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The US Supreme Court ruled 5-4 to allow an Alabama Muslim inmate to be executed without an imam present in the room.

Al Jazeera (08.02.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2DEaoY2> - A Muslim man was executed in Alabama on Thursday, as originally scheduled, after the US Supreme Court voted five-to-four to allow the execution, denying his request for an imam's presence in the execution chamber.

Attorneys for Domineque "Hakim" Ray, 42, had argued that Alabama's execution policy favoured Christian inmates because a chaplain is allowed in the room, often kneeling next to the death row prisoner, and praying with the inmate if requested.

Ali Massoud, government affairs coordinator for the Alabama chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations, says that "there were other avenues to pursue".

"We maintain that this was religious discrimination because the bottom line is that Christian [death row] inmates are provided with spiritual advisers until the very last moment, and the Muslim inmates are not," he told Al Jazeera by telephone.

Ray was executed by lethal injection at 10:12pm local time, a spokesman of the Department of Corrections told the Reuters news agency in an email. No other information was immediately available.

Ray's imam, Yusef Maisonet, watched the execution from an adjoining witness room, multiple media reports said, including the Birmingham News.

Lawyers for the state said only prison employees are allowed in the chamber for security reasons.

On Wednesday, the 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals agreed to stay the planned execution to weigh Ray's arguments, but the state of Alabama quickly appealed that decision to the Supreme Court, which overturned the Circuit Court.

'He wanted equal treatment'

Ray was sentenced to death in 1999 for the killing of Tiffany Harville, 15, who disappeared from her Selma, Alabama, home in July 1995.

Spencer Hahn, one of Ray's lawyers, said he was appalled that Ray received unequal treatment at his death because he was a member of a religious minority.

"Domineque was a devout Muslim and a human being. He was a son, a father, a brother. He wanted equal treatment in his last moments," Hahn wrote in a statement.

Ray's legal team said his first name was Domineque. The prison system used a different spelling, citing court records.

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall issued a statement saying he was pleased the court let the execution proceed.

"For 20 years, Domineque Ray has successfully eluded execution for the barbaric murder of a 15-year-old Selma girl," Marshall said.

He added, "Tonight, Ray's long-delayed appointment with justice is finally met."