



THE CAYMAN ISLANDS LAW REFORM COMMISSION



PART 1

THE PENAL CODE: IS IT COMPATIBLE WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS?

DISCUSSION PAPER

17th DECEMBER, 2021

THE CAYMAN ISLANDS LAW REFORM COMMISSION

Chairman	Mr. Hector Robinson, QC
Commissioners	Hon. Justice Alexander Henderson, QC, (retd.) Mr. Vaughan Carter, Attorney-at-Law Mr. Abraham Thoppil, Attorney-at-Law Ms. Reshma Sharma, QC, Solicitor General Mrs. Candia James-Malcolm, Director of Public Prosecutions (actg.)
Director	Mr. José Griffith, Attorney-at-Law
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CAYMAN ISLANDS LAW REFORM COMMISSION

Public Submissions

Stakeholders and members of the general public are invited to comment on the issues identified in the Discussion Paper and, in particular, to submit their views on the recommendations presented for discussion.

The Paper and supporting legislation may be viewed on the following website: **www.lrc.gov.ky** or **www.gov.ky** or a copy may be collected from the Offices of the Law Reform Commission.

Submissions should be forwarded no later than 15th March, 2022 to the Director of the Law Reform Commission, 4th Floor Government Administration Building, Portfolio of Legal Affairs, 133 Elgin Avenue, George Town, Grand Cayman, P.O. Box 136, Grand Cayman KY1-9000 either electronically to **cilawreform@gov.ky**, or in writing, by post or hand-delivered.

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CAYMAN ISLANDS LAW REFORM COMMISSION

THE PENAL CODE: IS IT COMPATIBLE WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS?

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This Discussion Paper (“the Paper”) is prepared in response to a referral by the Honourable Attorney General in 2017 requesting that the Law Reform Commission (“the Commission”) review the *Penal Code (2019 Revision)* (“Penal Code”)¹ to assess its compatibility with the Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities² (the “Bill of Rights”) as reflected in Part I to Schedule 2 of the *Cayman Islands Constitution Order, 2009* (“the Constitution”)³ and to update the obsolete and archaic provisions contained therein.
- 1.2 The Commission, at its 6th November, 2018 meeting, confirmed that the review of the Penal Code would be carried out in phases and that, in the first instance, the Commission would examine the compatibility of the Penal Code’s provisions with the Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities⁴.
- 1.3 Since its introduction in 1975, the Penal Code has not undergone a comprehensive review. With the adoption of the Constitution, it is imperative that all laws, including the Penal Code, are compatible with the fundamental human rights principles enshrined in the Bill of Rights⁵ set out in the Constitution as well as with the similar rights in Conventions and treaties that have been extended to the Cayman Islands.
- 1.4 The Bill of Rights⁶ provides for the fundamental rights to life; protection against torture and inhuman treatment; protection against slavery or forced or compulsory labour; personal liberty; humane treatment of prisoners; a fair trial; no punishment

¹ Penal Code (2019 Revision).

² Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Cayman Islands Constitution Order, 2009, SI No. 1379.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities came into effect on 6 November 2012 (except for sections 6 (2) and (3) which came into effect on 6th November 2013).

without law; respect to private and family life; freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of assembly and association; freedom of expression; property; marriage between opposite sexes; non-discrimination of any rights under the Constitution and protection of children and protection of the environment. These fundamental rights are intended to reflect broadly accepted international standards of human rights and it is imperative that the provisions of the Penal Code reflect and are consistent with the principles underpinning these rights as expressed in the Bill of Rights.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PENAL CODE IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

- 2.1 The Penal Code is derived from the *Indian Penal Code (1860)*⁷ (“IPC of Macaulay”) and is primarily a consolidation of a number of pieces of legislation which were passed between the late 1800s and the mid-1900s. It has its roots in English law of the Victorian era and comprises 325 sections divided into twelve (12) parts⁸ in order to capture the general criminal laws within the Islands.⁹
- 2.2 The *Cayman Islands Act, 1863* allowed for all British Acts or Laws, together with those Laws of The Colony of Jamaica to be applicable to the Cayman Islands.¹⁰ These provisions were later compiled in an Edition namely, the *(Laws of the Cayman Islands) Law, 1960* which was amended by the *Revised Edition (Laws of the Cayman Islands) (Amendment) Law, 1963*, as well as subsequent volumes, including the modifications effected by and under section 56 of the *Cayman Islands (Constitution) Order in Council, 1962*.¹¹

⁷ Thomas Babington Macaulay chaired the first Law Commission of India and was the main drafter of the Indian Penal Code – the first comprehensive codified criminal law produced anywhere in the British Empire (Friedland 1992, p. 1172).

⁸ Part I Preliminary; Part II Punishments; Part III Offence against Public Order; Part IV Offence against Administration of Public Authority; Part V Offence Injurious to the Public in General; Part VI Offence against the Person; Part VII Offence against the Children; Part VIII Anti Gangs Provisions; Part IX Offence relating to Property; Part X Malicious injuries to Property; Part XI Forgery, Coining and Counterfeiting.

⁹ Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

¹⁰ Cayman Islands Act 1863.

¹¹ The Law of the Cayman Islands Revised Edition 1963, Vol 1, Chpts 1-43, Eyre and Spottiswoode Limited, Her Majesty’s Printers, 2 Serjeants’ Inn, London, E.C.4. pg. vii.

- 2.3 By the *Penal Code Law 12 of 1975* the Cayman Islands Legislative Assembly (as it was then called), repealed laws which were penal¹² in nature,¹³ some in part¹⁴, in order to consolidate such laws into one statute, following the IPC of Macaulay, which was adopted throughout the British Colonies.¹⁵
- 2.4 The Penal Code creates offences relating to public order, the administration of lawful authority, religion, morality, marriage and domestic relations, nuisances, health and defamation. Further, the Penal Code creates offences against the person such as manslaughter, murder, procuring abortion, indecent assault, unnatural offences, incest, suicide pacts and kidnapping, offences relating to children, such as cruelty to children and child pornography offences and offences in relation to property and animals.
- 2.5 Since its introduction in 1975, the Penal Code has been amended and revised primarily by the adjustment of the type and length of punishments, and by the introduction of some new offences. However, the Penal Code has not undergone a comprehensive review to determine if any of the offences are obsolete based on changes in social conditions since the time of its enactment. Further, with the enactment of the Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution, there is an even more pressing need to examine the Penal Code to determine if any of its provisions are in conflict with the fundamental human rights.

¹² Black's Law Dictionary (16c) A statute by which punishments are imposed for transgressions of the law, civil as well as criminal; esp., a statute that defines a crime and prescribes its corresponding fine, penalty, or punishment. — Also termed penal law; punitive statute; criminal statute.

¹³ Cap 20 The Coinage Offence Law; Cap 28 The Country Fires Law; Cap 57 The Foreign Recruiting Law; Cap 58 The Forgery Law; Cap 69 The Incest (Punishment) Law; Cap 82 The Larceny Law; Cap 91 The Malicious Injuries to Property Law; Cap 101 The Military Training (Prohibition) Law; Cap 113 The Obeah Law; Cap 114 The Obscene Publications (Suppression) Law; Cap 115 The Offence Against The Person; Cap 122 The Perjury Law; Cap 146 The Recognisances' and Sureties of the Peace Law; Cap 151 The Riot Law; Cap 155 The Seditious Meetings Law; Cap 172 The Treason Felony Law; Cap 173 The Trespass Law; Cap 177 The Undesirable Publications (Prohibitions of Importation) Law; Cap 178 The Unlawful Possession of Property Law; Cap 180 The Vagrancy Law; No 13 of 1964 The Dangerous Offensive Weapons Law; No 7 of 1972 The Criminal Deception Law.

¹⁴ The Defamation Law, 1996 (Part III); Cap 112 The Oaths Law (Sections 21-27).

¹⁵ Memorandum of Objects and Reasons- Penal Code- Law 12 of 1975; International Encyclopedia of Comparative Law, Vol 1, National Reports, Victor Knapp, 1976 Mouton, The Hague & JCB MOHR (Paul Siebeck), Tubingen.

3. SCOPE OF THE DISCUSSION PAPER

- 3.1 This Paper examines the provisions in the *Penal Code (2019 Revision)*¹⁶ against the Bill of Rights and identifies those provisions that raise issues of potential incompatibility with the Bill of Rights. Among the provisions identified are those relating to immature age (minimum age of criminal responsibility)¹⁷, compulsion by spouse¹⁸, insulting the modesty of a woman¹⁹, procuring abortion²⁰, unnatural offences²¹, indecent assault²² and incest²³.
- 3.2 A desk review of the provisions identified as raising Bill of Rights compatibility issues was carried out having regard to the relevant provisions of the penal laws of various jurisdictions including England and Wales, Jamaica, Canada, India, The Bahamas and Australia.
- 3.3 Accordingly, the findings, comments and recommendations of the Commission on each issue together with questions on issues for consultation are presented in this Paper.

4. MINIMUM AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.1 The minimum age of criminal responsibility is the minimum age below which a person is presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the criminal law. This means that children below the minimum age of criminal responsibility cannot be arrested or charged, but those above are presumed to be sufficiently mature to stand trial, and in the eyes of the law, held accountable as adults.
- 4.2 The traditional common law position was a minimum age of criminal responsibility of seven (7) years and a rebuttable presumption of *doli incapax* from seven (7) years until fourteen (14) years.²⁴

¹⁶ Penal Code (2019 Revision).

¹⁷ Ibid. s 12.

¹⁸ Ibid, s 16.

¹⁹ Ibid, s. 133.

²⁰ Ibid, s. 141, 142, 143.

²¹ Ibid, s. 144.

²² Ibid, s. 132, 145.

²³ Ibid, s. 146, 147.

²⁴ *JM v Runeckles* (1984) 79 Cr App R 255.

- 4.3 The presumption of *doli incapax* means that the law presumes a child under the age of fourteen (14) years does not possess the necessary knowledge required to have criminal intent. The presumption may be disproved or rebutted by evidence showing that a child knew his or her actions were morally wrong.
- 4.4 Many countries have moved away from the common law position and in doing so, there has been a tendency to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility to ten (10) or twelve (12) years and in some cases to abolish the rebuttable presumption of *doli incapax*.

(a) International standard for minimum age of criminal responsibility

- 4.5 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child²⁵ (“UNCRC”) established an international standard for the recognition and support of the rights of the child and highlights the need for appropriate legal protection and special safeguards for children. The UNCRC requires States parties to establish a minimum age of criminal responsibility that reflects the physical and mental immaturity of children and promotes non-judicial measures (such as care and counselling)²⁶ for dealing with children in conflict with the law²⁷.
- 4.6 In 2007, the UNCRC²⁸ recognised that reports submitted by States parties showed the existence of a wide range of minimum ages of criminal responsibility ranging from a very low level of age seven (7) or eight (8) years to the high level of age fourteen (14) or sixteen (16) years²⁹. The UNCRC also found that, as is the case in the Cayman Islands³⁰, a number of States parties apply two minimum ages of criminal responsibility. Children in conflict with the law who at the time of the commission of the crime are at or above the lower minimum age, but below the

²⁵ Convention on the Rights of the Child, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 and entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49. <<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>>.

²⁶ Ibid, Article 40(3), p 11.

²⁷ Children in conflict with the law: children alleged as, accused of, or recognised as having infringed the penal law see page 3 of the UNCRC General Comment No. 24 (201x), replacing General Comment No. 10 (2007) Children’s rights in juvenile justice.

²⁸ To assist in the interpretation of the rights under the Convention, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, a body of independent experts which monitors implementation of the UNCRC, issues documents known as General Comments. These have dealt with such issues as adolescent health (General Comment 4) and the right of children to be heard (General Comment 12). 14. States Parties are also required to report periodically to the Committee. After consideration of a State party’s report the Committee issues observations and recommendations. Concluding observations refer both to positive aspects of a State’s implementation of the UNCRC and areas where the Committee recommends that further action needs to be taken by the State.

²⁹ General Comment No. 10 (2007), Children’s rights in juvenile justice CRC/C/GC/10, 25 April 2007, p 10.

³⁰ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 12.

higher minimum age, are assumed to be criminally responsible only if they have the required maturity in that regard. The assessment of the required level of maturity is left to the court or judge, often without the requirement of involving a psychological expert, and results, in practice, in the use of the lower minimum age in cases of serious crimes.³¹

- 4.7 The system of two minimum ages is often not only confusing, but leaves much to the discretion of the court or judge and may result in discriminatory practices.³² In light of this wide range of minimum ages of criminal responsibility, the UNCRC felt that there was a need to provide the States parties with clear guidance and recommendations regarding the minimum age of criminal responsibility and declared a minimum age of less than twelve (12) years “not to be internationally acceptable”.³³
- 4.8 The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (“the Beijing Rules”)³⁴ which accompanied the UNCRC as a supplemental guide, observed that the “modern approach to consider was whether a child can live up to the moral and psychological components of criminal responsibility; that is, whether a child can be held responsible for essentially antisocial behavior.”³⁵
- 4.9 Whilst the Beijing Rules do not specify a minimum age, rule 4.1 states that the minimum age of criminal responsibility should “not be fixed at too low an age level, bearing in mind the facts of emotional, mental and intellectual maturity.”³⁶ In addition, the rule suggested that there should be a relationship between this age and other rights and responsibilities of the child, such as the age of majority.³⁷
- 4.10 Although, in line with rule 4 of the Beijing Rules, the UNCRC in General Comment No. 10 (2007) had considered twelve (12) years as the absolute minimum age for criminal responsibility, the recommendation in its draft General Comment No. 24

³¹ General Comment No. 10 (2007), Children’s rights in juvenile justice CRC/C/GC/10, 25 April 2007, p 10.

³² Ibid, p 11.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ General Assembly Resolution 40/333, United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), A/RES/40/33 (29 November 1985) <<https://www.ohchr.org/documents/professionalinterest/beijingrules.pdf>>.

³⁵ Ibid, p 3.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

is that this age indication is still low. It is reported that the UNCRC has stated that it increased its recommended age to reflect current research in child development and neuroscience, which says that abstract reasoning skills are not fully developed in children aged twelve (12) and thirteen (13) years.³⁸

- 4.11 States parties are therefore encouraged to increase their minimum age to at least fourteen (14) years of age. At the same time, the UNCRC commends States parties that have a higher minimum age, for instance fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age. The UNCRC further recommends that a State party should under no circumstances reduce the minimum age of criminal responsibility, if its current penal law sets the minimum age of criminal responsibility at an age higher than fourteen (14) years.
- 4.12 Accordingly, many countries have introduced a minimum age of criminal responsibility or have raised their minimum age of criminal responsibility.

(b) Minimum age of criminal responsibility in the Cayman Islands

- 4.13 The Cayman Islands currently has a minimum age of criminal responsibility of ten years. Section 12(1) of the Penal Code provides that a person under the age of ten years is not criminally responsible for any act or omission.³⁹ However, under section 12(2), a person under the age of fourteen (14) years is not criminally responsible for an act or omission unless it is proved that, at the time of doing the act or making the omission, the person had capacity to know that the person ought not to do the act or make the omission.⁴⁰ In addition, under section 12(3), if the child is a male person under the age of twelve (12) years, the child will be presumed to be incapable of having carnal knowledge.⁴¹
- 4.14 Section 17 of the Constitution affords fundamental human rights protection for children and requires that the Legislature shall enact laws to provide every person

³⁸ <<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2019/sep/26/australia-urged-to-follow-un-advice-and-raise-age-of-criminal-responsibility-by-four-years>>.

³⁹ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 12(1).

⁴⁰ Ibid, s 12(2).

⁴¹ Ibid, s 12(3).

under the age of eighteen (18) years (a “child”) with such facilities as would aid the child’s growth and development.

4.15 As a British Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom, the UNCRC was extended to and ratified by the Cayman Islands in 1994.⁴² To better comply with its provisions and principles, the Cayman Islands Government enacted the *Children Act (2012 Revision)*.⁴³

4.16 Article 3(1) of the UNCRC, which provides for the “best interest of the child” principle, is the predominant theme echoed throughout the *Children Act (2012 Revision)*. However, the reliability of the principle is questioned when the Penal Code assigns criminal responsibility to persons who have attained the age of ten years. Hull J, sitting in the Grand Court observed in *R. v. T.E.B. and McKenzie*⁴⁴ that while a person remains a juvenile, that is, under the age of seventeen, special provisions govern the way in which the person can be dealt with.⁴⁵ Therefore, in making a decision about a juvenile, the Grand Court has to have regard both to the welfare of the juvenile and to the necessity of doing justice.⁴⁶

4.17 Another issue that potentially arises is the difficulty in determining the age of majority for rehabilitation. The confusion arises because of the use of terms such as “child” and “young person” interchangeably in Cayman Islands legislation. Section 17 of the Bill of Rights refers to a child as being “a child and young person under the age of eighteen”. Section 17 of the Bill of Rights also gives a child the right not to be detained except as a measure of last resort, in which case, in addition to the rights a child enjoys under sections 5 and 22 of the Bill of Rights, the child may be detained only for the shortest appropriate period of time, and shall be treated in a manner and kept in conditions that take account of his or her age.

4.18 A further issue is the distinction made in section 12(3) of the Penal Code such that if a child under the age of twelve (12) years is a male person, the child will be

⁴² <<http://www.gov.ky/portal/page/portal/hrthome/publications/international-treaties>>.

⁴³ *Children Act (2012 Revision)*.

⁴⁴ [1984–85 CILR 316].

⁴⁵ *Ibid* para 37-39, p 29.

⁴⁶ [1984-85 CILR 320] para 15-17.

presumed to be incapable of having carnal knowledge.⁴⁷ In light of section 16 of the Bill of Rights, which affords protection from discrimination in respect of rights under the Bill of Rights (arising from different and unjustifiable treatment on any ground including sex), in the application of section 12(3) of the Penal Code only to "a male person" raises gender neutrality questions which may render the provision inconsistent with the Bill of Rights. These issues are raised despite the direction in the *Interpretation Act (1995 Revision)*⁴⁸ that words importing the masculine gender in the Interpretation Act and in all other Acts include females. We also acknowledge that section 16 is not a standalone right.

- 4.19 In determining whether or not changes are required to the Penal Code provision on the minimum age of criminal responsibility to make it compatible with the Bill of Rights and the UNCRC, relevant laws in a number of jurisdictions were examined. In particular, reference is made in this Paper to the laws and authorities regarding minimum age in Australia, England and Wales, and Scotland.

(d) Countries with a minimum age that is ten (10) years or under

- 4.20 The Cayman Islands is joined by a few countries around the world which still have a minimum age of criminal responsibility which is ten (10) years or under, such as Australia and the United Kingdom (England and Wales and Northern Ireland).⁴⁹

(i) Australia

- 4.21 In Queensland, Australia, a person under ten (10) years is not criminally responsible for any act or omission.⁵⁰ However, a person under the age of fourteen (14) years is not criminally responsible for an act or omission, unless it is proved that at the time of doing the act or making the omission the person had capacity to know that the person ought not to do the act or make the omission.⁵¹ Therefore, to prove

⁴⁷ Penal Code (2019 Revision) s 12(3).

⁴⁸ Interpretation Act (1995 Revision), s 4.

⁴⁹ Also, The Bahamas, New Zealand and India.

⁵⁰ Criminal Code Act 1899 (Queensland), s 29(1).

⁵¹ Ibid, s 29(2).

capacity, it must be proven beyond reasonable doubt that the accused has the capacity to know that he or she ought not to have done the act.⁵²

4.22 In its concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of how Australia implements the provisions of the UNCRC⁵³, the UNCRC states that it regrets the lack of implementation of its previous recommendations and remains seriously concerned about, among other things, the very low age of criminal responsibility. With reference to its general comment, No. 24 (2019) on children's rights in the child justice system, the Committee on the Rights of the Child urged the State party to bring its child justice system fully into line with the UNCRC and to "raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to an internationally accepted level and make it conform with the upper age of fourteen (14) years at which *doli incapax* applies."⁵⁴

4.23 The State and Commonwealth Attorneys General investigated the issue of the minimum age of criminal responsibility in Australia in 2018 after legal and medical experts called for the age to be raised to fourteen (14) years. Dr. Tony Bartone, the Australian Medical Association President's view was that raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility will prevent the unnecessary criminalisation of vulnerable children. In an Australian Medical Association media release, Dr. Bartone stated:

"Australia has one of the lowest ages of criminal responsibility in the world. The criminalisation of children in Australia is a nationwide problem that disproportionately impacts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Most children in prison come from backgrounds that are disadvantaged. These children often experience violence, abuse, disability, homelessness, and drug or alcohol misuse. Criminalising the behaviour of young and

⁵² [1998] QCA 097.

⁵³ United Nations CRC/C/AUS/CO/5-6 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION, Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Australia.
<https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/AUS/CRC_C_AUS_CO_5-6_37291_E.pdf>.

⁵⁴ United Nations CRC/C/AUS/CO/5-6 ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION, Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Australia, p 13.
<https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/AUS/CRC_C_AUS_CO_5-6_37291_E.pdf>.

*vulnerable children creates a vicious cycle of disadvantage and forces children to become entrenched in the criminal justice system. Children who are forced into contact with the criminal justice system at a young age are also less likely to complete their education or find employment, and are more likely to die an early death”.*⁵⁵

- 4.24 The Law Council of Australia President, Arthur Moses SC is of the view that “Research-based evidence on brain development supports a higher age as children are not sufficiently able to reflect before acting or comprehend the consequences of a criminal action”.⁵⁶ Mr. Moses also believes that increasing the minimum age of criminal responsibility to fourteen (14) years would remove the need for courts to consider the confusing and complex *doli incapax* presumption which in practice has proven to be extremely difficult to apply in court. For example, the Northern Territory Court of Appeal allowed an appeal in the case of *KG v Firth*⁵⁷ which demonstrated the uncertainty surrounding *doli incapax* and the risks of its erroneous application.
- 4.25 Mr. Moses further believes that children must be protected and not criminalised. Additionally, it is Mr. Moses’ view that raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility to fourteen (14) years would improve justice outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and honour Australia’s commitments under international law, including promoting the best interests of the child. This would also replace *doli incapax* altogether, significantly reducing complexity and confusion in the Australian courts.

⁵⁵ <<https://www.ama.com.au/gp-network-news/ama-calls-age-criminal-responsibility-be-raised>>.

⁵⁶ <<https://www.lawcouncil.asn.au/media/media-releases/commonwealth-states-and-territories-must-lift-minimum-age-of-criminal-responsibility-to-14-years-remove-doli-incapax>>.

⁵⁷ [2019] NTCA 5.

(ii) United Kingdom (England and Wales and Northern Ireland)

- 4.26 The minimum age of criminal responsibility in the United Kingdom is a devolved matter⁵⁸, which, in each case (except for Scotland), is below the internationally recommended absolute minimum of twelve (12) years of age.⁵⁹
- 4.27 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the minimum age of criminal responsibility is ten (10) years of age.⁶⁰ In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, in addition to the ten (10) years minimum age of criminal responsibility until 1998, there was also a legal presumption (known as “*doli incapax*”) that children under the age of fourteen (14) years did not know the difference between right and wrong and were therefore incapable of committing an offence. The *doli incapax* presumption was rebuttable if the prosecution could satisfy the court that the child knew that what he or she was doing was seriously wrong, not merely naughty or mischievous.⁶¹
- 4.28 However, the *doli incapax*⁶² presumption was abolished in England and Wales by section 34 of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*⁶³ and in Northern Ireland by Article 3 of the *Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order, 1998*.⁶⁴ This meant that under the criminal law in England and Wales children aged ten (10) to thirteen (13) years would be treated in the same way as those aged fourteen (14) years or over.⁶⁵
- 4.29 A minimum age of criminal responsibility of ten (10) years does not comply with the UNCRC and is out of step with the rest of Europe where the average age of criminal responsibility is fourteen (14) years and, lately, with that of Scotland where the age is now twelve (12) years⁶⁶. The UNCRC has criticised the United Kingdom’s minimum age of criminal responsibility and has repeatedly urged the

⁵⁸ Devolved matters are those areas of government where decision-making has been delegated by Parliament to the devolved institutions such as the Scottish Parliament, the Assemblies of Wales, Northern Ireland and London or to Local Authorities.

⁵⁹ <<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0577/POST-PN-0577.pdf>>.

⁶⁰ Section 50 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (as amended). The Act as introduced set the age at eight and this was increased to the current age of ten by section 16 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.

⁶¹ *JM v Runkles* (1984) 79 Cr App R 255.

⁶² <<https://www.iclr.co.uk/knowledge/glossary/doli-incapax/>>.

⁶³ Crime and Disorder Act 1998, s 34. <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/contents>>.

⁶⁴ Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order, 1998, s 3. <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1998/2839/contents/made>>.

⁶⁵ House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper Number 7687, 16th August 2016, p 4. <<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7687/CBP-7687.pdf>>.

⁶⁶ The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019, Part 1, s 1. <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/7/data.pdf>>.

United Kingdom to increase the age to at least twelve (12) years.⁶⁷ In the UNCRC's list of issues in relation to the fifth periodic report, the United Kingdom was asked to provide information on progress made in raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility, developing a broad range of alternative measures to detention for children in conflict with the law and ensuring that such children are never tried as adults in ordinary courts. The Committee on the Rights of the Child also asked about the progress made in establishing a juvenile justice system in Northern Ireland, the overseas territories and Crown dependencies.⁶⁸

- 4.30 Although there is mixed public opinion, the call to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility is supported by many stakeholders. In 2008, a YouGov⁶⁹ poll suggested that just under half of those polled believed children are an increasing danger and that “something has to be done”.⁷⁰ In 2010, two out of five of British adults surveyed were in favour of increasing the minimum age of criminal responsibility.⁷¹
- 4.31 The criminalisation of children in conflict with the law is perceived by many as being unfair and contrary to international human rights. While children in the United Kingdom are not deemed to be mature enough to marry (even with parental consent) until they are sixteen (16) years of age, to drive a car until seventeen (17) years of age, or to vote in a general election until they are eighteen (18) years of age, they may be criminalised at ten (10) years of age. Further, it is reported that most children in conflict with the law have poor mental health, dysfunctional families and backgrounds of emotional, physical or sexual abuse.⁷²
- 4.32 One argument for maintaining the minimum age of criminal responsibility at ten (10) years is that children should be held accountable, especially when public

⁶⁷ See the House of Lords and House of Commons Joint Committee on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Tenth Report of Session 2002-2003, p 3; p 54. <<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200203/jtselect/jtrights/117/117.pdf>>.

⁶⁸ CRC/C/GBR/Q/5, p 3. <<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/573d76574.pdf>>.

⁶⁹ YouGov is a British international Internet-based market research and data analytics firm, headquartered in the UK, with operations in Europe, North America, the Middle East and Asia-Pacific.

⁷⁰ Houses of Parliament POSTNOTE 577, June 2018 Age of Criminal Responsibility, p 2. <<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0577/POST-PN-0577.pdf>>.

⁷¹ Ibid, p 2. See also Rules of Engagement Changing the heart of youth justice A policy report by the Youth Justice Working Group January 2012.

⁷² Houses of Parliament POSTNOTE 577, June 2018 Age of Criminal Responsibility, p 1. <<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0577/POST-PN-0577.pdf>>.

protection is at stake.⁷³ This view is shared by many who support increasing the minimum age of criminal responsibility, but alternative, age-appropriate responses are advocated.⁷⁴

- 4.33 The murder of James Bulger (a toddler) by two ten (10) year old boys Jon Venables⁷⁵ and Robert Thompson in 1993 is cited as a reason for maintaining a minimum age of ten (10) years.⁷⁶ In that case, two (2) year old James Bulger was abducted and murdered by two ten (10) year olds in Mersyside. The two boys were prosecuted and found guilty and served their sentences. The James Bulger case was shocking and generated many debates on the minimum age of criminal responsibility. If the minimum age of criminal responsibility is increased the effect would be that children such as James Bulger's killers who were ten (10) years of age when they took him away and murdered him could not be prosecuted for a crime and would have to be dealt with through the social care system.
- 4.34 Despite the claims and supporting evidence that serious, sexual or violent offences by young children are rare and that an increase in the minimum age of criminal responsibility would serve society and protect the rights of children, reform in England and Wales seems unlikely whilst the James Bulger case casts a shadow over the criminal justice system.
- 4.35 The United Kingdom government's position is that a ten (10) year old child knows the difference between right and wrong and to prosecute a child of that age⁷⁷ for an offence is perfectly legitimate⁷⁸. It is also believed that setting the age of criminal responsibility at ten (10) years provides flexibility in addressing offending behaviour by children and allows for early intervention to help prevent further offending⁷⁹. However, others believe that this contradicts evidence about the

⁷³ Houses of Parliament POSTNOTE 577, June 2018 Age of Criminal Responsibility, p 2.

<<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0577/POST-PN-0577.pdf>> and see House of Commons Hansard, Young Offenders, 08 March 2011 Volume 524.

⁷⁴ Cipriani, D. (2009) Children's Rights and the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility: A Global Perspective. Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing.

⁷⁵ *Reg. v. Secretary of State for the Home Department, Ex parte V. and Reg. v. Secretary of State for the Home Department, Ex parte T.* Session 1997-98.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ See <<https://criminaljusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/Age-of-Criminal-Responsibility-Bill-Lords-Second-Reading-080917.pdf>>.

⁷⁸ <<https://theconversation.com/the-james-bulger-case-should-not-set-the-age-of-criminal-responsibility-91342>>.

⁷⁹ <<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/nov/04/age-of-criminal-responsibility-must-be-raised-say-experts>>.

processes by which children as young as nine (9) years old have the capacity to make moral judgements and behavioural choices.⁸⁰

- 4.36 In 1999, in the cases *Venables v the United Kingdom* and *Thompson v the United Kingdom*⁸¹, the European Court of Human Rights decided that the two boys who were prosecuted for killing James Bulger had been denied the right to a fair trial under Article 6 of the Human Rights Convention⁸² due to the tense courtroom and public scrutiny and given their immaturity and disturbed emotional state. After the ruling, Thompson and Venables were granted new identities and lifelong anonymity.⁸³
- 4.37 The rulings in the *Venables v the United Kingdom* and *Thompson v the United Kingdom* cases triggered a number of changes to the England and Wales justice system. One such change was that cases in respect of all children between ten (10) and seventeen (17) years of age who are accused of offences including theft and burglary, antisocial behaviour and drug offences would be tried in youth courts, while serious crimes like rape and murder would be passed to a Crown Court. Children who are tried in youth courts are entitled to anonymity, face different sentences from adults, and go to special secure centres for young people if they are convicted, rather than standard prisons.
- 4.38 Additional steps are more routinely taken in a youth court to ensure a child defendant understands his or her trial. However, the “Children in Dock series”⁸⁴ produced by the Guardian exposed failures in the youth justice system in the United Kingdom and the youth justice system in England and Wales continues to receive criticism more than twenty-five (25) years after the James Bulger case. The Guardian has reported that Anne Longfield, the Children’s Commissioner for England, described current practices as chaotic and dysfunctional and has called for a wholesale review of the youth justice system.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Weithorn LA, Campbell SB *Child Dev.* 1982 Dec; 53(6):1589-98.

⁸¹ [1997] UKHL 25.

⁸² Article 6 of the Human Rights Convention.

⁸³ See <<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/four-criminals-handed-lifelong-anonymity-11990821>>.

⁸⁴ A **series** investigating the youth justice system in England and Wales, which sees **children** as young as 10 put on trial.

⁸⁵ Youth court system in 'chaos', says children's commissioner, November 3, 2019.

<<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/nov/03/youth-court-system-in-chaos-says-childrens-commissioner>>.

- 4.39 It is believed that the deeply shocking nature of the James Bulger case has prevented successive governments from dealing with the issue.⁸⁶ Consecutive governments have reiterated that there is no intention to review the minimum age of criminal responsibility⁸⁷. A 2011 statement on Youth Justice declared “It is entirely appropriate to hold (children over the age of ten (10)) to account for their actions if they commit an offence”⁸⁸. In 2012, the government position was that “young people aged ten (10) and over are able to differentiate bad behaviour and serious wrongdoing”.⁸⁹
- 4.40 In 2017, a Private Members Bill proposing to increase the age of criminal responsibility to twelve (12) years was introduced in the House of Lords. At the second reading of the Bill, the Government responded that the current minimum age of criminal responsibility, “is appropriate and accurately reflects what is required of our justice system”.⁹⁰ The Bill failed to complete its passage before the end of the Session.⁹¹
- 4.41 The Review of the Youth Justice System in Northern Ireland by the Department of Justice in 2011⁹² recommended increasing the minimum age of criminal responsibility from ten (10) to twelve (12) years with “consideration given after a period of time to raising it further to fourteen (14) years”.⁹³ The Report considered that “small numbers of children below these ages involved in offending still need support and discipline and to be held to account for their behaviour, but this should not be through a criminal justice process that further damages them”.⁹⁴ While this

⁸⁶ At What Age Is It Right To Prosecute Children? By Emily Kent, Volunteer Writer 20 Nov 2019 <<https://eachother.org.uk/age-criminal-responsibility>>.

⁸⁷ <<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/labor-at-odds-over-sending-children-to-jail-20210812-p58i8k.html>>.

⁸⁸ <<https://www.icca.ac.uk/revision-considered-to-age-of-criminal-responsibility/>>.

⁸⁹ Age of Criminal Responsibility Bill [HL] (HL Bill 3 of 2017–19). See <[http://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-01-29/debates/16012936000411/AgeOfCriminalResponsibilityBill\(HL\)](http://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-01-29/debates/16012936000411/AgeOfCriminalResponsibilityBill(HL))> col 1574.

⁹⁰ Age of Criminal Responsibility Bill [HL] Volume 783: debated on Friday 8 September 2017. See Baroness Vere of Norbiton comment.

⁹¹ <<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/ageofcriminalresponsibility.html>>.

⁹² Northern Ireland Department of Justice: A Review of the Youth Justice System in Northern Ireland, 2011. Belfast. See <<https://restorativejustice.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/files/Report%20of%20the%20Youth%20Justice%20System%20in%20Northern%20Ireland.pdf>>.

⁹³ Ibid, p 14.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p 14.

recommendation was widely supported,⁹⁵ a failure to implement it has been attributed to a lack of political consensus.⁹⁶

(e) Countries with a minimum age of criminal responsibility that is higher than ten (10) years of age

4.42 Countries with a minimum age of criminal responsibility higher than ten (10) years of age include Jamaica, most European Countries and Scotland. In Jamaica, no child under the age of twelve (12) years can be found guilty of an offence.⁹⁷ Currently, most European countries have a minimum age of criminal responsibility of at least twelve (12) years including France (thirteen (13) years), Poland (thirteen (13) years), Turkey (twelve (12) years), and the Netherlands (twelve (12) years).⁹⁸ Scotland is of particular interest to this review as the minimum age was changed from eight (8) to twelve (12) years in 2019.

(i) Scotland

4.43 The *Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act, 2019*⁹⁹, which increased the minimum age of criminal responsibility from eight (8) years to twelve (12) years¹⁰⁰ was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament in May 2019 and received Royal Assent on 11 June, 2019.

4.44 Prior to the passage of the Bill, Scotland was reported to have the lowest age of criminal responsibility in Europe¹⁰¹ and there were numerous calls for its increase by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

4.45 In 2015, the Scottish Government established an expert advisory group to identify the key issues arising from an increase in the minimum age of criminal responsibility from eight (8) to twelve (12) years, which made a number of

⁹⁵ Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Justice, Review of Youth Justice, Ministerial Briefing, Official Report (Hansard) 28th June 2012. ; Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Justice, Official Report, (Hansard) 31st May 2012. See Include Youth, Response to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Draft revised General Comment No. 10 (2007) on children's rights in juvenile justice, p.3.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p 3.

⁹⁷ Child Care Protection Act 2004, s 63.

⁹⁸ See Child Rights International Network (CRIN), Minimum Ages of Criminal Responsibility in Europe. <<https://archive.crin.org/en/home/ages/europe.html>>.

⁹⁹ Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, s 1.

¹⁰¹ The Report of the Advisory Group on the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility To Michael Matheson, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Angela Constance, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, para 1.1.

recommendations about how to safely and responsibly raise the age.¹⁰² The work of the advisory group resulted in the *Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act, 2019*¹⁰³ being enacted.

- 4.46 The *Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act, 2019*¹⁰⁴ is aimed at protecting children, reducing stigma and ensuring better future life chances, rather than reflecting a particular understanding of when an individual child in fact has the capacity to understand their actions, or the consequences that could result from those actions – either for them or for the people they may have harmed.¹⁰⁵ The Act reflects Scotland’s commitment to international human rights standards and promoting the rights and interests of children and young people as well as addressing offending behavior by young people.¹⁰⁶
- 4.47 The *Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act, 2019*¹⁰⁷ also provides for a number of safeguarding measures to ensure that action (including investigations) can still be conducted by the police and other authorities when children under the age of twelve (12) years are involved in serious incidents of harmful behavior and to protect the child’s rights and best interests and the interests and rights of anyone harmed. The safeguarding measures include specific investigatory powers for the police.
- 4.48 The changes made by the *Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act, 2019*¹⁰⁸ also makes provision for a victim of a serious incident to receive information and for the right of a child under the minimum age of criminal responsibility who is thought to be responsible for a serious incident to have “access to a supporter and an advocacy worker during a formal police interview”.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² Ibid, para 1.3.

¹⁰³ Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ The Report of the Advisory Group on the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility To Michael Matheson, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Angela Constance, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, para 1.14.

¹⁰⁶ See Scottish Government, Youth Justice, Raising the age of criminal responsibility, <<https://www.gov.scot/policies/youth-justice/raising-age-criminal-responsibility/>>.

¹⁰⁷ Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment, CRWIA for the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Bill, p 1.

- 4.49 The *Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act, 2019*¹¹⁰ makes changes to the disclosure system by removing the automatic disclosure of convictions for the behaviour of children under twelve (12) years and putting in place independent consideration of information to be included in response to a disclosure check, when that check may disclose non-conviction, but potentially adverse information dating back to when a person was under the minimum age of criminal responsibility.¹¹¹
- 4.50 There are still calls for the minimum age of criminal responsibility to be raised to fourteen (14) years in Scotland.¹¹² The Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, Bruce Adamson, has also made his view clear that fourteen (14) years is the "lowest acceptable age".¹¹³ The Scottish Government has reported that the Minister for Children and Young People has committed to creating a new advisory group to consider whether the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland should be increased further to fourteen (14) years and to review the operation of the *Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act, 2019*¹¹⁴.

(f) Comments and recommendations regarding minimum age of criminal responsibility

- 4.51 The Commission is of the view that children must be protected from the harmful effects of early criminalisation while ensuring that incidents of harmful behaviour by those who are under the minimum age may be effectively investigated to ascertain the facts surrounding the behaviour. The best interests of the child must be protected as well as the interests of victims and other persons that are affected by such harmful behaviour.
- 4.52 Recommendations made with regard to increasing the age of criminal responsibility must be aimed at protecting children and affirming the commitment of the Cayman Islands to comply with the Constitution and the UNCRC. However, these recommendations may not necessarily reflect a particular view of the age at which

¹¹⁰ Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019.

¹¹¹ Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment, CRWIA for the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Bill, p 1.

¹¹² The Sunday Post Report, Age of criminal responsibility raised to 12 in Scotland <<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/age-of-criminal-responsibility-raised-to-12-in-scotland>>.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019<<https://www.gov.scot/policies/youth-justice/raising-age-criminal-responsibility/>>.

a child has the capacity to understand their actions or the consequences of those actions for themselves or for their victim.

- 4.53 In making recommendations to increase the age of criminal responsibility, provision must be made to ensure that a child who is under the minimum age of criminal responsibility and whose behaviour is in conflict with the law will not be labelled as an offender or disadvantaged or stigmatised by being left with a criminal record for that behaviour.
- 4.54 Specific investigatory powers for the police may also be required together with a right for a child under the minimum age of criminal responsibility who is thought to be responsible for a serious incident to have access to a supporter and an advocacy worker during a formal police interview.
- 4.55 The victim of a serious incident must also have the right to support and to receive information regarding the incident.
- 4.56 The Commission's view is that an increase in the minimum age of criminal responsibility to either age twelve (12) or fourteen (14) should be considered by amending section 12 of the Penal Code to reflect the protections afforded in the Bill of Rights and the international standards and obligations that have been extended to the Cayman Islands. In achieving this, consideration should also must be given to the other legislation and mechanisms for youth justice currently in place in the Cayman Islands.

Recommendation:

That the age of criminal responsibility should be increased from ten (10) years of age to –

- (a) twelve (12) years of age; or
- (b) fourteen (14) years of age.

(g) Consultation questions on minimum age of criminal responsibility

Questions (Please give reason for your answers)

1. Do you agree with the recommendations of the UNCRC that the age of criminal responsibility should be increased?
2. If the answer to question 1 is “Yes”, what age should the age of criminal responsibility be?
3. Do you anticipate that adjustments may be required in relation to child protection if the minimum age of criminal responsibility is increased?
4. If the age of criminal responsibility is increased, do you agree that it will be possible to deal with the harmful behaviour of children under the age of criminal responsibility via the existing youth justice legislation and system?
5. If the minimum age of criminal responsibility is increased, should some police power in respect of children below the minimum age of criminal responsibility be retained?
6. What safeguards should be put in place for children aged under the minimum age of criminal responsibility in relation to the use of police powers?
7. Do you agree that there should be a strong presumption against the release of information about a child’s harmful behaviour when an incident occurred before the minimum age of criminal responsibility?
8. Should this strong presumption also apply to cases retrospectively?
9. Where it is felt necessary to release information about an incident occurring before a child reaches the minimum age of criminal responsibility do you agree that this process should be subject to independent ratification?

10. Do you agree that information about an incident of harmful behaviour that took place when a person was a child should continue to be disclosed when that person reaches the age of eighteen (18)?

11. If the age of criminal responsibility is increased, will this lead to any gaps in the support and information available to victims of a child's harmful behaviour, including other children?

5. COMPULSION BY SPOUSE

5.1 The defence of compulsion by spouse derives from the old English common law rule of marital coercion (compulsion by spouse) that, “subject to limited exceptions, if a wife committed a crime in her husband’s presence she was presumed, *prima facie*, to have committed it under such compulsion as to entitle her to be acquitted.”¹¹⁵ The mere fact of the presence of the husband at the time of commission of the offence was sufficient to raise the presumption and in the absence of evidence that the wife was principally responsible for commission of the crime (or at least that she was acting independently) she would be acquitted, even though there is no evidence that she was acting under threats, pressure, or instructions from her husband.¹¹⁶

5.2 Generally, the defence of compulsion was rarely used. Writing in 1888, Sir Fitzjames Stephen declared that in the course of nearly thirty years’ experience at the bar and on the bench, during which he paid special attention to the administration of criminal law, he never knew or heard of the defence of compulsion being made except in the case of married women.¹¹⁷ At that time he only found two reported cases¹¹⁸. J.W. Cecil Turner sets out that in whatever form compulsion appears, the courts have been indisposed to admit that it can be a defence for any crime committed through yielding to it and the law of the matter is

¹¹⁵ Archbold, Criminal Pleading (1848) 11th Edition, p. 17. See <<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/57842NCJRS.pdf>>.

¹¹⁶ Report of Ivory Committee (1922)-Cmd. 1677, and Peel Case there referred to; R. v. Whelan (1937) S.A.S.R. 237; Glanville Williams, The Criminal Law-The General Part, Section 249. See <<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/57842NCJRS.pdf>>.

¹¹⁷ History of the Criminal Law, Vol. II, p. 106. <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1468-2230.1951.tb00208.x>>.

¹¹⁸ R. v. McCrowtlicr (1746) 18 St.Tr. 801, and R. v. Crutchlpy (1831) 5 C. C P. 133.

both meagre and vague¹¹⁹. It can best be considered under the heads of obedience to orders, martial coercion, duress *per minas*, and necessity¹²⁰ defined by spouse.

(a) The defence of compulsion by spouse in the Cayman Islands

- 5.3 In the Cayman Islands, section 16 of the Penal Code provides that a person is not free from criminal responsibility for something that they did or did not do on the grounds that the act or omission was in the presence of their spouse. However, except on a charge of murder or treason, a defence of compulsion by spouse may be used when an individual is charged with an offence if the accused can prove that their act or failure to act was in the presence of and under coercion from the person's spouse.¹²¹
- 5.4 Neither the Penal Code nor the *Interpretation Act (1995 Revision)*¹²² defines the term "spouse". Black's Law Dictionary which defines "spouse" as "one's husband or wife by lawful marriage; a married person".¹²³ The defence of compulsion is restrictive as it is available only in respect of the case of persons of the opposite sex who are married. It is to be noted that section 2 of the *Marriage Act (2010 Revision)*¹²⁴ defines "marriage" as the union between a man and a woman as husband and wife¹²⁵.
- 5.5 The restrictions in the defence of compulsion raise human rights compatibility issues in particular in relation to section 16 of the Bill of Rights¹²⁶ which restricts the Government from treating any person in a discriminatory manner in respect of the rights under the Bill of Rights. "Discriminatory"¹²⁷ includes discrimination on any ground including grounds of sex, birth and other status. This means that discrimination on the basis of the status of not being married may fall well within the scope of section 16 of the Bill of Rights. Further, with the enactment of the *Civil*

¹¹⁹ Kenny's Outlines of Criminal Law 54 (16th ed. 1952).

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 16.

¹²² Interpretation Act (1995 Revision).

¹²³ Garner, Bryan A., "Black's Law Dictionary, Tenth Edition" (2014). *Faculty Books and Book Contributions*. 18.

¹²⁴ Marriage Act (2010 Revision).

¹²⁵ Ibid, s 2.

¹²⁶ The Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009, No. 1379, Part I, Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities, s 16.

¹²⁷ Ibid, s 16(2).

*Partnership Act, 2020*¹²⁸, civil partnerships are recognised as a union between two persons.¹²⁹

- 5.6 The protection from discrimination is not absolute as section 16(3) of the Bill of Rights provides that a law shall not contravene that section if it has an objective and reasonable justification and is reasonably proportionate to its aim in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health.¹³⁰ Further, section 16(4) of the Bill of Rights prevents section 16(1) from rendering unlawful laws which make provision with respect to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property on death or other like matters that is the personal law applicable to persons of that description.¹³¹ However, the defence does not appear to be protected by section 16(3) or (4) of the Bill of Rights.
- 5.7 A less restrictive provision for the defence of compulsion is found in section 13 of the Penal Code which provides that a person is not criminally responsible for an offence if that act was committed by two or more persons¹³² and on the basis that during the time when the act was being done or omitted, the person was compelled to do or failed not to do an act because the other person was threatening to kill them or do grievous bodily harm. In other words, the reason for the act or the failure to act was due to compulsion. Section 13 of the Penal Code also provides that threats of future injury do not excuse any offence and are not reasonable grounds to rely on compulsion.¹³³ The defence of compulsion is similar to the common law defence for duress and a person who committed a crime due to compulsion whether by a spouse or other person would have that defence available to them if the elements of the defence are satisfied.
- 5.8 Quin J, sitting in the Grand Court in *R v Hill*¹³⁴ observed that the elements for defence of duress¹³⁵ are as follows —

¹²⁸ Civil Partnership Act, 2020.

¹²⁹ Ibid, s 2.

¹³⁰ The Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009, No. 1379, Part I, Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities, s 16(3).

¹³¹ Ibid, s 16(4).

¹³² Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 13.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ [2014 (2) CILR Note 2].

¹³⁵ See <<https://cilr.judicial.ky/Judgments/Cayman-Islands-Law-Reports/Cases/CILR2014/CILR14N202.aspx>>.

- (a) there was a threat of serious injury or death;
- (b) the harm threatened was directed at the defendant, a member of the defendant's immediate family, someone close to the defendant, or someone for whose safety the defendant reasonably regarded himself or herself as responsible;
- (c) the defendant genuinely and reasonably believed that the threat would be carried out immediately, or almost immediately, if the defendant did not comply;
- (d) the threat, or the defendant's reasonable belief in the threat, was a direct cause of the defendant's actions;
- (e) a reasonable person (being a sober person of reasonable firmness, and sharing the same age, gender and any other relevant characteristics as the defendant) in the defendant's situation would have been given to act as the defendant did; and
- (f) the defendant could not reasonably have taken any action to evade the effects of the threat.¹³⁶

5.9 There are no reported cases in which the defence of compulsion by the spouse has been relied upon in the Cayman Islands.

(b) The defence of compulsion by spouse in other jurisdictions

5.10 In determining any human rights issues raised by the defence of compulsion by spouse in the Cayman Islands, the relevant laws of England and Wales and Canada were examined.

(i) *England and Wales*

5.11 In 1925, attempts were made in England and Wales to abolish the old common law presumption of compulsion by spouse that permitted the mere presence of a husband to be sufficient to raise the defence for an offence committed by his wife.

¹³⁶ [2014 (2) CILR Note 2].

Although section 47 of the *Criminal Justice Act 1925*¹³⁷ abolished the presumption, that section also provided a defence on a charge against a wife for any offence other than treason or murder if a wife proved that the offence was committed in the presence of, and under the coercion of, the husband.

- 5.12 However, as there was little authority to the correct test to be applied where the defence of compulsion by spouse was raised,¹³⁸ the use of the defence led to unfavourable decisions.¹³⁹ In 1977¹⁴⁰, the Law Commission Defences of General Application (Law Commission No. 83)¹⁴¹ took the view that the defence was not appropriate to modern conditions.¹⁴² It recommended that the defence should be abolished and that the limit of the general defence of duress was to be considered instead.¹⁴³
- 5.13 In 2014, the defence of compulsion by spouse was abolished by the *Anti-Social Behavior, Crime and Policing Act 2014*.¹⁴⁴ The abolition was influenced by the use of the defence in *R v Pryce and Huhne*.¹⁴⁵ Here, Vicky Pryce, the ex-wife of ex-Liberal Democrat MP and Cabinet Minister, Chris Huhne claimed that Huhne had forced her to claim she was driving, when in fact he was the driver. This coercion went on for many years which caused her driving licence to incur penalties. The use of the defence was rejected. The trial judge, Justice Sweeney, noted that Pryce was readily persuaded but chose to go along with it for her mutual benefit. Pryce was sentenced to eight months imprisonment.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁷ Criminal Justice Act 1925, 925 Chapter 86 15 and 16 Geo 5, s 47.

¹³⁸ *R v Pierce* (1941) 5 Jo. Cr. L. 124. The jury was directed that moral pressure was sufficient, but in fact convicted the defendant.

¹³⁹ *R v Bourne* [1952]36 Cr App R. 125. A husband forced his wife to have a connection with a dog. She raised the defence arguing that she was coerced. He was charged with, and convicted of, abetting the offence of his wife. However, it was shown that the wife was coerced and was therefore found not guilty of the offence herself.

¹⁴⁰ The Law Commission (Law Com No. 83) Criminal Law Report on Defences of General Application. See Edwards, (1953) 69 L.Q.R. 226 and Cross (1953) 69 L.Q.R. 354.

¹⁴¹ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228595/0556.pdf>.

¹⁴² Criminal Law: Defences of General Application Report. See <<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/criminal-law-report-on-defences-of-general-application/>>.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, p 18.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p 19.

¹⁴⁵ Anti-social behavior, Crime and Policing Act 2014, c. 12 Pt 13 s 177(2). (May 13, 2014: subject to transitional provisions specified in 2014 c.12 s.1.

¹⁴⁶ *R v Vasiliki Pryce and Christopher Huhne*, Indictment No. T20127076. See <<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/r-v-pryce-and-huhne-judgment1.pdf>> and <<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Judgments/pryce-huhne-sentencing-remarks.pdf>>.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

(ii) *Canada*

5.14 Section 18 of the Canada *Criminal Code*¹⁴⁷ provides that —

“No presumption arises that a married person who commits an offence does so under compulsion by reason only that the offence is committed in the presence of the spouse of that married person.”.¹⁴⁸

5.15 Section 18 of the Canada *Criminal Code*¹⁴⁹ removes the common law presumption that a woman who commits an offence in the presence of her husband doing so at the compulsion of her husband (known as the doctrine of marital coercion). In other words, the criminal law of Canada does not presume that a person who commits an offence in the presence of a spouse has been compelled to do the criminal act merely by virtue of their relationship.¹⁵⁰

5.16 Section 18 of the Canada *Criminal Code*¹⁵¹ begs the question as to why the marriage relationship is singled out in this way. The section does not speak to any other family relationships or other relationships with a strong bond. Lisa Silver, a Calgary educator and lawyer, is of the view that the answer lies in the original version of section 18 and although the present iteration seems benign enough, the historical version, on today’s standards, is much more contentious.¹⁵² According to Silver, the original provision “Compulsion of Wife” found in the *Criminal Code 1892*¹⁵³ under the then section 13 was based on gender stereotypes as it held that “no presumption shall be made that a married woman committing an offence does so under compulsion because she commits it in the presence of her husband”.¹⁵⁴ This was changed to gender-neutral language in the 1980 *Code* amendments.

¹⁴⁷ Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, s 18.

¹⁴⁹ Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46).

¹⁵⁰ Lisa Silver, IDEABLAWG, Section 18 – A Duress Addendum? Episode 20 of the Ideablawg Podcasts on The Criminal Code of Canada.

¹⁵¹ Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46).

¹⁵² Lisa Silver, IDEABLAWG, Section 18 – A Duress Addendum? Episode 20 of the Ideablawg Podcasts on The Criminal Code of Canada.

¹⁵³ 55-56 Victoria Chap 129 found at <<https://archive.org/details/criminalcodevic00canagoog/page/n46/mode/2up>>.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid [110].

- 5.17 In Canada, some common law defences available to an accused are still available through section 8(3) of the Canada *Criminal Code* which provides that every rule and principle of the common law that renders any circumstance a justification or excuse for an act or a defence to a charge continues in force and applies in respect of proceedings for an offence under the Canada *Criminal Code* or any other Act of Parliament except in so far as they are altered by or are inconsistent with the Canada *Criminal Code* or any other Act of Parliament.¹⁵⁵ Marital coercion was one such common law defence but it was rarely used. Common law defences are available unless they are “altered by or inconsistent with” the Canada *Criminal Code*¹⁵⁶. The defence of marital coercion is altered by section 18 of the Canada *Criminal Code* and thus the defence of marital coercion is no longer available.
- 5.18 Section 18 of the Canada *Criminal Code* does not preclude the accused person from raising the defence of duress which exists in Canada both in statute under section 17 of the Canada *Criminal Code* and under the common law.
- 5.19 Under Section 17 of the Canada *Criminal Code*, a person who commits an offence under compulsion by threats of immediate death or bodily harm from a person who is present when the offence is committed is excused for committing the offence if the person believes that the threats will be carried out and if the person is not a party to a conspiracy or association whereby the person is subject to compulsion.¹⁵⁷
- 5.20 However, this section does not apply where the offence that is committed is high treason or treason, murder, piracy, attempted murder, sexual assault, sexual assault with a weapon, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm, aggravated sexual assault, forcible abduction, hostage taking, robbery, assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm, aggravated assault, unlawfully causing bodily harm, arson or an offence under sections 280 to 283 (abduction and detention of young persons).

¹⁵⁵ Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46), s 8(3).

¹⁵⁶ Lisa Silver, IDEABLAWG, Section 18 – A Duress Addendum? Episode 20 of the Ideablawg Podcasts On The Criminal Code of Canada.

¹⁵⁷ Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46), s 17.

- 5.21 The statutory defence of compulsion by threats was held to be “quite restrictive in scope” in *R v Ruzic*.¹⁵⁸ In this case, the Canadian Court of Appeal found that the defence of compulsion by threats breached the principles of fundamental justice under section 7 of the *Canada Constitution Act, 1982*¹⁵⁹ when it limited the defence of duress to a person who is compelled to commit an offence under threats of immediate death or bodily harm from a person who is present when the offence is committed.¹⁶⁰
- 5.22 Accordingly, the requirements of section 17 of the *Canada Criminal Code* to have “presence” and “immediacy”¹⁶¹ are unconstitutional as those requirements violate section 7 of the *Canada Constitution Act, 1982* and thus that portion of the section has no force or effect.

(c) Comments and recommendation regarding the defence of compulsion by spouse

- 5.23 Section 16 of the Penal Code only offers protection to an individual who is married and therefore is discriminatory as it raises issues regarding compatibility with section 16 of the Bill of Rights. If an unmarried individual has been forced to commit an act, this defence is not available to them. The rights that are available to a married person should also be available to any individual whether they be civil partners, common law partners, siblings and parents.
- 5.24 The Commission supports the approach taken in England and Wales to repeal the defence of compulsion by spouse as the Commission is of the view that the provision is restrictive and discriminatory. Further, a spouse who commits an offence under pressure from their spouse can avail themselves of the defence of duress.

¹⁵⁸ *R. v Ruzic* [2001] 1 SCR 687, 2001 SCC 24 (CanLII). See <<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/1861/1/document.do>>.

¹⁵⁹ Enacted as Schedule B to the Canadian Act 1982, 1982, c. 11 (U.K.), which came into force on April 17, 1982.

¹⁶⁰ *R. v Ruzic* [2001] 1 SCR 687, 2001 SCC 24 (CanLII), at 688. See <<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/1861/1/document.do>>.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, at 688.

Recommendation 2: That offence of compulsion by spouse in section 16 of the Penal Code should be repealed.

(d) Consultation question regarding the defence of compulsion by spouse

- 5.25 The Commission seeks the views of stakeholders and the public as to whether the defence of compulsion by spouse should be repealed. The Commission invites stakeholders and the public to consider and respond to the question below which will inform the report of the Commission.

Question (Please give reasons for your answer)

Should the offence of compulsion by spouse in section 16 of the Penal Code be repealed?

6. INSULTING THE MODESTY OF A WOMAN

- 6.1 The word modesty is defined to mean the state of being free from undue familiarities and indecency, and being pure in thought and conduct.¹⁶² A woman's modesty may therefore be attributable to her womanhood and to her sense of decency and dignity. The offence of insulting the modesty of a woman presumes that women possess those qualities of modesty that are capable of being insulted and that anyone who insults a woman's decency without her consent commits an offence that is punishable.

- 6.2 The Supreme Court of India in the 1967 decision in *State of Punjab v Major Singh* AIR 1967 SC 63 stated that —

*(The) “essence of a woman's modesty is her sex and from her very birth she possesses the modesty which is the attribute of her sex”.*¹⁶³

¹⁶² See the Oxford English Dictionary.

¹⁶³ *State of Punjab v Major Singh* AIR 1967 SC 63.

(a) Prohibition on insulting the modesty of a woman in Cayman Islands

- 6.3 Under section 133 of the Penal Code, a person commits the offence of insulting the modesty of a woman when they utter any word, make any sound or gesture or exhibit any object intending that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object seen by such woman, or intrudes upon the privacy of such woman, and is liable to imprisonment for 3 years.¹⁶⁴
- 6.4 The intent is to punish offenders who intentionally conduct acts of lewd behaviour directed at females. This section expresses the illegal act of a sexual assault on women where the perpetrator has stopped short of causing physical harm. This means that society will not condone whatever method was used to insult the dignity of a woman's modesty. The best authorities that give insight into the operation of the section are the jurisprudence of India and Singapore along with some assistance from the United Kingdom's legislation (which refers to "*affronting the modesty of a woman*").
- 6.5 The general meaning of modesty of a woman is a multifaceted concept. It is linked to religious beliefs, especially in very conservative countries and is found in all cultures. Muslim cultures take a woman's modesty to the highest degree, and many require that a woman must be covered in public. This is not exclusive to one religion as it extends to the Jewish faith, Mormon and Amish cultures and traditional conservative values.
- 6.6 Both Catholic and Protestant wings of Christianity, which is where the majority of Caymanians are aligned, tend to take a stricter view than those taken by persons with little or no religious allegiances. The opposite of being modest is being immodest which goes to behaviour beyond just clothing to cover the body. Interestingly it is something that is both subjective to the individual and the values they hold as well as objective to society. The intention of section 133 is to capture both the standard of moral conduct expected in Cayman as well as the protection of a woman's privacy and her person.

¹⁶⁴ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 133.

- 6.7 The broad scope and low threshold of this offence enables it to be charged frequently.¹⁶⁵ However, many of the accused persons in these cases are reported to be admonished or discharged.¹⁶⁶ This was the situation in the case of Anthony White, a former Police Inspector who was formally charged with the offence of insulting the modesty of a woman. The court imposed a fine of \$100 and the conviction was not recorded.¹⁶⁷
- 6.8 The Cayman Islands also has in place section 88A of the Penal Code which makes it an offence for a person to intentionally harass, alarm or distress another person by using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, by using disorderly behaviour, or by displaying any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting.¹⁶⁸

(b) Human rights issues raised by the offence of insulting the modesty of a woman

- 6.9 The offence of insulting the modesty of a woman is applicable only in relation to a woman and therefore prohibits a man from being the complainant or victim in relation to that offence.¹⁶⁹ The offence of insulting the modesty of a woman therefore raises human rights compatibility issues with respect to the fundamental right to be free from discrimination enshrined in section 16 of the Bill of Rights, Articles 2 and 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (the “Universal Declaration”)¹⁷⁰ and Articles 2¹⁷¹ and 26¹⁷² of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It also raises compatibility issues with the right to freedom of expression enshrined in section 11 of the Bill of Rights.
- 6.10 The offence of insulting the modesty of a woman fails to specify where the insult must occur before it can amount to an offence. Therefore, even insults exchanged

¹⁶⁵ RCIPS Annual Crime and Traffic Statistical Report Full report 2019. There were 76 cases in 2019 and 48 cases in 2018.

¹⁶⁶ <<https://www.caymancompass.com/2011/08/15/ex-police-inspector-pleads-to-insulting-modesty/>>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s. 88A.

¹⁶⁹ See for example, report in Cayman Compass March 27, 2015: <<https://www.caymancompass.com/2015/03/27/modesty-charge-archaic-attorney-says/>>.

¹⁷⁰ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a historic document that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its third session on 10 December 1948 as Resolution 217 at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, France.

¹⁷¹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2.

¹⁷² Ibid, Article 26.

during an argument in a private dwelling can amount to a criminal offence. In such an instance, this presumption conflicts with a person's right to private and family life as well as their right to expression enshrined in sections 9 and 11 of the Bill and Rights.

- 6.11 At present, apart from the Cayman Islands, mainly patriarchal societies¹⁷³ such as India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Fiji have kept this offence.¹⁷⁴ However, in most multicultural societies, similar to the Cayman Islands, this offence has been amended to suit societal norms. Accordingly, in examining the human rights issues raised by the offence of prohibition on insulting the modesty of a woman, the Commission considered the legislation of Canada and England and Wales.

(c) Other Jurisdictions with offences relating to insulting the modesty of a woman

(i) England and Wales

- 6.12 In England and Wales, the offence of harassment, alarm or distress is found in section 5(1) of the *Public Order Act 1986*.¹⁷⁵ A person is guilty of this offence if they use threatening or abusive words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour¹⁷⁶ in a public place¹⁷⁷ within the hearing or sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress thereby.
- 6.13 In the case *Abdul and others v DPP*¹⁷⁸ the High Court ruled that prosecution of a group of people who had shouted slogans, including, “burn in hell”, “baby killers” and “rapists” at a parade of British soldiers, was not a breach of their right to freedom of expression, protected by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Five men were convicted of using threatening, abusive or insulting words within the hearing or sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm

¹⁷³ K.D. Gaur 1992, A Textbook on the IPC, p 694. Societies where women suffer a variety of psychological, economical and sociological forms of victimizations; There is a high price placed on a woman's virginity and sex before marriage is generally condemned.

¹⁷⁴ The Cayman Islands Law Reform Commission 11th Annual Report, 1st April 2015/31 March 2016.

¹⁷⁵ Public Order Act 1986 c. 64, s 5(1).

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, s 5(1)(a).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, s 5(2). No offence is committed where the words or behaviour are used, or the writing, sign or other visible representation is displayed, by a person inside a dwelling and the other person is also inside that or another dwelling.

¹⁷⁸ [2011] EWHC 247 (Admin), at 52 <<http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2011/247.html>>.

or distress thereby (contrary to section 5 of the *Public Order Act 1986*). The men launched an appeal, raising amongst other things the question of whether the decision to prosecute them for shouting slogans and waving banners close to where the soldiers and other members of the public were was compatible with Article 10. On appeal the court found that decision to prosecute was compatible with Article 10.

6.14 Freedom of expression is protected under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. However, Article 10 is subject to a number of qualifications set out in article 10(2). Article 10 is therefore a qualified right and as such infringements on the right to freedom of expression must be proportionate and justifiable. Accordingly, while Article 10 does not confer an unqualified right to freedom of expression, the restrictions contained in Article 10 are to be narrowly construed.

6.15 Previously, section 5(1) of the *Public Order Act 1986*¹⁷⁹ included the word “insulting”.¹⁸⁰ However, in 2009 the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) observed that “whilst arresting a protester for using ‘threatening or abusive’ speech may, depending on the circumstances, be a proportionate response, we do not think that language or behaviour which is merely ‘insulting’ should ever be criminalised in this way”.¹⁸¹ As a result, the Reform Section 5 Campaign sought to delete the word “insulting” to avoid frivolous arrests like Sam Brown who was arrested for saying, “Excuse me, do you realize that your horse is gay?”.¹⁸²

(ii) Canada

6.16 In Canada, the relevant offence is causing disturbance, indecent exhibition, loitering etc.¹⁸³ A person who, not being in a dwelling-house, causes a disturbance in or near a public place, by fighting, screaming, shouting, swearing, singing or

¹⁷⁹ Public Order Act 1986, s 5(1).

¹⁸⁰ Reform Section 5 Campaign <<http://reformsection5.org.uk/>; House of Lords voted by 150 to 54, a majority of 96, to remove the word insulting.

¹⁸¹ UK Parliament Publication, Demonstrating Respect for Rights? A Human Rights Approach to Policing Protest, Joint Committee on Human Rights, HC 320-1 and HL Paper 47-1 Vol.1 paras 80-85.

¹⁸² BBC News <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/oxfordshire/4606022.stm>.

¹⁸³ Criminal Code, R.S.C.1985, C-C-46, s 175(1)(a)(i).

using insulting or obscene language is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.¹⁸⁴

- 6.17 The Canada Supreme Court in *R v Lohnes*¹⁸⁵ observed that the offence is something more than mere emotional upset or annoyance. Therefore, before an offence can arise, the enumerated conduct must cause an externally manifested disturbance of the public peace, in the sense of an interference with the ordinary and customary use by the public of the place in question. The interference may be minor, but it must be present.¹⁸⁶

(d) Comments and recommendations regarding the offence of insulting the modesty of a woman

- 6.18 The Commission supports the approach followed in England and Wales because it defends a person's right to freedom of expression enshrined in section 11 of the Bill of Rights. That approach would not raise any compatibility issues with right to protection from discrimination enshrined in section 16 of the Bill of Rights.
- 6.19 The Commission also acknowledges that the approach taken in England and Wales in relation to the removal of the word "insult" from section 5(1) of the *Public Order Act 1986* should be followed.
- 6.20 Accordingly, the Commission recommends the repeal of section 133 of the Penal Code and the removal of the reference to "insulting" in relation to words or behaviour in section 88A of the Penal Code.

Recommendation 3: That section 133 (Insulting the modesty of a woman) of the Penal Code is repealed.

Recommendation 4: That section 88A (Intentional harassment, alarm or distress) of the Penal Code is amended by deleting the reference to "insulting" in relation to words or behaviour.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, s 175.

¹⁸⁵ [1992] 1 S.C.R. 167. <<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/831/1/document.do>>.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. See <<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/831/1/document.do>>.

(e) Consultation question regarding the offence of insulting the modesty of a woman

6.21 The Commission seeks the views of the stakeholders and public in considering whether the offence of insulting the modesty of a woman should be repealed and whether the reference to “insulting” words or behaviour in the offence of intentional harassment, alarm or distress should also be repealed.

Questions (Please give reasons for your answer)

1. Should the offence of insulting the modesty of a woman be repealed?
2. Should the reference to “insulting” words or behaviour in the offence of intentional harassment, alarm or distress be repealed?

7. ABORTION

7.1 Abortion is the commonly used term for the deliberate termination of an established pregnancy, where “established” is taken to mean that the embryo has implanted in the uterus.¹⁸⁷

7.2 According to the Centre for Reproductive Rights¹⁸⁸, 90 million (5%) women¹⁸⁹ of reproductive age live in the twenty-four countries that fall within the category of countries that prohibit abortion altogether, including where the woman’s life is at risk. 359 million (22%) women of reproductive age live in countries that allow abortion to save the life of the woman and thirty-nine countries fall within this category.¹⁹⁰ 237 million (14%) of women of reproductive age live in countries that allow abortion on health grounds. 386 million (23%) women of reproductive age live in countries that allow abortion on broad social or economic grounds and 590

¹⁸⁷ See the Oxford English Dictionary.

¹⁸⁸ <<https://maps.reproductiverights.org/worldabortionlaws>>.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ <<https://maps.reproductiverights.org/worldabortionlaws>>.

million (36%) women of reproductive age live in countries that allow abortion on request. Sixty-seven countries globally fall within this category.¹⁹¹

- 7.3 The statistics show a woman's ability to access safe and legal abortions is restricted in law or in practice in most countries in the world. In fact, even where abortion is permitted by law, women often have severely limited access to safe abortion services because of lack of proper regulation, health services, or political will. At the same time, only a very small minority of countries prohibit all abortions. Whilst the grounds to allow abortion may vary considerably, common elements covered in the legislation are usually centered on the ground for abortion and gestational limits, who can provide abortion services, conscientious objection and notification requirements. In most jurisdictions, abortion is allowed at least to save the pregnant woman's life, or where the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest.¹⁹²
- 7.4 There are profound opinions on abortion and the subject of abortion is highly emotive, sensitive, complex and controversial. Women's organisations across the world have fought for the right to access safe and legal abortions for decades, and increasingly, international human rights law supports their claims. International human rights legal instruments and authoritative interpretations of those instruments support the claim that the right to access safe abortion services is a human right and compel the conclusion that women have a right to decide independently in all matters related to reproduction, including the issue of abortion¹⁹³. Where abortion is safe and legal, no one is forced to have one. Where abortion is illegal and unsafe, women are forced to carry unwanted pregnancies to term or suffer serious health consequences and even death. Approximately 13 % cent of maternal deaths worldwide are attributable to unsafe abortions - between 68,000 and 78,000 deaths annually.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ <<https://reproductiverights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/World-Abortion-Map-ByTheNumbers.pdf>>.

¹⁹² Women's human rights, Abortion found at <<https://www.hrw.org/legacy/women/abortion.html>>.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

(a) Prohibition on the procurement of an abortion in Cayman Islands

- 7.5 The Cayman Islands falls amongst the countries that that only allow an abortion to save the life of a woman. Section 141 of the Penal Code prohibits the procurement of the miscarriage of a woman (abortion)¹⁹⁵ unless it is done in good faith for the purpose of only preserving the life of the mother.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, any person who attempts to procure an abortion, or supply drugs or an instrument to assist with the procurement of an abortion¹⁹⁷ commits a criminal offence.
- 7.6 Under section 141(3) of the Penal Code¹⁹⁸, a health practitioner registered to practice medicine under the *Health Practice Act (2021 Revision)*¹⁹⁹ does not commit the offence of procuring an abortion in respect of any act if such act is first certified in writing by two such registered health practitioners acting in good faith, as being necessary for the purpose of preserving the life of the mother. One of the registered health practitioners must be registered by the Medical and Dental Council as an obstetrician or a gynecologist or must be employed as a Government Medical Officer in either capacity.²⁰⁰
- 7.7 Section 142 of the Penal Code makes it an offence for a woman with child to intentionally procure abortion²⁰¹. Section 143 goes further by making it an offence for a person to unlawfully procure or supply drugs or instruments to procure abortion.²⁰²
- 7.8 There are no reported criminal cases for the procurement of abortion in the Cayman Islands. However, this does not mean that abortion is not being procured. In 2013, the then Ministry of Health, Environment, Sports and Culture released a Report on the Adolescent Health and Sexuality Survey²⁰³, which states that, out of 202 female

¹⁹⁵ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 141.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, s 141(2).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, ss 141, 142, and 143.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, s 141(3).

¹⁹⁹ Health Practice Act (2021 Revision).

²⁰⁰ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 141(3).

²⁰¹ Ibid, s 142.

²⁰² Ibid, s 143

²⁰³ A Report on the Adolescent Health and Sexuality Survey, Cayman Islands, 2013. See <https://www.humanrightscommission.ky/upimages/publicationdoc/AdolescentHealthandSexualityFinalReport_1471471847_1471471862.pdf>.

participants who answered the question and provided their age, 9.1% of 15-16 year olds and 8.5% among 17-19 year olds admitted to having an abortion.²⁰⁴

- 7.9 The criminalisation of the procurement of abortion in sections 141, 142 and 143 of the Penal Code raises compatibility issues with the fundamental right to life protected in section 2 of the Bill of Rights which provides that everyone's right to life shall be protected by law and that no person shall intentionally be deprived of his or her life. The right to life is also protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights²⁰⁵ and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women²⁰⁶, which are both extended to the Cayman Islands²⁰⁷.

(b) International standards relating to the abortion

(i) *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*

- 7.10 Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognises and protects the right to life of all human beings. It is the supreme right from which no derogation is permitted even in situations of armed conflict and other public emergencies which threaten the life of the nation.
- 7.11 The right to life is a fundamental human right of significant importance as it is a fundamental right that exists for every human being and is the prerequisite for the enjoyment of all other human rights.²⁰⁸
- 7.12 In General Comment No. 36 (2018) on Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on the right to life (the "Covenant")²⁰⁹, the UNRC states that the "right to life is a right which should not be interpreted narrowly. It concerns the entitlement of individuals to be free from acts and omissions that are intended

²⁰⁴ Ibid, p 47.

²⁰⁵ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is a multilateral treaty adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) on 16 December 1966, and in force from 23 March 1976 in accordance with Article 49 of the covenant.

²⁰⁶ The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly.

²⁰⁷ The UK ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on 20 May 1976. The ratification extends to the CDs and the following OTs: Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands, St. Helena and its dependencies (Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha), and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

²⁰⁸ General Comment No. 36 (2018), CCPR/C/GC/36, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/CCPR_C_GC_36.pdf CCPR/C/GC/36>, para 2.

²⁰⁹ General Comment No. 36 (2018), CCPR/C/GC/36.

or may be expected to cause their unnatural or premature death, as well as to enjoy a life with dignity.”²¹⁰ States parties must respect the right to life and have the duty to refrain from engaging in conduct resulting in arbitrary deprivation of life.”²¹¹

- 7.13 General Comment No. 36 (2018) is the result of a three-year process at the United Nations Human Rights Committee. Member states and non-government organisations worked together to create critical global human rights standards to prevent maternal mortality and to ensure that access to abortion is protected under international human rights law. It also reaffirms the fundamental principle that human rights apply only after birth.²¹²
- 7.14 Accordingly, General Comment No. 36 (2018) states that the obligation of States parties to respect and ensure the right to life also extends to reasonably foreseeable threats and life-threatening situations that can result in loss of life. States parties may be in violation of Article 6 even if such threats and situations do not result in loss of life. Although States parties may adopt measures designed to regulate voluntary terminations of pregnancy, such measures must not result in violation of the right to life of a pregnant woman or girl, or her other rights under the Covenant. Thus, restrictions on the ability of women or girls to seek abortion must not, among other things, jeopardise their lives, subject them to physical or mental pain or suffering which violates Article 7, discriminate against them or arbitrarily interfere with their privacy.²¹³
- 7.15 General Comment No. 36 (2018) also clarifies that the criminalisation of abortion of women or girls undergoing abortion, or of medical service providers assisting them in doing so could be considered a violation of the right to life of women or girls, as it compels them to resort to unsafe abortions. States parties are also obliged to ensure women and girls have access to affordable contraception and evidence-based sexual and reproductive health information. Further, States parties must prevent stigmatisation of women and girls who seek an abortion.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ Ibid, para 3.

²¹¹ Ibid, para 7.

²¹² General Comment No. 36 (2018), CCPR/C/GC/36.

²¹³ Ibid, para 8.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

- 7.16 Nancy Northup, President and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights said that “General Comment No. 36 (2018) provides the international community with a much-needed framework to hold governments accountable for the high rates of death and injury which occur when women are forced to seek out unsafe abortions.”²¹⁵

(ii) Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

- 7.17 The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and has been ratified by almost every single member of the United Nations including the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom extended CEDAW to the Cayman Islands in 2016.
- 7.18 As well as calling for the criminalisation of all forms of gender-based violence against women, CEDAW also calls for the repeal of provisions that allow, tolerate or condone forms of gender-based violence against women, including legislation that criminalises abortion.²¹⁶

(c) Legislation relating to abortions in other jurisdictions

(i) United Kingdom

- 7.19 Under the *Offences Against the Person Act, 1861*²¹⁷ which applies in England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, it is a criminal offence for any woman or girl, being with child, unlawfully to do any act with intent to procure a miscarriage. It is also an offence for any person, unlawfully with intention to do an act, to procure a miscarriage of any woman or girl or to unlawfully supply or procure drugs or instruments to cause an abortion. The offence of unlawfully procuring

²¹⁵ Centre for Reproductive Rights, Press Release, 10/31/2018 UN Human Rights Committee Asserts that Access to Abortion and Prevention of Maternal Mortality are Human Rights.

²¹⁶ CEDAW, Article 2(g). See <<https://www.lse.ac.uk/women-peace-security/assets/documents/2020/LSE-WPS-40-Years-of-CEDAW.pdf>>.

²¹⁷ Offences Against the Person Act, 1861

abortion is punishable with life in prison. More specifically, sections 58 and 59 of the *Offences Against the Person Act, 1861* provide that —

“58. Administering drugs or using instruments to procure abortion.

Every woman, being with child, who, with intent to procure her own miscarriage, shall unlawfully administer to herself any poison or other noxious thing, or shall unlawfully use any instrument or other means whatsoever with the like intent, and whosoever, with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman, whether she be or be not with child, shall unlawfully administer to her or cause to be taken by her any poison or other noxious thing, or shall unlawfully use any instrument or other means whatsoever with the like intent, shall be guilty of felony, and being convicted thereof shall be liable to be kept in penal servitude for life.

59. Procuring drugs to cause abortion.

*Whosoever shall unlawfully supply or procure any poison or other noxious thing, or any instrument or thing whatsoever, knowing that the same is intended to be unlawfully used or employed with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman, whether she be or be not with child, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and being convicted thereof shall be liable to be kept in penal servitude.”*²¹⁸

- 7.20 The *Infant Life Preservation Act, 1929*²¹⁹ for England and Wales and section 25(1) of the *Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1945* also make it a criminal offence for anyone to assist or wilfully act to “destroy the life of a child then capable of being born alive”, except where the purpose is to preserve the life of the mother “in good faith”. The Act provides that evidence that a woman had been pregnant for a period of 28 weeks is *prima facie* proof that she was at that time pregnant with a child capable of being born alive.²²⁰

²¹⁸ *Offences Against the Person Act, 1861*, ss 58 and 59.

²¹⁹ *Infant Life Preservation Act, 1929*, 929 Chapter 34 19 and 20 Geo 5 <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/19-20/34/data.pdf>>.

²²⁰ *Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1945*, s 25(1).

- 7.21 At common law, if a doctor is of the reasonable opinion that the probable consequence of the continuation of the pregnancy is to make a woman or girl a “physical or mental wreck” that will have “real and serious” effects that would be “permanent or long term” it can be construed that the doctor is “operating for the purpose of preserving the life of the woman”.²²¹
- 7.22 The *Abortion Act, 1967*²²² which was later amended by the *Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, 1990*²²³ liberalised the rules on abortion in England, Scotland and Wales but not in Northern Ireland. The *Abortion Act, 1967* does not make all abortions legal but it makes exceptions to the *Offences Against the Person Act 1861*²²⁴ which made abortion an offence punishable by life in prison.
- 7.23 Under the *Abortion Act, 1967*, a doctor can legally perform an abortion, which has been authorised by two doctors, up to the 24th week of pregnancy if continuing the pregnancy would involve risk greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or any existing children of her family²²⁵. An abortion can be authorised and carried out with no time limit if —
- (a) the termination is necessary to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman;
 - (b) there is a risk to the life of the pregnant woman, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated; or
 - (c) there is substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

²²¹ *R v Bourne* [1939] 1 KB 687 and subsequent cases.

²²² *Abortion Act, 1967*; UK Public General Acts 1967, c.87.

²²³ *Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, 1990*.

²²⁴ UK Public General Acts 1861, c.100.

²²⁵ *Abortion Act, 1967*, s 1(1).

- 7.24 Health professionals are not required to perform or participate in an abortion if they have a moral or conscientious objection. They still have a duty to participate in an abortion, if it is necessary to save the life of a woman or to prevent serious injury.²²⁶
- 7.25 The *Abortion Act 1967* was never extended to Northern Ireland and until October 2019²²⁷ termination was only permitted in Northern Ireland if a woman's life was at risk or if there is a risk of permanent and serious damage to her mental or physical health in accordance with the common law and *Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1945*²²⁸.
- 7.26 The UK government reports that between 2017 and 2018 there were only 12 abortions performed in hospitals in Northern Ireland under the existing common law provisions.²²⁹
- 7.27 Although the *Abortion Act 1967* was never extended to Northern Ireland, technically, abortion is no longer a crime in Northern Ireland. Since January 2017, Northern Ireland has been without a devolved government because of the differences between the political parties Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionist Party and the United Kingdom Parliament has been managing its affairs. In July of 2019, the United Kingdom Parliament passed the *Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019*²³⁰ which repealed sections 58 and 59 of the *Offences Against the Person Act 1861* (attempts to procure abortion) under the law of Northern Ireland and provides that no investigation may be carried out, and no criminal proceedings may be brought or continued, in respect of an offence under those sections under the law of Northern Ireland, whenever committed.
- 7.28 An obligation was also imposed on the Secretary of State to ensure that the recommendations of paragraphs 85 and 86 of the CEDAW Report²³¹ be made, by

²²⁶ Ibid. See <<https://www.bma.org.uk/media/3307/bma-view-on-the-law-and-ethics-of-abortion-sept-2020.pdf>>.

²²⁷ See Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019. See <<https://legalresearch.blogs.bris.ac.uk/2019/10/abortion-law-reform-in-northern-ireland/>>.

²²⁸ Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1945.

²²⁹ HM Government "A new legal framework for abortion in Northern Ireland – Implementation of the legal duty under section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc. Act 2019. Government consultation.

²³⁰ c. 22, Act of UK Parliament.

²³¹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Report of the inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland under article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW/C/OP.8/GBR/1, p 21 <<https://undocs.org/en/CEDAW/C/OP.8/GBR/1>>.

regulations, and any other changes to the law of Northern Ireland which appear to the Secretary of State to be necessary or appropriate for the purpose of complying with the obligation to ensure that the recommendations in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the CEDAW Report are implemented in respect of Northern Ireland. In particular, focus was placed on the need to make provision for the purposes of regulating abortions in Northern Ireland, including provisions as to the circumstances in which abortion may take place.

- 7.29 Paragraph 85 of the CEDAW Report recommends that the United Kingdom repeal sections 58 and 59 of the *Offences against the Person Act, 1861* so that no criminal charges can be brought against women and girls who undergo abortion or against qualified health care professionals and all others who provide and assist in the abortion. Paragraph 85 of the CEDAW Report also recommends that legislation be adopted to provide for expanded grounds to legalise abortion at least if there is threat to the pregnant woman's physical or mental health without conditionality of "long-term or permanent" effects; if the pregnancy was as a result of rape or incest; and if there is severe fetal impairment.
- 7.30 Paragraph 85 of the CEDAW Report also recommends the introduction of, as an interim measure, a moratorium on the application of criminal laws concerning abortion, and the ceasing of all related arrests, investigations and criminal prosecutions, including of women seeking post-abortion care and healthcare professionals.²³² The adoption of evidence-based protocols for healthcare professionals on providing legal abortions particularly on the grounds of physical and mental health is also recommended.²³³
- 7.31 Paragraph 86 of the CEDAW Report recommends that the United Kingdom provide, among other things, non-biased, scientifically sound and rights-based counselling and information on sexual and reproductive health services, including on all methods of contraception and access to abortion;²³⁴ provide women with access to high quality abortion and post-abortion care in all public health facilities;

²³² CEDAW/C/OP.8/GBR/1, para 85(c).

²³³ Ibid, para 85(d).

²³⁴ Ibid, para 86(a).

adopt guidance on doctor-patient confidentiality in this area;²³⁵ and monitor its implementation.²³⁶

7.32 In November 2019 the United Kingdom Government published a consultation paper entitled “A new legal framework for abortion services in Northern Ireland - Implementation of the legal duty under section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019”.²³⁷ The consultation covers a proposed new legislative framework for Northern Ireland to deliver on the statutory duty in section 9 of the *Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019*, and which is consistent with the recommendations in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the CEDAW Report, Inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland under Article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW. The aim is to provide women and girls in Northern Ireland with access to legal and safe abortion services in accordance with the CEDAW Report recommendations.

7.33 Accordingly, the consultation poses a number of questions regarding the issues relating to abortion including grounds for abortion and gestational time limits, who can provide services and where these can be performed, conscientious objection and notification requirements.

(ii) Canada

7.34 In Canada, this offence was called “procuring miscarriage”.²³⁸ It defended the common law position that a person should be punished for destroying infants in the mother’s womb.²³⁹

7.35 However, the offence of “procuring miscarriage” was repealed by *Bill C-39*²⁴⁰ on the basis that it was “unconstitutional.”²⁴¹ In *R v Morgentaler*²⁴² the Supreme Court

²³⁵ Ibid, para 86(c).

²³⁶ Ibid, para 86(d).

²³⁷ See

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875380/FINAL_Government_response_-_Northern_Ireland_abortion_framework.pdf>.

²³⁸ Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46), s 287, previously s 251, which became law in 1969.

²³⁹ William Russell, ‘A Treatises on Crimes and Misdemeanors’, Philadelphia: T& JW Johnson & Co., 1857, p 671.

²⁴⁰ Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould proposed the Charter Statement - Bill C-39. An Act to amend the Criminal Code (unconstitutional provisions) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. See

<<https://lop.parl.ca/staticfiles/PublicWebsite/Home/ResearchPublications/LegislativeSummaries/PDF/42-1/c39-e.pdf>>.

²⁴¹ Ibid, para 1.

²⁴² [1988] 1 S.C.R. 30.

of Canada struck down the offence of procuring a miscarriage because it violated the woman's right to life, liberty and security of the person as stipulated in Article 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.²⁴³

7.36 The Supreme Court of Canada in *Morgentaler*²⁴⁴ observed that forcing a woman, by threat of a criminal sanction, to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, was a profound interference with a woman's body and a violation of security of the person.²⁴⁵

7.37 Chief Justice Dickson observed in *Morgentaler*²⁴⁶ that even the exception mechanism that allowed therapeutic abortions to be performed only in "accredited or approved hospitals"²⁴⁷ was illusory. This was because the requirement to have at least four physicians available to authorise and perform an abortion meant in practice that abortions would be absolutely unavailable in almost one quarter of all hospitals in Canada.²⁴⁸ The domino effect of such a procedural requirement of this law is that it placed a pregnant woman at a higher risk for complications²⁴⁹ because she was forced to wait on the Therapeutic Abortion Committee to decide to grant or not grant the approval to abort.²⁵⁰

(iii) Jamaica

7.38 In Jamaica, this offence is captured partly under the English common law, which follows the holding of the English case *Rex v. Bourne*²⁵¹, and partly by statute, in section 72 of the *Offences Against the Person Act of 1864*²⁵² (as amended in 2005), which is based on the 1862 English Act of the same title. That Act provides that every woman with the intent to procure her own miscarriage or whosoever with

²⁴³ (Enacted as Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982, 1982, c. 11 (U.K.), which came into force on April 17, 1982. The Canada Act 1982, other than Schedules A and B).

²⁴⁴ [1988] 1 S.C.R. 30.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. See <<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/288/1/document.do>>.

²⁴⁶ [1988] 1 S.C.R. 30.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p 149. See <<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/288/index.do>>.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, p 66.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, p 33.

²⁵⁰ Ibid p 60.

²⁵¹ [1939] 1 K. B. 687 3 All E. R. 615 (1938).

²⁵² Offences Against the Person Act of 1864, Jamaica Cap 268 Law 43 of 1958, s 72.

intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman, is guilty of a felony and is liable to life imprisonment except where the mother's actual life is at risk.²⁵³

- 7.39 In spite of this offence, women continue to procure abortions. The Jamaican Ministry of Health concluded that the offence encroached on the reproductive rights of women, the right to liberty and security of the person and the right to privacy.²⁵⁴ It examined neighbouring countries, such as Barbados,²⁵⁵ with the hopes to establish a similar civil law to regulate the service of abortion. However, no such law has been enacted in Jamaica. Consequently, illegal abortions continue in Jamaica. In fact, "some 22,000 pregnancies are aborted annually in Jamaica, and this is only a rough estimate from research done by the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI), which believes that the figures for the clandestine, criminal acts could be more."²⁵⁶

(iv) *Australia (Northern Territory)*

- 7.40 In the Northern Territory of Australia, procuring an abortion is prohibited.²⁵⁷ However, a woman may acquire consent²⁵⁸ to procure an abortion, if a medical practitioner reasonably believes that she is not more than 14 weeks to 23 weeks pregnant.²⁵⁹
- 7.41 Pregnancies over 23 weeks may only be terminated to prevent serious harm to the woman's physical or mental health²⁶⁰ or for the sole purpose of preserving life.²⁶¹ Furthermore, the abortion must take place at a hospital.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ A Ministry Advisory Group on Abortion Policy Review in 2007,

<http://www.japarlament.gov.jm/attachments/375_Abortion%20Policy%20Review%20Advisory%20Group%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

²⁵⁵ The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (Act No.4 of 11 February 1983) and the 1983 Regulations to the Act; In Barbados a pregnancy can be terminated to protect the life and physical and mental health of the woman, in pregnancies resulting from rape, for deformations of the fetus, and for economic and social reasons.

²⁵⁶ <<https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/lead-stories/20210131/millions-illegal-abortions-taxpayers-fork-out-us14-million-annually>>.

²⁵⁷ Criminal Code Act 1983, s 208 A-C. Division 8, s 208 A-C. Criminalises the administration of drugs or an instrument to procure an abortion.

²⁵⁸ The Discussion Paper, Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform; Improving access by Northern Territory women to safe termination of pregnancy services, was released by the Department of Health on 9 December 2016 and submissions closed on the 27 January 2017. See Medical Services Act 1982 (NT), s 11(5). The consent of each person having authority in law is required if the woman is under 16 years of age or is incapable in law of giving consent. See <<https://www.gotocourt.com.au/criminal-law/nt/the-age-of-consent/>>.

²⁵⁹ Medical Services Act 1982 (NT) s 11(1)-(2) in relation to pregnancies not more than 14 weeks; s 11(3) in relation to pregnancies not more than 23 weeks.

²⁶⁰ See <<https://www.bma.org.uk/media/3307/bma-view-on-the-law-and-ethics-of-abortion-sept-2020.pdf>>.

²⁶¹ Medical Services Act (NT) s 11(4). Abortion to save a woman's life is permitted at any stage of pregnancy, but is the only circumstance in which it is permitted after 23 weeks gestation.

- 7.42 The requirements which detailed when a pregnancy could be terminated were criticised as being outdated²⁶² because they failed to keep abreast with the changing nature of medicine²⁶³, best practices in medicine²⁶⁴ and societal expectations or legislation elsewhere in Australia.²⁶⁵ Therefore, to improve a woman’s access to terminate a pregnancy safely, the Government repealed the offence of procuring an abortion in its entirety by passing the *Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Act 2017*.²⁶⁶
- 7.43 The *Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Act 2017* removed the procedural requirement that abortions could only be done in a hospital by enabling the procedure to be done in any place termed as a “safe access zone.”²⁶⁷ It also amended the consent requirement in order for it to be uniform with the age of consent to acquire a medical procedure.²⁶⁸
- 7.44 The effect of the Act is that it decriminalises the conduct of a woman seeking an abortion and upholds the Government objective to ensure that she has access to safe health care. In particular, the Act requires that only a suitably qualified medical practitioner can terminate a pregnancy when having regard to all relevant medical circumstances, and current and future physical, psychological and social circumstances of the woman and they are in compliance with professional standards and guidelines.²⁶⁹

(d) Comments and consultation questions regarding the offences of procuring an abortion

- 7.45 The Commission is of the view that reform is needed in the area of abortion and in particular takes note of the Australian approach which focuses on the safety

²⁶² Medical Services Act 1987, s 11, which was drafted in 1970 – not taken in consideration that termination of pregnancy can be done surgically (instruments) or medically (drugs).

²⁶³ Drugs such as Mifepristone (RU486) and Misoprostol.

²⁶⁴ Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). Authorised Prescriber Scheme and Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme.

²⁶⁵ Discussion Paper, Termination of Pregnancy Law; Improving access by Northern Territory women to safe termination of pregnancy services, 9, December 2016.

²⁶⁶ Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Act 2017.

²⁶⁷ Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Bill 2017 (Australia –NT), Clause 4.

²⁶⁸ See <<https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/Termination-Of-Pregnancy-Law-Reform-Act-2017>>. Requirements where a female age sixteen or under had to first obtain both parents/legal guardians consent.

²⁶⁹ Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Bill 2017 (Australia-NT), clause 7.

requirements needed to terminate a pregnancy, whether terminated surgically or by administering medication.

7.46 The Commission seeks the views of the stakeholders and the public in relation to the following -

Questions (Please give reasons for your answer)

1. Should sections 141, 142 and 143 of the Penal Code be repealed and substituted by bespoke legislation which provides for safe access to termination of pregnancy.
2. Should the Penal Code be amended to expand the grounds for legal abortion in the following cases —
 - (a) where there is a threat to the pregnant woman's physical or mental health, without conditionality of "long-term or permanent" effects;
 - (b) where the pregnancy is as a result of rape, incest;
 - (c) where there is a severe fetal impairment, including fatal fetal abnormality;
 - (d) where the pregnancy is as a result of carnal knowledge of a minor;
 - (e) where there is a serious health problem with the fetus which did not present itself until a later date;
 - (f) where the woman is not more than 23 weeks pregnant;
 - (g) where there is an inability to pay for the abortion procedure before 23 weeks;
 - (h) where the intellectual or cognitive ability of the woman is impaired.

- (i) where the woman's current and future physical, psychological and social circumstances will be adversely impacted;
- (j) where there is unpreparedness for the transition to motherhood;
- (k) where there is an absence of a partner or lack of support of partner;
- (l) where the woman cannot mentally fathom the thought of placing the baby for adoption; or
- (m) where the woman does not want to be a single mother or was having relationship problems.

8. UNNATURAL OFFENCES

8.1 The term unnatural offence is used to describe the prohibition of a sexual act which is against the "order of nature"²⁷⁰, for example, with a person of the same sex. Other terms used to describe the offence include "sodomy" and "buggery".

8.2 In 2019, it was reported by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association (ILGA Report)²⁷¹ that, while 113 countries permit consensual same-sex sexual activity among adults, at least 78 countries have laws in effect that are used to criminalise consensual relationships between adults of the same sex.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s.144.

²⁷¹ State-sponsored Homophobia: a world survey of laws criminalising same-sex sexual acts between consenting adults", International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association (ILGA), Brussels, December 2019 13th Edition.

²⁷² See https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2019.pdf. See <https://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/The%20criminalisation%20of%20consensual%20same%20relations%20across%20the%20commonwealth%20-%20developments%20and%20opportunities.pdf>.

- 8.3 Among those countries reported were Commonwealth Caribbean countries such as Antigua and Barbuda²⁷³, Barbados²⁷⁴, Jamaica²⁷⁵ and Saint Lucia²⁷⁶. The laws of those countries that criminalise sexual activity between persons of the same sex typically prohibit either certain types of sexual activity or any intimacy or sexual activity between persons of the same sex. In many cases, the language used refers to “carnal knowledge against the order of nature” or “gross indecency”. These are usually known as moral offences and are justified by reference to tradition, popular opinion, and public morality. They all make private sexual activity between consenting same sex adults illegal.
- 8.4 Other Commonwealth countries, including Australia, Canada, India and the United Kingdom, were reported in the ILGA Report to have repealed the prohibition and as such, have legislation permitting sexual activity between consenting adults of the same-sex.

(a) Prohibition on sexual activity between consenting adults of the same sex

- 8.5 Whilst the Cayman Islands was not featured in the ILGA Report, there is still legislation on the statute books that prohibit sexual activity between consenting adults of the same-sex.
- 8.6 Notably, section 144(1) of the Penal Code provides that a person who has carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature, or has carnal knowledge of any animal or who permits a male person so to have carnal knowledge of him or her commits an offence and is liable to imprisonment for ten years.²⁷⁷ By section 144(2) of the Penal Code, a person who attempts to commit an offence under section 144(1) commits an offence.²⁷⁸
- 8.7 Additionally, section 145(5) of the Penal Code provides that a male person who commits, or is party to the commission of or who procures or attempts to procure

²⁷³ Sexual Offences Act of 1995 (Act No. 9) 264, ‘Buggery’ - Article 12 and ‘Serious Indecency’ - Article 15.

²⁷⁴ Sexual Offences Act 1992, Chapter 154, ‘Buggery’ - s 9 and ‘Serious Indecency’ - s 12.

²⁷⁵ The Offences Against the Person Act, Article 76 (Unnatural Crime) and Article 77 (Attempt).

²⁷⁶ Criminal Code, No. 9 of 2004 (Effective January 1, 2005), ‘Gross Indecency’ - s 132 and ‘Buggery’, s 133.

²⁷⁷ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 144(1).

²⁷⁸ Ibid, s 144(2).

the commission by any male person of, an act of gross indecency with another male person commits an offence.²⁷⁹

- 8.8 However, while these offences remain in the Penal Code, by an Order in Council made the 13th day of December, 2000 that came into force on January 2001, it is provided, *inter alia*, that “a homosexual act in private shall not be an offence provided that the parties consent thereto and have attained the age of eighteen years.”²⁸⁰
- 8.9 Section 144 and 145(5) of the Penal Code restrict a male person’s right to engage in sexual relations with a person of their choice.²⁸¹ The Penal Code does not create a similar offence in relation to female persons. Further, the term “unnatural offence” used to describe sexual activity between persons of the same sex is outdated and discriminatory against persons who engage in this type of relationship. It is incompatible the Civil Partnership Act (2020) which allows persons involved in same-sex relationships to formalize and register their union in the Cayman Islands. Laws such as section 144 of the Penal Code that criminalise sexual activity between persons of the same sex give rise to a number of separate but interrelated human rights violations.
- 8.10 Sections 144 and 145(5) of the Penal Code raise human rights compatibility issues with the fundamental right to be free from discrimination enshrined in section 16 of the Bill of Rights, Articles 2 and 7 of the Universal Declaration, Articles 2 and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as other core international human rights treaties.
- 8.11 Sections 144 and 145(5) also raise compatibility issues with an individual’s right to private and family life enshrined in section 9 of the Bill of Rights, Article 12 of the Universal Declaration and Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Further, section 144 of the Penal Code raises compatibility issues with the right to personal liberty enshrined in section 5 of the Bill of Rights, Article

²⁷⁹ Ibid, s 145(5).

²⁸⁰ *A.D.T. v The United Kingdom* (Application no. 35765/97).

²⁸¹ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 144 and 145(5).

9 of the Universal Declaration and Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

- 8.12 A further discrimination occurs with the provision in the Order in Council of 13th December 2000 in that the age of consent to engage in a homosexual relationship under the Penal Code is 18 years whereas the age of consent to engage in a heterosexual relationship under the Penal Code is 16 years.²⁸²
- 8.13 The right to private and family life is broad. In general, it means that a person has the right to live their own life, with reasonable personal privacy in a democratic society, taking into account the rights and freedom of others.
- 8.14 The right to freedom from discrimination prevents discrimination on grounds of age and other status which may include sexual orientation. In some of the countries, for example the United Kingdom, that have decriminalised same-sex adult consensual sexual conduct, different ages of consent for homosexual and heterosexual relationships remain. Young people who engage in same-sex sexual conduct may be subject to criminal penalties, while those who engage in heterosexual sex are not. Differing ages of consent in respect of same-sex relationships constitute discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.
- 8.15 Another concern that arises in the context of the criminalisation of same-sex sexual conduct is arrest and detention on the basis of sexual orientation. Section 9 of the Bill of Rights as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights all guarantee the right to be free from arbitrary arrest or detention. The UNHR Working Group on Arbitrary Detention²⁸³ has consistently maintained that detaining an individual on the basis of her or his sexual orientation is prohibited under international law.
- 8.16 While all of those fundamental rights are not absolute rights, any interference with those rights by the government needs to be proportionate and justified and must

²⁸² Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 132(2), 134, and 145(2).

²⁸³ The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention was established by resolution 1991/42 of the former Commission on Human Rights to among other things investigate cases of deprivation of liberty.

achieve a legitimate public objective. Grounds for government interference include the interest of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health.

(b) Human rights challenges and changes made in the legislation of other jurisdictions regarding

(i) Australia

- 8.17 In 1994 the UN Human Rights Committee decided in the case of *Toonen v. Australia*²⁸⁴ (the “Toonen case”) that Tasmania’s sodomy laws violated Articles 17 (privacy) and 26 (non-discrimination) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In so doing, it rejected Tasmania’s public morality justification. Since Toonen, the Human Rights Committee and other UN treaty bodies have repeatedly urged States parties to decriminalise consensual same-sex sexual conduct.
- 8.18 The Toonen case concerned a challenge to laws in the Australian State of Tasmania criminalising consensual same-sex sexual conduct. The Committee found that it was “undisputed that adult consensual sexual activity in private is covered by the concept of ‘privacy’” under Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It did not matter that Mr. Toonen, the author of the communication, had never been prosecuted. The mere existence of the criminal law “continuously and directly interferes with the author’s privacy.”²⁸⁵ Under Article 17, individuals are protected against “arbitrary or unlawful interferences” with their privacy. An “arbitrary interference” can be one provided for by law that does not meet the requirements of being “in accordance with the provisions, aims and objectives of the Covenant” and of being “reasonable in the particular circumstances.”²⁸⁶
- 8.19 The Committee in the Toonen case interpreted “the requirement of reasonableness to imply that the interference with privacy must be proportional”²⁸⁷. It concluded that the laws in Tasmania were neither proportional nor necessary. They did not

²⁸⁴ *Toonen v Australia*, Human Rights Committee Communication No. 488/1992, CCPR/C/50/D/488/1992, 4 April 1994.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, at para. 8.2.

²⁸⁶ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 16 (The right to respect of privacy, family, home and correspondence, and protection of honour and reputation).

²⁸⁷ *Toonen v Australia*, at para. 8.3.

achieve the aim of protecting public health and they were not necessary to protect public morals, as demonstrated by the fact that laws criminalising homosexuality had been repealed in the rest of Australia and were not enforced in Tasmania.

- 8.20 Since the Toonen case was decided, United Nations human rights treaty bodies have repeatedly urged States parties to reform laws criminalising homosexuality or sexual conduct between partners of the same sex and have also welcomed the legislative or judicial repeal of such laws.²⁸⁸ For example, in the case of Chile, the Committee stated —

*“The continuation in force of legislation that criminalises homosexual relations between consenting adults involves violations of the right to privacy protected under Article 17 of the Covenant and may reinforce attitudes of discrimination between persons on the basis of sexual orientation. Therefore: The law should be amended so as to abolish the crime of sodomy as between adults.”*²⁸⁹

- 8.21 As the Committee observed in the Toonen case, an individual’s privacy and non-discrimination rights are violated even if the law in question is never enforced. In its concluding observations on Ethiopia, the Committee stated that “The Committee’s concerns are not allayed by the information furnished by the State party that the provision in question is not applied in practice.”²⁹⁰

(ii) Canada

- 8.22 In Canada, the offence of buggery carried a maximum punishment of 10 years’ imprisonment.²⁹¹ The offence was declared unconstitutional because it

²⁸⁸ Born Free and Equal, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in International Human Rights Law, United Nations Human Rights. See Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on Togo (CCPR/C/TGO/CO/4), at para. 14; Uzbekistan (CCPR/C/UZB/CO/3), at para. 22; Grenada (CCPR/C/GRC/CO/1), at para. 21; United Republic of Tanzania (CCPR/C/TZA/CO/4), at para. 22; Botswana (CCPR/C/BWA/CO/1), at para. 22; St. Vincent and the Grenadines (CCPR/C/VCT/CO/2); Algeria (CCPR/C/DZA/CO/3), at para. 26; Chile (CCPR/C/CHL/CO/5), at para. 16; Barbados (CCPR/C/BRB/CO/3), at para. 13; United States of America (CCPR/C/USA/CO/3), at para. 9; Kenya (CCPR/C/KEN/CO/83), at para. 27; Egypt (CCPR/C/EGY/CO/76), at para. 19; Romania (CCPR/C/RO/CO/111), at para. 16; Lesotho (CCPR/C/LSO/CO/106), at para. 13; Ecuador (CCPR/C/ECU/CO/92), at para. 8; Cyprus, (CCPR/C/CYP/CO/88), at para. 11; United States of America (A/50/40), at para. 287. Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on Kyrgyzstan (E/C.12/KG/CO/49), at paras. 17, 30; Cyprus (E/C.12/CYP/CO/28), at para. 7. Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on Uganda (CEDAW/C/UGA/CO/7), at para. 43-44; Kyrgyzstan (A/54/38), at paras. 127, 128. Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on Chile (CRC/C/CHL/CO/3), at para. 29.

²⁸⁹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on Chile (CCPR/C/CHL/CO/104), at para. 20.

²⁹⁰ CCPR/C/ETH/CO/1.

²⁹¹ Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46).

discriminated on the grounds of age as well as sexual orientation and marital status which violated section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, individuals continued to be charged for buggery.²⁹²

- 8.23 In 2001, the Attorney General of Canada and others were sued for bringing discriminatory charges under section 157 of the *Canada Criminal Code*.²⁹³ Minister of Justice, Hon Jody Wilson-Raybould stated section 157 of ‘unfairly discriminated against the LGBTQ’ and introduced *Bill C-32*, an Act related to the repeal of section 159 of the *Canada Criminal Code*.²⁹⁴
- 8.24 Clause 1 of *Bill C-32* repeals section 159 of the *Canada Criminal Code* so that anal intercourse is treated the same way as other forms of sexual activity,²⁹⁵ with a uniform age of consent. Non-consensual anal intercourse could still be the object of other charges, such as sexual assault under sections 271 to 273 of the *Canada Criminal Code*. The age of consent is raised to 18 years where there is a relationship of trust, authority or dependence, or where the sexual activity is exploitative.²⁹⁶

(iii) India

- 8.25 Section 377 (unnatural offences - sodomy of the *Indian Penal Code* provided that “Whoever, voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment of life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine”.²⁹⁷
- 8.26 On 2 July 2009, the Delhi High Court gave a liberal interpretation to this section and laid down that this section cannot be used to punish an act of consensual sexual intercourse between two same sex individuals.²⁹⁸ On 11 December 2013, the Supreme Court of India overruled the judgment given by the Delhi High Court in

²⁹² R. c. D.G. 2016; Department of Justice, Questions and Answers – An Act related to the repeal of section 159 of the Criminal Code [Questions and Answers]. See <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0964663918822150>>.

²⁹³ *Lucas v Toronto Police Service Board* [2001] CanLII 27977 (ON SCDC).

²⁹⁴ *Bill C-32*, An Act related to the repeal of section 159 of the Criminal Code. Publication No. 42-1-C32-E, 11 January 2017. See <<https://lop.parl.ca/staticfiles/PublicWebsite/Home/ResearchPublications/LegislativeSummaries/PDF/42-1/c32-e.pdf>>.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p 9.

²⁹⁶ Criminal Code, s 153.

²⁹⁷ India Penal Code, s 377.

²⁹⁸ “Delhi High Court strikes down Section 377 of IPC”. *The Hindu*. 3 July 2009. ISSN 0971-751X. Retrieved 24 September 2018.

2009 and clarified that “section 377, which holds same-sex relations unnatural, does not suffer from unconstitutionality”. The Bench in that case said that “We hold that section 377 does not suffer from unconstitutionality and the declaration made by the Division Bench of the High Court is legally unsustainable²⁹⁹.” The Bench also said that “Notwithstanding this verdict, the competent legislature shall be free to consider the desirability and propriety of deleting section 377 from the statute book or amend it as per the suggestion made by *Attorney-General G.E. Vahanvati*.”³⁰⁰

- 8.27 On 8 January, 2018, the Supreme Court agreed to reconsider its 2013 decision and after much deliberation agreed to decriminalise the parts of Section 377 that criminalised same-sex relations on 6 September 2018³⁰¹ and overruled the judgment of *Suresh Kumar Koushal v Naz Foundation*³⁰².

(iv) England and Wales

- 8.28 In England and Wales the offence of sodomy was found to discriminate against persons who even acknowledge being involved in a same-sex relationship. In March 1952, Alan Turing was convicted for gross indecency because he admitted to being in a homosexual relationship with Arnold Murry³⁰³. He was sentenced to a one year probation period and was required to undergo hormone therapy known as “chemical castration” at the Manchester Royal Infirmary.³⁰⁴ Sadly, Turing committed suicide 2 years later.³⁰⁵
- 8.29 In 1957, the Wolfenden Committee issued a report (“Wolfenden Report”)³⁰⁶ recommending that the United Kingdom should decriminalise homosexual conduct in private. The Wolfenden Report reflected a theory of the relationship between criminal law and morality that was first popularised by the political philosopher

²⁹⁹ A bench of Justices G.S. Singhvi and S.J. Mukhopadaya.

³⁰⁰ B.M.Gandhi. Indian Penal Code. EBC. pp. 1–796. ISBN 978-81-7012-892-2.

³⁰¹ Venkatesan, J. (11 December 2013). "Supreme Court sets aside Delhi HC verdict decriminalising gay sex". The Hindu. ISSN 0971-751X. Retrieved 24 September 2018.

³⁰² *Suresh Kumar Koushal v Naz Foundation*, Civil Appeal No. 10972 of 2013.

³⁰³ See <<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/02/19/lgbt-history-month-alan-turing-and-his-enduring-legacy/>>.

³⁰⁴ Nigel Cawthorne, ‘Alan Turing: The Enigma Man’, Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2014.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ The Report of the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution (better known as the Wolfenden report, after Sir John Wolfenden, the chairman of the committee) was published in the United Kingdom on 4 September 1957 after a succession of well-known men, including Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, Michael Pitt-Rivers, and Peter Wildeblood, were convicted of homosexual offences.

J.S. Mill and later by H.L.A. Hart. In the words of the Wolfenden Report: “Unless a deliberate attempt be made by society through the agency of the law to equate the sphere of crime with that of sin, there must remain a realm of private morality and immorality which is, in brief and crude terms, not the law’s business”.³⁰⁷ In other words, the function of the criminal law should be to prevent harm, not to legislate moral values.

- 8.30 The Wolfenden Report marked a turning point. The United Kingdom followed its recommendations by amending the *Sexual Offences Act* in 1967 to legalise homosexual acts, on the condition that they were consensual, in private and between two men who had attained the age of 21. The Act applied only to England and Wales. The law was extended to Scotland by the *Criminal Justice Act 1980* and to Northern Ireland by the *Homosexual Offences Order 1982*.
- 8.31 Excerpts from the Wolfenden Report appeared in the case *Dudgeon v. United Kingdom* [1981]³⁰⁸, in which the European Court of Human Rights struck down laws in Northern Ireland that prohibited all sexual activity between men, on the grounds that they violated the right to privacy guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The case effectively made legislative repeal mandatory in all Council of Europe countries.
- 8.32 Further, the *Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994*³⁰⁹ provided for uniformity in the age of consent to engage in sexual intercourse and reduced the age of consent first to 18 years old and then in 2001 to 16 years old to engage in same-sex sexual relations. Later, the *Sexual Offence Act 2003*³¹⁰ repealed gross indecency and buggery³¹¹ in the Sexual Offences Acts of 1993, 1956, 1967 and 1999.
- 8.33 In 2017³¹² the English Government enacted section 166 of the *Policing and Crime Act 2017*³¹³ which is commonly referred to as the Alan Turing Law, in order to

³⁰⁷ Wolfenden Report, 1957. See <<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/wolfenden-report-conclusion>>.

³⁰⁸ *Dudgeon v. United Kingdom* 7525/76 [1981] ECHR 5 (22 October 1981) <<https://www.bailii.org/eu/cases/ECHR/1981/5.html>>.

³⁰⁹ Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

³¹⁰ Sexual Offence Act 2003.

³¹¹ <<https://www.justis.com/2017/07/06/50-years-of-lgbt-legal-landmarks/>>.

³¹² February 23, 2017.

³¹³ Policing and Crime Act 2017, s 166.

issue 49,000 posthumous pardons to deceased gay and bisexual men who were convicted under these laws.³¹⁴ It also extends statutory pardon to remove convictions from records of living persons that have been convicted.³¹⁵

(c) Comments and recommendations regarding the prohibition on sexual activity between consenting adults of the same sex

- 8.34 The criminalisation of sexual practices between consenting adults of the same sex provided for in sections 144 and 145(5) of the Penal Code raises human rights compatibility issues with the fundamental right to be free from discrimination enshrined in section 16 of the Bill of Rights, in Articles 2 and 7 of the Universal Declaration and in Articles 2 and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as other core international human rights treaties.
- 8.35 Sections 144 and 145(5) of the Penal Code also raise compatibility issues with an individual's right to private and family life enshrined in section 9 of the Bill of Rights, Article 12 of the Universal Declaration and Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Further section 144 of the Penal Code raises compatibility issues with the right to personal liberty enshrined in section 5 of the Bill of Rights, Article 9 of the Universal Declaration and Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- 8.36 A further discrimination occurs with the provision in the Order in Council of 13th December 2000 that the age of consent to engage in homosexual relations is 18 years as the age of consent to engage in heterosexual relationship is 16 years.³¹⁶ Therefore, where the age for consent is not equal, it is discriminatory.
- 8.37 Even if prosecutions are no longer available under sections 144 and 145(5) of the Penal Code because of the Order in Council of 13th December 2000, the Commission is of the view that the provisions should be removed from the Penal Code. Accordingly, the Commission recommends that the provisions in sections 144 and

³¹⁴ The Law Library of Congress - Clare Feikert-Ahalt, 'England & Wales: Thousands receive a posthumous pardon for homosexual convictions, 2017.

³¹⁵ Subject to persons giving consent being 16 years and the offence is not under s 71 of the Sexual Offence Act.

³¹⁶ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 132(2) and 145(2).

145(5) of the Penal Code that prohibit sexual activity between consenting same sex adults should be repealed.

Recommendation 6: That the provisions in section 144 and 145(5) of the Penal Code that prohibit sexual activity between consenting same sex adults are repealed.

9. INDECENT ASSAULT

(a) Current Law

9.1 The Penal Code contains the offences of indecent assault of a woman (section 132)³¹⁷ and indecent assault of a man (section 145).³¹⁸ These offences prohibit non-consensual sexual acts which do not involve penetration.

9.2 The Grand Court in *CT v R*³¹⁹ found a disparity between the two indecent offences, namely that indecent assault committed on a male contrary to section 145 of the Penal Code, is a Category A offence triable only on indictment. On the other hand, indecent assault committed on a female contrary to section 132 of the Penal Code, is a Category B offence triable in either Summary or Grand Court.³²⁰ Due to the fact that the offences deal with a general offence of indecent assault, there is no justifiable reason why there should be a difference in the mode of trial. This difference amounts to discrimination on the grounds of sex.

9.3 The term indecent assault is not defined in the Penal Code which creates ambiguity.

9.4 The Commission considered the laws in Jamaica and Australia for comparative purposes.

(i) Jamaica

9.5 In Jamaica, any person who carries out an act of indecent assault on another person commits an offence of assault. Such a person is liable to imprisonment for a term

³¹⁷ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 132.

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, s 145.

³¹⁹ *CT v R* [2016 (2) CILR 376].

³²⁰ *Ibid*. See <<https://cilr.judicial.ky/Judgments/Cayman-Islands-Law-Reports/Cases/CILR2016/CILR162376.aspx>>.

not exceeding three years on conviction in the Resident Magistrate's Court or is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fifteen years on conviction in a Circuit Court.³²¹

- 9.6 However, the term “indecent assault” is also undefined and assaults made by an offender of the same sex are not included.³²²

(ii) Australia

- 9.7 A review of the Australian territories³²³ show that they have included a definition that includes direct and indirect touching, attempts to apply force, and threats by actions or gestures to apply force if the person making the threat appears to be able to carry out the threat.³²⁴

- 9.8 In *R v Nazif*³²⁵ the courts held that the term indecent is an ordinary word in the English language and it is for the jury to decide whether the facts of a case amount to indecency.³²⁶ This led the MCC to define the term “indecent” as “indecent according to the standards of ordinary people” and to provide that “indecency is a matter for the jury to decide.”³²⁷

- 9.9 The wide use of the language in this offence distinguishes cases that involve penetration and involve touching.³²⁸ Therefore, the gentle holding of a hand is capable of being an indecent assault without showing there was a kiss or sexual contact. This is because the offence is only concerned with whether an unlawful indecent assault took place, and if intent to indecently assault the other person was done without the victim’s consent.

³²¹ Sexual Offence Act of 2009, s 13 (enacted 20th Oct 2009) came into effect (except for Part VII Sex offender Register and Sex Offender Registry) on June 30, 2011.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Western Australia (WA), Queensland (Qld), and North Territory (NT).

³²⁴ Criminal Code (Qld), s 245; Criminal Code (NT) s 187; Criminal Code (WA) s 222.

³²⁵ *R v Nazif* [1987] 2 NZLR 122 (CA).

³²⁶ It has also been said that ‘indecent’ conduct is conduct which would be considered indecent by ‘right minded people’ or ‘so offensive to contemporary standards of modesty or decency as to be indecent; *R v Court* [1989] AC 28, 42, per Lord Ackner.

³²⁷ MCC, MCCOC Report (1999), Appendix 2,5.2.2.

³²⁸ [2013] WASCA 274; touch a child age 7 breast; record a child age 13 taking a shower; digitally penetrate a woman age 37 years with fingers and vibrator.

(b) Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.10 The Commission concludes that reform is needed by replacing the two different offences with a general offence of indecent assault. This would enable the offence to be clear about the nature of the offence and be gender neutral.
- 9.11 The Commission recommends that a definition be included which is flexible enough to cover a broad range of conduct and to that end, supports the approach taken by Australia.

Recommendation 7

Repeal section 132- Indecent assault on a woman

Recommendation 8

Repeal section 145- Indecent assault on a man.

Recommendation 9

Enact a general offence of Indecent assault.

Recommendation 10

Define the term indecent as follows -

- (1) A person commits an act of indecent assault against another person if the first-mentioned person, without the consent of the second-mentioned person and knowing that the second-mentioned person does not consent, intentionally —
- (a) sexually touches the second-mentioned person;
 - (b) incites the second-mentioned person to sexually touch the first-mentioned person;
 - (c) incites another person to sexually touch the second-mentioned person; or

	(d) incites the second-mentioned person to sexually touch another person.
(2)	“Sexual touch” means a person touching another person — (a) with any part of the body; (b) with any object; or (c) through anything, including anything worn by the person doing the touching or by the person being touched, in circumstances where a reasonable person would consider the touching to be sexual.
(3)	The matters to be taken into account in determining whether a reasonable person would consider a touch to be sexual include — (a) whether the area of the body touched or doing the touching is the person’s genital area, anal area, breasts or lips; or (b) whether the person doing the touching does so for the purpose of obtaining sexual arousal or sexual gratification; or (c) whether any other aspect of the touching on the body makes it sexual.
(4)	A person who commits an offence of indecent assault is liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for ten years.

10. INCEST

10.1 Incest is defined as human sexual activity between family members or close relatives. This typically includes sexual activity between people in consanguinity

(blood relations), and sometimes those related by affinity (marriage or stepfamily), adoption, clan, or lineage.³²⁹

(a) Cayman Islands legislation regarding incest

- 10.2 The Penal Code contains two offences addressing incest, namely incest by males provided for under section 146 of the Penal Code and incest by females provided for under section 147 of the Penal Code. These offences prohibit sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other through lineal relations, and who have knowledge of the relationship.
- 10.3 For incest committed by a male, the lineal relationship includes grand-daughter, daughter, sister or mother relationships.³³⁰ For incest committed by a female, the lineal relationship includes grandfather, father, brother or son relationships.³³¹
- 10.4 Where incest is committed by a male, he is liable to imprisonment. If the female is under thirteen years of age, the period of imprisonment is ten years. In other instances, the period of imprisonment is seven years.³³² The male offender remains liable for incest, despite receiving consent from the female to engage in sexual relations.³³³ Where incest by a female is proven, she is liable to imprisonment for ten years.³³⁴ It is a defence for a female offender to show that she received consent from the male to engage in sexual relations.³³⁵ Consequently, a female offender can use the defence of consent to avoid liability for incest but a male offender cannot.
- 10.5 Another cited problem is that both offences fail to provide protection to victims who are abused by same-sex offenders.³³⁶ Further, both offences limit the nature of incest to carnal knowledge and do not consider other sexual inferences and sexual assault elements which may involve the anus and mouth. Sections 146 and 147 of

³²⁹ See

<https://www.unodc.org/documents/southernafrica//Publications/CriminalJusticeIntegrity/GBV/UNODC_SOPS_HANDBOOK_WEB_VERSION.pdf> p 10.

³³⁰ Penal Code (2019 Revision), s 146(1).

³³¹ Ibid, s 147.

³³² Ibid, s 146(3).

³³³ Ibid, s 146(2).

³³⁴ Ibid, s 147.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Penal Code (2019 Revision), ss 146 and 147.

the Penal Code therefore raise human rights compatibility issues with the right to protection from discrimination.

- 10.6 Further, section 146 and 147 of the Penal Code do not reflect the modern family structure of the Cayman Islands which includes step-parents³³⁷ and adoptive parents.³³⁸

(b) Brief outline of legislation in other Jurisdictions

- 10.7 The Commission considered the laws in Canada, Jamaica and New Zealand for comparative purposes.
- 10.8 Canada, Jamaica and New Zealand all enact a general offence of incest.³³⁹ However, in Canada the offence is worded in such a way as not to distinguish between person based on their sex or gender. The use of the term “everyone” in the provision enables the offence to be read widely to capture different types of offenders, including male, female, homosexual, transgender or non-binary.
- 10.9 Therefore, in Canada, everyone who commits incest is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years and, if the other person is under the age of 16 years, to a minimum punishment of imprisonment for a term of five years.³⁴⁰ However, an accuser will not be found guilty if they were under restraint, duress or fear of the person with whom the accused had the sexual intercourse at the time the sexual intercourse occurred.³⁴¹
- 10.10 A cited problem in Jamaica and Canada is that the linear relation is restricted to only blood relations, including half relations that are in direct blood line.³⁴² However, in New Zealand the linear relationship is extended to include adoptive parents but not step-parents.³⁴³

³³⁷ Children Act (2012 Revision), s 2, provides that parent includes a step parent.

³³⁸ Adoption of Children Law (2003 Revision), s 15(11); Smellie CJ in *Watler Cardwell (as Personal Representative of the Estates of W.W. Watler, Snr. and W.W. Watler, Jnr., deceased) v. Fish* [1999 CILR 232] observed that a child is viewed as the natural child of her adoptive parents and not of the natural father.

³³⁹ Sexual Offence Act 2009, s 7 (Jamaica), Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46), s 151 (Canada), Crimes Act 1961 (New Zealand), s 130.

³⁴⁰ Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46 (Canada), s 15(2).

³⁴¹ *Ibid*, s 151(3).

³⁴² Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46 (Canada), s 151(1) and Sexual Offence Act 2009 (Jamaica), s 2 and 3.

³⁴³ *Adams on Criminal Law* CA 130. 08. *R v Stanley* (1903) 23 NZLR 378(CA).

10.11 In Canada and New Zealand, consent is not an element of the offence of incest. McLachlin C.J. and Major, Binnie, Fish and Charron JJ observed in the Canadian Court of Appeal in *R v G. R*³⁴⁴ that incest is not concerned with the age or consent of the partner.³⁴⁵

(c) Comments and recommendations

10.12 The Commission concludes that reform is needed by replacing the two different offences with a general offence of incest that applies to all individuals. This would ensure that there is a clear understanding of the nature of the offence, would remove human rights compatibility issues and would allow for gender neutrality.

10.13 The Commission supports the approach followed in New Zealand and recommends that the scope of the offence of incest should be extended so that the linear relationships include adoptive parents. The Commission also recommends that the scope of the offence of incest should be extended so that the linear relationships include step-parents, persons with parental responsibility and guardians.

Recommendation 11: That section 145 (Incest by males) and section 146 (Incest by females) of the Penal Code are repealed and substituted by a general offence of incest.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The Penal Code plays a fundamental role in defining the rules governing some of our most important relationships as a society. There can be little doubt that a review and reform of many of its provisions are long overdue. There can also be little doubt that it is necessary that the provisions of the Penal Code should conform with the standards of human rights prescribed by our Bill of Rights.

³⁴⁴ *R. v. GR*, 2005 SCC 45 (CanLII), [2005] 2 SCR 371; A father was accused of committing incest with his daughter age 5-9 years. However, as she could not see what he was doing, it could not be determined if he penetrated her vagina with his fingers, penis or another object.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*, per Per McLachlin C.J. and Major, Binnie, Fish and Charron JJ.

- 11.2 It is the view of the Commission that it is preferable that this review and reform is done in a manner which is structured and comprehensive, and which allows for public participation, rather than for society to wait for the issues to be addressed through a series of constitutional challenges before the courts. This Paper is the first stage of a very significant process.
- 11.3 The review in this Paper of the provisions of the Penal Code on the age of criminal responsibility, compulsion by spouse, insulting the modesty of a woman, abortion, unnatural offences, indecent assault and incest suggests that these offences need to be amended and in some cases repealed to remove issues of incompatibility between the Bill of Rights in the Constitution and the Penal Code. The Commission in each case recommends that the relevant provision of the Penal Code be amended or repealed as appropriate. The Commission however invites submissions from the public in response to the specific questions raised in this Paper and will make its final recommendations only after considering the public input which this Paper invites.

Cayman Islands Law Reform Commission