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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MPs TABLE SEX-SELECTION ABORTION AMENDMENT TO THE SERIOUS CRIME BILL.

Today, 53 MPs tabled an amendment to the Serious Crime Bill based upon the Abortion (Sex-Selection) Ten Minute Rule Bill.

At the conclusion of its Committee Stage, Fiona Bruce laid an amendment to Section 65 of the Serious Crime Bill 2014, clarifying that the Abortion Act 1967 does not permit a pregnancy to be terminated on the grounds of the sex of the unborn child.

If it is selected for debate at Report Stage, the Abortion Amendment will be voted upon. If it wins the vote, it will become law when the Serious Crime Bill receives Royal Assent. The date of Report Stage has yet to be announced, but is likely to be within the next 10 sitting parliamentary days.

This short amendment will go into Part 5 of the Bill which deals with crimes which have a disproportionate effect on girls, including female genital mutilation. Together with clause 74(2), which deals with how the Bill's provisions can be followed-up, the amendment achieves the same effect as the 10 minute Rule Bill, which received near unanimity in a vote on the 4th November in the House of Commons where a motion approving the Abortion (Sex-Selection) Bill was passed 181:1.

Speaking about the amendment, Fiona Bruce MP said:

*“The amendment has two aims. First to oblige the Government to think of ways to support women who are under pressure to abort on grounds of the sex of their baby. Second, to consolidate current law, which is necessary to prevent false information being distributed to women. Still today, BPAS, Britain’s biggest abortion provider, insists that sex-selective abortion is not illegal. We must battle the prejudices which give rise to the abhorrent practice of sex-selective abortion. It would be wrong to look the other way as women and girls continue to suffer.” **

Mary Glendon MP said:

“If opposing the abortion of baby girls – often under coercion – makes me anti-choice, then I will wear the label with pride.”

Jasvinder Sanghera CBE, founder and CEO of Karma Nirvana and spokeswoman for www.stopgendercide.org said:

“Sex-selective abortion is a reality in the UK. This is widely known in diaspora communities and beyond. The Government has a responsibility both to women suffering under cultural pressures and to their baby girls.”

Rani Bilkhu, founder of Jeena International, and spokeswoman for www.stopgendercide.org said:

“The Government has been clear that sex-selective abortion is illegal. But the UK’s biggest abortion provider BPAS continues to contradict them. It has been very upsetting to see some people claim that there is no evidence of sex-selective abortion in the UK. We know it is happening because we have been continually supporting women for nearly a decade who have had them or are being forced or coerced in having them. In their desperation to oppose this initiative, some radical commentators have said that there is no way to help women like those we deal with except through racial profiling. This is nonsense, and if the same argument were made about FGM and forced marriages, people would run a mile. We know sex-selective abortions are happening in the UK and the time has come to face up to it. People speak about choice. The women who we deal with rarely have a choice. Many are forced or coerced to abort simply because they are girls, this is the first act of violence against women and girls. We are supporting Fiona Bruce and her colleagues because it is the right approach, making a clear statement about the law, and providing the means for the Government to take practical action and to send a clear message to all stakeholders including communities that practice sex selection abortions is not only acceptable but against the law.”

For questions regarding <http://www.stopgendercide.org> email info@stopgendercide.org

For interviews, phone <http://www.stopgendercide.org> spokeswomen

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A full media kit including video feature, images and further information is available here:
<http://www.stopgendercide.org/media/>

A feature video on the campaign including interviews with Jasvinder Sanghera, Rani Bilku and Fiona Bruce MP is available here (The original video file is available on request): <http://youtu.be/nJCMkb8R1Rw>.

NOTES:

*“Is abortion for reasons of fetal sex illegal under the abortion act? No. The law is silent on the matter.” ‘British Pregnancy Advisory Service, Britain’s Abortion Law: What it Says and Why?’ page 8 http://www.bpasresources.org/product_info.php?ID=11244 (download requires registration).

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