



UK Mission to the
United Nations
in Geneva

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Note Verbale No 123

The Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations and Other International Organisations presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights and has the honour to enclose a letter dated 13 July 2015 from Ms Caroline Dinéage MP, UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Women, Equalities and Family Justice, in response to the letter dated 1 April 2015 from Mr Karim Ghezaoui, Chief a.i. of the Special Procedures Branch at the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights.

The Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations and Other International Organisations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 15 July 2015

Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights



Government
Equalities Office

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Karim Ghezaoui
Chief, a.i
Special Procedures Branch
Office of the High Commissioner on
Human Rights
Geneva

BM
July 2015

Dear Karim,

ABORTION PROVISION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for your letter of 1 April. I apologise for the delay in responding. Your letter highlights the concerns of the United Nations Human Rights Rapporteurs under the Special Procedures regarding the current legal provisions pertaining to abortion in Northern Ireland.

The UK Government is firmly committed to delivering its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and in this regard, welcome continued constructive dialogue on our implementation of this important human rights convention.

The UK Government notes the concerns of the UN Human Rights Rapporteurs regarding the current legal provisions pertaining to abortion in Northern Ireland. You will be aware that although Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and therefore subject to much of its legislation, the Abortion Act has never extended to Northern Ireland as the Parliament there has decided not to adopt the provisions of the Abortion Act.

However, as you highlighted, the Northern Ireland Department of Justice recently held a public consultation on proposals to adjust the law to enable women to choose to have a pregnancy terminated in the event of a diagnosis of lethal foetal abnormality. The Northern Ireland Executive will receive the Minister's recommendations and then take a decision whether or not to make any change.

Further updates on this issue will be reflected in the UK's forthcoming 8th periodic report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

yours

CAROLINE DINENAGE