

**THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS, PARTICULARLY WOMEN AND
CHILDREN, AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL
OFFENCES AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING – THE BRUNEI
EXPERIENCE**

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Introduction

An effective criminal justice system must command the respect and support of society. One key component of obtaining such support is how it treats the victims of crimes. In many cases, the only contact a member of society has with the criminal justice system is unfortunately when he or she is a victim of crime. It is important that the measures undertaken must be perceived to be adequate whether it is in the form of legislation or administrative measures to protect and cater for the needs of victims. This paper will deal with three categories of offences namely domestic violence, offences against women and children and human trafficking and how the victims of such crimes may be afforded recourse under the law

A. Domestic Violence

There is a noticeable increase in the number of reported cases of domestic violence involving spouses and children. In this context, domestic violence involves actual physical harm caused on the person and not merely emotional distress. Statistics provided by the Domestic Violence Unit of the Royal Brunei Police Force show upon comparison of the 2000 and 2005 figures, the number of reported cases of wife abuse has tripled. Incidentally, there are also a number of husbands who reported being abused by their wives but the number is relatively small.

It is simply impossible to determine the exact number of abuses as not all abuses will be reported. The majority of cases are only reported after a number of abuses had occurred. The usual reasons given for finally reporting the abuse include "I cannot stand it any longer", "I'm in fear of my safety", "I want a divorce" or "I want to teach him a lesson". The Police to their credit take such allegations seriously including tasking a special unit to deal with domestic abuse cases. It is noted however that in almost all reported cases, the wife eventually indicates to the Police to withdraw her complaint citing reasons including "I don't want my husband to lose his job", "my husband is the sole bread winner and I don't want my family to suffer", "my husband has changed for the better", "we have divorced" or "I have forgiven him".

Although conducts usually falling within the usual definition of domestic violence are also offences under the Penal Code such as causing hurt, assault or use of criminal force, they are non-seizable offences under the Criminal

Procedure Code and considered as less serious offences. This is of course totally meaningless to victims of abuse. Any abuse however it is viewed in law is a serious matter to the victims. Other conduct which may also be regarded as domestic violence such as causing emotional trauma and denial of basic needs do not fit within the definition of crimes.

The Public Prosecutor also view domestic violence as a serious matter. In this respect, the Public Prosecutor has directed that where a criminal offence has been committed against the victim, the matter should be brought to court. If the victim does not wish to pursue the matter further, the victim may then choose to compound the case with the court's consent. This is known as composition.

Often the composition is made subject to the condition that the defendant refrain from further acts of abuse. The effect of composition is to halt the proceedings and the defendant will then be discharged and acquitted of the charge. This course of action is undoubtedly time consuming and a strain on the resources of the prosecution. However it is felt that by bringing the abuser to court rather than being given a warning by the Police, he would recognise the seriousness of his misconduct against the spouse and hopefully he would be deterred from committing further abuse in the future. A conviction is not recorded and the consequences of a conviction do not therefore arise.

It is recognised however that bringing a case to court is not the answer in every case. If the case proceeds for trial, the victim will have to undergo the trauma of testifying in court without any guarantee that the abuser be convicted. Of course the abuse may still continue and even worsen if an abuser is charged whether or not a conviction is obtained as in many cases, the victim and the abuser still live together. Further it may not be in the victim's interest to proceed. The abuser is usually the breadwinner of the family and the victim and the family have no other source of income. What is clearly needed and at the moment still lacking is a mechanism to ensure that the victim is protected from further abuse whilst not treating the matter lightly short of bringing a criminal prosecution.

Upon consultations with the Community Development Department of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, the Attorney General's Chambers is preparing a new legislation specifically dealing with domestic violence using as a basis existing legislation in Malaysia and Singapore with some modifications to ensure effective implementation in the Brunei context. The aim of the new legislation is to provide an effective procedure to protect victims of domestic violence in the form of protection orders. An important consideration is to make the procedure as simple as possible as the victims are unlikely to be versed in legal procedure and may well be illiterate or have minimal educational backgrounds.

There was consideration whether domestic violence is to be made a specific crime similar to child abuse. It is however felt that if prosecution is

necessary, existing penal legislation may be resorted to. As seen above even if prosecution is contemplated, the victim usually expresses the desire not to proceed with the matter further. The new legislation is to emphasize another approach as an alternative to criminal action. Despite not being made a crime, the Police are given special powers in dealing with instances of domestic abuse including detaining the alleged abuser prior to the application for a protection order.

Another consideration is how the proposed legislation can co-exist with present law also dealing with court orders relating to victim protection. A party who is a Muslim may apply for an injunction order in the Syariah (Religious) court. A non Muslim may obtain a protection order under the Married Women Act though this is restricted to a married woman and the children of a marriage only. In general an injured party may also bring a civil action for an injunction order to restrain to abuser from further abuse. Unfortunately the present law is seldom resorted to as the procedure involved can be very trying and bewildering for a victim. Further, having different regimes for protection of victims of domestic violence depending on a person's religion may not be desirable and a separate legislation applicable is thought to be more effective and causes less confusion. The new legislation is intended however to complement the existing law and existing remedies will still be available even after the new legislation comes into effect.

The main features of the proposed legislation are as follows:

a. Definition of Domestic Violence

In the draft legislation, domestic violence is defined as the commission of any of the following acts -

- (a) willfully or knowingly placing, or attempting to place, a family member in fear of hurt;
- (b) causing hurt to a family member by such act which is known or ought to have been known would result in hurt;
- (c) compelling the family member by force or threat to engage in any conduct or act from which he has a right to abstain;
- (d) wrongfully confining or restraining a family member against his will;
- (e) causing mischief or damage to property or continual harassment with intent to cause distress, annoyance or humiliation, or knowing that it is likely to cause distress, annoyance or humiliation, to a family member;

The inclusion of harassment in the definition covers situations where no actual physical harm has been inflicted on the victim but the victims suffer just the same through emotional trauma through continual harassment. Cases reported include the persistent sending of Short Messaging Services (SMS) and stalking the victim at the place of residence and work.

b. Scope of Protection

An application for a protection order may be made by a family member of the abuser. A family member includes:

- (a) a spouse or former spouse of that person;
- (b) a child of that person, including an adopted child and a step-child;
- (c) the father or mother of that person;
- (d) a father-in-law or mother-in-law of that person;
- (e) a brother or sister of that person; or
- (f) any other relative of that person who in the opinion of the court should, in the circumstances, be regarded as a member of the family of that person;

A spouse includes a person who has undergone a marriage ceremony even if the marriage has not been legally registered. This situation is quite common with the indigenous population and the protection of the Order is extended to them.

c. Protection Order

The court may, upon being satisfied that domestic violence has been committed or is likely to be committed by any person against a family member and that it is necessary for the protection of that family member,

make a protection order restraining that person from using domestic violence against that family member.

The court, in making a protection order, may include a provision that the person against whom the order is made shall not incite or assist any other person to commit domestic violence against the protected person.

A protection order may, where the court is satisfied that it is necessary for the protection of the protected person, provide for such orders as it thinks fit, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, including any one or more of the following orders –

(a) granting the right of exclusive occupation to the protected person of the shared residence or any specified part of the shared residence by excluding the person against whom the order is made from the shared residence or specified part thereof, regardless of whether the shared residence is solely owned or leased by the person against whom the order is made or jointly owned or leased by the parties;

(b) prohibiting or restraining the person against whom the order is made from entering the protected person's place of residence, shared residence or alternative residence, or from entering the protected person's place of employment, school or other institution or from making personal contact with the protected person other than in the presence of an enforcement officer or such other person as may be specified or described in the order;

(c) requiring the person against whom the order is made to permit the protected person to enter the shared residence, or to enter the residence of the person against whom the order is made, accompanied by any enforcement officer for the purpose of collecting the protected person's personal belongings;

(d) requiring the person against whom the order is made to avoid making written or any other form of communication with the protected person or specifying the limited circumstances in which such communication is permitted;

(e) requiring the person against whom the order is made to permit the protected person to have the continued use of a vehicle which has previously been ordinarily used by the protected person;

(f) requiring the person against whom the order is made, the protected person, both of them or their children to attend counseling provided by such person as the Director of Community Development may approve or as the court may direct.

In any proceedings, the person against whom the order is sought will have the right to be present and make representations in respect of the proposed order. However where, upon an application for a protection order, the court is satisfied that there is imminent danger of domestic violence being committed against the applicant, the court may make the protection order even in the absence of the alleged abuser in the proceedings. However such order is only temporary in nature and will expire after a period of 28 days

beginning with the date of the making of the order or when proceedings for a protection order are commenced. This is known as an expedited order.

An application may be made by a family member of the alleged abuser. In the case of a child or an incapacitated adult, an application may be made by a guardian, a relative or the person responsible for the care of that child or incapacitated adult, or by any person appointed by the Director of Community Development Department.

Where a victim of domestic violence suffers personal injuries, destruction or damage to property, loss of property or financial loss as a result of the domestic violence, the court in addition to making a protection order may award such compensation in respect of such injuries, destruction, damage or loss as it considers just and reasonable.

The court hearing a claim for such compensation may take into account the pain and suffering of the victim, and the nature and extent of the physical or mental injury suffered, the cost of medical treatment for any such injury, any loss of earnings arising from any such injury, the amount or value of the property destroyed, damaged or lost and necessary and reasonable expenses incurred by or on behalf of the victim when he is compelled to separate or be separated from the defendant due to the domestic violence, such as -

- (i) lodging expenses to be contributed to a safe place or shelter;
- (ii) transport and moving expenses;
- (iii) the expenses required in setting up a separate household which may include amounts representing such housing loan payments or rental

payments or part thereof, in respect of the shared residence or alternative residence, for such period as the court considers appropriate.

d. Powers of Enforcement

It may be the case that a protection order may not be obtained immediately but the victim faces danger of further violence from the abuser. The draft legislation provides the power for a police officer to take preventive action and to arrest any person whom he believes on reasonable grounds that domestic violence has been committed or is likely to be committed and that it is necessary for the protection of the family member for the person to be detained until a protection order or expedited order is obtained.

B. Trafficking in Persons and Offences against Women and Children

Brunei Darussalam is a small jurisdiction country with a small population of approximately 380,000 people including a large number of migrant workers (estimated to be around 80,000 in number) who are largely employed in the private sectors as domestic workers, labourers, shop assistants, garment factory workers, service workers and other related private industries.

a. Policy Framework

Although very few cases have been identified as legitimate trafficking cases, the Brunei Government has taken several steps, including enacting specific

legislation, to ensure that Brunei is not a destination or transit point for human trafficking.

The National Committee on Transnational Crime (NCTC) was also established to combat transnational crimes such as trafficking and smuggling of persons. The committee is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office and is comprised of relevant government agencies such as the Royal Brunei Police Force, the Attorney-General's Chambers, the Internal Security Department, the Ministry of Defence, the Immigration Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

b. Legal Framework

• INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

Brunei is a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and it has also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and Children (CEDAW).

CRC obliges Brunei to take all necessary action to prevent the commercial exploitation of children, including through trafficking, and to ensure that the best interests of the child are the primary consideration in relation to all aspects of Brunei's response.

CEDAW obliges Brunei to take all appropriate measures to suppress the traffic in women and the exploitation of women through prostitution.

However, Brunei Darussalam is not yet a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

- **DOMESTIC LAWS**

- **Trafficking and related offences:**

Brunei Darussalam has a specific law on trafficking and an array of other relevant and related laws which can be used to deal with the many aspects of trafficking.

The Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons Order 2004 which came into force on 20th December 2004 conforms with the UN Trafficking Protocol.

Under this Order, ‘people trafficking’ means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person for the purpose of exploitation by one or more of the following means: threat, use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person. Whereas the term ‘exploitation’ is defined as including all forms of sexual exploitation (including sexual servitude and exploitation of another person’s prostitution), forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude and the removal of organs. The ‘consent’ of the victim is irrelevant in determining whether or not an offence of trafficking have taken place.

On the other hand, 'People Smuggling' is defined as 'arranging or assisting a person's unlawful entry into any receiving country including Brunei Darussalam, of which the person is not a citizen or permanent resident of the receiving country knowing or having reason to suspect that the person's entry is unlawful, in order to obtain a financial or other material benefit.'

Persons convicted of trafficking persons, harbouring smuggled persons, or endangering the lives or safety of trafficked or smuggled persons can be fined up to Brunei \$1 million (approximately \$600,000 US), imprisoned for 30 years and caned. A person convicted of facilitating trafficking or smuggling can be fined up to Brunei \$50,000 (\$30,000 US) and imprisoned for 10 years.

There is also a specific aggravated offence of trafficking in children under the 2004 Order, which attracts in addition the penalty of mandatory whipping.

The Order also provides that forging travel and identity documents for the purpose of trafficking is an offence attracting a penalty of ten years' imprisonment and a fine of B\$50,000.

Aside from the 2004 Order, **the Children Order 2000** deals specifically with the offence of trafficking in children. Section 33(1) of the Order provides that it is an offence for anyone who takes any part in any transaction the object or one of the objects of which is to transfer or confer, wholly, partly, temporarily or permanently, the possession, custody or control of a child for any valuable consideration . The penalty for the

offence is imprisonment which may extend to 7 years with 10 strokes of whipping or to a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or both. Subsection (2) provides that every person who without lawful authority or excuse harbours or has in his possession, custody or control of any child with respect to whom the temporary or permanent possession, custody or control has been transferred or conferred for valuable consideration by any other person within or out of Brunei Darussalam shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to 7 years with 10 strokes of whipping or to a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or both.

Under that same Order, importation of child by false pretences is an offence under Section 34 for which the penalty is imprisonment which may extend to 7 years with 10 strokes of whipping or to a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or both.

The **Women and Girls Protection Act, Cap 120** provides for the protection of women and young girls by, inter alia, penalising the act of:

- Selling, letting, hiring, buying or obtaining woman or girl for the purposes of prostitution, whether in Brunei or elsewhere
- Selling, buying, procuring, trafficking in or importing into Brunei woman or girl, whether or not for present or subsequent prostitution,
- By threat or intimidation procures any woman or girl to have carnal connection within Brunei or elsewhere
- Procuring by or under false pretence, false representation, or fraudulent or deceitful means within or without Brunei, bringing or assisting in bringing into Brunei any woman or girl with intent that such woman or girl shall be employed or used for the purpose of

- prostitution either within or without Brunei, or knowing or having reason to believe that such woman or girl will be employed or used,
- Bringing into Brunei, receiving or harbouring any woman or girl under the age of 21 years or any woman or girl of or above that age not being a prostitute or of a known immoral character knowing or having reason to believe that such woman or girl has been procured for the purpose of carnal connection except by way of marriage , with any other person or for purpose of prostitution either within or without Brunei and with intent to aid such purpose.
 - Detaining any woman or girl in a brothel against her will,
 - Detaining any woman or girl in any place against her will with intent that she be used or employed for the purpose of prostitution or any unlawful or immoral purposes
 - Living wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution of any other person,
 - Persistently soliciting or importunes on behalf of any woman or girl in a public place, for immoral purposes

Penalties for all these offences are imprisonment for 5 years and a fine of \$20,000.

Several offences relating to abduction, slavery, forced labour, wrongful confinement, assault, kidnapping, forced marriage and document fraud are also found under the **Penal Code, Cap 22**.

The Labour Act, cap 93 absolutely prohibits the employment of a child (in the Act defined as a person under the age of 14 years) in any industrial

undertaking. Further, His Majesty in Council have the power to prohibit the employment of children in other specified places or prescribe the terms and conditions on which children may be employed in any other specified trade undertaking. The Labour Act also provides for other prohibitions, conditions, minimum standards and benefits relating to the employment of women and young persons (in the Act defined as a person who has ceased to be a child but is under the age of 18 years). In addition, the Act provides that the employer are required to meet the costs of repatriating migrant workers and their dependants in certain circumstances.

○ **Other related offences against women and children:**

The Children Order 2000 also penalizes any person who assaults, neglects, abandons or exposes a child in a manner likely to cause him physical or emotional injury or causes or permits such child to be so abused, assaulted etc. The penalty for such offence is 7 years with 10 strokes of whipping or to a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or both.

Further the Children Order 2000 also prohibits children to be used for the purposes of begging, receiving alms or any illegal activities. The penalty is imprisonment which may extend to 5 years with 8 strokes of whipping or to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or both.

Various offences are found under the Penal Code for which the victims are primarily women and children such as rape, outraging modesty, incest,

causing hurt, causing grievous hurt etc. In Brunei, most rape victims know the offender and more frequently than not, the offender is someone who is in a position of trust such as father, step-father, uncles and grand-father.

c. Protection and Support for victims

Under the **Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons Order, 2004**, ‘smuggled person’ and ‘trafficked persons’ are regarded as victims or objects of the offences of people smuggling and trafficking respectively.

Under section 21 of the said Order, any fines imposed by the court for any of the trafficking offences, may, upon application by the Public Prosecutor, be used to pay compensation to the trafficked persons.

A fund known as the Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons Fund is established under section 19 of the 2004 Order which is administered by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The monies in the Fund are to be applied for, inter alia, financing the cost of repatriation of smuggled persons and trafficked persons, rewarding any persons in preventing or suppressing people trafficking and smuggling and any other purposes as the Minister of Home Affairs may consider necessary for giving effect to and carrying out the provisions of the Order.

Further, under the **Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons Order 2004**, **section 22** provides that the Minister may make regulations necessary or

expedient for giving effect the carrying out the provisions of the Order and any matters incidental, consequential or supplementary thereto.

Under the **Criminal Procedure Code, cap 22** the Court may also order for payment of compensation to be made to any person or the representatives of any person , injured in respect of his person, character or property by the crime or offence for which the sentence is passed. Such order for payment does not preclude a right to a civil remedy for recovery of any property of damages

The **Women and Girls Protection Act, cap 120**, provides for the maintaining of a place of safety. The Commissioner (defined as the Director of Welfare , Youth and Sports and includes any person declared by the Minister to be vested with such powers) may order the detention in a place of safety any woman or girl,

- 1) whom the Commissioner considers to need protection and whose lawful guardian can not be found;
- 2) whom the Commissioner believes to have been ill-treated and to need protection; or
- 3) whom the Commissioner considers to be in moral danger.

for the purpose of counseling, maintenance and education.

Section 13 of the **Children Order 2000** provides that any protector or police officer who is satisfied on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection may take such child into temporary custody by placing the child in a place of safety. The term ‘a child is in need of protection’ is defined widely under the Order and includes where a guardian of a child

neglects or is unwilling to provide for the child's adequate care, food, clothing and shelter and where a family relationship is so seriously disrupted that emotional injury is caused to a child.

Under **section 36** of the **Children Order 2000**, if a protector has reasonable cause to suspect that any child brought or sold either within or outside Brunei or being detained against his will by some person other than his parent or guardian, he may be placed in a place of safety under conditions determined by the Protector.

A 'protector' is defined as 'the Director of Community Development and any such person as His Majesty may by notification in the Gazette declare to be vested with all or any of the duties imposed upon a protector by the Order and any other appointed public officer.

Under **section 44** of the **Children Order 2000**, the Minister may, by notification in the Gazette declare any place or institution to be a place of safety for the purposes of the Order. Further, under **section 49** of the same Order, the Minister may make such regulations as appear to him necessary or expedient for carrying out the provisions of the Order such as,

- i) providing for the care, maintenance and education of children placed in custody or under the care or control of any person under the provisions of the Children order , and
- ii) providing for the control , care , detention, temporary absence, maintenance and education of children in places of safety.

- **Giving evidence in court:**

Section 263B of the **Criminal Procedure Code, cap 108** provides inter alia, that a child witness under the age of 14 years may give evidence via a live television link where the offence either involves an assault, injury or threat of injury to any person or the offence falls within one of those prescribed under subsection (2) of the same section (includes procurement of a minor, importing for purpose of prostitution, traffic in women and children and buying/selling minor).

Under section 236E, the accused is precluded from cross-examining a child witness himself.

Any other witness who is outside Brunei Darussalam or who is to be cross-examined following the admission of a video recording evidence from him may also give evidence via live television link if the offences fall within those prescribed under section 236B(2).

The Women and Girls Protection Act provides that any court proceedings in relation to offences committed under that Act may be held in camera and where the female victim is under the age of 16 years, the proceedings must be held in camera. Further, any newspaper report of such proceedings is prohibited from publishing any pictures, revealing the name, address or any particulars which tend to lead to the identification of any woman or girl, in respect of whom the offence is alleged to have been committed.

The **Children Order 2000** prohibits the publication of any material which tends to reveal the name, address, school, or any particulars which tend to

lead to the identification of any child concerned in any court proceedings under the Order.

Further, no liability shall be incurred by any person for notifying that a child is in need of protection and the making of such notification will not constitute a breach of professional etiquette or departure from accepted standards of professional conduct. Further, identity of informant under the Order is protected and no witness can be compelled to reveal identities or any matter which tend to lead to the identities of such informants.

- **Institutional arrangements**

The Royal Brunei Police Force has vast powers of arrest as afforded under the Criminal Procedure Code, cap 22. The Women and Children Abuse Investigation Unit exists under the Royal Brunei Police Force to deal with all issues concerning women and children.

Under the Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons Order, 2004, the Royal Brunei Police Force, the Immigration Department and the Royal Customs and Excise are empowered to carry out investigations (including the powers of search) into any alleged offences committed under the Order and to arrest without warrant any persons reasonably believed to have committed such offences. Although currently, there is no specialist unit within the Immigration Department, this department takes the lead role in trafficking investigations.

The Action Teams on Child Abuse is established under the Children Order 2000 and is made up of the Permanent Secretary as the Chairman, a medical officer, a senior police officer and representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Attorney-General's Chambers and the Social Affairs Services Unit. The team coordinates locally based services to families and children where the children are suspected of being in need of protection.

The Attorney-General's Chambers has set up a victim response unit within the Criminal Justice Division, which aims to assist victims of crimes to understand the criminal justice process such as informing them of the current status of their cases etc.

The Ministry for Culture's Social Affairs Services Unit runs a number of places of safety known as Taman Nor Hidayah, Darussyafaah and Darussakinah.

These shelters, however, do not accommodate foreign domestic workers who are involved in disputes with their employers. Such domestic workers are usually taken in by their respective embassies until the determination of any disputes or proceedings. Until the determination of such disputes or proceedings, these domestic workers are usually allowed to stay in the country under special passes issued to them by the Immigration Department and through administrative arrangements made by the respective embassies and Immigration Department, they are also allowed to take up employment during the duration of that stay.

- **Prosecutions**

No prosecution has, so far, been conducted for offences under the Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons Order 2004. Prosecutions for offences against women and children are frequent and in general successful.

- **Bilateral and regional cooperation**

Brunei has ratified the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, along with Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam. It has also enacted a Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Order 2005 which was enforced in January 2006. Brunei has also put into place a new Extradition Order 2006 which facilitates the transfers of accused or convicted persons from the country even without prior extradition treaties.

Brunei Darussalam, through its National Committee on Transnational crime is seriously considering the ratification of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Crimes and its Trafficking Protocols. Brunei Darussalam also the proposal for a regional extradition treaty to be concluded.

Future Developments

A new Children Order has been enacted but has yet to come into force. This new order will strengthen the provisions in the existing Children Order 2000 and introduces a separate Juvenile court for young offenders as well as

various rehabilitation and detention schemes especially tailored for such offenders.

Conclusion

The legislative and institutional frameworks provide excellent platforms to not only to deal with offenders but also ensure that the welfare of victims of domestic violence, sexual offences and human trafficking is treated as paramount. A respected criminal justice system must not only safeguard the rights of accused persons but also victims of crimes.

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