

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

Bulletin No.2- K13

Source Christian Institute

Northern Ireland's Attorney General has said that the UK Government exceeded its powers as it radically changed abortion law in the Province.

The changes go far beyond the law in the rest of the UK, with abortions allowed for any reason up to 12 weeks. The new abortion regime came into force last month despite huge resistance from the public.

The new regulations have not yet been put into practice, after John Larkin QC raised legal issues with the implementation of the framework. He gave written evidence to a House of Lords committee, in which he said that conscience protections should be extended beyond those who directly perform abortions.

Conscience

Mr Larkin said: "This is of political and legal significance and, given that the relevant judgement call is best made by a local legislature, it may be inappropriate for the provision to have been so limited in light of the changed political context."

The Attorney General told the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee it was "disproportionate" to require healthcare professionals in any capacity "to act contrary to their conscience" and that it "would have been possible" for Westminster to introduce broader conscience protections. An affront to the people of Northern Ireland and wholly wrong

Crossbench peer Baroness O'Loan agreed, telling the committee that the regulations discriminate against those in administrative roles who, on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion, would object to being involved in the process of abortions.

She added: "The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) did not engage in a meaningful consultation with the Northern Ireland Executive or the Assembly more broadly on conscience. This was an affront to the people of Northern Ireland and wholly wrong."

Protect

Last week, a Roman Catholic Archbishop urged the Stormont Assembly to overturn the highly permissive abortion law.

Ireland's Archbishop Eamon Martin said: "We urge you to take steps to formulate new regulations that will reflect more fully the will of a significant majority of the people in this jurisdiction to protect the lives of mothers and their unborn children."

He added that the law was "imposed without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland" and that he would do all in his power to "save the lives of unborn children" and "protect mothers".

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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