

From: Harper's Law NI <[REDACTED]>

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To: +Comm Justice Public Email <committee.justice@niassembly.gov.uk>

Subject: Harper's Law

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To the Committee Clerk.

I am requesting to submit into the call for evidence on the Criminal Justice (sentencing etc) Bill.

I am the campaigner for Harper's Law and have been running this campaign from December 2021.

I have been following Harper's Law England & Wales through Westminster and reading the Hansard Reports.

The petition for Harper's Law was officially launched on 19 August 2020 by Lissie Harper, the widow of PC Andrew Harper who died in the line of duty in 2019, the law introduced mandatory life sentences (40 years) for anyone convicted of killing an emergency worker whilst committing a crime.

Emergency worker: Prison Officer, Fire Officer, Police Officer, Ambulance Personnel, Doctors and Nurses.

Harper's Law was officially added to the statute book on 28 April 2022 as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and came into effect on June 28, 2022.

During my campaign I meet with and wrote to CEOs of these organisations and their unions, I received full support for Harper's Law for Northern Ireland.

It has been 3 years since Harper's Law (England & Wales) was enacted and should have received attention before now in Northern Ireland.

In the 3 years Harper's Law (England & Wales) was enacted it has been used twice, in both cases the perpetrator received a whole life term (40 Years).

Case One: Metropolitan Police sergeant Matt Ratana.

Sgt Ratana, 54, was shot in the chest and leg at Croydon custody centre by Louis De Zoysa, who had smuggled an antique gun into the building following his arrest on 25 September 2020.

Louis De Zoysa, 26, was found guilty of murdering Sergeant Matt Ratana on 23 June 2023 at Northampton Crown Court.

Sentencing: 27 July 2023. He was handed a whole-life sentence under Harper's Law, meaning he will never be released from prison.

Case Two: West Yorkshire Police PC Sharon Beshenivsky.

PC Sharon Beshenivsky was shot dead in Bradford on 18 November 2005 during a robbery.

Piran Ditta Khan who was ringleader of the robbery gang shot and killed PC Beshenivsky.

A manhunt for the suspects was launched. This led to the arrest and conviction of six people.

Khan had fled to Pakistan after the killing at the age of 57, and evaded justice until he was caught in 2020.

Khan was extradited to the UK on 12 April 2023. He was sentenced in Leeds Crown Court on 10 May 2024. Mr. Justice Hilliard jailed Khan under Harper's Law to life imprisonment with a minimum of 40 years.

I am requesting Harper's Law (England & Wales) Act is replicated in Northern Ireland in this mandate.

It is vitally important we protect in law those that protect and save lives.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Regards,

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Campaigner

Harper's Law NI