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Faruk Orman: Murder Conviction Quashed in Australia 'Lawyer X' Scandal

An Australian man's conviction for a gangland murder has been quashed, after a high-profile scandal where his lawyer was revealed to be a police informant. Faruk Orman was freed on Friday after serving 12 years in jail for the killing of a Melbourne crime figure. It is the first legal test of the so-called "Lawyer X" scandal which is currently the focus of a major inquiry into police conduct. Some of Australia's most high-profile convictions have been cast into doubt. Mr Orman had been convicted of acting as a driver for a hitman who shot dead Victor Peirce in 2002, during a period in Melbourne known as the gangland wars. Mr Orman successfully appealed against his conviction, arguing that the case against him had been tainted by the actions of his lawyer, Nicola Gobbo. Ms Gobbo's actions had "subverted Mr Orman's right to a fair trial, and went to the very foundations of the system of criminal trial," said the judgement by Victoria's Court of Appeal. "There was, accordingly, a substantial miscarriage of justice."

Wider scandal: Last year, court documents revealed that a lawyer had worked as an informant for Victoria Police between 2005-2009. That person was publicly identified as Ms Gobbo by a court in March. She had represented other key figures in Melbourne's criminal underworld. The scandal has rocked the justice system in the state of Victoria, and prompted appeals from at least four other convicted gangland criminals. The state government is currently holding a royal commission inquiry into the scandal.

Home Secretary Priti Patel's Record on Human Rights Prompts 'Extreme Concern'

Jamie Grierson, Guardian: wary of new home secretary, who backed Theresa May's hostile environment aim. Priti Patel's appointment as home secretary has been met with an outpouring of "extreme concern" over her hard-right record on key issues covered by her new brief. Patel — who was forced to resign from government two years ago after it emerged that she had held secret, unofficial meetings with Israeli ministers, businesspeople and a senior lobbyist — will be responsible for immigration, crime and policing, counter-terrorism and drugs policy. The Essex MP, whose Gujarati Indian parents migrated to the UK in the 1960s from Uganda just ahead of Idi Amin's decision to deport all Asians, has voted for a stricter asylum system, stronger enforcement of immigration rules, and against banning the detention of pregnant women in immigration jails.

She backed the key components of Theresa May's hostile environment policies, presented in the immigration bills of 2014 and 2016, such as rent, work and bank account checks, all of which led to members of the Windrush generation being wrongfully told they had no lawful right to live and work in the UK. Her views on asylum will be watched closely by campaigners and charities that work closely with asylum seekers and refugees, many of whom have been calling for the government to relax rules on asylum seekers' ability to work in the UK, extend the time refugees are given to find work and a home before they are cut off for government support, and to expand pledges to resettle displaced persons.

Clare Collier, advocacy director at the human rights group Liberty, said: "Priti Patel is a politician with a consistent record of voting against basic human rights protections. For her to be put in charge of the Home Office is extremely concerning. "The new home secretary

needs urgently to put human rights at the heart of Home Office policymaking and reverse the damage caused by Theresa May's most toxic legacy – the hostile environment."

Satbir Singh, chief executive of the charity the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, said: "We're a year on from the Windrush scandal and Theresa May's departure creates a real opportunity to fix a chaotic and inhumane Home Office and build a fair immigration system that works for everyone. "Priti Patel's record doesn't inspire confidence, but we urge her to prove us wrong by committing to end the universally unpopular hostile environment, to reject the politics of scapegoating and demonising migrants and to rebuild trust by creating a Home Office that welcomes and supports those who move here."

Stephen Hale, chief executive of Refugee Action, said: "The new home secretary must get to grips now with the long-running crises that have gripped the Home Office and done so much damage to vulnerable people. "The Windrush review must be published as soon as possible and lead to a new commitment to treat people seeking asylum, and all others, with the respect and dignity they deserve." Alluding to the reasons for Patel's resignation two years ago, Tory peer Sayeeda Warsi said Patel's was a "disturbing appointment at a critical time for the Middle East".

Underlining her reputation for being tough on criminal justice issues, Patel has submitted several written questions to the Home Office on the issue of foreign national offenders and their deportation. Not long after she was elected to the House of Commons, she appeared on Question Time and revealed her support for the reintroduction of capital punishment in the UK, a position she later said she no longer held. Her views on the death penalty will be of particular concern to civil liberties groups that were alarmed by Javid's decision not to seek a "death penalty assurance" from the US in the case of two Isis executioners. Alexanda Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh are alleged to have been members of a fourman cell of Isis executioners in Syria and Iraq responsible for killing a number of high-profile western captives. It emerged last year that Javid had written to Jeff Sessions, then US attorney general, to confirm that the UK would not be seeking an assurance in the case of Kotey and Elsheikh.

The Liberal Democrats' home affairs spokesman, Ed Davey, said: "The job of the home secretary is to keep our country safe and ensure that everyone's rights are respected. "But now we have a Conservative home secretary who voted against allowing same-sex couples to marry, has argued that it is wrong for citizens to hold the government to account through the courts, and is one of the most enthusiastic advocates of Brexit – which would rob British police of the European arrest warrant and other crucial crime-fighting tools. The Liberal Democrats demand better from a home secretary. We will always fight to protect the rights of every individual, to give our police the tools and resources they need to prevent crime and keep communities safe, and to stop Brexit."

Patel, an ardent Brexiter, has advocated a skills-focused immigration system, which ultimately was reflected in the immigration white paper published under her predecessor Javid's tenure as home secretary. Boris Johnson also backed a skills-focused immigration system in his recent campaigning, championing the oft-cited Australian points-based system but offering little further detail. In an article for Conservative Home written in April last year, she set out her vision for immigration post-Brexit. "As a country, we recognise the immense benefits that migration has brought to our economy and society," she wrote. "As the daughter of a migrant, I know the sanctuary, welcome and opportunities that Britain provides. Regaining control of our borders does not mean slamming the door shut and, as we approach the final year of our membership of the EU, Britain can show leadership by mapping out a positive future for our immigration system. Britain must always be fair, and give refuge to refugees from conflicts and humanitarian crises. We have always had a strong record in this area, and this is the ultimate test of our civility and our humanity as a nation."

INQUEST Calls For Action as Suicide, Self-Harm and Violence in Prison Continues to Rise

The Ministry of Justice has today (25 July 2019) released the latest statistics on 'Safety in Custody', highlighting an increase in self-inflicted deaths and self-harm in the 12 months to June 2019. This continues the historically high level of deaths in prison, seen in the past six years. The key statistics on deaths in prison in the 12 months to June 2019 include: 86 self-inflicted deaths, up 6% from 81 in the previous year. This represents one self-inflicted death in prison every four days. 309 deaths in prison in total, only two fewer than the past 12 months despite increased investment and scrutiny. 165 deaths which the MOJ describe due to "natural causes". INQUEST's casework and monitoring show these deaths often reflect serious lapses in care (see notes). 55 deaths recorded as 'other' or awaiting classification, a particularly high number. In the 12 months to March 2019, self-harm levels have increased by 24% from the previous year, once again reaching record highs. Self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance have increased in male establishments by 4% and by 34% in female establishments. In the child and youth prison estate, there was a 30% increase in self-harm incidents. Overall, this reflects rising levels of distress in prisons.

Deborah Coles, Director of INQUEST, said: "Every four days a person in prison takes their own life. Appalling inspection reports, damning inquest findings, and statistics on yet more deaths, have become so regular that those in power seem to forget these are human beings to whom the state owes a duty of care. Families continue to be traumatised, not only by the deaths, but by the failure to enact change. Deaths, self-harm, violence, impoverished regimes and conditions are the daily reality of the prison system. Despair and distress are at unprecedented levels in failing institutions within a failing system. The failure to act on warnings from inspection, monitoring, investigation bodies and inquests exposes an accountability vacuum allowing dangerous practices to continue. The new Justice Secretary must act upon what are clear solutions - tackle sentencing policy, reduce the prison population and redirect resources to community health and welfare services. This however requires bold and decisive action at a political and institutional level, not more empty words." Levels of assaults in prison have also risen, reaching record highs. This comes despite programmes of investment focused on reducing violence and increasing security over the period in the 10 most 'challenging' prisons. In the 10 prisons themselves, the total number of deaths has risen.

Analysis of INQUEST's casework shows that recent inquests on deaths in prison highlight repeated and systemic failings around self-harm and suicide risk management (known as ACCT procedures), drug prescribing processes, communication, record keeping, inadequate healthcare, and procedural failures and delays. See relevant inquests in the notes. The Office for National Statistics has also published experimental statistics looking at the risk of suicide and drug-related deaths for men in prison compared to the general male population. They found, the risk of male prisoners dying by suicide was 3.7 times higher than the general male population during the 9-year period they considered.

New Inquiry: MPs To Investigate the Ageing Prison Population

The number of people in prison aged over 50 is projected to grow from 13,616 in June 2018, to 14,100 (3.6% increase) in June 2022. The number over 60 is projected to grow from 5,009 to 5,600 (12% increase) over the same period, and those aged over 70 from 1,681 to 2,000 (19% increase). The proportion of people aged over 60 is also expected to rise as a proportion of the total prison population. These projections result from more offenders aged 50

and over being sent to prison than are being released – driven by increases in sexual offence proceedings since 2012. Offenders are also receiving longer sentences, which also raises the numbers turning 50, 60 or 70 while in custody. The Committee's inquiry will examine the challenges older prisoners face and the services they need, including the adequacy of accommodation, purposeful activity, provision of health and social care, resettlement and whether a national strategy for the treatment of older prisoners is needed.

Chair of the Justice Committee, Bob Neill MP, said: "Prisons are often unfit for the needs of older people and the Committee is concerned that more and more older prisoners are living in unsuitable accommodation without access to proper health and social care or the wider prison regime. The Chief Inspector has said that it is disappointing that there is no clear strategy for older prisoners and the Committee wants to get to the bottom of what is being done to support this cohort of prisoners and what plans are being made for the future as the number of older prisoners increases. The Justice Committee last looked at this issue six years ago and we are concerned that little progress has been made since then. Our new inquiry seeks to identify the extent of the problem and to recommend what can be done to improve the situation."

Terms of reference: The Committee invites written evidence submissions on some or all of the following points via the Committee's website by 1st October 2019.

1) What are the characteristics of older prisoners, what types of offences are they in prison for and how is this demographic likely to change in the future? 2) What challenges do older prisoners face, what services do they need and are there barriers to them accessing these? 3) Is the design of accommodation for older prisoners appropriate and what could be done to improve this? 4) How do older prisoners interact with the prison regime and what purposeful activity is available to them? 5) Does the provision of both health and social care, including mental health, meet the needs of older prisoners and how can services be made more effective? 6) Do prisons, healthcare providers, local authorities and other organisations involved in the care of older prisoners collaborate effectively? 7) Are the arrangements for the resettlement of older prisoners effective? 8) Does the treatment of older prisoners comply with equality legislation and human rights standards? 9) Whether a national strategy for the treatment of older prisoners should be established; and if so what it should contain? Guidance on submitting evidence to Select Committees can be viewed here. https://is.gd/PNXnV5

Background: The Committee published a report on older prisoners in 2013. The Committee found that there was a lack of provision of social care for older prisoners and that there was confusion as to which authorities were responsible for what. The Committee highlighted that much of the current accommodation was built for young men and was not appropriately configured for older prisons. A lack of mental health provision was also raised as a significant issue.

The Committee returned to the issue as part of its recent inquiry Prison Population 2022. The Committee found that although there is good provision in some prisons, physical constraints in the prison estate mean that older and infirm prisoners are not always well accommodated, with cell showers and walkways largely inaccessible. Places in palliative care units and dedicated units for older prisoners are insufficient for the size of the population and in some cases, they are held in healthcare beds as the only suitable accommodation.

As part of its current inquiry into prison governance, the Committee looked at the oversight and commissioning arrangements for healthcare in prisons. The Committee heard from witnesses that healthcare for older prisoners was a growing issue. Dr Sarah Bromley, National Medical Director at Care UK, told the Committee that "the fabric of the buildings does not

lend itself to caring for people who are wheelchair-bound or have poor mobility. Social care is very patchy across the country, and how well social care is working has a big impact on health as well. For the frail elderly, particularly those with dementia, we are struggling to provide what they need to keep them safe and healthy."

Information on how to submit written evidence: https://is.gd/tDfhLj

The deadline for submitting written evidence via the Committee's website is Tuesday 1 October 2019. Please note that the Committee may not investigate or intervene in individual cases. Submissions may make reference to individual cases for illustrative purposes, provided they are not the subject of legal proceedings currently before UK courts.

Written submissions should be made via the web portal. https://is.gd/tDfhLj

Submissions need not address every aspect of the terms of reference and should be no longer than 3,000 words. The Committee values diversity and seeks to ensure this where possible. We encourage members of underrepresented groups to submit written evidence.

Getting Into Jail Free

Two women were promptly arrested after complaining to police that a hitman they hired had ripped them off. The 52-year-old woman and her 20-year-old daughter allegedly plotted with the daughter's 29-year-old boyfriend to find and kill the older woman's ex-partner. The boyfriend, who police believe had convinced the others he was a spy with powerful connections, was allegedly paid €7,000 as a deposit. However, when the hit did not take place, the women contacted the national police in their home country of Spain to accuse the boyfriend of fraud, El País reports. All three have now been arrested, charged and are awaiting court proceedings for arranging a contract killing.

All Courts and Tribunals Have Inherent Jurisdiction to Grant Access to Documents

The UK Supreme Court has ruled that all courts and tribunals have an inherent jurisdiction to grant access to court documents in a judgment reaffirming the principle of open justice. Lady Hale, delivering the judgment, urged the bodies responsible for framing the court rules in each part of the UK to "give consideration to the questions of principle and practice raised by this case".

The judgment was handed down in a dispute between Cape Intermediate Holdings Ltd and the Asbestos Victims Support Group Forums UK, in which the Media Lawyers Association intervened. The case concerned a decision by Master McCloud to allow the Forum to obtain copies of a trial bundle related to a six-week trial in 2017 in which Cape was the defendant and which ended in settlement.

In July 2018, the Court of Appeal allowed an appeal by Cape, holding that the documents which a non-party could be allowed to access were more limited than the Master had held, but upholding the Forum's entitlement to copies of a large range of documents.

Refusing an appeal by Cape, Lady Hale said: "The constitutional principle of open justice applies to all courts and tribunals exercising the judicial power of the state. It follows that, unless inconsistent with statute or the rules of court, all courts and tribunals have an inherent jurisdiction to determine what that principle requires in terms of access to documents or other information placed before the court or tribunal in question. "The extent of any access permitted by the court's rules is not determinative (save to the extent that they may contain a valid prohibition). It is not correct to talk in terms of limits to the court's jurisdiction when what is in fact in question is how that jurisdiction should be exercised in the particular case." In a post-script, she added: "We would urge the bodies responsible for framing the court rules in each part of the United

Kingdom to give consideration to the questions of principle and practice raised by this case. About the importance and universality of the principles of open justice there can be no argument. But we are conscious that these issues were raised in unusual circumstances, after the end of the trial, but where clean copies of the documents were still available. We have heard no argument on the extent of any continuing obligation of the parties to co-operate with the court in furthering the open justice principle once the proceedings are over. This and the other practical questions touched on above are more suitable for resolution through a consultative process in which all interests are represented than through the prism of an individual case."

Brazil Jail Riot in Para State Leaves 57 Dead as Gangs Fight

BBC News: At least 57 people have been killed in a prison riot in Brazil which saw rival gangs battle for five hours, officials say. Gang members from one prison block invaded another part of Altamira jail in Pará state. Sixteen of the dead were decapitated and the remainder suffocated after part of the prison was set on fire, officials said at a news conference. Two prison officers who were taken hostage have since been freed. The violence began at about 07:00 local time (10:00 GMT) on Monday 29th July, and ended at around noon, officials said.

Members of the Comando Classe A (CCA) gang set fire to a cell where rival gang members from Comando Vermelho (Red Command) were kept, the Pará state government said in a statement. The structure of the cell allowed the fire to spread quickly, resulting in the death by asphyxiation of some inmates. Officials said that the two prison officers taken hostage were soon released, because the goal of the attack was to strike at the rival gang - rather than at the prison guards. There had been no prior warning or signs of an impending attack on this scale, the statement said. Video reported to be from the prison carried by Brazilian media showed smoke billowing from at least one prison building, while another clip appeared to show inmates walking around on the rooftops. The prison in Altamira where Monday's violence broke out has a capacity of 200, but was occupied by 309 prisoners. Officials denied it was overcrowded.

The Ministry of Justice said that ringleaders of the violence will be transferred to more secure units in federal jails. Violence in Brazilian prisons is not uncommon. The country has the world's third-largest prison population of some 700,000 people, and overcrowding is a widespread problem. Clashes between rival gangs are frequent, as are riots. In May, 40 people were killed on the same day in four different prisons in Manaus in Amazonas state - a day after 15 died in prison fights in the area. More than 130 people were killed in January 2017 alone, as violence broke out in several prisons between the country's two largest gangs, resulting in lengthy riots and the eventual transfer of hundreds of prisoners. Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has vowed to bring in tighter controls in prisons, while building more across the country. But this will not be straightforward as most prisons are controlled at the state level.

What causes violence in Brazil's jails? Overcrowding - A crackdown on violent and drug-related offences has seen the country's prison population boom in recent decades. Overcrowding makes it hard for prison authorities to keep rival factions separate. It also raises tensions inside the cells, with inmates competing for limited resources such as mattresses and food. Gang warfare: Killings between rival gang members are common in Brazilian prisons. This was exacerbated when a two-decade truce of sorts broke down in recent years between two of the country's most powerful gangs - the Sao Paulo-based First Capital Command (PCC) drug gang and Rio de Janeiro's Red Command. Lack of resources: Many Brazilian prisons are underfunded. Poorly-trained and badly-paid prison guards often face inmates who not only outnumber them but who also feel they have

little to lose as they face long sentences already.

Man Wrongfully Arrested Following Serious Attack on Fiancée Awarded Over €1 Million

Irish Legal News: A man who was wrongfully arrested on suspicion of attacking his fiancée, even though she insisted it was another man, has been awarded over €1 million by an Irish High Court jury. Gerald Jennings, 34, sued the Garda Commissioner and the State over his arrest in Carlow on 2 December 2012 on suspicion of attacking Martha Kowalczyk, RTÉ reports. Her attacker, Colvin Keogh, 26, was jailed for seven years in 2014 after being found guilty of assault causing serious harm and sexual assault. Mr Jennings was sleeping in his fiancée's apartment near where she was attacked when gardaí woke him. Gardaí told the court that Mr Jennings was drunk and abusive, and they began to suspect he was the attacker after spotting a handbag which they understood had been stolen from Ms Kowalczyk.

However, a jury found that the actions of gardaí, who pepper sprayed Mr Jennings three times, were not reasonably necessary for the purpose of affecting a lawful arrest for breach of the peace and being drunk and disorderly, and that his detention was unlawful. A total award of €1,152,000 was granted by the jury, including €819,550 in general damages and €330,000 in exemplary damages, with a stay on the award in the event of appeal on condition that €150,000 is paid to Mr Jennings.

Liberty Loses High Court Challenge to Snooper's Charter

The civil rights group Liberty has lost its latest high court challenge against surveillance laws, saying the ruling allowed the government "to spy on every one of us". In its challenge to parts of the Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) 2016 – which critics have described as the "snooper's charter" – the organisation argued that government surveillance practices were incompatible with human rights law. The charity told the court that, of the multiple powers authorised by the legislation, the ability to interfere with computers, mobiles and other equipment amounted to the greatest invasion of individuals' privacy. In a judgment on Monday, Lord Justice Singh and Mr Justice Holgate dismissed Liberty's claim, rejecting the argument that IPA "does not contain sufficient safeguards against the risk of abuse of power". The judges concluded that the IPA included several "safeguards against the possible abuse of power".

Megan Goulding, a lawyer for Liberty, said the "disappointing judgement" allowed the government to continue "to spy on every one of us, violating our rights to privacy and free expression. We will challenge this judgment in the courts, and keep fighting for a targeted surveillance regime that respects our rights," she said. "These bulk surveillance powers allow the state to hoover up the messages, calls and web history of hordes of ordinary people who are not suspected of any wrongdoing. The court recognised the seriousness of MI5's unlawful handling of our data, which only emerged as a result of this litigation. The security services have shown that they cannot be trusted to keep our data safe and respect our rights."

Appearing at the Royal Courts of Justice in London last month, Martin Chamberlain QC, representing Liberty, argued there were "inherent dangers" in bulk hacking powers, saying the intelligence services could take "remote control of a device, for example, to turn mobile phones with cameras into recording devices or to log keystrokes to capture passwords". Chamberlain warned against "the possibility of abuse of power necessarily exercised in secret, and the generally chilling effect on individuals' communications and expression of ideas caused by the existence of such powers".

In a written submission, Sir James Eadie QC, representing the government, argued that the powers provided by IPA struck "an appropriate balance between security and individual privacy". "The powers under challenge are of critical importance to, and are effective in securing, the protection of the public from a range of serious and sophisticated threats arising in the

context of terrorism, hostile state activity and serious/organised crime," he said.

'Ministers Bullied Justice Watchdog', Say Lawyers

Jon Robins, Justice Gap: Whitehall mandarins unlawfully interfered with the independent miscarriages of justice watchdog and threatened its directors with 'removal', lawyers have claimed. The Justice Gap has seen the minutes of one of the regular meetings between civil servants and the commissioners in February 2018 when the Ministry of Justice's deputy director, Alison Wedge, appeared to insist that the watchdog accepted changes to terms of employment for staff and to the structure of its board. Wedge warned the commission, set up by statute in the wake of the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six debacles, that it would be 'in conflict' with government policy if it did not accept fundamental changes laid out in a ministerial review.

The minutes, obtained under freedom of information legislation, showed that Wedge told the commission that David Gauke, secretary of state for justice 'recommends the appointment of commissioners to HMQ [the Queen] and that similarly he could recommend removal. However, [she] hoped that there would be no need for such a situation to arise'. Glyn Maddocks, a lawyer and special adviser to the all-party parliamentary group on miscarriages of justice, which was launched two years ago, said that it was 'entirely inappropriate for the MoJ to be bullying the CCRC' in the way that the revelations suggest. Concerns over the performance of the CCRC have mounted since it referred just a dozen cases to the Court of Appeal in 2017, only 19 cases in 2018 and just 13 last year. Maddocks argued that the squeeze on funding threatens the commission's independence. Earlier this week, the all-party parliamentary group launched a Westminster commission chaired by Baroness Stern and Lord Garnier, QC, a former Conservative solicitor-general, to look at the commission's role.

The watchdog was created by the Criminal Appeal Act 1995 and began work two years later. The legislation stipulates its independence, saying: 'The commission shall not be regarded as the servant or agent of the Crown.' When the watchdog was launched, its budget was £7.5m and it dealt with 800 cases a year. It received just £5.45m last year with applications running at an average of 1,500 a year which means that for every £10 it had then it has £4 now. 'We need to get to the bottom of how the funding crisis is impacting on the CCRC,' said Maddocks. 'To be truly independent the watchdog must be properly funded. It is also alarming that the CCRC has effectively allowed itself to be comprised. The power of the CCRC resides in the commissioners' ability to refer these cases back to the Court of Appeal.'

Ten years ago nearly all the watchdog's 11 commissioners were on full-time contracts with salaries and pension schemes. Now all but one are employed on a minimum one-day-a-week contracts and paid on a £358 daily rate, and some legal experts are concerned the watchdog is not independent because commissioners no longer have tenure. Criticism has also fallen on Richard Foster, who until last November was the commission's chairman. Foster was a career civil servant and former chief executive of the Crown Prosecution Service. His prosecution background created increasing cause for concern, former commissioner David Jessel, told The JG.

Mr Jessel said the approach of the original commission chairman, Sir Frederick Crawford to the government was 'give us the money and leave us alone'. However, the appointment of Mr Foster, 'led to a closer relationship with the ministry, who saw the CCRC as a somewhat maverick organisation in terms of its governance'. Mr Jessel added: 'There were eventually bitter divisions between Foster and the Commissioners, but the Whitehall view prevailed. The influence of the commissioners – many of them distinguished and independent experts with a concern for miscarriages of justice, who supervised and guided the case workers, was drastically diminished.

'The CCRC, and its dedicated staff, have lost some of the sense of mission which full-time Commissioners brought to the organisation's founding vision. The paltry number of successful investigations is the result – although, laughably, the MoJ takes it as proof that the criminal justice system is working well.' The former chief prosecutor Nazir Afzal applied for the job as CCRC chair but was not successful. He reckons that commissioners have been feeling increasingly marginalised. 'The impact of funding can't be exaggerated. It's having a conscious or unconscious impact on decision making,' he told the Justice Gap. 'Staff clearly know that there's a shortage of judges and judicial time added to an unnecessary requirement fir a very high threshold for referral which means that fewer cases are referred. To pretend otherwise is a dereliction of duty.'

Details of the meeting between the commission and the MoJ in 2018 came to light in the High Court when a decision by the commission to reject the case of a convicted armed robber was challenged on the basis that the group is not sufficiently free of control from the Ministry of Justice. Dean Kingham, of Swain & Co, a specialist public law and prison law solicitors' firm, said: "The independence of the CCRC goes to the heart of the integrity of the justice system. Politicians need to respect that and the CCRC needs to stand up for itself." The Ministry of Justice declined to comment on the allegations.

Harun Gürbüz v. Turkey - Violation of Article 6 § 3 (c) in Conjunction with Article 6 § 1

The applicant, Harun Gürbüz, is a Turkish national who was born in 1988 and lives in Istanbul (Turkey). The case concerned his complaint that he had been found guilty of crimes including murder on the basis of statements to the police which had been given under duress and without a lawyer being present. Mr Gürbüz was tried and convicted over two attacks on taxi drivers in Istanbul. In the first incident, in January 2007, the driver was stabbed and killed, while in the second, in April of the same year, another driver was stabbed and injured. The police placed the applicant and another man, M.K., under arrest soon after the second incident, and interviewed them.

According to the police's reports of the interviews, when first questioned, the applicant confessed to being involved, along with M.K., in the stabbing of the second taxi driver. He then admitted, when questioned again, to taking part in the murder of the first taxi driver, also with M.K. Both interviews took place without a lawyer being present. The police had tried to obtain a lawyer from the Istanbul Bar Association but it had refused to appoint anyone unless the suspect was a minor, apparently due to strike action. The applicant signed the record of both interviews and only saw a lawyer, hired by his family, after the second questioning. The applicant alleges that his lawyer asked for the second interview to be carried out again, but the police refused. The applicant, accompanied by his lawyer, was subsequently questioned by the Istanbul Public Prosecutor. He confirmed his involvement in the second attack, but alleged that it was M.K. who had actually stabbed the driver.

Moreover, he denied the content of the statements made in the police interview regarding the first incident. He stated that he had not had any connection with the acts of murder and attempted robbery that had taken place in January 2007, and alleged that he had only related what M.K. had told him. The applicant later confirmed that statement to an investigating judge. The applicant was tried by the Istanbul Assize Court for both crimes. During the murder trial, which began in September 2007, he stated that he had been coerced into signing the interview record with his confession in the absence of a lawyer, without being able to read it first. He and M.K. denied all the robbery and murder charges and submitted that their statements had been made under duress. Both men were found guilty in February 2009 and sentenced to life imprisonment for murder and to five years for attempted robbery.

Violation of Article 6 § 3 (c) in conjunction with Article 6 § 1 Just satisfaction: The Court held that the finding of a violation constituted in itself sufficient just satisfaction for the non-pecuniary damage sustained by Mr Gürbüz. It awarded him 3,500 euros (EUR) in respect of costs and expenses.

'50 Shades' Defence: Are the Courts Allowing Women to Consent to Their Own Deaths?

Helena Spector, Justice Gap: The so-called '50 shades' defence operates to insinuate that as women were consenting parties to intercourse, and presumably to 'rough' intercourse, any concomitant violence was equally consensual. Legally, however, this is a misnomer. It is established law that individuals cannot consent to the infliction of bodily harm against themselves, whether during consensual intercourse or otherwise. Although victims can inflict bodily harm on themselves without committing an offence, this does not extend to involving another in such acts, a distinction established in 1993 when a group of men were found guilty of wounding and occasioning actual bodily harm (ABH) while engaging in consensual BDSM. Despite this clear legal precedent, however, versions of the '50 shades' defence have informally proliferated in the court system.

In the last ten years, the number of women killed in violent 'sex games' has increased by 90% and a new 'rough sex' defence has emerged in court for those who admit their homicide. 'Men are using the narrative of women's sexual enjoyment of being injured by violence to escape murder charges and face only manslaughter charges,' Harriet Harman MP and Mark Garnier commented last week.

Natalie Connolly, mother of one, was killed in 2016 by her partner John Broadhurst. The 26 year-old was found with over forty injuries, internal trauma and a fractured eye socket. The jury heard how Broadhurst had 'lost it' during the night, wanting to 'teach her a lesson' for sending photos to other men. He penetrated Connolly with a bottle of carpet cleaner, causing an internal haemorrhage, and sprayed her face with bleach after she fell unconscious because 'he didn't want her to look a mess'. Despite being significantly less intoxicated than his partner, Broadhurst had declined to seek help leaving her at the bottom of the stairs. He did not call for medical assistance until 9.30 the following morning. In his address to Broadhurst, the sentencing judge summarised: 'Despite her obvious injuries, you did not summon help. You just left her at the foot of the bed. You did not cover her up, get her a blanket or pillow. You left her flat on her back and left her.' The trial heard that when Broadhurst called police operators the following morning, he described his deceased partner as 'dead as a doughnut'. In spite of these details, Broadhurst only received a sentence for gross negligence manslaughter and was sentenced to three years and eight months in prison. Commenting on the case, Harriet Harman MP condemned the use of the '50 shades of grey' defence: 'We cannot have a situation where men kill women and then blame those women for their own deaths.'

The so-called '50 shades' defence operates to insinuate that as women were consenting parties to intercourse, and presumably to 'rough' intercourse, any concomitant violence

was equally consensual. Legally, however, this is a misnomer. It is established law that individuals cannot consent to the infliction of bodily harm against themselves, whether during consensual intercourse or otherwise. Although victims can inflict bodily harm on themselves without committing an offence, this does not extend to involving another in such acts, a distinction established in 1993 when a group of men were found guilty of wounding and occasioning actual bodily harm (ABH) while engaging in consensual BDSM.

In 2016, Hannah Pearson, a 16-year-old school girl, was strangled and killed by James Morton, eight years her senior, whom she had met that day. Morton was described as being obsessed with strangulation, who frequently watched porn featuring strangulation. During the trial, the court heard that after the two got into bed, Morton began to lightly strangle her, which she did not object to, before strangling her forcibly for more than one minute, during which time she tried to gasp for air before she died. Pearson had been 'heavily intoxicated' when she was killed, while Morton was sober. The jury found Morton not guilty of murder but guilty of gross negligence manslaughter, and he was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

The difficulty in establishing a murder charge in these cases is often threefold: the problem with establishing causation; the categorisation of strangulation; and the troubled matter of consent, an embedded ambiguity in the law about sex, rough sex and rape. In terms of the former, post mortem for Natalie Connolly concluded that she had died from a combination of her injuries and the potentially fatal level of alcohol and cocaine that she had consumed. This presented a challenge: for Broadhurst to be guilty of murder, his actions had to be the singularlydecisive cause of her death. Given this ambiguity, The Crown Prosecution Service were doubtful that the jury would return a murder verdict, and so lowered the charge to manslaughter. The CPS simultaneously allowed Connolly to have been so intoxicated it killed her, yet sufficiently sober to consent to sex.

The second issue is the categorisation of strangulation as a crime in itself. According to Women's Aid, one woman on average is strangled to death by her partner every two weeks; yet strangulation assaults are not de facto classed as occasioning actual or grievous bodily harm. Instead, strangulation may be classified as battery, the least serious form of assault possible. While any assault during the course of consensual intercourse is unlawful, the normalisation of strangulation by men against women during sex has meant that prosecutors appear unwilling to press additional charges of assault occasioning grievous bodily harm or unlawful act manslaughter when it appears in cases, which could result in higher sentences.

The law is therefore in the anomalous situation where an attack on somebody which results in a victim suffering serious injuries could be charged as a grievous bodily harm, with a sentence that could exceed twenty years in custody, while Hannah Pearson's killer who strangled her during sex without her consent and with a degree of premeditation was only imprisoned for twelve years. Meanwhile, Natalie Connolly's killer could be released within two years.

More fundamentally, the '50 shades' defence relies on the presumption that a woman who consented to rough sex consented for its duration, up until the point at which they died. In Natalie Connolly's case, Broadhurst relied on the fact that the two had previously engaged in sadomasochistic sex. But although consent may be given, it may also be retracted and that retraction ignored. The website "We Can't Consent to This," established by Fiona Mackenzie following Natalie Connolly's death, emphasises the point: women cannot, and surely do not, consent to their serious injury or murder at the hands of their partners, with or without BDSM.

In the words of the judge who ruled on Hannah Pearson's case: 'She had never been involved in such activity before, was very intoxicated and, if not totally unconscious, then certainly not think-

ing straight. She was in no position to object, trapped whilst you strangled her.' Yet a manslaughter charge fails to recognise the perpetrator's causal role in the woman's death, and nor does it recognise the lack of consent at the moment of death, the violence, sexual assault, or rape. Earlier this year a 52-year old German man Ralph Jankus used a Wartenberg Wheel, a spiked instrument normally used to diagnose nerve reactions, on his wife with such force that he perforated her bowel and she died of an internal haemorrhage. Despite a long history of domestic abuse, including testimony from Ms Jankus' son that she would be assaulted for going to the hairdresser without permission, and the fact that Mr Jankus waited for four days while his wife bled to death before seeking medical attention, Mr Jankus only received a suspended prison sentence. Prosecutors in Germany declined to charge him with murder.

As Harriet Harman commented last week, 'What an irony that the narrative of women's sexual empowerment is being used by men who inflict fatal injuries.' The more ominous problem is that the courts, under the guise of a legally false and evidentially unclear notion of 'consent' are enabling them to do so.

Man Jailed For 50 Minutes in 'Shortest Ever Prison Sentence'

Geoff Bennett, Independent: A man has been given what is believed to be Britain's shortest jail sentence of just 50 minutes. Shane Jenkins, of Portishead in Somerset, was told to use his time in custody to write letters of apology. The 23-year-old appeared in court after he smashed his former partner's window with a broom and fled from police. He pleaded guilty to damaging property, assaulting two officers and escaping custody during the incident on 30 May. Kenneth Bell, prosecuting, said after arguing with his former partner, Jenkins left her home and threatened to "brick the window". He later returned and smashed the window with a broom, Bristol Crown Court heard. Police were called on him at 3.30am but he shrugged off the officers and managed to flee. Judge Julian Lambert sent Jenkins into custody for 50 minutes. In the cell, Jenkins was given a pen and paper and wrote two letters, which the judge made him read out on his return to court.

Robert Thomas and Joe Tomlinson: How Immigration Judicial Review Works

Two years ago we drew attention to the immigration judicial review system—by far the most active area of judicial review litigation and the vast majority of all judicial reviews in England and Wales. In that post, we identified why there was a pressing need for further empirical exploration of the topic: not only was there a lack of understanding of litigation patterns but, on the basis of the evidence available, it seemed there was an issue of whether disputes were being channelled appropriately to judicial review (Paul Daly's reflections on this post are available here). Since then, we have set about trying to build the evidence base that we argued was necessary to advance understanding. We collected data on the types of immigration judicial review claims and the views and experiences of people involved in the system. Our approach to the research was to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. We then combined the data gathered through these methods to inform our analysis. Our data included case-file analysis of Upper Tribunal judicial review cases and interviews with judges, representatives, users of the system, and others. We also undertook observations. Our full findings are set out in a detailed report, which we are publishing today. In this post, we provide a summary of our key conclusions.

Following the transfer of most immigration judicial reviews from the Administrative Court to the Upper Tribunal in 2013, the tribunal's caseload was initially very high, but has since declined. Most judicial reviews are fact-specific; they turn on their own specific facts and

circumstances and tend not to raise wider points of law and policy. Many claims raise issues concerning the application of asylum and human rights law, especially the right to respect for family and private life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Many judicial reviews are lodged in an attempt to secure an in-country right of appeal (instead of an out-of-country appeal). While there is an ongoing debate about the relative advantages of appeals as against judicial review, the removal of appeal rights under the Immigration Act 2014 does not seem to have led to a significant increase in judicial reviews.

Many judicial review claims are refused permission because the Upper Tribunal decides that they are unarguable. The use of template, standard, and unparticularised grounds of challenge is a common, though not universal, feature. There are continuing concerns regarding the variable quality of representation for claimants. Action has been taken to deter lawyers from repeatedly lodging abusive and vexatious judicial review claims. Anecdotally, this may have led to a reduction in the volume of judicial reviews. There is evidence that some people are at risk of exploitation by unscrupulous advisers. At the same time, good quality representatives work under a range of pressures and find that this environment can hinder their work.

The majority of judicial review claims are refused permission to proceed. Nonetheless, there are concerns about the quality of initial Home Office decisions. We encountered instances of poor decision-making effectively challenged by way of judicial review. We found that 20 per cent of the cases we examined are settled out of court, with an agreement that the case be reconsidered by the Home Office. We also encountered the phenomenon of "repeat judicial reviews." That is, when a second judicial review is lodged against a fresh Home Office decision which is very similar to the initial decision. This was symptomatic of wider issues of poor communication between the Home Office and claimants.

As regards the categories of immigration judicial reviews, there is a wide range of immigration decisions that are challenged by way of judicial review. However, much of the caseload is concentrated within a few categories of case: asylum and human rights claims certified as clearly unfounded; fresh asylum and human rights claims; and removal decisions. Many judicial review challenges are lodged either to secure an in-country appeal or to prevent or delay an individual's removal from the country. Challenges to Home Office delay used to feature prominently in the caseload, but this is no longer the case.

There is a wider debate concerning the appropriate remedies that should be available. Judicial review is an important remedy, but its scope is relatively limited. By contrast, appeals to tribunals involve a full re-hearing of a case. We encountered the view from representatives that a right of appeal to the tribunal is a more preferable and effective remedy than judicial review. We also encountered the argument that some specific types of decisions that affect an individual's fundamental rights, but are currently non-appealable, should attract a right of appeal. These include decisions concerning human trafficking, statelessness, and domestic violence.

As regards claimants, we found evidence that they are often desperate and find the process difficult to understand and stressful. Most, though not all, claimants are legally represented, but the quality of such representation varies enormously. Most claimants are self-funding. Very few claimants appear to be in receipt of legal aid. The process for seeking Exceptional Case Funding is perceived as being difficult. We encountered concerns about the ability of litigants in person to navigate the system effectively. The judicial review process was not designed with litigants in person in mind and there is accordingly a need to address the situation of litigants in person by, for instance, greater provision of guidance. The Upper Tribunal is aware of this challenge.

There is little reason to think that alternative dispute resolution would operate effectively as an alternative to judicial review in the immigration context. Nonetheless, the various forms of alternative dispute resolution already built into the process, such as administrative review, re-application, and settlement, could be made to work more effectively. The full implications of the withdrawal of appeal rights by the Immigration Act 2014 requires wider evaluation. The question whether to restore full appeal rights is a policy question. Nonetheless, it is arguable that certain decisions affecting issues of fundamental rights – human trafficking, statelessness, and domestic violence – could be more effectively handled through appeals than judicial review.

From one perspective, our findings pertain to the immigration judicial review system and we hope the new evidence we gather benefits the advancement of that specialist discussion. From another perspective, however, this is also a study of what many judicial reviews look like in a state where public law litigation typically revolves around large machine bureaucracies. It is striking how different the realities of this area of litigation are next to the discussion of judicial review often found in constitutional theory.

HMP Ashfield - Serious Weaknesses in Release and Rehabilitation Work

HMP Ashfield, a prison near Bristol holding only men convicted of sexual offences, was assessed as 'good', the highest grade, for safety, respectful detention and purposeful activity. However, around 85% of the 400 men presented a high or very high risk of harm to the public and inspectors were concerned that rehabilitation and release planning was not sufficiently good. Peter Clarke, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, said Ashfield was very safe, with only one fight and seven assaults recorded in the six months prior to the inspection. Use of force (by staff) was similarly low. The prison was urged, though, to understand survey results suggesting a third of prisoners had felt unsafe at some point during their time in Ashfield.

Inspectors found that the prison provided a respectful environment, and relationships between staff and prisoners were particularly strong, with 86% of prisoners saying that staff treated them with respect. The Ashfield buildings were in good condition, there was no overcrowding, and there were areas devoted to gardens and animal husbandry. Purposeful activity – including training and education – had improved significantly since the last inspection in 2015. Ofsted inspectors found that provision across the board in education, skills and work was good and there were high quality facilities for sports and exercise, and a good library. Time out of cell for prisoners was exceptionally good.

However, Mr Clarke said the positive findings were "to some extent balanced by some disappointing findings in rehabilitation and resettlement planning... the weaknesses we found were serious, and were exacerbated by the specialist requirements of the prisoner population at Ashfield." Inspectors found that the level and quality of contact between prisoners and offender supervisors – staff who assist prisoners in carrying out sentence plans – had declined since 2015. "The ability of the prison to reduce the risk posed by this high-risk group of prisoners was inhibited by the fact that some 45% of them did not have an up-to-date OASys (Offender Assessment System) assess-

ment," Mr Clarke said. To make matters worse, offender supervisors were not sufficiently trained or properly supervised in working with prisoners convicted of sexual offences. In addition, the number and range of interventions to enable prisoners to address their offending behaviour and to make progress through their sentence towards the eventual point of release was insufficient. There was very little provision for those who maintained their innocence."

Inspectors also found some systemic failures, including insufficient category D places for prisoners to move to in open prisons. This meant that Ashfield, a prison with no formal resettlement function, was having to release prisoners back into the community. "At the time of the last inspection the prison was releasing on average around four prisoners each month, but by the time of this inspection the figure had doubled. Given the high-risk nature of the vast majority of the prisoners at Ashfield, this was an issue of great concern." Overall, Mr Clarke said: "With the exception of the serious problems in rehabilitation and release planning, we found that there had been an unusually good response from the prison to the last inspection... The prison is aware of what needs to be done to address the risks presented by the weaknesses... and my hope is that on this occasion they will be properly addressed."

'Mcmafia' Law Used on Northern Irish Woman Linked to Paramilitaries

Rupert Neate, Guardian: A Northern Irish woman accused of having links to paramilitary criminals has been ordered to explain how she bought six properties worth £3.2m. The National Crime Agency said the woman is believed to be associated with criminals involved in paramilitary activity as well as cigarette smuggling gangs and is at the centre of an investigation into the source of funds used to buy four properties in London and two in Northern Ireland. The property empire could be seized by the authorities if the woman fails to provide evidence of the legitimate funds used to buy the homes. Andy Lewis, the head of asset denial at the NCA, said it was the fourth case in which the agency had obtained an unexplained wealth order (UWO). "Our investigations are complex and involve careful consideration before we make an application before the court. "We do not investigate illicit finance based on monetary value alone. This latest order shows that we will act against those who we believe are causing the most harm to our communities." The high court has granted interim freezing orders on the properties, blocking the woman from selling or transferring them until the end of the investigation.

UWOs, which have been nicknamed McMafia laws after the hit BBC1 drama, are a new tool to help investigators crack down on the £90bn tide of "dirty money" flooding into the UK by forcing suspected corrupt government-linked officials to prove their wealth is legitimate. The first UWO was targeted at Zamira Hajiyeva, the wife of a Azerbaijani banker jailed for fraud. Hajiyeva is the subject of two orders on £22m worth of Uk properties, including a £11.5m townhouse in Knightsbridge. The court heard that Hajiyeva spent £16.3m at Harrods between 2006 and 2016. Her Harrods spending receipts reveal the 55-year-old treated the store in Knightsbridge, London, like a corner shop, popping in for £24,000 worth of tea and coffee and spending £10,000 on fruit and veg and £32,000 on Godiva chocolates. She also splashed out £4.9m on Boucheron and Cartier jewellery and £300,000 on French couture label Celine. A further £251,000 was spent in the toy department and tens of thousands on Disney princess experiences at the Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique.

Sarah Pritchard, the director of the National Economic Crime Centre, said: "We are determined to identify and prioritise the cases which have the biggest impact on tackling serious and organised economic crime. "Criminally obtained assets undermine the integrity of the UK's economy and institutions. We will use all the powers available to us to target those we suspect are trying to launder money and will explore every opportunity to deny assets linked to illicit finance."

Loyalist killer Michael Stone has secured a Supreme Court date for his bid to overturn a verdict that he must remain in prison for five more years. In January, the High Court ruled Stone could not be considered for release until July 2024. On Thursday, lawyers said the 64-year-old's case would be heard in London in October. Stone is pursuing two separate legal routes, aimed at achieving a release from prison. In 1988, he was convicted of killing six people during the Troubles and was sentenced to 30 years in prison. He was freed under the terms of the Good Friday peace agreement in 2000. However, he was returned to jail six years later for trying to kill Sinn Féin leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness at Stormont in 2006. He denied his actions were an attempt to kill the politicians, claiming it was an act of performance art. Stone's case had been due to go before parole commissioners in January on the basis that he had served 30 years.

Deborah McGuinness, the sister of one of his victims, challenged his parole. Her brother Thomas McErlean was among three people killed during a grenade attack carried out by Stone on an IRA funeral in west Belfast in March 1988. Stone was also the gunman in another three separate killings. Ms McGuinness successfully argued that the six years Stone had spent out on licence, before the Stormont attack, should not count towards his 30-year minimum term of imprisonment. Ms McGuinness is also issuing a judicial review challenge against the SRC's jurisdiction to consider Stone's application. On Thursday, the High Court in Belfast gave permission for commissioners to hear Stone's appeal over their preliminary indication, scheduled for the end of August. Mr Justice McCloskey also confirmed the judicial review would take place in September.

In January, judges said Stormont's Department of Justice had wrongly determined Stone would be eligible to seek parole. That determination will be tested at the Supreme Court. Stone is also due to go before a panel of the Sentence Review Commissioners (SRC) this month to appeal its preliminary indication that his application to be freed early for a second time, under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, should be refused.

Home Secretary Priti Patel, "I Want Criminals to Feel Terror"

The new home secretary, Priti Patel, has been criticised after she said she wants criminals "to literally feel terror" once she begins her law and order reforms. Patel indicated a sharp rightward turn in the government's approach to crime, which comes after Boris Johnson, the prime minister, announced plans to recruit 20,000 new police officers. "I fundamentally think the Conservative party is the party of law and order. Full stop," Patel told the Daily Mail, in her first interview since Johnson appointed her home secretary. She vowed to "empower [police] to stop criminality." "My focus now is restating our commitment to law and order and restating our commitment to the people on the frontline, the police," Patel said. "I've always felt the Conservative party is the party of the police and police officers ... quite frankly, with more police officers out there and greater police presence, I want [criminals] to literally feel terror at the thought of committing offences."

Serving Prisoners Supported by MOJUK: Naweed Ali, Khobaib Hussain, Mohibur Rahman, Tahir Aziz, Roger Khan, Wang Yam, Andrew Malkinson, Michael Ross, Mark Alexander, Anis Sardar, Jamie Green, Dan Payne, Zoran Dresic, Scott Birtwistle, Jon Beere, Chedwyn Evans, Darren Waterhouse, David Norris, Brendan McConville, John Paul Wooton, John Keelan, Mohammed Niaz Khan, Abid Ashiq Hussain, Sharaz Yaqub, David Ferguson, Anthony Parsons, James Cullinene, Stephen Marsh, Graham Coutts, Royston Moore, Duane King, Leon Chapman, Tony Marshall, Anthony Jackson, David Kent, Norman Grant, Ricardo Morrison, Alex Silva, Terry Smith, Hyrone Hart, Warren Slaney, Melvyn 'Adie' McLellan, Lyndon Coles, Robert Bradley, Thomas G. Bourke, David E. Ferguson, Lee Mockble, George Coleman, Neil Hurley, Jaslyn Ricardo Smith, James Dowsett, Kevan & Miran Thakrar, Jordan Towers, Patrick Docherty, Brendan Dixon, Paul Bush, Alex Black, Nicholas Rose, Kevin Nunn, Peter Carine, Paul Higginson, Robert Knapp, Thomas Petch, Vincent and Sean Bradish, John Allen, Jeremy Bamber, Kevin Lane, Michael Brown, Robert William Kenealy, Glyn Razzell, Willie Gage, Kate Keaveney, Michael Stone, Michael Attwooll, John Roden, Nick Tucker, Karl Watson, Terry Allen, Richard Southern, Jake Mawhinney, Peter Hannigan.