

U.K.: MP Nusrat Ghani bids to ban 'honour killing' term

An MP is attempting to ban authorities from describing murders as "honour killings".

BBC (31.01.2017) – <http://bbc.in/2kUbnIA> – Conservative Nusrat Ghani said the term was used by abusers as a "pathetic self-justification" for their violence.

She proposed a bill in the House of Commons that would ban the use of the description in official publications.

The move would make it clear that "cultural and religious sensitivities are not a barrier to justice", the MP for Wealden in East Sussex said.

There is no specific offence of "honour-based" violence.

The Crown Prosecution Service describes it as a "collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour".

'Clear message'

Ms Ghani said police had been put off investigating such crimes because they fear being branded "racist".

"Language matters," she told the Commons.

"The use of the term 'honour' to describe a violent criminal act – sometimes committed against a man, but more often against a woman – can be explained only as a means of self-justification for the perpetrator.

"It diminishes the victim and provides a convenient excuse for what in our society we should accurately and simply call

murder, rape, abuse or enslavement.

“I want us in this House to send a clear message that the excuses end here.”

Her Crime (Aggravated Murder of and Violence against Women) Bill would also require the UK authorities to fund assistance for British women attacked in other countries and for the bodies of those murdered to be repatriated.

UK nationals guilty of such offences towards other UK nationals overseas would also face prosecution in British courts, her bill states.

MPs agreed the bill should be able to proceed, although Conservative MP Philip Davies – who said it was too focused on women and did not mention honour crime towards men – objected.

Mr Davies said he would continue to oppose legislation “unjustifiably aimed at dealing with just one gender”, adding: “Yes, of course women are far more likely to be the victims of honour-based crimes than men, but they are not exclusively the victims of these crimes.

“As far as I am concerned, all these things are just as bad as each other.”

The bill will be heard again on 24 March, although it is unlikely to become law without the government’s support.

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