Written submission from Liz Blair (ANI0223)

I am a woman living in Northern Ireland and I am making this submission as an individual and I trust in a compassionate manner.

• Q.1 What are the views of the general public, women and medical and legal professionals in Northern Ireland about the law on abortion and whether it should be reformed? How have those views changed over time.

As a Christian, I believe in the sanctity of human life and wish the present law regarding abortion in N.I. to be maintained, not reformed. ‘Reformed’ suggests making things better. It disturbed me to read that in England, Wales and Scotland babies who have been diagnosed as having a severe disability can be aborted even up to full term and that latest figures show that 92% of pregnancies where Down’s syndrome is identified result in abortion. I would not like the same to be true in Northern Ireland. It is surely better to value the life of both mother and unborn child and support both before and after the baby is born.

Some have called for abortion to be available in Northern Ireland in very sad and difficult cases of rape or where the baby cannot survive outside the womb. However this is not an indication that overall views on the subject have changed.

• Q.3 What are the responsibilities of the UK government under its international obligations for taking action to reform abortion law in Northern Ireland? How should these be reconciled to the UK’s devolution settlement?

It is often argued that Northern Ireland’s abortion law does not comply with the United Nations Convention on Human Rights. However abortion denies the most fundamental human right – the right to life. Furthermore those who have looked into the details have pointed out that at no point does the Convention mention abortion.

I acknowledge that the Northern Ireland Assembly is suspended at the moment but abortion is a devolved matter and politicians at Westminster should not overrule our MLAs, especially on such a sensitive matter.

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