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The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
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I write regarding proposals relating to anonymity for rape defendants to urge you not to change the law in this regard.

I believe these proposals could have a hugely detrimental impact on the reporting and conviction of rape.

As you will know, anonymity for rape defendants was removed in 1988, following police claims that it was preventing women from coming forward to report rapes.

The extent of the horrific crimes of Kirk Reid and John Worboys, which I am very sad to say affected my constituency, was only revealed when their identities were released which encouraged other victims to come forward. This is not uncommon.

I do not doubt that it is most traumatic for anyone to be falsely accused of a crime. What is unclear to me is why rape defendants should have greater protection than perpetrators of other serious crimes and why rape victims should be presumed to be unreliable.

Unique protection for rape defendants could give the impression that the State presumes any rape victim may be making a false allegation. I am concerned this could lead to victims assuming they will be met with disbelief by the Police, making them reluctant to come forward and report crimes against them.

In the earlier part of this year I recall you making much of your belief that the law in this country was skewed towards protecting the rights of alleged criminals over the rights of victims. I cannot see how providing anonymity for rape defendants does anything but prioritise the rights of defendants over victims. Indeed, in cases such as this, where there is a balance to be struck, I would urge you to take no risks and give the benefit of the doubt to the victim

The last Government worked hard to increase the conviction rates for rape, and to improve support and provisions for victims of rape and sexual violence, both in the criminal justice system and wider society. I fear anonymity will undermine the enormous progress we have made on this issue over the past 10 years.

I would be grateful if you could address the following questions:

- Why should rape defendants be entitled to greater protections than defendants of other serious crimes?
- Does the Government believe giving rape defendants greater protection could reduce conviction rates, particularly for serial rapists?
- What evidence is there that false allegations, which we all agree can be extremely damaging, are higher for rape than for other crimes?
- What new evidence has the Government received that has led it to decide to extend anonymity in rape cases to defendants?
- How does the Prime Minister respond to the concerns of anti-rape campaigners such as 'Women against Rape' that this proposal is an "insult" to victims of this horrendous crime?

I urge you to rethink your proposals and would welcome a reply to this letter, addressing the points I have raised in full.

Yours sincerely,

**Rt. Hon. Sadiq Khan MP**