



**GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**  
**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**  
**6 Convent Place**  
**Gibraltar**

Telephone No: (350) 20070071 Fax No: (350) 20076396

**PRESS RELEASE**

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The Minister for Justice, Daniel Feetham, has today announced that the Working Group on reform of the Criminal Law has made substantial progress on a wide range of issues and the Government envisages that it will be in a position to take to Parliament legislation this year in several areas.

The purpose of the Working Group is to put forward proposals for law reform of the criminal justice system and its structures including reforms to the procedures in place in criminal cases and amendments to the substantive law and the rules of evidence. Specific areas being looked at include:

- Reform of our criminal offences. The Government intends to introduce a major piece of legislation codifying and reforming all criminal offences in one statute. Work has already been completed on those parts of the legislation dealing with sexual offences with particular emphasis on offences against children. This includes modern and resilient legislation dealing with internet crime against children and the maintenance of a sexual offenders register. The next segment will include work on other offences such as theft and fraud.
- Substantial work has already been undertaken prior to the creation of the Working Group in relation to a new Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act setting out and regulating the powers and duties of the police in relation to individuals in police custody and evidence in criminal cases.
- The rules of evidence in relation to vulnerable victims and witnesses will be reformed. For instance the rules will allow the court to give Special Measure Directions in cases involving vulnerable or intimidated witnesses such as the giving of evidence by live link or video rather than in open court. This will be particularly useful in child abuse cases.
- Victims of Crime will be given greater legislative protection.
- The existing procedure for committing cases for trial from the Magistrates' Court to the Supreme Court.
- The threshold for election to trial by jury will be increased. A comprehensive exercise in this area has not been undertaken for decades.
- There will be a comprehensive revision of levels of fines across the board.

Daniel Feetham said

"This will be the most comprehensive and significant reform of our criminal justice system for decades. The Government is determined to ensure that we have a modern criminal justice system that strikes the appropriate balance between protecting the rights of the accused and ensuring we have a system that works efficiently and protects the public and victims of crime."

Note to editors:

In November of last year the Minister for Justice indicated that he had asked the Attorney General to provide a report on the outcome of jury trials from 1991 to 2007. The period was extended from 1983 to 2007 and those statistics are now available. The Working Group has been considering these statistics and a separate communiqué will be issued on this issue in due course.

The Working Group comprises Defence Lawyers Christian Rocca, Ray Pilley, Maurice Turnock, Members of the Judiciary, Crown Counsel Liam Yeats, Chief Inspector Mifsud, Chief Officer of Prisons Daniel Agius, Members of the Legislation Support Unit and Ministry of Justice staff.