

Daily Telegraph
12, 16, 16

News

Sex-selective abortion case dropped 'for fear of being seen as racist'

'Political correctness' fears halted prosecution over Asian woman's termination, says government aide

By Hannah Summers
and Camilla Turner

THE Crown Prosecution Service failed to secure what could have been the first conviction for sex-selective abortion after dropping a case against an Asian family amid fears of "political correctness", a government aide has claimed.

Mandy Sanghera, who advises the Government on how to tackle honour-based violence, told *The Daily Telegraph* that prosecutors failed to pursue a case involving an Asian woman whose family forced her to have an abortion, for fear of being labelled racist.

"When her family found out it was a girl, she was put under a lot of emotional pressure and duress. She did not

want to have that termination," said Ms Sanghera. "She already had a girl and they said 'what about the dowry? We can't afford to have another daughter'."

When the woman reported the crime to police they did not recognise it as honour-based abuse at first, said Ms Sanghera. They pursued the case and the woman wanted to prosecute, but the CPS refused to press charges, claiming it was not in the public interest and that it was a "family matter". The husband later pleaded guilty to controlling behaviour and was sent on a course.

Ms Sanghera, one of the founders of and advisers to the Foreign Office and Home Office's joint Forced Marriage Unit, said: "She felt [the case had been] abandoned for cultural reasons."

Two doctors were secretly filmed agreeing to arrange sex-selective abortions as part of a *Daily Telegraph* investigation in 2012, but the CPS decided not to pursue the case after ruling that it was not in the public interest.

Ms Sanghera said: "There is a fear of not wanting to be accused of being rac-

ist. People are so scared about being politically correct that they are blinded. They have lost their moral compass and their ability to challenge cultural norms that have no place in 21st century Britain."

Earlier this week, a Scotland Yard whistleblower claimed that an "apathy" by prosecutors led to the collapse of what could have been the first conviction for forced marriage in England.

Det Sgt Pal Singh told *The Daily Telegraph* how the CPS was failing to prosecute honour crimes for fear of causing "unrest" in Asian communities.

The Attorney General said he took the issues raised "very seriously" and is to look into alleged failings by the CPS.

A CPS spokesperson said: "We take honour-based crime extremely seriously. 'Political correctness' plays no part whatsoever in our decision making - nor does any outside influence.

"All charging decisions are made completely independently and objectively and based solely on the Code for Crown Prosecutors."