

## HARASSMENT

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Harassment is any act of systematic and/or continual unwanted and annoying actions by one party or group against another or others which may include threats and demands. It may involve racial prejudice, sexual harassment, malice or an attempt to get someone to do something. It may be applying pressure or obtaining sadistic pleasure from making someone worry or be fearful or anxious. It could be bullying.

It is what is offensive, annoying or causing bother which disturbs and upsets. It could be psychological because it affects the mind of the victim; it could be religious, sexual, which would include stalking, or the improper use of the internet. It could also be sociological being intimidation.

Harassment is defined as repeated attacks, and such attacks can be reported to the police who may issue a warning or a caution and if the attacks continue there could be an arrest, a Court case, a fine or, in some cases, a prison sentence.

If I were to regularly telephone a woman for a date that could be harassment.

If a friend regularly telephoned me and pressed me that I should believe in aliens and spiritualism that is harassment. If he were to continue by telling me that Jesus Christ did not exist and the Bible is garbage that is harassment. I can report this to the police and he would be warned to cease this or face arrest.

But there is duplicity here. If I say homosexuality is wrong, I could be charged with being homophobic.

Freedom of speech is the freedom to speak freely without censorship or limitation and is recognised under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But there are limitations when freedom of speech conflicts with other values and rights which has the 'harm principle' or the 'offensive principle.' Hate speech disparages a person or group on the basis of some characteristic such as race or sexual orientation.

And so, if I believe that homosexuality is wrong and say so this could be taken as hate speech. But I do not hate homosexuals. I hate homosexuality and there is a difference.

For a very long time people have been speaking against Jesus Christ so much so that His names are used as swear words. That is hate speech and it is offensive to thousands of people worldwide and yet there is not something called Christophobia. We cannot speak ill of homosexuals but we can of Christ!

Richard Dawkins is an atheist and calls all Christians stupid, ignorant and wicked.

Is this harassment?

Another aspect of the offensive principle is pornography which is rightly deemed as offensive. But no one does anything about it and it brings in millions of pounds each year in revenue for the government.

Richard Desmond is the publisher of many pornographic magazines and the 57th richest man in the UK. He gave a donation of £100,000 to Tony Blair and the Labour Party, which Blair accepted, which is money acquired from Desmond's porn empire. It has been said to be dirty money received by a dirty Prime Minister.

If I say prostitution is wrong I am contradicting UK law which says it is legal. However, if I engage in kerb-crawling to pick up a street prostitute for sex, I am committing an offence.

I could be arrested for regular campaigns denouncing prostitution as evil.

There is also Islamophobia where to speak against Muslims could be hate speech and harassment. This is relevant because of the danger posed by a minority of extreme Muslims who are terrorists. My own experience of Muslims I have known is that they are peaceable people.

My sister's husband, Bob, was sectioned under the Mental Health Act and went into a mental hospital. My sister was desperate and for several weeks I supported her with money, transport and in many other ways, and willingly.

The medical staff asked me to say what I thought was the cause of Bob's illness and, with my sister's prior permission, I spoke with them. They were convinced that his illness was due to an ongoing problem and I explained that my sister had an obsession with the blind Italian tenor, Andreas Bocelli. Bob had said to me on occasions that his wife was married to him and not to a blind Italian tenor and he was angry about this. The medical staff said that this was almost certainly the cause of his severe depression.

I can only assume that this information got back to my sister who then sent me offensive texts messages and finally went to the Police who rang me and said that I must not communicate with my sister again in any way or I could be arrested for harassment.

That cannot be fair. Of course, the problem is my sister's reaction.

Harassment has other problems. Someone may continually joke with another and genuinely believe it is harmless fun. But it is hurting the recipient of that constant joking.

Recent examples of harassment are shown in the rights of homosexuals over the rights of Christians. A Christian couple had a hotel in Cornwall and, because of their beliefs, refused a gay couple a room with a double bed. The devout Christian couple were taken to Court and fined £1800 each. Had they allowed that couple to stay, the hotel's usual clientele may have walked out and never returned thus giving that hotel a bad name and ruining the business. Surely everyone had a right to choose whom they allow on their premises.

A Christian couple in Derbyshire have fostered children successfully for years, now have been prevented from doing so because they follow the Bible teaching that homosexuality is sinful and an abomination unto the Lord. The authorities have said that openness and the rights of gay people are more important than Christianity or religion.

A woman at a reception desk at a UK airport was told she could not wear a crucifix because it was not part of her uniform and yet Asians and Muslims could wear items which were part of their religion but not part of their uniform.

It is clear that Christians are being persecuted and/or penalised because of their beliefs and this constitutes harassment and discrimination.

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