

Government Imposes Restriction Zones for Serious Offenders

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The Ministry of Justice announces that serious violent and sexual offenders must stay within designated restriction zones monitored by GPS, with the measure aimed at enhancing victim safety and freedom.

The plan requires serious offenders, typically those with violent or sexual convictions, to remain within specific areas under GPS monitoring. The

Ministry designs the zones in partnership with victims so that restrictions begin immediately upon sentencing, and violations carry the risk of prison recall. This marks a shift from exclusion zones, which limited victims' movements; instead, the policy confines offenders, granting victims greater freedom to live without fear.

The measure forms part of the Sentencing Bill progressing through Parliament and supports the government's Plan for Change initiative. Victims' advocates commend the reform, stating it allows survivors to rebuild their lives without constraint. The policy includes the recruitment of additional probation officers and investment in monitoring technology, backed by significant funding to strengthen offender management services.

Critics raise concerns that such confinement may risk breaching human rights, citing obligations under the Human Rights Act, particularly Article 5, which protects liberty, and Article 8, which safeguards private and family life. Legal experts warn that restrictions must remain proportionate and necessary to withstand legal scrutiny.

Probation services handle the operational details, drawing up tailored restriction zones based on risk assessment and the safety needs of victims. The system relies on GPS technology to monitor offenders' movements in real time. The technology aims to improve accountability, while swift recall for breaches serves as a deterrent against non-compliance.

This policy underlines the government's shift towards victim-centred justice, placing the burden of safety on oversight of offenders rather than on victims themselves. It signals a new approach in criminal justice

reform that emphasises public protection balanced against legal safeguards.