# Kemi Badenoch faces urgent test to end Conservative leadership turmoil



The Conservative Party has found itself at a significant crossroads following Kemi Badenoch's election as leader amidst a climate of electoral turmoil. As the party grapples with the ramifications of recent elections, the urgency for stability has never been more pressing. Sir Iain Duncan Smith, the former party leader, has voiced his concerns regarding the Conservatives’ persistent tendency to hastily replace leaders in pursuit of a so-called "Messiah." His sentiments are echoed by many within the party, who believe that this cycle of leadership changes only fuels public perception of the Conservatives as a party in disarray.

Historically, the party has seen a rapid turnover at its helm, with five prime ministers—David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, and Rishi Sunak—leading since 2010. Sir Iain argues that the electorate is now weary of this pattern, stating, “The public think that we are panickers... and I think they are sick of that.” His analysis comes at a time when the Conservatives' popularity is waning; a recent Techne poll indicates that Nigel Farage’s Reform UK leads with 30%, closely followed by Labour at 22%, while the Conservatives trail behind at 17%. Such statistics highlight the uphill battle facing Badenoch as she steps into her new role.

The lessons drawn from the party’s history are particularly poignant in light of Badenoch's leadership. Sir Iain’s reflection on Margaret Thatcher's ascent underscores a critical point: she was not immediately viewed as the formidable leader she later became. Initially, Thatcher was labelled as “hopeless” and “shrill” before she had the chance to prove her capabilities. Sir Iain remarks, “Luckily the Conservative party wasn’t quite so fixated on getting rid of their leaders as they have been,” suggesting that immediate judgement often hinders long-term success. Indeed, Thatcher was afforded the time necessary to grow into her role, eventually becoming a seminal figure in both British and global politics.

Badenoch’s election is noteworthy not only for the change in leadership but also for historical significance; she is the first Black woman to lead a major UK political party. This milestone reflects a gradual yet essential shift within the Conservatives, highlighting a commitment to diversity and representation. Yet, with this historic change comes the weight of expectation. Badenoch's track record as shadow housing secretary and her advocacy for a return to the party's foundational principles indicate her ambition to restore stability. Commentators acknowledge her self-assuredness, but the challenges ahead are profound, especially as she faces the imperative to unite a party fragmented by internal disputes and public discontent.

As Sir Iain aptly points out, the public is not looking for a miraculous saviour but rather for a stable leadership that fosters trust and confidence in governance. “They want to know that we are a stable party that does what we say,” he insisted, a sentiment that resonates deeply in the Conservative Party's current context. Badenoch’s path forward will necessitate both pragmatism and a willingness to exhibit dynamic leadership in the face of significant political headwinds.

The question remains: can Kemi Badenoch rise to the occasion and provide the much-needed continuity that the party desperately seeks, or will she fall prey to the very cycle of upheaval that has beleaguered her predecessors?

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2059825/tories-decapitate-leader-messiah), [[2]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2059825/tories-decapitate-leader-messiah)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2059825/tories-decapitate-leader-messiah), [[2]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2059825/tories-decapitate-leader-messiah), [[4]](https://www.irishtimes.com/world/uk/2024/11/04/kemi-badenoch-brings-sass-and-confidence-as-leader-of-conservative-party/), [[5]](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-11-03/kemi-badenoch-becomes-first-black-woman-to-lead-uk-conservatives/104554270)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/nov/02/kemi-badenoch-wins-tory-leadership-election), [[6]](https://www.irishtimes.com/world/uk/2024/11/02/kemi-badenoch-takes-over-from-rishi-sunak-as-new-conservative-leader/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.irishtimes.com/world/uk/2024/11/04/kemi-badenoch-brings-sass-and-confidence-as-leader-of-conservative-party/), [[5]](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-11-03/kemi-badenoch-becomes-first-black-woman-to-lead-uk-conservatives/104554270)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2059825/tories-decapitate-leader-messiah)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2059825/tories-decapitate-leader-messiah> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2059825/tories-decapitate-leader-messiah> - The article discusses the Conservative Party's recent leadership changes, highlighting Kemi Badenoch's election as leader following the party's electoral defeat. It features Sir Iain Duncan Smith's criticism of the party's tendency to frequently change leaders in search of a 'Messiah,' emphasizing the need for stability and continuity. The piece also reflects on Margaret Thatcher's initial reception and her eventual success, suggesting that leaders should be given time to develop and prove themselves.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/nov/02/kemi-badenoch-wins-tory-leadership-election> - This article reports on Kemi Badenoch's victory in the Conservative Party leadership election, marking her as the first Black leader of a major UK party. It details her background, including her tenure as shadow housing secretary and her focus on returning the party to its founding principles. The piece also touches upon the party's recent electoral challenges and Badenoch's commitment to leading the party through a period of renewal.
4. <https://www.irishtimes.com/world/uk/2024/11/04/kemi-badenoch-brings-sass-and-confidence-as-leader-of-conservative-party/> - The article highlights Kemi Badenoch's leadership style, noting her confidence and assertiveness as she takes over the Conservative Party. It includes insights from former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith, who acknowledges Badenoch's potential while emphasizing the need for her to demonstrate verve and effectiveness in her new role. The piece also discusses the challenges she may face, including potential internal party dynamics and the need to unite the party.
5. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-11-03/kemi-badenoch-becomes-first-black-woman-to-lead-uk-conservatives/104554270> - This article covers Kemi Badenoch's election as the new leader of the UK's Conservative Party, marking her as the first Black woman to lead a major British political party. It details her background, including her defeat of Robert Jenrick in the leadership contest and her pledge to lead the party through a period of renewal. The piece also discusses the challenges she faces in rebuilding the party after its significant electoral defeat.
6. <https://www.irishtimes.com/world/uk/2024/11/02/kemi-badenoch-takes-over-from-rishi-sunak-as-new-conservative-leader/> - The article reports on Kemi Badenoch's election as the new leader of the UK Conservative Party, succeeding Rishi Sunak. It provides details of the leadership contest, including the vote count and Badenoch's plans for the party's future. The piece also highlights her background and the significance of her leadership in the context of the party's recent electoral challenges.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cw0yr7pyzneo> - This article discusses Kemi Badenoch's announcement to run for Conservative Party leader, emphasizing her focus on renewing the party and returning to its 'first principles.' It outlines her campaign platform, including a focus on sovereignty and confidence in capitalism, and notes her popularity among Conservative Party members. The piece also mentions other candidates in the leadership race and the context of the party's recent electoral defeat.