# Kemi Badenoch calls for reassessment of UK’s commitment to ECHR



In a significant address at the Policy Exchange think tank in Westminster, Kemi Badenoch, leader of the Conservative Party, proposed that the United Kingdom may need to reconsider its commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) if it continues to conflict with national interests. This statement marks her first substantial intervention in foreign policy since taking on the party leadership.

Badenoch articulated a perspective shaped by global instability, stating that British sovereignty must take precedence over international law and institutions, especially amid what she perceives as a decline in the post-war order largely supported by the United States. "When faced with regimes with no respect for the law, we need more realism," she asserted. Her comments reflect a broader call for re-evaluation of long-standing international agreements made by the UK.

During her speech, she identified the ECHR as potentially problematic, particularly citing instances where international bodies have taken positions on issues she considers to be outside their remit, such as climate change, which the ECHR has declared a human right. Additionally, she noted that both the International Court of Justice and a UN maritime tribunal have instructed Britain to relinquish control of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, framing these developments as examples of foreign entities undermining British interests.

Badenoch warned against allowing "international law" to be manipulated by non-governmental organisations or critics who may seek to impose political agendas through international mechanisms or legal systems. "If international bodies are taken over by activists, or by autocratic regimes like China or Russia, we must use our influence to stop them, and if that fails, we will need to disengage," she stated.

In response to questions regarding the potential for the UK to withdraw from the ECHR, Badenoch was forthright but cautious, emphasising that any exit should be carefully planned. "I have always been very clear that the ECHR should not stop us from doing what is right for the people of this country and what is right in our national interest. And if it continues to do so, at some point we will probably have to leave," she noted.

Badenoch acknowledged the importance of international agreements that were forged following the Second World War, yet expressed concern that some have deviated from their original intentions over time. She lamented, "we cannot win a war against an opponent willing to break all the rules while we insist on playing by the most gentle of Queensbury rules."

While maintaining a complex view of international relations, Badenoch reinforced her belief in the United States as an ally, even as she referenced the controversial remarks made by former President Donald Trump regarding Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Badenoch's speech seems to reflect an increasingly assertive stance on national sovereignty and a determination to navigate the balance between international obligations and domestic priorities, positioning herself as a key voice in shaping the future of the UK's foreign policy landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2025/02/24/kemi-badenoch-tories-willing-disengage-international-law/> - This article supports Kemi Badenoch's stance on potentially disengaging from international law and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) if they conflict with British national interests. It highlights her speech at the Policy Exchange think tank, where she emphasized the need for 'conservative realism' in foreign policy.
* <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/badenoch-threatens-to-disengage-from-echr/5122460.article> - This article corroborates Badenoch's comments on disengaging from international bodies like the ECHR if they no longer support British interests. It also mentions her criticism of naive trust in institutions such as the International Criminal Court.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/kemi-badenoch-vladimir-putin-volodymyr-zelensky-policy-exchange-donald-trump-b2704234.html> - This article provides context for Badenoch's speech at the Policy Exchange, where she discussed the need for realism in foreign policy and the potential for leaving the ECHR if it hinders national interests. It also touches on her views regarding the US as an ally.
* <https://www.policyexchange.org.uk/> - This is the website of the Policy Exchange think tank, where Kemi Badenoch delivered her speech on foreign policy. It provides a platform for discussing and analyzing policy issues, including those related to international law and sovereignty.
* <https://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=home> - This is the official website of the European Court of Human Rights, which Badenoch mentioned as potentially conflicting with British national interests. It provides information on the court's role and decisions, including those related to climate change.