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Why Britain Must Exit the European Court of Human Rights

July 17, 2025

— Categories: Human Rights



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The European Convention on Human Rights, born in the shadow of World War II, was a noble endeavour. Shaped with significant British input, it stood as a beacon for liberty, dignity, and justice across a war-torn continent. For decades, it shielded the vulnerable and set a standard for civilised nations. Yet, what was once a protector of the oppressed has morphed into a legal straitjacket, hindering Britain's ability to safeguard its citizens and secure its borders.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), tasked with enforcing the Convention, has issued rulings that some critics claim prioritise the rights of individuals, including those with criminal convictions, over certain public safety or immigration controls. However, the Court maintains that its role is to uphold rights guaranteed under the Convention, and rulings are based on case-specific facts and proportionality tests. Take the case of Lawangeen Abdulrahimzai, an Afghan who entered the UK illegally, posing as a 14-year-old unaccompanied minor. In reality, he was a 21-year-old who had been convicted of double murder in Serbia in absentia. He was placed in foster care and attended a local college. In March 2022, he fatally stabbed Tom Roberts, an aspiring Royal Marine, in Bournemouth. A young man who dreamed of serving his country was killed because our legal framework placed a foreign criminal's rights above public safety.

This is not an isolated incident. The Home Office is frequently blocked from deporting foreign nationals convicted of serious crimes due to appeals under Article 8 of the ECHR, which protects the right to a family life. Violent offenders, including murderers and sexual predators, remain in Britain, shielded by laws never intended to protect the guilty. In one shocking case reported by The Times, a Sri Lankan paedophile delayed deportation for years by falsely claiming persecution based on his sexuality. No paedophile's preferences should ever trump the safety of children.

The issue extends beyond urban centres. In Ipswich, an asylum seeker claiming to be 15 was enrolled in a local school, only to be exposed as an adult, possibly as old as 30. Such deception puts our children at risk when immigration and safeguarding laws collide. The British public bears the consequences of a system that no longer functions as intended.

The Rwanda policy, intended as a deterrent, was introduced by the Conservative government, but no deportation flights to Rwanda took place due to ongoing legal challenges. In 2023, small boat crossings dropped by approximately 36 per cent compared to 2022. The Labour government announced the end of the Rwanda deportation policy in 2025. In one weekend in July 2025, over 1,600 people crossed the Channel, marking one of the highest totals on record. Without a credible deterrent, smugglers prosper, and the crossings continue unabated.

Critics argue that leaving the ECHR would undermine human rights. This is nonsense. Britain's commitment to justice predates the ECHR, rooted in centuries of common law and parliamentary oversight. To suggest we need foreign judges to uphold our values is an insult

to our legal heritage. We are perfectly capable of protecting rights without Strasbourg's interference.

Genuine refugees fleeing persecution deserve our compassion, and Britain will always offer sanctuary to those truly in need. But the line between protection and exploitation has become dangerously blurred. When criminals with fabricated claims or serious convictions can avoid deportation, the system has failed. British families should not be left grieving while we debate the rights of those who lied to enter our country.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, in a recent interview on *The View*, put it succinctly: immigrants should respect their host country, learn its language, follow its laws, and embrace its culture. Like guests in a home, they must abide by the rules. If they don't, we must have the power to ask them to leave. That power is currently shackled by the ECHR.

Leaving the ECHR doesn't mean abandoning human rights. It means prioritising the safety and well-being of British citizens. It means ensuring our laws serve justice, not exploitation. We don't need Strasbourg to tell us how to be fair, we've been doing it for centuries. But fairness must go hand in hand with firmness. Exiting the ECHR is the only way to restore that balance.