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## UK Attorney General Urges Clarity on ECHR Rulings

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The United Kingdom's Attorney General is urging a shift in legal terminology to help the public better grasp what it means when Britain is required to follow European Court of Human Rights decisions. The proposal aims to counter widespread misconceptions fueled by imprecise language and growing scepticism toward international courts.

At the Council of Europe's summer school in Liverpool, Attorney-General Lord Richard Hermer KC proposed replacing the term "execution of judgments" with "implementation of judgments," arguing that "execution" carries unintended connotations of capital punishment

and fuels mischaracterisations of ECHR rulings. This misunderstanding, he noted, feeds into claims that the European Court of Human Rights, a body often criticised for overreach, imposes severe or punitive measures on sovereign nations.

Hermer said that replacing “execution” with “implementation” more precisely reflects the legal obligation of member states to consider compliance with ECHR decisions, while leaving space for democratic debate. He acknowledged that even “implementation” might understate the level of debate and political choice involved when a government responds to a ruling from the European Court of Human Rights, sometimes referred to as the ECHR.

Hermer made these comments amid growing public mistrust of international courts, with critics arguing that rulings from Strasbourg may clash with UK legal traditions and national interests. By advocating clearer terminology, Hermer aims to dispel misconceptions that compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights equates to surrendering sovereignty, reinforcing that the UK can both honour its obligations and retain policymaking autonomy.

This renewed focus on transparent communication reflects a broader effort to ensure that obligations to uphold human rights do not become mired in misunderstanding or exploited by those seeking to discredit international cooperation. Reframing the conversation with accurate language could help preserve public trust in legal institutions and reduce the sense of stigma around humanitarian rulings without compromising democratic decision-making.

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