

[Whether or not whole-life sentences are right, the ECHR is taking over British sovereignty](#) [1]

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Jeremy's Bamber's successful appeal to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), has significance further than simply declaring whole life terms to be against human rights, and therefore allowing those sentenced to have their sentence reviewed and seek appeal. Although many will regard this as a great success for human rights in the UK, this is debatable, whilst it allows familiar concerns about the slow erosion of our sovereignty to emerge.

As seen in the saga of the only very recently successful attempt to deport Abu Qatada, the ECHR reigns supreme over the UK, and as such, it can overrule decisions by British Courts and Parliament. This has only been confirmed by today's ruling, which clearly illustrates how Parliament has lost its sovereignty, as the laws it has made no longer necessarily take effect in the UK, as illustrated by the alteration of the whole-life tariff today. The fact that we no longer have power over our own sentencing, and that the Parliament, supposedly the most powerful institution in the country, has been usurped, should be a cause for alarm, and illustrates one of the main problems with our relations with that other overbearing European institution—the EU.

Separately, the claims that this is a victory for human rights, are, at best, dubious. Whilst it gives some of this country's worst criminals a chance for release, it does not consider the rights of the victims of the crimes, or their families, who will either be forced to relive extremely uncomfortable events during retrials, or, even worse, be faced with the prospect of someone who has seriously harmed them or their family being released out into the world again. In addition, the threat of a whole life tariff is significantly diminished by this ruling, as lacks the weight it previously had, and so is less of a deterrent to crime.

Then there is the claim that prison offers the possibility for rehabilitation, and so releasing these criminals back into our society is not necessarily a bad thing. This may be all well and good in the case of more minor offenders, but those on whole life tariffs are hardly what you can call minor offenders, with some of Britain's most notorious criminals, including Bamber himself, Peter Moore, and the more recently convicted Mark Bridger and Dale Cregan. The prospect of such violent and dangerous criminals being released, on the pretence that they have 'reformed' is both unreliable, given their often deceptive characters, and disconcerting, as we may see serial killers returned to our streets.

This ruling, therefore, can be seen to have had a strongly negative impact on both sovereignty, sentencing processes, and even our own safety, and, as such, should be regarded with great concern.

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