

Lame duck Sunak awaits his fate as the country stagnate...

Published: January 13, 2026, 1:52 am

The [FT notes this morning](#) that:

Rishi Sunak has been warned by senior Conservatives that he would face a significant rebellion and certain defeat in the House of Commons if he tried to take Britain out of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Why does Sunak want to follow Russia and Belarus out of the ECHR (which has nothing to do with the EU)? Because he knows what he plans to do with small boat crossings is likely to be at the limits of legality, and easily open to challenge. That's why.

So what is his response? It is to get rid of the law, and not meet international expectations.

Why will some Tories challenge this (whilst others will, no doubt, cheer)? That is because there still remains within the party an element that thinks that being Conservative necessarily implies respect for the rule of law.

How big is that element? No one can be certain, but the suggestion being made is that it is big enough to guarantee defeat for Sunak on this issue in the House of Commons.

That, however, also means that Sunak cannot deliver on one of his five pledges: if he cannot deliver legislation to stop small boat migration into the UK that is compliant with the ECHR then he not only fails to deliver law on this, but can also do nothing to actually stop those boats.

Let me be clear: it is my belief that the way to stop the small boats crossing the channel is to provide legal ways of access into the UK and cross-channel ferry tickets for those who have succeeded with their application or who are thought likely to do so. I think that every aspect of Sunak's policy is wrong.

This point having been made there does remain an important dimension to this story. This is that if Sunak cannot get through legislation on his most basic commitments, because members of his own party will not vote for them, then why is he in office as

prime minister? What power has he actually got to effect change in that case? Or is he already a total lame duck occupying Number 10 until an election can put him out his misery?

And what will that election be? Will it be a general election or might it be another vote of no confidence by Tory backbench MPs? At present, the second seems more likely, but that depends on whether or not a Boris Johnson survives his forthcoming trial by his fellow MPs in the House as a whole.

Meanwhile, the country will continue to stagnate.