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Dear Committee of Ministers,

Hirst v UK (No. 2) Judgement

I write to you under Rule 9 of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers for the supervision of the execution of judgments and of the terms of friendly settlements.

I refer the Committee to previous submissions from UNLOCK regarding the above case which was decided in 2004 – some six and a half years ago, during which time the UK government has effectively defied the Court and failed to comply with its ruling.

The UK general election held in May 2010 took place with the blanket ban barring prisoners from taking part still in place; a clear and repeated violation of Article 3 Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights. A number of prisoners have since embarked on legal actions against the UK government.

At a meeting with the justice minister Lord McNally in June, the Committee of Ministers “expressed confidence that the new United Kingdom government will adopt general measures to implement the judgement ahead of elections scheduled for 2011 in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and thereby also prevent further, repetitive applications to the European Court.” Following this meeting, justice minister Lord McNally said the government would look “afresh at the best way forward on the issue of prisoners voting rights”.

It is essential that in order to avoid a similar situation arising in next year’s elections, legislation to be brought forward without delay and UNLOCK asks the Committee to take all actions possible to ensure that this happens.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature appears to read 'J. Harmsworth'.

Julie Harmsworth (formerly Wright) | Deputy Chief Executive