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How the U.S. Government Should Respond to Hungary's Slide to Authoritarianism

July 2017

ON HUMAN RIGHTS, the United States must be a beacon. Activists fighting for freedom around the globe continue to look to us for inspiration and count on us for support. Upholding human rights is not only a moral obligation; it's a vital national interest. America is strongest when our policies and actions match our values.

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We know that it is not enough to expose and protest injustice, so we create the political environment and policy solutions necessary to ensure consistent respect for human rights. Whether we are protecting refugees, combating torture, or defending persecuted minorities, we focus not on making a point, but on making a difference. For over 30 years, we've built bipartisan coalitions and teamed up with frontline activists and lawyers to tackle issues that demand American leadership.

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Introduction

Praising recent statements from the State Department and its embassy in Budapest, foreign diplomats, human rights activists and others in Hungary urge the U.S. government to make clear to the Hungarian authorities that fresh attacks on civil society and academic freedom will be met with costs. They also warn that Hungary's increasingly closer relationship with Russia threatens the interests of the United States and of the European Union. They suggest too that a powerful point of leverage over the Hungarian government will be the upcoming E.U. budget negotiations.

Since 2014, Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban has openly declared his desire to build an "illiberal state" in the European Union. Key to this effort to abandon trans-Atlantic values and remake Hungary in the mold of Vladimir Putin's Russia is the repression of civil society.

European and other foreign diplomats in Budapest told Human Rights First that Trump's rhetoric and domestic policies towards minority rights, immigration, and other issues have helped create an environment enabling these attacks on human rights values. During the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Orban proudly supported Donald Trump, praising the two leaders' oft-stated common concern over Muslims and refugees, and noting that "this decent presidential candidate [has] said that the export of democracy must be stopped. I myself couldn't have said that any better."

Now, emboldened in part by an expectation that President Trump's election will result in a more permissive environment, Orban is intensifying his effort to build his repressive state, expanding an aggressive assault on dissent. Since Trump's inauguration, the Hungarian government has passed a series of repressive measures that include a law, based on Russian legislation,

targeting the finances of NGOs, which it describes as "paid political activists... attempting to promote foreign interests."¹ It has also enacted a law designed to close down Budapest's prestigious Central European University (CEU).

The Economist warned in a June editorial that "Orban's creeping authoritarianism is not just a problem for Hungary. It is a direct challenge to the 'fundamental values' of the European project— values that Hungary accepted when it ratified the Lisbon treaty. Where Hungary leads, others may follow; Poland already has. 'We were black sheep, but now we are a success story,' Mr. Orban crowed, shortly after the inauguration of Donald Trump."²

Meanwhile, Orban's government edges ever closer towards President Putin. The Kremlin regards the Orban government as a vehicle for expanding its influence while weakening E.U. and NATO cohesion.

"There is more talk now from Fidesz about 'balancing' major power influence between the U.S. and Russia," said one European diplomat, referencing Orban's political party.³ "For some Hungarian government officials, politics is geography. It's about practicalities, not ideology or values. They tell us they have a history over centuries of playing the major powers, that they're in the middle and need to balance both, not to be one on side or the other too much. For E.U. countries this is a bit scary; it's not a policy based on our shared values."

Public enthusiasm in Hungary for staying in the European Union remains high, despite the Orban government's consistent attempts to vilify Brussels. A Pew Research Center survey published in June 2017 showed 77 percent of Hungarian respondents said they wanted to remain in the European Union, with 13 percent favoring leaving. This was exactly the median

response from respondents in the nine countries surveyed.⁴

Fidesz supporters have a stranglehold on virtually all of the country's print and television media, and with opposition forces divided and weak, Fidesz is expected to easily win next year's parliamentary elections, possibly reaching the two-thirds "supermajority" threshold.

Foreign government officials commonly remark on Fidesz officials' impressive discipline, and the party's unified public messaging. Foreign diplomatic staff based in Budapest also complain that it's hard to engage with Hungarian government officials, and that few are willing to discuss political policies and ideas, even privately.

"The government isn't interested in building a post-Cold War democracy, but in establishing a power base for the Fidesz Party," said one diplomat. Others referred to Orban's enthusiasm for citing "Hungary First" as a slogan, in conscious imitation of Trump's "America First." According to a veteran diplomat based in Budapest, "Orban is saying if it's okay for the U.S. to say this and act out of pure self-interest, then it's okay for Hungary to do it too. He's saying that, like Trump, we're not going to tell other countries how to run their politics—we don't want anyone meddling in our business and we won't interfere in anyone else's."

This report outlines the concerns of a range of Hungarians and foreign diplomats based in Budapest about the Hungarian government's latest attempts to stifle civil society and deepen ties to Russia. It recommends a strong U.S. response to these actions, and highlights potential opportunities for the U.S. government to demonstrate to the Hungarian government the importance it places on respect for human rights and democratic institutions. It draws on interviews with dozens of Hungarian human rights defenders, diplomats, civil society activists, and

journalists, conducted during a research trip in June 2017.

It follows Human Rights First's April 2017 report, "[No Society Without Civil Society: Orban, Putin, and Why the United States Should Resist Hungary's Attack on NGOs](#)," which detailed Orban's close ties to Putin and his government's systematic assault on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and independent media. Human Rights First has for many years made recommendations on how the U.S. government should respond to the Hungarian government's assault on democratic institutions and the rule of law.⁵

Playing With Fire: Orban's Russian Overtures

A June 22, 2017 *New York Times* editorial suggested that, "Russia's mischief knows few boundaries. The country is still destabilizing Ukraine, using its military force to defend President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, undermining democracy across Europe and trying to woo vulnerable NATO members in Eastern Europe to its side."⁶

This is a view strongly supported by foreign diplomats in Budapest, who warn that Orban's encouragement to Putin to become further involved in Hungary's internal business is, as one said, "playing with fire."

In January 2017, Orban noted approvingly that Russia had survived "the West's attempts" to "isolate" and "dismantle the regime" there, surviving low oil prices and sanctions. He added that Europe shouldn't ignore the opportunities presented by Russia.⁷

At the end of May, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said in an interview with Russian state news agency TASS that "Sanctions against Russia [over Crimea] have failed to reach their

goals, and countries of the European Union must discuss their impact.”⁸ As Szijjarto’s statement indicates, Orban regularly criticizes E.U. sanctions on the Kremlin. He is also the only European leader to regularly host Putin since the latter’s 2014 annexation of Crimea. The Russian leader is scheduled to make his second visit to Hungary this year in August.⁹

One foreign diplomat based in Budapest said, “In private, some Fidesz officials say they’re okay with what Russia is doing, as long as there is a country between them and Russia. This is 19th century thinking, with talk of buffer zones.”

Another senior foreign diplomat commented, “As a small country, we are very nervous about Orban’s undermining of the rule of law, and of playing the big powers against each other. For us, the rule of law internationally is the basis of our security.”

When Putin last traveled to Budapest, in February 2017, Orban said Hungary and Russia were being forced to work together in a “difficult international environment,” because anti-Russian policies have become popular in Western Europe.

In March, Orban’s government got the go-ahead from the European Union to proceed with a \$10.6 billion nuclear project financed by Russia, with Russia’s state nuclear company Rosatom leading construction of two nuclear reactors at Paks, in central Hungary. It’s a controversial project, not least because Rosatom won the no-bid contract to build the plant, and because around \$10.8 billion of the \$13 billion in financing required to build the reactors is being handled by Russia’s Vnesheconombank, which is under E.U. sanctions.

Said one European diplomat, “Orban is very smart, and can play both major powers, but he might not be as smart as he thinks he is, letting Russia in like this.”

Another suggested the Hungarian government’s overtures to Russia were a high-risk gamble. “This is really dangerous from Orban—he thinks he has Putin in his pocket, but trying to balance the U.S. and Russia is playing with fire, not least because the Hungarian public is, for historical reasons, deeply suspicious of Russia and at some point they might turn against Orban for this.”

For many Hungarians, the Soviet era is not yet a distant memory, and they are uncomfortable with too close an alliance with Russia. One senior diplomat told Human Rights First, “Orban’s Putin relationship is his vulnerability. While lower energy prices are good for Hungarians and the nuclear plants will create jobs, the public has a deep distrust of Russia.”

Trump’s own relationship with Putin is, to say the least, unclear—and the American leader’s stated interest in establishing a new era of cooperation between the United States and Russia may circumscribe the range of options the United States would take to weaken Russia’s influence in Hungary. But more than one foreign diplomat warned that the budding Hungary-Russia partnership is dangerous in security terms for the United States. “As a NATO country, the U.S. should demand more transparency from Hungary on its dealings with Russia, and should question what’s being shared with the Russians, inadvertently or not,” said one Budapest-based foreign diplomat. “The U.S. should be worried about sharing intelligence with Hungary when it’s getting this close to Russia—you have to worry how far Russia can penetrate Hungary’s internal security systems.”

Attacks on Civil Society: An Overkill Mindset

Thus far in 2017, Hungary has witnessed a remarkable acceleration in government attacks on academic freedom and civil society. In April, the

Hungarian government passed a law that independent observers view as aimed at forcing the closure of Central European University (CEU). In June, it passed another to force NGOs to disclose whether they receive foreign funds, a tactic first pioneered by the Kremlin. Fidesz has in recent years also targeted investigative journalists, taken over independent media, harassed NGOs with draining tax audits, and passed legislation targeting activists' foreign funding.

Orban has declared that 2017 is the year to "extrude" NGOs, but attacks on NGOs began years ago. In 2014, the Hungarian prime minister directed the investigation of 62 organizations that had received money from Norway Grants or European Economic Area Grants programs. A campaign of raids, confiscation of property, and investigations lasted over a year, with the government claiming that certain groups had used international funds illicitly to subvert the country's politics. The incident led to a major diplomatic rift between Hungary and Norway, with Norway freezing development funds to Hungary for 19 months.

In March, the government sent a "national consultation" survey of six biased questions to every Hungarian household aimed at legitimizing its attacks on NGOs. Question Four read:

"More and more foreign-supported organizations operate in Hungary with the aim of interfering in the internal affairs of our country in an opaque manner. These organizations could jeopardize our independence. What do you think Hungary should do? (a) Require them to register, revealing the objectives of their activities and the sources of their finances. (b) Allow them to continue their risky activities without any supervision."¹⁰

This followed Orban's State of the Union address, where he identified civil society as one of five major challenges threatening Hungary:

"We will also need to take up the struggle against international organizations' increasingly strong activists... foreign funding is being secretly used to influence Hungarian politics. I think that on more than enough occasions we have proved that we are capable of deciding on our own fate. So the question is whether we should yield to covert foreign attempts to exert influence. We are not talking about non-governmental organizations fighting to promote an important cause, but about paid activists from international organizations and their branch offices in Hungary. Are we going to do something to at least ensure transparency, and make these issues publicly known? We must also recognize, ladies and gentlemen, that here there are large predators swimming in the water. This is the transnational empire of George Soros, with its international heavy artillery and huge sums of money."¹¹

The demonization of Hungarian-American philanthropist George Soros and the public policy NGOs associated with him is not a new tactic, but has recently reached a fever pitch. In early July billboards and full-page media ads appeared across Hungary showing a smiling Soros with the caption, "Don't let Soros have the last laugh." The government campaign targeted Soros's support for migrants. Some of the billboards were defaced with graffiti saying "stinking Jew." The Federation of Hungarian Jewish Federations urged Orban to stop the campaign, saying, "This campaign, while not openly anti-Semitic, clearly has the potential to ignite uncontrolled emotions, including anti-Semitism."¹² On July 11, days after the campaign began, the government relented and agreed to take down advertisements, a task still pending at the time this report went to press.



Government-sponsored billboard targeting George Soros
ATTILA KISBENEDEK/AFP/Getty Images

Orban sees Soros's funding of independent journalists and groups focused on the rights of immigrants, refugees, and minorities such as Roma as a threat to his increasingly authoritarian rule. Fidesz's Szilard Nemeth, an M.P. and deputy chair of the National Security Committee, has called for groups supported by Soros' Open Society Foundation to be "swept out of the country." He has also promised to push the state's security apparatus to investigate NGOs, saying, "These organizations have to be pushed back with every possible tool, and I think they should get out of here."¹³

The legislation targeting foreign funding passed despite strenuous warnings from U.N. and European experts. Michel Forst, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, and David Kaye, U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, said financial transparency was already ensured under existing legislation, adding: "The current bill would only discriminate against, delegitimize and stigmatize NGOs that receive all or part of their funding from abroad. If adopted, it would have a

chilling effect not only on expressions of peaceful dissent but also on the legitimate work of NGOs and individual human rights defenders scrutinizing government and exposing human rights violations."¹⁴

In May, members of the European Parliament censured Orban's government, easily passing a resolution that condemned a "serious deterioration of the rule of law, democracy, and fundamental rights."¹⁵ It cited the attempted closure of the CEU and called for a process that could ultimately

lead to E.U. sanctions against Hungary. "The situation in Hungary justifies the triggering of the procedure which may result in sanctions for Hungary," MEPs said in the resolution, and called for the controversial laws to be suspended or withdrawn.¹⁶

The resolution listed a catalogue of MEP concerns, including "freedom of expression, academic freedom, the human rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, freedom of assembly and association, restrictions and obstructions to the activities of civil society organizations, the right to equal treatment, the rights of people belonging to minorities, including Roma, Jews and LGBTI people, social rights, the functioning of the constitutional system, the independence of the judiciary and of other institutions and many worrying allegations of corruption and conflicts of interest, which, taken together, could represent an emerging systemic threat to the rule of law in this Member State."¹⁷

Undeterred, Orban's government passed its anti-NGO law on June 13. The act imposes strict restrictions, requiring groups receiving more than \$26,000 annually in overseas funding to register



The youth wing of Fidesz also organized a separate campaign using posters depicting Soros as a "puppet master," a pre-WWII antisemitic trope that Jews exercise too much control in politics.

as “foreign-supported” and disclose their foreign donors, or face closure. The law is similar to a law passed in Russia in 2012, which required NGOs receiving foreign funding to register as “foreign agents.”

Local activists estimate that roughly 500 NGOs will be affected by the new law, out of a total of 60,000 operating in the country. These include leading Hungarian NGOs working on civil and political rights. Amnesty International Hungary, the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU) and the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, have said that they will not comply with the law. "The law is a targeted attack and attempt to silence TASZ (HCLU) and all other organisations which have the courage to help those who are oppressed," said HCLU.¹⁸

Hungary’s anti-NGO law is less stringent than similar legislation in some other countries, but one foreign government official in Budapest predicted that it is likely to be amended in the future, and

that “You’ll see a slicing of the salami gradually so more rights are eroded.” Another viewed the laws targeting NGOs and CEU as “totally unnecessary,” saying, “the government is completely in control here, and those criticizing it really aren’t a serious threat. But this government has a mindset of overkill when it comes to any dissent.” Another senior diplomat described the arguments used by the Fidesz government against NGOs as “grotesque.”

But Orban appears to have miscalculated by taking on CEU, a university endowed by Soros in 1991, just as Hungary emerged from communist rule. Today, CEU is among the most prestigious universities in central Europe, and every year educates over 1,500 students from over 100 countries.

On April 4, 2017, with no consultation and only a week’s notice, the Hungarian parliament passed amendments to Hungary’s higher education law that would, if implemented, have had the effect of

forcing CEU out of the country. The move triggered unexpectedly large protests in Budapest, with tens of thousands of Hungarians taking to the streets, and massive international condemnation. Twenty-seven Nobel laureates, the International Association of Universities, and the presidents of Yale, Harvard, Princeton, New York University, Duke, and Oxford, as well as thousands of scholars and researchers, subsequently called for CEU to be allowed to remain in Hungary.¹⁹

The new law, dubbed by its critics “Lex CEU,” sets legally unnecessary requirements on universities registered in foreign countries, several of which apply only to CEU. These include a requirement to establish a national-level agreement on the university between the United States and Hungary, and the need for the university to operate a campus in the United States in addition to its existing campus in Budapest. The university has accreditation in New York, and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo began negotiations with representatives of the Hungarian government at the end of June 2017, although no resolution has been reached yet.

Lex CEU is widely regarded as an assault on academic freedom in Hungary and a transparent attempt to target the inclusivity and critical thinking supported by Soros. One popular theory in Hungarian diplomatic circles is that in addition to attacking Soros directly, Orban put the CEU issue on the agenda in an attempt to focus Trump’s attention on Hungary, given that Orban expected Trump would regard Soros as a common adversary, and respond approvingly to the Hungarian Prime Minister. If so, given the U.S. State Department’s stern, public refusal to “negotiate” over CEU’s fate, the gambit appears thus far to have fallen short of Orban’s wish.

U.S. and International Response

Many activists and diplomats suggested that the strongest outside points of influence on Hungary’s government in the coming years will be in the context of the next E.U. budget, which comes into force in 2021 and will last for seven years. Negotiations will open in earnest next year, with E.U. countries having the opportunity to exert some pressure on Hungary’s behavior when it comes to allocating how much each country will receive.

As *The Economist* has suggested, “The E.U. should use upcoming budget negotiations to apply fiscal pressure... Hungary is a big recipient of the aid dished out to its poorer members, receiving nearly \$6.7 billion a year. More than 95% of public investment projects in Hungary are co-financed by the E.U. In general, the E.U. should stay out of members’ internal affairs, but governments that flagrantly violate democratic norms should face sanctions, such as receiving fewer handouts from E.U. structural funds. (German politicians favor similar sanctions for those, like Hungary, that fail to accept their share of refugees.)”²⁰

The Economist’s view was shared by several European diplomats who spoke to Human Rights First, including that one condition for Hungary receiving E.U. funds is that it should join the European Public Prosecutor’s Office, a new body set up to fight corruption.

Despite ongoing fears that the Trump White House might offer overt encouragement to Orban, diplomats who Human Rights First spoke to in Budapest were generally positive about the U.S. embassy’s response to the assault on NGO and the CEU, and note with approval that the State Department has been critical of the last moves towards authoritarianism. “The U.S. embassy here is saving America’s reputation,” said one diplomat.

In relation to the U.S. embassy's new-found voice, activists and diplomats frequently cited the poor record of political appointees as U.S. ambassadors to Budapest over the last 20 years, irrespective of American political party. Common complaints are that previous ambassadors had little or no foreign policy experience, and that Hungary is too complicated and too important a posting to entrust to the hands of a novice.

There is currently no U.S. ambassador in Budapest, and several civil society leaders suggested that the vacancy should be filled by an experienced career diplomat. At the moment the mission is headed by U.S. Chargé d'Affaires David Kostelancik, whose record on defending Hungarian civil society and academic freedom was repeatedly commended to Human Rights First by activists and foreign diplomats. At the end of March, just before the law targeting the CEU was adopted, Kostelancik noted that the United States was:

“very concerned about the legislation proposed by the Hungarian Government yesterday that would severely impact the operations of the Central European University in Budapest... It is a premier academic institution with an excellent reputation in Hungary and around the world, and it stands as an important center of academic freedom in the region ...Moreover, the University is an important success story in the U.S.-Hungarian relationship, and it enjoys strong bipartisan support in the U.S. Government. The United States opposes any effort to compromise the operations or independence of the University.”²¹

The U.S. embassy joined other embassies in issuing a diplomatic demarche against the Hungarian government over the NGO legislation, and the day after the law on NGO foreign funding was passed in June, the U.S. embassy released a statement indicating:

“The United States is troubled by the Hungarian parliament's passage of legislation that unfairly burdens a targeted group of Hungarian civil society organizations, many of which focus on fighting corruption and protecting human rights and civil liberties. This new law, particularly in the context of government rhetoric portraying civil society organizations receiving foreign funding as acting against the interests of society, stigmatizes local organizations and will have a chilling effect on the ability of Hungarians to organize themselves and address their concerns to the government in a democratic manner. If signed into law, this legislation will constitute a step backward from the principles of freedom of association and expression embodied in NATO, the E.U., and the OSCE, and from our shared commitments to supporting civil society. Statements that this legislation is based on the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) in the United States are false.”²²

This was followed five days later by a statement from State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert in Washington, D.C., who said the legislation:

“unfairly burdens and targets Hungarian civil society, which is working to fight corruption and protect civil liberties. By portraying groups supported with foreign funding as acting against the interests of Hungarian society, this legislation would weaken the ability of Hungarians to organize and address concerns in a legitimate and democratic manner. If signed into law, this would be another step away from Hungary's commitments to uphold the principles and values that are central to the E.U. and NATO.”²³

The rebukes from the United States are vitally important, say the foreign diplomats. “Orban craves American government approval,” said one. “He's frustrated that he hasn't been invited to the White House for a visit, and public criticism from

the State Department and the embassy really hurts the government here.”

Another said: “Even if things in Hungary are bad, it’s important for the U.S. government to make a fuss about what’s happened, because it will deter the next country thinking about doing the same, whether it’s the Czech Republic or Slovakia or whoever next,” said one.

The U.S. Congress is also taking action on Orban’s attacks on academic freedom and civil society. Members of the House of Representatives have unveiled two separate bipartisan resolutions in recent weeks.

In May, Representatives Seth Moulton (D-MA), Joe Wilson (R-SC), Vicky Hartzler (R-MO), and Gregory Meeks (D-NY) introduced House Resolution 353, which notes, “Prime Minister Viktor Orban and his ruling party ‘Fidesz’ has increasingly moved towards authoritarianism in word and action, declaring in 2014 that he preferred an ‘illiberal state’ and ‘illiberal democracy’ citing Russia as his model,” and that Orban has “sought to stifle any opposition to his rule, including by suppressing free speech and assembly, from universities, civil society groups, and independent think tanks.”²⁴

House Resolution 353 also cites the new law on NGO foreign funding. It notes how “policies are thinly disguised as attempts to consolidate Fidesz control,” and that the NGO law “is modeled on Russia’s foreign agent law which the E.U. and international rights experts have criticized as a tool to silence independent civil society.” It also “condemns Hungary’s movement towards a less free and democratic society; and...urges Hungary to reverse laws and policies that curtail individual rights and basic freedoms.”

In June Representatives Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) and Paul Cook (R-CA) introduced House Resolution 39, which clearly sends a signal to the Hungarian government about the CEU. Titled

“Supporting International Academic Freedom and American Universities Abroad,” H.R. 394 doesn’t mention Hungary by name, but pointedly notes that “it is essential for the United States Government to support and defend American-accredited academic institutions that are subjected to discrimination, harassment, coercion, unjustified closure or seizure,” and urges “that it should be the policy of the United States to support American-accredited academic institutions that are subjected to discrimination or harassment by foreign governments and to respond quickly in the case of the coercion, unjustified closure, or seizure of any such institution,” and that “the Secretary of State to take strong and effective measures to respond to any such treatment toward American-accredited academic institutions operating in other countries.”²⁵

Conclusion

Hungary’s Orban government is steering the country towards a dangerous authoritarianism. Dissent is increasingly threatened. The U.S. government should resist this development, and public support from the U.S. government for civil society is valued by local activists. The U.S. government should continue to openly criticize attacks on freedoms of speech, of association, and on academic and other rights that impede civil society’s work. Foreign diplomats based in Budapest also encourage the U.S. government to react strongly to the Hungarian government’s attempts at authoritarianism and to act as a brake on extremism fueled by Fidesz.

The U.S. government should use its influence to support a more inclusive politics in Hungary that supports human rights.

Recommendations

The U.S. government should:

- Urge E.U. leaders to use the upcoming budget negotiations to push the Hungarian authorities to cease their attacks on civil society and academic freedom.
- Publicly defend the right of local NGOs—in Hungary and elsewhere—to accept international funding in support of their work on democracy and human rights, and articulate why no government should fear or oppose such activities.
- Nominate an experienced foreign service officer to Budapest as ambassador as soon as practicable. Once confirmed, the new ambassador should immediately affirm the embassy’s support for human rights defenders.
- Review the security relationship with Hungary and the integrity of intelligence-sharing protocols.
- Continue to publicly condemn attacks by the Orban government on academic freedom and against civil society.
- Continue, in cooperation with other embassies, to issue diplomatic démarches to the Hungarian government when it attacks civil society.
- Promote on its website and elsewhere, in Hungarian and English, the State Department Fact Sheet “U.S. Support for Human Rights Defenders,” and encourage human rights defenders to publicly engage with the embassy and its representatives.

Members of Congress should:

- Support House Resolutions 353 and 394.
- Authorize and appropriate Democracy, Human Rights and Governance funding for Hungary to fight corruption, support an independent media, and otherwise help civil society to function as it should.
- Oppose any invitation from the White House to Prime Minister Orban for an official visit, unless and until his attacks on civil society cease.■

Endnotes

- ¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/10/fears-new-crackdown-civil-society-groups-hungary-george-soros>
- ² <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21723835-europe-has-tools-make-autocrat-back-down-what-do-when-viktor-Orbán-erodes-democracy>
- ³ All foreign diplomats spoke with Human Rights First staff on the condition of anonymity.
- ⁴ The survey was conducted among 9,935 respondents in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom from March 2 to April 17, 2017. Together, these 10 European Union member states account for roughly 80% of the E.U. population and 84% of the E.U. economy.
- ⁵ Others recent reports include: A Troubling Turn, The Vilification of Human Rights Lawyers in Northern Ireland (June 2017), High Stakes for Syria (April 2016), How to Reverse Five Years of Failure on Bahrain (February 2016), How to Navigate Egypt's Enduring Human Rights Crisis (January 2016), How the U.S. Can Counter Violent Extremism and Support Civil Society in Kenya (July 2015), and How to Counter Terrorism by Supporting Civil Society in the United Arab Emirates (May 2015).
- ⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/22/opinion/congress-nato-trump.html>
- ⁷ <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/pm-orban-eu-should-revisit-deals-with-russia-and-china-and-create-common-security-system-for-europe/>
- ⁸ <http://tass.com/world/947937>
- ⁹ <http://hungarytoday.hu/news/pm-Orbán-europe-let-go-illusion-federalism-14199>
- ¹⁰ <http://budapestbeacon.com/featured-articles/lets-stop-brussels-new-national-consultation/45493>
- ¹¹ <http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-Orbán-s-state-of-the-nation-address-20170214>
- ¹² <https://www.voanews.com/a/hungary-soros-billboards/3937391.html>
- ¹³ <http://budapestbeacon.com/featured-articles/government-poised-to-launch-next-wave-of-attacks-on-hungarian-civil-society/43677>
- ¹⁴ <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Opinion/Legislation/OLHungaryCEU.pdf>
- ¹⁵ The resolution passed with 393 votes in favor and 221 votes against, with 64 abstentions.
- ¹⁶ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170511IPR74350/fundamental-rights-in-hungary-meps-call-for-triggering-article-7>
- ¹⁷ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170511IPR74350/fundamental-rights-in-hungary-meps-call-for-triggering-article-7>
- ¹⁸ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-hungary-ngo-law-idUKKBN19417T?il=0>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/defending-academic-freedom-in-a-populist-age-by-michael-ignatieff-2017-06?barrier=accessreg>
- ²⁰ <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21723835-europe-has-tools-make-autocrat-back-down-what-do-when-viktor-Orbán-erodes-democracy>
- ²¹ <https://hu.usembassy.gov/charge-daffaires-embassy-united-states-budapest-david-kostelancik-issued-following-statement/>
- ²² <https://hu.usembassy.gov/statement-u-s-embassy-budapest/>
- ²³ <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/06/272036.htm>
- ²⁴ <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-115hres353ih/html/BILLS-115hres353ih.htm>
- ²⁵ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-resolution/394/text/ih?overview=closed&format=txt>



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