

DISMANTLING DEMOCRACY

Hungary's Assault on Civil Society



By Maya Fernandez-Powell

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Introduction

Under the leadership of its far-right nationalist prime minister, Hungary is carrying out one of the most aggressive assaults on civil society in Europe as it prepares for nationwide and European Parliamentary (EP) elections in June 2024.

Since being elected to office for the first time in 2010, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his ruling party Fidesz have rolled back democratic safeguards and pushed the country towards an [autocracy](#).

After winning a [fourth consecutive term](#) in office in 2022 and a supermajority in parliament, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's grip on power appears tighter than ever. The Hungarian leader is Russian President Putin's greatest ally in the European Union, and Orbán [publicly supports](#) a Donald Trump election victory in 2024.

For years, Orbán and his allies have been passing anti-NGO legislation and used various tactics to suffocate civil society in Hungary. The parliament recently passed a [law](#) that establishes a new authority to investigate individuals or organizations accused of serving foreign interests, and imposes [criminal penalties](#) on those who use foreign financing for election campaigns.

Human Rights First traveled to Hungary in April 2024 ahead of the upcoming election campaign to report on the challenges facing human rights defenders (HRDs) working in an increasingly hostile and dangerous environment. We spoke with dozens of civil society leaders, human rights lawyers, LGBTQ+ activists, journalists, academics, and foreign diplomats in the capital Budapest and the eastern city of Debrecen. This report outlines the concerns of HRDs and urges a strong U.S. response to Hungary's democratic backsliding and attacks on civil society.

Human Rights First's history of working in Hungary

Human Rights First has worked with local HRDs in Hungary for many years. We have documented human rights violations firsthand and made recommendations on how the U.S. government should respond to the Hungarian government's assault on democratic institutions and the rule of law.

Since Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his right-wing nationalist Fidesz government were first elected in 2010, Human Rights First has released a series of reports, articles, press



statements, and letters to the U.S. Government on democratic backsliding and extremism in Hungary.

In 2014, we published [“We’re Not Nazis, but... The Rise of Hate Parties in Hungary and Greece and Why America Should Care.”](#) a report on the rising popularity and threat of neofascist parties in Hungary and Greece. We [welcomed U.S. visa bans in 2014](#) on members of Orbán’s inner circle in response to democratic backsliding and corrupt practices in the country.

In 2017 and 2018, following the adoption of the [“Stop Soros” legislation](#) which targeted those who help migrants, we traveled to Hungary and published a report, [“Hungary’s False Sense of Security.”](#) The report highlighted the concerns of HRDs on Prime Minister Orbán’s accelerated assault on peaceful dissent, anti-corruption activism, and the rule of law. We also published the 2017 issue briefs: [“No Society Without Civil Society”](#) and [“How the U.S. Government Should Respond to Hungary’s Slide to Authoritarianism.”](#)

A major election year

2024 is a major election year for Hungary. On June 9th, voters in Hungary will vote in [municipal elections and European elections](#). Election campaigns in Hungary are traditionally stressful and difficult for HRDs, as government propaganda and smear campaigns against civil society leaders increase during these periods.

Much of Prime Minister Orbán’s political rhetoric has been focused on anti-migrant, anti-LGBTQ+, and other right-wing nationalist messages. These issues remain central to his campaign, but this year Orbán is devoting much of his [campaigning](#) to attacking Brussels and the European Union.

Despite facing an ongoing political scandal that [has mobilized tens of thousands](#) to participate in anti-government and anti-corruption protests since March, the Fidesz party is expected to dominate both elections and maintain its tight grip on political power.

But Fidesz is not the only far-right party expected to do well in June.

In Hungary, polls estimate that the even more extreme Hungarian far-right party, [Mi Hazánk](#) (“Our Homeland”), will [gain seats](#) in the municipal elections, and win its first seat in the European Parliament.





Thousands participate in anti-government protests outside parliament in Budapest in April.

Across Europe, [polls](#) predict that far-right parties in the EU will enjoy [record-breaking success](#) in the EP elections. While the center-right European People's Party (EPP) looks set to remain the largest bloc, they are likely to lose seats. The elections' main winners could be the far-right, with the Identity and Democracy (ID) group [expected to gain as many as 40 seats](#), making them the third largest group in the parliament with almost 100 MEPs.

The potential for a '[sharp right turn](#)' in the European Parliament could have significant consequences for European policies on hot-button issues like immigration, climate change, and the war in Ukraine.

Fidesz will play a crucial role in the far-right's gains in the EP. The party is expected to win between [12 to 14 seats](#), but Fidesz is currently not affiliated with any of the major European parties, after being [ousted from the EPP](#) in 2021. Most experts predict that Orbán's party will join the [European Conservatives and Reformists](#) (ECR) bloc, a nationalist right-wing group dominated by Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy and Poland's Law & Justice.



This would make Fidesz the [third-largest group in the ECR](#), and push the group to overtake ID as the third-largest group in parliament. "I haven't seen such a good opportunity for national, conservative, sovereigntist and Christian-based forces to become dominant in the European Union in a long time," [said](#) Orbán in March 2024.



Posters in the city of Debrecen promote the June 9th municipal and European Parliament elections.

2024 offers Orbán another critical opportunity for visibility on the European and global stage. From July 1st to the end of 2024, Hungary will hold the [presidency of the Council of the EU](#), a rotating position that puts the country in charge of the EU's policy-making process for six months.

The holder of the role is expected to act as an "[honest broker](#)" who sets aside national interests and [oversees](#) the Council's work on EU legislation and the EU agenda.

But as one of the most Euroskeptical leaders in Europe, Orbán will likely use the presidency to advance his anti-EU political agenda. In an [annual speech](#) to parliament in February 2024,



Orbán [said](#), "Real change can be brought about by a new European right, of which we Hungarians are a part... Down with Brussels. Long live Europe!"

A transatlantic far-right friendship

Hungary has been a NATO ally since 1999, but recently the relationship between the Biden administration and Orbán's government has significantly deteriorated, while Orbán has sought a far-right alliance with the MAGA side of the Republican party.

For the most part, Orbán depicts the United States as an [enemy](#) of Hungary. Unlike many U.S. embassies around the world, the U.S. Embassy in Budapest has been vocal against the government's human rights abuses and corruption.

In March 2024, U.S. Ambassador to Hungary David Pressman [said](#) that Washington will respond to Budapest's "dangerously unhinged anti-American messaging" and "expanding relationship with Russia." At a campaign event in March 2024, President Biden [took aim](#) at Orbán, saying, "He's looking for a dictatorship."

Comments like these against an American ally are uncommon, but Ambassador Pressman [stressed](#), "With other allies we engage, we collaborate, we work together, even where we have differences. Here, that doesn't work – until we act."

In contrast to the declining Orbán-Biden relationship, Orbán's support for former-President Trump is stronger than ever. In March 2024, Orbán traveled to Mar-A-Lago to meet with Trump and has publicly called for a Trump return to the White House.

In May 2023 at a rally, Orbán [said](#), "I'm sure if President Trump would be the president, there would be no war in Ukraine and Europe. Come back, Mr. President. Make America great again and bring us peace."

Orbán has elevated his international relevance by making Hungary a model for conservatism and far-right policies. Hungary is a hub for right-wing events, including the [Conservative Political Action Conference \(CPAC\)](#) in Budapest. Orbán's illiberal practices are inspiring democratic backsliding across Central and Eastern Europe, such as in [Georgia](#), [Serbia](#), and [Slovakia](#). "Hungary is an incubator where the conservative policies of the future are being tested," [said](#) Orbán.

Orbán's authoritarian tactics and hardline stance against immigration, LGBTQ+ rights, multiculturalism, and support for Christian nationalism have earned him praise from America's far-right.

MAGA politicians including Kari Lake and Paul Gosar have said they would like to see a "[Hungarian model](#)" transplanted in the U.S., and former Fox News host Tucker Carlson has



[praised](#) Orbán's "illiberal democracy," traveling to Hungary on various occasions to shoot episodes and interview Orbán.

Ties between the Hungarian government and right-wing think tanks in the U.S. are also [deep](#). Orbán has built [relationships](#) with the Heritage Foundation, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, the America First Policy Institute, and other right-wing think tanks, to gain influence in the United States.

Yet some of Orbán's policies are at odds with American interests, including his [relationship with China](#). China is the [largest foreign investor](#) in Hungary, and the two countries continue to deepen their economic and security ties, despite criticism from Hungary's NATO allies and the EU.

While Orbán continues to court the American far-right and tout Hungary as a model for conservative and illiberal policies, by undermining the rule of law and strengthening his ties to Russia and China, he threatens to weaken the NATO alliance and bipartisan American interests.

Activists targeted

Since 2010, harmful legislation has been central to Orbán's assault on civil society and targeting of HRDs.

In 2018, the government passed "[The Stop Soros](#)" package, anti-NGO legislation that criminalizes those who offer help to migrants and asylum seekers. The laws made "enabling illegal migration" a crime, including anyone providing legal advice or information to migrants. Those prosecuted under the legislation can face up to a year in prison.

In 2021, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) determined that the "Stop Soros" legislation [violated EU Law](#). The CJEU and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg have [repeatedly ruled against](#) anti-NGO legislation passed by the Orbán government.

But despite these rulings, Orbán's onslaught of harmful legislation has intensified. In 2021, the government passed an [anti-LGBTQ+](#) law and in 2022, held a [national referendum](#) to support a law banning the "portrayal and promotion of homosexuality and sex change" in schools and the media.

In December 2023, the government passed the [Defense of Sovereignty bill](#), the most recent alarming addition to anti-NGO legislation. Under the guise of protecting national sovereignty, the new law expands the government's power to punish organizations and citizens accused of serving foreign interests with little judicial oversight.

The State Department has [criticized the law](#), saying it "equips the Hungarian government with draconian tools that can be used to intimidate and punish those with views not



shared by the ruling party” and that it is “inconsistent with our shared values of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law.”

HRDs explained that the law is intentionally vague. “The new law could be used for anything, meaning not just against NGOs, but also against private citizens,” says Stefánia Kapronczay, director of the [Hungarian Civil Liberties Union](#) (HCLU).

The Defense of Sovereignty legislation [established](#) the Office for the Defence of Sovereignty, a new authority with unchecked powers to arbitrarily target any organization or person it suspects of serving foreign interests and jeopardizing Hungary’s sovereignty. One of the biggest concerns is that organizations or individuals accused of using foreign money to influence elections could face jail time.

Media and human rights organizations are [comparing](#) the legislation to Russia’s foreign agents law, which Moscow uses to silence and threaten its critics and political opposition.

While the 2017 “Stop Soros” law has never been fully enforced, HRDs stressed that the criminal punishment attached to the Sovereignty Defense law is particularly concerning, and there’s no way to be sure how the government will use it.

“There is a level of fear across society of retaliation. Self-censoring is an issue, not just for human rights activists but for artists, academics, and others too. There has been a shift in mindset over the last five or six years where people increasingly think about what the consequences of new laws will be for them and their work,” says Dávid Víg, Director at [Amnesty International Hungary](#).

Human rights lawyers anticipate that the only likely consequence of non-compliance with the new authority will be the mention of the alleged offender in a government report, but there are no legal remedies to challenge a government report that could damage an organization’s reputation.

“The law is intended to intimidate citizens with its vagueness, propaganda messaging potential and that the Office will receive information from the NIK [[National Information Centre](#)] intelligence agency. This means our organization has had to invest tremendous effort already to support civil society colleagues with our expertise,” says human rights lawyer Márta Pardavi, co-chair of the [Hungarian Helsinki Committee](#).

The Council of Europe [called](#) for the law to be abandoned and in February 2024 the EU Commission [started an infringement procedure](#) against the Hungarian government after determining that the Hungarian law violates “several fundamental rights” enshrined in EU law.

The Fidesz government defends the law and has [dismissed](#) the EU’s concerns. A spokesperson for the party [said](#). “One of the main stakes of the June election is whether it will be possible to elect a European Parliament strong enough to free the Brussels bureaucracy from the grip of NGOs and mainstream media financed by international financiers.”



Powerful propaganda machine

Key to the Hungarian government's assault on civil society is its powerful propaganda machine. According to [reports from independent investigative media in Hungary](#), the Fidesz government has invested hundreds of millions of euros in propaganda and smear campaigns since it gained power in 2010.



Government propaganda posters like this accuse the opposition of corruption and can be found across the country.



Fidesz [controls most of the Hungarian media landscape](#), making it extremely difficult for independent media to survive and counter government propaganda.

Orbánist think tanks have also set up propaganda initiatives like "[Megafon](#)," a project that funds pro-government social media influencers to promote Fidesz narratives and smear civil society.

The state's propaganda machine overloads online spaces with pro-government and anti-NGO messaging that targets organizations and individual HRDs.

HRDs emphasized that Orbán's tight grip on media makes it extremely difficult to challenge the government's anti-NGO narratives. HRDs are repeatedly targeted in smear campaigns fueled by the government's propaganda efforts and are accused of being foreign agents.

The barrage of online attacks is increasingly normalized, but the mental toll on HRDs is significant.

"The threats we face are almost exclusively online. To do this work, you can get used to online attacks, but you also have to get used to it," says Kapronczay.

Antisemitism features heavily in the government's propaganda and attacks on civil society. One of the most popular targets of the government's antisemitic conspiracy theories is George Soros, the Hungarian-American Jewish philanthropist. Soros has been demonized for years by the Fidesz government for his support of human rights organizations.

In 2017, the Fidesz government accused Soros of flooding the country with migrants in what it described as a [Muslim invasion](#), and today they continue to focus on the imaginary threat he poses to the country.

The Fidesz government claims to have [a zero-tolerance policy for antisemitism](#), but their anti-Soros rhetoric is both [highly antisemitic](#) and ignites antisemitic sentiments. Fidesz propaganda has included [propaganda posters and billboards of Soros](#), some of which invoked antisemitic World War II-era imagery.

HRDs are frequently accused of being Soros agents, and some explained that the attacks they face online include antisemitic language and imagery.





A Holocaust memorial site in Budapest sits near parliament, where the Fidesz party continues to promote antisemitic rhetoric.

HRDs also reported instances of state-sponsored media and pro-government influencers showing up at their offices unannounced, taking videos and photos of them while asking harassing questions like, “Why are you committing high treason?” or “Why are you threatening our national sovereignty?” These photos and recordings are used for anti-NGO clickbait and online smear campaigns against civil society members.

Even when an online attack is not directly from a government source, the state’s propaganda fuels the intimidation and vilification of HRDs.

“The phenomenon of online attacks is a consequence of the Hungarian government’s narratives and hate mongering,” says Bulcsú Hunyadi, Head of Radicalisation and Extremism Programme at the [Political Capital Institute](#) in Budapest.

Fighting Facebook

HRDs are not only dealing with a government propaganda machine that relentlessly harasses them, but they are also facing challenges from the country’s most popular social media platform: Facebook (now officially Meta).



There are over [7 million users](#) on Facebook in Hungary, a massive number for a country of just 9.6 million. In recent years, Facebook policy and algorithm changes have made it even more difficult for NGOs in Hungary to do their work.

"We are fighting with the government, but we are also fighting with Facebook. Where Facebook has been most detrimental to HRDs in Hungary is in its algorithmic changes which have made it even harder to reach our audiences," says Áron Demeter from Amnesty International Hungary.

The Fidesz government relies on Facebook to spread its propaganda and disinformation. Civil society members, already unable to compete with the government's overwhelming budget for propaganda, are struggling to get views for their content.

"We feel blocked by Facebook in the sense that the algorithm changed last year as we see a 70 percent drop in exposure of our work, and so we get fewer readers. Facebook is not a friend to media like us," says the publishing editor at [Debreciner](#), an independent media organization.

Despite efforts to report harassment and online attacks to Facebook, Meta fails to take any meaningful action.

"We reported online attacks to Facebook at least ten times in recent years. Nothing happens and after a while, we just stopped trying," says the publishing editor.

Deception and surveillance

Deception of civil society organizations by government-affiliated actors is another major concern for HRDs.

In the build-up to the 2018 national elections, the private intelligence firm Black Cube helped run a [campaign](#) to discredit NGOs. Hungarian NGOs and their employees were contacted by Black Cube agents, who under false identities contacted Hungarian NGO members and invited them to participate in virtual job interviews.

Black Cube published recordings of these fake interviews to [orchestrate a video campaign](#) that took NGO employees' words out of context. Prime Minister Orbán used these clips to attack civil society ahead of the 2018 elections, which he went on to win by a landslide.

Civil society organizations are also concerned about increased government surveillance. The new office established with the Defense of Sovereignty Law allows for the arbitrary monitoring and surveillance of HRDs, and some HRDs think it's likely they are already under intense government surveillance.

"The intrusion of privacy is very harmful. We must assume that they are all over our bank accounts," says one experienced human rights lawyer.



Safe space for far-right extremists

Orbán's nationalist rhetoric has normalized far-right ideology, and emboldened extremist groups across Hungary.

"Hungary is a prime example of the mainstreaming of the far-right, at the highest levels of political institutions. The main problem is the lack of political will to challenge these narratives and extremist organizations," says Bulcsú Hunyadi.

Policies now embraced by Fidesz, such as [banning books](#) that positively portray LGBTQ+ communities, [draconian abortion laws](#), and [manipulating election rules](#) to benefit the ruling government, originated from radical right-wing politicians in far-right parties like Jobbik and [Mi Hazánk Mozgalom](#) (Our Homeland Movement, MH), a party established by former Jobbik politicians in 2020.

While the Fidesz government formally distances itself from far-right extremist groups, its endorsement of far-right beliefs has made Hungary a safe space for neo-Nazis.

"Hungary has become a very popular destination amongst these far-right groups," says Flora Garamvolgyi, an [investigative journalist](#) who covers links between the U.S. far-right and Europe. In recent years, there have been [numerous examples](#) of far-right extremists from the U.S. and other foreign countries moving to Hungary.

Hungary has an [expansive network of Neo-Nazi groups](#), and the largest organizations of the radical and far-right movement include Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom (Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement, HVIM), Betyársereg (Army of Outlaws, BS), Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom (Hungarian Self-defence Movement, MÖM) and Légió Hungária (Hungarian Legion, LH).

Many of these groups are closely tied to politicians in [Mi Hazánk Mozgalom](#), which is currently the third largest party in parliament.

The main target of the far-right in Hungary has historically been Romani communities. There are 700,000 Roma in Hungary, making it the country's [largest minority group](#). Hungarian Roma face [widespread poverty](#) and pervasive [discrimination](#) and segregation in housing, employment, and education.

Far-right extremist violence against the Roma reached a peak in 2008 and 2009 when a [spree of attacks](#) killed six Roma, including a four-year-old child, and wounded dozens more.

These attacks forced the government to establish order and control the violence of far-right extremist groups. As a result, extremist groups in Hungary have shifted their tactics.

"Instead of committing acts of violence as paramilitaries, right-wing extremists are now focused on patrolling Roma communities," says Szabolcs Hegyi, a senior expert in the



Political Freedoms Program at the HCLU. "There are two elements to the problem; on the one hand, you have the patrolling of Roma communities, on the other hand, there is the policing of this issue, specifically the lack of policing."

In a country where Roma communities face rampant racism and discrimination, far-right extremists can intimidate these communities with little police disturbance.

The mainstreaming of the far-right by the Orbán government also has costly consequences for Hungary's LGBTQ+ and migrant communities. Pride events are [popular targets](#) for far-right extremist groups, and extremist groups frequently [disrupt](#) LGBTQ+ events and [intimidate](#) those who attend.

One HRD described an LGBTQ+ training program for teachers where far-right extremists heckled them outside to intimidate them. At a screening of an LGBTQ+ movie hosted by Amnesty International, far-right extremists pulled the power plug to prevent the showing.

With a ruling party whose values align with many elements of the far-right, extremists are free to harass and intimidate minority communities with few consequences.

Pressures outside Budapest

Civil society organizations outside the capital often face different challenges than those in the capital.

Debrecen is a city in eastern Hungary and a Fidesz-stronghold. The local government is largely [controlled by Fidesz candidates](#). In the upcoming June elections the extreme far-right party [Mi Hazánk has a mayoral candidate](#) and will likely gain a seat on the local city council. Some of the [far-right extremists](#) involved in the attacks on Roma communities in 2008 and 2009 were from Debrecen.

In recent years, Debrecen has made international headlines because of local protests against the [construction of a Chinese battery factory](#) in the city. Protests in the pro-Orbán city are rare, and opposition to the battery factory is shared by both the extreme-right and the far-left opposition. Both sides emphasize environmental concerns associated with the factory, but the extreme far-right is focused on the arrival of migrant workers from China and other east-Asian countries to work in the factory.

Despite the controversy over the battery factory, Fidesz is still expected to dominate the municipal elections in Debrecen. Local HRDs explained that they are constantly impeded by the local-Fidesz run government to carry out their work.





A border patrol recruitment poster in Debrecen, a Fidesz stronghold.

Debreciner, an independent media organization in the city, faces obstacles from local government in covering local politics and countering state-affiliated media. "We are never invited to press conferences; we are blocked from information," says Tamás Polgár Tóth, a local journalist at Debreciner who covers political issues.

This is a common issue for journalists in Fidesz-controlled cities, while independent media is granted more access in the few cities where the opposition runs the local government.

Independent media pose a threat to the Orbán government's stronghold on propaganda and narratives, especially during election campaigns.

"The financial background of local independent media is very fragile in Hungary. And without local media, citizens will not be informed about key issues," says Polgár Tóth.

HRDs in Debrecen explained that they are consistently blocked by local pro-Fidesz government officials from accessing space for events and programming. "Access to public spaces is really a major difficulty, because the local government controls all those spaces. When I organize a public event, there are basically two cafés I can use," says Virág Zsugyó, Amnesty International Hungary's regional community coordinator in Debrecen.



One young LGBTQ+ activist faces the same issue and says, “We have a youth space in Debrecen, but they don’t let us use it, because we are an LGBTQ+ organization.”

The [Association of Alternative Communities](#), an essential actor of civil society in Debrecen, owns one of the few spaces open and available to HRDs in the city.



Ágnes Molnár helps run the Association of Alternative Communities, an essential part of civil society in Debrecen.

Engaging locals in civil society initiatives presents another challenge. “The government and the university are the biggest employers in the city. There is an existential fear of joining these types of civil society organizations,” says Ágnes Molnár, Vice President of the Association of Alternative Communities.

Fear is justified in a city like Debrecen, where associating with civil society groups can result in serious consequences. “We have people pulling out of our group. A gay student was threatened with expulsion from his dorm by the university when they found out he was part of our group, so he pulled out,” says one LGBTQ+ activist.

Online attacks and smear campaigns against civil society are common against local organizations and individuals. Debreciner’s website is frequently attacked by online bots that crash the website, especially during election campaigns.



Journalists also reported dealing with online attacks, including threats saying that they should leave the city. “I’ve been attacked twice, but for our editor, it’s at least every month,” says one journalist.

HRDs are now preparing for a wave of anti-NGO propaganda ahead of the June elections. “Online attacks and smear campaigns are more intense when elections occur. 2018 was a horror for us. We were made the enemy and called a migrant organizer office,” says Molnár.

Conclusion

Despite the continuous attacks on civil society in Hungary, [public opinion polling](#) shows a rise in trust and support for NGOs and human rights activists. But these attacks distract and draw resources from HRDs’ work.

The far-right in Hungary is connected to and inspired by its U.S. counterparts, who in turn look to the Hungarian far-right as model for American policies. The June elections promise a sharp, transatlantic reality check on how far-right extremism can become mainstream, electable, and put democracy at risk.

Recommendations

The U.S. government should:

- Continue to publicly denounce anti-NGO legislation in Hungary and show solidarity with local civil society.
- Defend the right of local NGOs—in Hungary and elsewhere—to accept international funding and to operate free from restriction so they can do their work.
- Encourage members of Congress to visit Hungary and to meet local HRDs to hear firsthand the impact of far-right extremism on their work.
- Work with Congress to authorize and appropriate funding to strengthen Hungary’s civil society and independent media, including supporting smaller civil society organizations and democracy initiatives outside of the capital.
- Apply Global Magnitsky sanctions and Section 7031(c) visa restrictions to Hungarian officials involved in corruption that has contributed to democratic backsliding in the country, building upon [visa bans](#) issued against suspected corrupt actors in 2014.



The Hungarian Government should:

- Protect Roma and other vulnerable communities and ensure proper police protection from far-right extremists.
- Stop enabling attacks on civil society, including the smearing and vilification of HRDs.

The European Union should:

- Invest in democracy initiatives and civil society in Hungary.
- Urge European and other international actors to publicly meet with civil society in Hungary, particularly during Hungary's 6-month period in the EU presidency.
- Approve long-term grants for sustained NGO work and invest in civil society organizations outside of Budapest.
- Continue proceedings against Hungary for violations of E.U. law.

Meta should:

- Meet regularly with local HRDs in Hungary and respond to their ideas on how to remove harassment and threats against activists in the country.



Mission Statement

Human Rights First works to create a just world in which every person's intrinsic human rights are respected and protected, to build societies that value and invest in all their people. To reach that goal demands assisting victims of injustice, bringing perpetrators of abuse to justice, and building institutions that ensure universal rights.

Human Rights First is a nonprofit, nonpartisan international human rights organization based in Los Angeles, New York, and Washington D.C.

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