

ANTISEMITIC HATE CRIMES
AND INCIDENTS REPORT
IN HUNGARY

FEBRUARY 2023



ACTION AND PROTECTION
LEAGUE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



significant part of combating antisemitism is monitoring of the prevalence of antisemitic incidents. One of the aims of the Action and Protection League (APL) is to heighten the awareness of antisemitism in the society. The primary tool in achieving this is continuous professional monitoring of hate crimes in public life. Neither Jewish communities nor individual Jews can be protected unless there is data on antisemitic incidents and other hate crimes and that these are collected and analysed. The data collected by the Action and Protection League, cooperated with Action and Protection Foundation (APF), are published in monthly reports, and a summary of the findings is published for the individual countries/regions in a yearly report. The monitoring report is carried out by the APF.

The reports deal with two forms of behaviour: antisemitic hate crimes and hate-motivated incidents. Both types of behaviour are referred to as "hate incidents" in the reports. The main difference between an antisemitic hate crime and other hate crimes is that the former possesses an antisemitic motive. Due to differences in legislation and application of legislation in various countries, there are different interpretations of which antisemitic incidents that are violations of criminal law. In addition are some hate-motivated acts, albeit troubling for Jews, not considered criminal if they, e.g., are considered belonging to the realm of freedom of speech. The APL considers it essential to record both types of hate incidents in order to gain a general overview and to make it possible to analyse changes over time.

In order to have the most extensive scope possible, the APL uses a variety of sources simultaneously. The incidents are not only recorded, but the characteristics of the individual incident are also analysed. The data recorded includes the incident's location, the perpetrator (if known), victim, and consequences (if any). In addition, are the various types of incidents differentiated in the reports.

In February, the Action and Protection Foundation's monitoring activity identified four hate incidents of antisemitic nature. These were categorised as Damage to Property, Threats and Hate Speech. This month, we also identified two Further Hate Incidents.

The Damage to Property category includes the following case: Antisemitic slurs scrawled on a Momentum party banner.

The Threat category includes the following cases: Police arrested the man who tried to enter the Dohány Street Synagogue with a knife, and antisemitic riots were reported at the Fény Street market on “Breakout Day”.

The Hate Speech category details how the grave of Ferenc Szálasi's widow turned into an Arrow Cross memorial.

The Further Hate Incidents category contains two cases: Neo-Nazis and anti-fascists clashed on the day of the breakout, and Neo-Nazis attacked passers-by at Széll Kálmán Square.

Our Foundation did not initiate any new proceedings this month, nor did we receive any notifications of our previous proceedings.

ACTION AND PROTECTION LEAGUE

In the last decade there has been a rise in antisemitism in Europe. Surveys by e.g. the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)¹ and the ADL Global 100² show a broad spectrum of antisemitism and how it fluctuates over time.

The character of antisemitic incidents is quite different in the monitored countries concerning content, expressions, and perpetrators. Current antisemitism is mainly connected to Islamism, Far-right groups, and Far-left groups. Islamist expressions are most frequent in countries with large Muslim populations in Western Europe and uncommon in Eastern and Central Europe. Far-left expressions of antisemitism can often be found disguised as Anti-Zionism in Western Europe and is often connected to the conflict in the Middle East.

In East and Central Europe, right-wing expressions of prejudice against Jews frequently have old roots, not only among groups related to Fascism and Nazism, but at times also in populist-nationalist settings. In several countries Jews have found themselves under more threat during the last decade. This does not only include physical attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions but is also visible in the growth of conspiracy theories, online hatred, and political campaigns favouring banning of, e.g., brit milah and kashrut.

Countering antisemitism becomes an increasingly urgent issue for Europe. Action and Protection League of Europe (APL) has been established to explore the causes of modern-day antisemitism and to implement effective defense.

¹ EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS: ANTISEMITISM - OVERVIEW OF DATA AVAILABLE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION 2008–2018
² <https://global100.adl.org>

ABOUT THE REPORT

The general opinion on, and treatment of, antisemitism often takes extreme forms. On the one hand, some voices try to belittle the importance of such offenses and manifestations. On the other hand, on occasion, one-off incidents are exaggerated in the public arena to such an extent that they give the impression that they are frequent or a regular part of daily life. Knowledge of the actual situation(s) is an indispensable condition for the treatment of real problems. Monitoring of antisemitic hate crimes and incidents³ is one of the tools used in achieving this objective.

From 2019 the Action and Protection League has decided to monitor seven European countries. In the first stage, data is collected from seven countries: Austria, Czechia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Sweden, and more countries will be added later. All countries have their own particularities and vast differences when it comes to the monitoring of antisemitism

in some cases, there are several organisations with similar goals as the APL and in other countries, few or no similar activities. In no case will APL try to replace existing organisations, but rather seek cooperation and exchange of data.

Apart from the monthly reports, an annual summary review, including more detailed analyses on the incidents, is published. All reports are published in English, and almost all are published in the local language.

The fight against hate crimes is of utmost importance since it differs from many other forms of criminal conduct. On one level can these crimes and incidents can be considered as messages. They are not only about the victim in question but points to a larger group. Antisemitism and other hate crimes are thus not only attacks against individuals, but the social fabric of the society as a whole. This does not, of course, diminish the distress and psychological trauma which individual victims might

suffer. These crimes are often not “only” against property or lead to physical threat of individuals, but it also concerns self-dignity. The offenses indicate that the victim is not an equal member or a member at all of the society. Since hate crimes, in general, target victims due to some unchangeable characteristics (real or imagined), the victim becomes almost defenseless. Victims often fear that they may again be targets of similar incidents or worse atrocities if they identify perpetrators to relevant authorities. Inappropriate handling of such incidents may easily lead to secondary victimization where the victim can be led to believe that it was their fault, e.g., by not being careful enough, etc. This type of criminal act also, as mentioned, has an effect on the group as a whole. The victims of these crimes are often interchangeable, since they are not targeted at individuals and any other member could just as well have been targeted. This means that all members of the targeted group become potential victims and might live in fear of a future when they themselves may be the target of a prejudice-motivated crime. This situation is particularly poignant for groups that have been exposed to prejudice for a long time. There is no need to justify at length why Jews belong among such groups. These crimes undermine the fundamental value that all members of a society are of equal value. Inadequate handling of such incidents can have grave consequences for the society as a whole. Not only may it encourage the perpetrators to commit further crimes, but it significantly diminishes the cohesive power of society as a whole⁴.

It is not an exaggeration to state that fewer hate crimes are reported and documented than are committed. The discrepancy between committed crimes and reported crimes vary significantly between different countries is not necessarily connected to the number of Jews. A contributing factor

³ See detailed definitions in the *Methodology* section.

⁴ Levin & McDavitt 1999, 92-93; OSCE/ODIHR 2009a, 19-21; OSCE/ODIHR 2009b, 17-18; Perry 2001, 10).

to the under-reporting is that victims rarely report them to the police or relevant authority. There are several causes for this: many victims are not convinced that the authorities will handle the matter adequately, either because they lack the competence or that they are prejudiced. In addition, many victims are unaware of applicable laws or where to turn for help. Furthermore, some victims are worried that their concealed traits will be exposed and that they might suffer more by reporting incidents. Victims might also fear that authorities will not be able to prove a hate-crime motivation and that reporting is thus useless.

It is civic organizations that can help remedy these problems. These organizations can cooperate with police and relevant authorities, but also an intermediary between victim and authority. Reports by civic organizations can be expedient in alerting official authorities on hate-motivated crimes, and long-term tendencies can be outlined through the use of collected data. Civil organizations can prepare cases for legal process, may provide legal defense for victims, and give other forms of aid and support.

METHODOLOGY

The report deals with two types of offense: hate crimes and hate motivated incidents. These are defined by OSCE as follows⁵ (OSCE/ODIHR 2009b, 15–16):

- hate crime: a crime as defined by the criminal code, which has been motivated by prejudice against a certain group of people⁶
- hate-motivated incident: an offense, also based on prejudice against a specific group of people, but not reaching the level of criminal conduct.

The heightened importance of individual hate crimes is indicated by the fact that the criminal code of numerous countries deals with these cases separately. Although there is a widely accepted definition of antisemitism (see IHRA 2017), there is currently no consistent definition of hate crimes in the countries monitored by the APL.

In addition are the legal consequences different in the monitored countries. This means that an incident which a crime in one country could be legal in another. The obvious example concerns the so-called Holocaust denial, which, e.g., is outlawed in Hungary, but legal in several countries monitored by APL. Since the Action and Protection League has a broad scope when it comes to data collection, everything is covered in the reports, but in some instances, similar acts are filed as a crime in one country and "only" an incident in another. In every case, we follow the definitions in the criminal code of the individual countries. We estimate that this problem will diminish over time due to the adaptation of the same definitions and legislation in the European Union.

Our reports contain detailed descriptions of the definition of hate incidents and our approach to solving the problems. The reports are based on sources taken from international, independent monitoring services, local informants as well as data collected by other organizations working with same or similar issues.

The monthly report presents hate crimes and hate incidents motivated by antisemitism in the broadest possible sense: perpetrator, target, means, or message. The target may be a person, a group, an event, a building, a monument, or other property. It is essential, however, that an antisemitic motivation can be established. This means that the perpetrator chose the given target on the basis that he/she was Jewish or perceived as being Jewish. It is thus not relevant whether the assumption is correct or not: the belief of the target's connection to Jewry is sufficient.

In the course of monitoring, all incidents that fall in the category of hate crime are also considered hate incidents. These may be crimes identified as such by the Criminal Code in the individual country (e.g. violent assault of a member of a community, incitement to hatred of a community, denial of the crimes of the national socialist regime, use of symbols of autocratic regimes etc.), but can also include other acts mentioned in the Criminal Code, if prejudice can be proven as a motivating factor.

When identifying hate incidents, various indicators are recorded during the monitoring period⁷ and are used as the basis for examining whether the given action could have been motivated by antisemitism.

For the broadest possible scope in monitoring antisemitic hate incidents, the simultaneous use of a variety of sources is required. In addition to media monitoring, reports from local informants the Action and Protection League also rely on reports filed by victims. In Hungary, the Action and Protection League has a 24-hours-a-day Hotline that serves to ease the passage of reports. The goal is to supply a similar service for the other countries so reports can be filed in the local languages. It is also possible to file reports anonymously online. Such reports will be of especially great importance to this study. If a victim cannot or does not want to file a report, the APL can use an intermediary to help the victim in the process. Such an intermediary may be a family member, an acquaintance of

5 The scientific definition of hate crimes is extremely contradictory and divergent (for more on this, see Chakrabarti and Garland 2009, 4–7).

These definitions can serve as important addenda to an understanding of these crimes; however, they are difficult to apply in practice. This is what made the creation of simpler, more practical definitions necessary.

6 For example, on these grounds the OSCE does not consider hate speech a hate crime, since the given behaviour would not count as criminal without the motive of prejudice (OSCE/ODIHR 2009a, 24). For our approach in dealing with this, see below.

7 These indicators are described in the Methodology section

the victim, a witness of the incident, or another civil organization.

It is a declared objective of the League to be in close contact with the authorities, since in some countries, they are the first to be approached by victims or witnesses.

A variety of media channels also represent relevant sources: television, radio, as well as the printed and online versions of the press. An essential segment of the report is composed of monitoring the expressions of online hatred as a phenomenon that is continually growing.

The public discourses are monitored by a team of experts. One of our aims is to cover the increasingly large segment of the media with continuous monitoring. Monitoring extends to roughly all receivable TV and radio stations, all the printed press with high print-runs, as well as online material not only on news portals, but the social comment arenas and extreme, hate inciting websites. The monitoring process is carried out systematically, according to precisely prepared standards.

Among the monitored hate incidents, some are considered a part of the statistics, but some are recorded, though not counted as part of the statistics.⁸

The categories for hate incidents that are included in the statistics are as follow:

- The hate incidents have to have occurred in the countries monitored; no matter whether the victim is a citizen of the country or not
- Any action, incident, atrocity that is aimed at Jewish individuals, organizations or property where an antisemitic intent or content can be proven, or if the victim was attacked for being Jewish or due to an assumed Jewish identity
- Deliberate and wanton impairment of any Jewish institution or building (even if no further, antisemitic message was paired with the vandalism [for example, a Jewish synagogue's window is broken with a stone])

- Antisemitic comments that have been reported to Action and Protection League appearing on blogs, forums, community pages and similar.
- Antisemitic and neo-Nazi material delivered to particular Jewish individuals, Jewish organizations, institutions
- Antisemitic and neo-Nazi material deposited at Jewish-owned property, Jewish organizations, institutions or similar
- Criticism related to Israel and Zionism, if they go beyond a political statement and serve to recall traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes
- Moreover, events apt to raise fear among Jews.

Hate incidents that are not accounted for in the statistics⁹ :

- Antisemitic hate incidents that are related to the countries monitored and Jewry in these countries, but for some reason do not belong to the scope of the statistics (e.g., they did not occur in the country in question, antisemitic intent cannot be proven, or the circumstances are unclear)
- Expressions of hate that appear regularly on homepages, in comments and online forums, but have not been reported to Action and Protection League.
- Other news that only indirectly are linked to antisemitism

A number of the aspects of the registered incidents are recorded. The indicators that help decide whether a given incident was motivated by prejudice are mentioned above.

These indicators pertain to various characteristics of the perpetrator, data concerning the victim, the time and location of the incident. These are recorded in the course of collection of data. Tabs are kept on whether incidents had any, and if so, what sort of possible legal consequences.

⁸ The following were used to develop these criteria: ADL 2012, CST 2013

⁹ The criteria for hate incidents that are not accounted for in the statistics were modified, therefore the present description is different from the one we used in 2013.

Apart from registering incidents, it is also important to capture the qualitative differentials between them. The typification of cases is carried out in two ways. According to one of the systems of categorization, the following types are differentiated: incitement against members of a community, violence against members of a community, use of symbols of autocratic regimes, and Holocaust denial.

Based on the *Facing Facts! Guidelines*, seven types of incidents are differentiated as follows¹⁰:

- Homicide: any attack on a person that causes loss of life
- Extreme physical violence
 - Any attack on a person that potentially causes serious bodily harm
 - Any attack involving weapons, or other tools that can cause bodily harm
 - Any attack on property, where there is a potential for the people occupying the property to be killed
 - Bombs and letter bombs
 - Kidnapping
- Assault
 - Any physical attack against a person or people, which does not pose a threat to their life and is not serious
 - Attempted assault, which fails due to self-defense, or if the victim runs away
 - Throwing objects at a person or people, including where the object misses its target
- Damage to property
 - Any physical attack directed against property, which is not life-threatening
 - Desecration of property
 - Arson attacks on property where there is not threat to life, failed attempts at arson

- Threats
 - Any clear and specific threat, whether verbal or written
 - Any “bomb” which is assessed to be a hoax
 - Stalking
 - Defamation
- Hate speech
 - Public hate speech
 - Hate speech channeled via the internet and social media
 - Abusive behavior
 - Abusive literature sent to more than one person
 - Hate speech in literature and music
- Discriminatory incidents

Placing hate incidents in context is also a priority. These actions do not exist in empty space and are by no means independent of the social and cultural environment in which they occur. The dynamics of these incidents is also of importance: often the processes, rather than separately occurring events (Perry 2001, 8). Apart from the static data, short descriptions of each event are also published, which leads to a better understanding of the environment surrounding the incidents.¹¹ In presenting timelines, attention will always be given to showing the dynamics of the events.

ANTISEMITIC HATE INCIDENTS FEBRUARY 2023

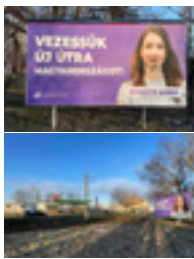
In February, the Action and Protection Foundation's monitoring activity identified four hate incidents of antisemitic nature, categorised as Damage to Property, Threat and Hate Speech.

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

Antisemitic slurs scrawled on Momentum banner

Source: tev.hu

8 February 2023 The hotline of the Action and Protection Foundation received a report that vulgar, tasteless antisemitic texts were written on the Momentum party's 9th District billboard.



Source: tev.hu

The informant also reported that obscene texts written in the same handwriting have appeared in several places in the inner parts of the 9th District. The pictures show the poster on Gubacsi Street. Our Foundation has contacted the operator of the billboard to have the defamatory inscription removed.

THREAT

Police arrested the man with a knife who tried to enter the synagogue on Dohány Street

Source: police.hu

14 February 2023 The Polish man who tried to enter the Dohány Street Synagogue in the 7th District of Budapest was arrested by the Counter-Terrorism Centre (TEK), the Budapest Police Headquarters (BRKF) said. The man was questioned on suspicion of armed vandalism, detained and remanded in custody.

The Dohány Street Synagogue security service in the 7th District notified the BRKF's Action Management Centre on 13 February 2023 at 19:14 that a man had attempted to enter the building. At the same time as they were notified, the security guards sent a video recording of the incident, which clearly shows the man, wearing military clothing, with a beard, stripped to his shirt and holding a knife.

As a possible terrorist motive could not be ruled out, the TEK reconnaissance team identified the perpetrator and his whereabouts during a comprehensive investigation. The TEK operations unit arrested the 29-year-old Polish citizen at the hostel he was staying at near the synagogue.

The Budapest police officers questioned him on suspicion of armed assault, detained him and proposed a motion for his arrest. The Budapest Police Headquarters will continue the further proceedings.

Antisemitic riots at the Fény Street market on "Breakout Day"

Source: Meinbezirk

17 February 2023 A group of four people rioted in and around the Fény Street market on Saturday, 11 February, before the Breakout Day parade. On 11 February 1945 some 28,000 German army, Waffen SS, and Hungarian troops accompanied by a large number of civilians attempted to break through Soviet lines encircling the city and escape to the wooded hills to the northwest. Most were captured, killed, or wounded by the Soviet army. Two days later the city surrendered.

The four men, dressed in black and camouflage and carrying Nazi symbols, marched in the market and then in the street, causing much noise and disturbance.

Imre Para Kovács, the writer and presenter of Klubrádió, who was passing by, reported the atrocity on the radio and was shouted down by group members dressed as Nazis.

"Unfortunately, nothing has changed in 70 years; people walked past me with their heads turned, indifferent", Imre Para Kovács told the Action and Protection Foundation.

HATE SPEECH

Grave of Ferenc Szálasi's widow turned into Arrow Cross memorial

Source: merce.hu

6 February 2023 A reader of *Mérce* pointed out that the grave of the widow of the Arrow Cross leader in the Farkasréti cemetery now has a gravestone that reads "In memory of Ferenc Szálasi". The newspaper's journalists investigated who could have recently altered the gravestone, located a few hundred metres from the Israelite cemetery. The most striking feature of the site is the symbol on the top of the marble obelisk, which strongly resembles an arrow cross. It also revealed that the tomb, which has been turned into a mini-memorial, is frequently visited and maintained.



Source: merce.hu

It has not been possible to establish precisely when the new tombstone was erected and when the old one was replaced. However, who could have replaced it, exercising their ownership rights, has been established. The manager of the Farkasréti cemetery did not answer *Mérce*'s questions until this article was published. Still, a search of far-right websites revealed that a neo-fascist activist could have altered the grave of the Arrow Cross leader's widow after the lease had expired and arranged the changes.

Tibor Károly Papp, the leader of Magyar-elvű Mozgalom, told the far-right portal *Zöldinges* in an interview in autumn 2021 that "quite a few people" had been visiting Gizella Lutz's grave for decades and that one of the Hungarians had noticed in 2018 that the cemetery had put a sticker on the gravestone indicating that the grave had expired. Papp then organised a Facebook fundraising campaign, which raised the money needed in two months for him to redeem the plot and become its owner.

After another fundraising campaign, Gizella Lutz's resting place was restored to its original state in August 2021. The 2021 restoration work was reported on the neo-fascist *Blood and Honour Hungaria* website, which publicly praised Szálasi and thanked the cemetery staff for their "attitude and helpfulness".

Tibor Károly Papp was present at the 2019 "Day of Honour" event at the "Nazi Boat" site, which many members of the international neo-fascist movement attended. At the far-right gathering on the *Zsófia* event boat, owned by a Fidesz-affiliated entrepreneur, Papp ended his speech with the following neo-fascist slogan:

"We must unite, or we will be swallowed up by the dark tide unleashed by the Zionist conspiracy. [...] Long live Hungary, long live White Europe, long live the White race!"

On the website of Magyar-elvű Mozgalom, led by Papp, are several photos of events commemorating the Arrow Cross takeover. He is a regular participant, speaker and organiser of these events and the events on the day of the escape. The leader on the organisation's website describes his Hungarianism:

"Our nationalism is based on our national (ethnic) and racial consciousness. The Carpathian Basin is the homeland of our Hungarian people and of the indigenous and deeply rooted peoples who live with us, share our destiny and our community, where foreign elements have no place: Jews and coloured ethnic groups have no place."

FURTHER HATE INCIDENTS

This category presents two cases this month. This section includes incidents classified as hate-motivated but not included in our most recent statistics due to their insignificant nature and lack of clear antisemitic motive or because the time of the incident is unknown. It also includes acts that may have an antisemitic intent and were committed by people connected to Hungary, but they did not take place in Hungary.

Neo-Nazis and anti-fascists clashed on the day of the breakout

Source: tev.hu

14 February 2023 As in previous years, this year, several far-right organisations held a commemoration on the anniversary of the 1945 Budapest breakout. Six rallies were reported in the Buda Castle area, three of which were banned by the police, while the police acknowledged three. Anti-fascists from different countries and Hungary planned to demonstrate against the far-right rallies, so the police were on high alert in public places.

RTL reports that German police arrested a 41-year-old and a 46-year-old at Frankfurt airport; the far-right men were planning to travel to the march on the day of the breakout in Budapest. After questioning, they were banned from leaving the country.

The police alert was justified because, despite a police ban on rallies in the area of Buda Castle - Vienna Gate, the healing, which had been announced for 13:00 on Saturday, was attended by many people, according to hvg.hu. By 16:00, there could have been hundreds, even thousands of people in the square.

Mandiner reported that the police did not allow the demonstrators to march to the Vienna Gate Square, where members of the anti-fascist movement from Germany gathered. According to information from the scene, some far-right demonstrators attempted to enter the site despite the ban, but police prevented the two gatherings from meeting at all points. However, according to various press reports, neo-Nazis and anti-fascists clashed in several places. The torchlight procession was officially due to start at 17:00, but around 16:30, small groups began to leave the site.

According to the Mandiner, there were already suggestions that such a clash could have occurred after a gang of viper-wielding, ski-masked men attacked a man in his 40s in the 11th District on Friday afternoon. It is believed that the perpetrators may have been German anti-fascists.

In connection to this, MÉRCE quotes a press release from the far-right party Hatvannégy Vármegye, which reported that a video of the incident was also made. According to those who released the footage, armed with pepper spray and vipers, the attackers were German anti-fascists hunting neo-Nazis. Police arrested one woman at Saturday's anti-fascist demonstration concerning the incident. The newspaper's correspondent also reported that a German journalist was assaulted by unknown neo-Nazis in the Normafa area. A group of anti-fascists and neo-Nazis allegedly confronted each other at the Fisherman's Bastion as well. MÉRCE said the far-right threw things at the anti-fascists, but no injuries were reported.

The Communications Department of the Budapest Police Headquarters (BRFK) said in response to a question from Mandiner that "the case is currently under investigation against unknown perpetrators on suspicion of armed group rioting. The BRFK is investigating all the circumstances of the case".

Mandiner reported that there was a clash between the two camps not only in Gazdagrét but also in Normafa on Saturday. Magyar Jelen said a similar incident occurred in Széll Kálmán Square. According to a report from the scene, "the Betyársereg launched an attack against two antifa camps, one on Széll Kálmán Square and one at the foot of the Castle. Some of the imported anti-fascists fell and injured themselves while fleeing. Now they are protected by the police".

Neo-Nazis attacked passers-by at Széll Kálmán Square

Source: hvg.hu

15 February 2023 On 11 February, far-right extremists on the corner of Széll Kálmán Square and Retek Street beat up three people. The group of five was on their way to lunch when participants of the Breakout Day commemorations gathered in a pub in the street. Eight to 10 people attacked the group of men and women from behind, and several were hit. One of them had his nose and cheekbone broken, while another suffered a skull contusion and a concussion, HVG reports.

The police detained two suspects at the scene, who were released 48 hours after the court ordered lighter criminal supervision.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND RESPONSES

US ambassador in Budapest meets Hungarian Holocaust survivors

Source: neokohn.hu

13 February 2023 When 12-year-old György Kun arrived at Auschwitz, he was not immediately sent to the gas chamber because "Doctor" Mengele believed that György and his brother were twins, David Pressman wrote after the meeting.

"This morning, on the day that Nazi sympathisers marched in Budapest, I brought my twin sons to meet György Kun and another Holocaust survivor, Agnes Kun, to hear their stories, to remember, to rededicate ourselves. The courage of Ágnes and György is unimaginable, their strength is inspiring, their hearts are huge, and their story must never be forgotten," added the ambassador, who shared several pictures and a video of the meeting.

APF: Unfounded accusations reduce the effectiveness of the fight against antisemitism.

Source: 168.hu

17 February 2023 The number of antisemitic acts in Western Europe is increasing alarmingly, but it does not help if Hungary is condemned for the incident in Sweden, Kálmán Szalai, Secretary of the Action and Protection Foundation (APF), said on Jazzy.hu's "Business Class" on Friday morning.

Antisemites have vandalised Hungary's Raoul Wallenberg memorial, the US Ambassador to the United Nations told a meeting on global efforts to combat antisemitism at the UN headquarters in New York. The remarks by Linda Thomas-Greenfield, who hosted the meeting, also caused a stir because no such incident actually took place in Hungary. In fact, the event occurred in Sweden. The Hungarian Foreign Ministry requested a public correction from the US Mission, but this did not happen.

"Unfortunately, in recent years, it has become a tendency that when political arguments run out, antisemitism is dragged out, which leads the discourse towards denigration", Kálmán Szalai said. As he said: "In Hungary, there are 30-40 antisemitic hate crimes per year, in France 6-800; in Germany the number is over 2,000 and in Sweden 230.

Szalai said that the TEV uses the OSCE methodology, which includes acts of terrorism, vandalism, threats, hate speech and discrimination. "It includes abusing someone in the street, spilling paint on a statue of Raoul Wallenberg and terrorist acts against a kosher delicatessen in Paris in which people are killed."

Antisemitic acts are rising in Western Europe", Szalai said, sharing the Foundation's data. "At conferences and political events, there is constant talk about fighting antisemitism, but when the facts are mentioned, they try to trivialise it. This case proves that it is not so important where the incident happened. This is a problem because it diminishes the importance of the subject if we treat these misunderstandings in this way", said the APF secretary, who said the current case was quite blatant. The problem is that by making this mistake, the discourse is rendered meaningless.

If it is of no importance to the US State Department that it happened in Sweden and not in Hungary, and if the text of the speech has been published and not corrected on the website but simply crossed out, i.e. it is still there, let's just pretend that it was not said. This has never happened before. This is problematic because if the US State Department wants to deal with antisemitism in Hungary in the future, it weakens their argument that in some cases they don't even take the facts seriously", Kálmán Szalai explained.

"In professional circles, it is well known that the fight against prejudice is not a short-term fight and that results can only be achieved by thinking in the long term. That is why education is the key to reducing the lack of knowledge of future generations, which is the breeding ground for prejudice", said the TEV secretary in response to a question on how to fight antisemitism.

The APF, now based in Brussels and active in several countries, focuses its activities around this. Education, legal instruments and monitoring are the basis for effective action against antisemitism. In addition to Hungary, the foundation is active in France, Germany and Sweden, Szalai said.

In response to a journalist's question, he said: "In Hungary, about 90 percent of antisemitic acts are hate speech, with few physical atrocities.

"In Western Europe, the numbers are higher, and the proportions have shifted. Attempted physical violence, vandalism, physical violence or attempted physical violence against Jewish property, communities or persons is much higher. And the proportion of perpetrators affiliated with Islamic fundamentalist movements is significant. It is true that in Germany, far-right Nazi sympathisers are also active, and their hate crimes have increased in the last two years", said Kálmán Szalai.

OFFICIAL AND CIVIL RESPONSES

Hungarian and Israeli governments join forces with Shlomo Köves

Source: index.hu

8 February 2023 Israeli Minister of Diaspora Affairs and Combatting Antisemitism Amihai Chikli met this week with Miklós Soltész, Minister of State for Church and Ethnic Relations. The Israeli minister thanked the Hungarian government for its support of Israel and for its fight against antisemitism. Rabbi Shlomo Köves, head of the Association of Hungarian Jewish Communities (EMIH), also attended the meeting, reports Index, citing a report by The Jerusalem Post.

At the meeting, the Israeli side asked the Hungarian government to stop and jointly fight against European funding of anti-Israel Palestinian organisations. Amihai Chikli expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian government and the Jewish community in Hungary for establishing the Machne Chabad refugee camp, which has assisted more than 1,000 Ukrainian Jews displaced by the war. EMIH set up the camp with the support of the Hungarian government.

The parties also discussed the efforts needed to combat antisemitism in Hungary and Europe. Miklós Soltész reported on the constitutional amendments made to this end with the help of Jewish organisations led by the Action and Protection Foundation.

The participants also agreed that anti-Israelism is a form of antisemitism and that the problem can only be tackled internationally.

According to a new report by the Israeli ministry, 68% of anti-Jewish content on social media comes from Palestinians or pro-Palestinian progressives.

Breakout Day rallies banned by police in Budapest

Source: tev.hu

10 February 2023 On 11 February, the anniversary of the attempted breakout of German and Hungarian troops in 1945 during the siege of Budapest by Soviet troops, several events were announced in Budapest. Three of these rallies, announced in the area of the Vienna Gate in Buda Castle, have been banned by police, police.hu said in a statement.

The Budapest Police Headquarters draws attention to the fact that participation in banned rallies will result in sanctions. According to the reasons given, the place of the gathering is a historic site of national importance. The date commemorates the victims of inhuman crimes committed under the National Socialist dictatorship.

The Budapest Police Headquarters will ensure the peaceful exercise of the right of assembly but will also take action against the perpetrators of violations, participants in banned assemblies, organisers and holders of unregistered assemblies, the police said.

Gergely Karácsony: We cannot let the neo-Nazis take over the historic commemoration

Source: i68.hu

11 February 2023 Budapest's mayor has strongly condemned the neo-Nazi commemoration of Breakout Day on 11 February, which took place at the Castle of Budapest.

"We cannot allow space for neo-Nazis to take a page out of this tragedy and then appropriate and distort its memory. There will always be those who will use the tragedies of the past for their own political ends", Gergely Karácsony wrote on his Facebook page, reacting to the fact that despite a police ban, neo-Nazi and far-right organisations from Hungary and abroad are again trying to commemorate the 11 February 1945 breakout of German and Hungarian armies from the Soviet encirclement of Budapest.

The mayor recalled that "there were attempts to spare our capital from the siege, but the occupying Germans decided otherwise. They ordered that Budapest be a fortress that must be defended from door to door. They sacrificed our city and countless Hungarians' lives just to slow the end of the war".

European Left calls on prosecutors to explain why neo-Nazis were allowed to gather in state-owned forest

Source: amiidonk.hu

24 February 2023 The European Left is calling on the Prosecutor General's Office to clarify who is responsible for the fact that the far-right rally banned by the court was held in a popular hiking area managed by the state-owned Pilisi Parkerdő Zrt. Attila Vajnai, president of the European Left, had previously submitted a citizens' petition to the Ministry of Agriculture asking for clarification on the case. In its reply, the Ministry of Agriculture deflected responsibility, according to the party.

In their letter, they wrote that, according to the information provided, there was no obstacle to forestry activities in connection with the event planned by the petitioning private individual for 11 February 2023, which was marked as an excursion. It is the organiser's duty and responsibility to obtain any additional permits that may be required for the activity.

According to the European Left, the letter from the Ministry of Agriculture shows that a special police permit should have been obtained for a political event rather than an "excursion". The police issued no such permit, but the far-right groups from home and abroad were still allowed to hold their event. Since the press even knew about the event, the police cannot claim that they were unaware of the unauthorised political event and therefore did not take action against the offence.

The European Left, therefore, expects all authorities to use any avenue provided by law to prevent the denial and relativisation of the crimes of the Nazi occupation troops and their collaborators, the press office of the European Left said.

OTHER NEWS

Hungarian foreign ministry expects apology for wrongly accusing it of antisemitism at UN headquarters

Source: index.hu

14 February 2023 On the second weekend of February, a high-level meeting on global efforts to combat antisemitism was held at the UN Headquarters in New York. The Index portal reports that the meeting was hosted by Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the US ambassador to the United States, who began her remarks by saying that while synagogues in Ukraine are being hit by Russian rockets, in Hungary, Holocaust memorials are being vandalised.

According to the report, in her speech, the ambassador cited Hungary as an example of how "antisemitism is spreading and growing around the world. This oldest form of hatred is again threatening the security of the Jewish people and the sense of belonging they deserve." She added that "this hatred is being fuelled not only by extremist groups but also by mainstream political leaders, popular celebrities and people in positions of power. They are fuelling the hatred online and in person. Directly and indirectly. Covertly and out in the open".

Although the Hungarian delegation attended the meeting, they were not allowed to speak, and the Hungarian ambassador had to personally address the allegations after the meeting.

Index understands that the US mission admitted behind closed doors that they had made a mistake and that the incident had actually occurred in Sweden, where the statue of Raoul Wallenberg was vandalised. The Hungarian embassy then requested a public correction from the US mission, which was not forthcoming.

According to a document obtained by the paper, the US diplomacy, for its part, considers the matter closed by crossing out the part concerning Hungary in the official transcript of the speech.

Máté Paczolay, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade spokesman, told Index that it was outrageous that the US ambassador made unfounded and false allegations about Hungary in front of the UN's broad public. As the Hungarian delegation was not given the opportunity to speak by the US hosts, they could only complain after the meeting. The US side admitted that it had made a mistake, but beyond that, no clarification or apology was issued, which is the minimum diplomatic expectation in such a situation. What is even more shocking is that, after the matter had clearly become unpleasant, the part about Hungary in the official transcript of the speech was simply crossed out, thus apparently "dealing with the situation", he said.

According to the Hungarian foreign ministry, it is likely that the US ambassador's speechwriter made a mistake. He said that if it was really just a mistake due to lack of preparation and not a deliberate slip, it is incomprehensible why the mission did not issue a statement to resolve the situation.

The spokesman said that the seriousness of the whole event was called into question by the fact that, in a high-profile meeting on antisemitism, untruths could be made about a country in the presence of the entire diplomatic corps without any consequences and without any due diligence. Máté Paczolay pointed out that Hungary has zero tolerance for antisemitism and that anyone who identifies openly as a Jew can feel safe in the country, unlike in some large Western European cities.

THE MONTH'S CHRONICLE

All the incidents to be found in the report are presented chronologically in the table below. The *Category* column shows which part of the report deals with the given case in greater detail.

No.	Date	Incident	Category
1.	6th of February	Grave of Ferenc Szálasi's widow turned into Arrow Cross memorial	Antisemitic Hate Incidents – Hate Speech
2.	8th of February	Antisemitic slurs scrawled on Momentum banner	Antisemitic Hate Incidents – Damage to Property
3.	8th of February	Day of Honour: far-right organisations announce their programme as an anti-fascist commemoration	Official and Civil Responses
4.	10th of February	Hungarian and Israeli governments join forces with Shlomo Köves	Official and Civil Responses
5.	11th of February	Gergely Karácsony: We cannot let the neo-Nazis take over the historic commemoration	Official and Civil Responses
6.	13th of February	US ambassador in Budapest meets Hungarian Holocaust survivors	Community News and Responses
7.	14th of February	Hungarian foreign ministry expects apology for wrongly accusing it of antisemitism at UN headquarters	Other News
8.	14th of February	Police arrested the man with a knife who tried to enter the synagogue on Dohány Street	Antisemitic Hate Incidents – Threat
9.	14th of February	Neo-Nazis and anti-fascists clashed on the day of the breakout	Further Hate Incidents
10.	15th of February	Neo-Nazis attacked passers-by at Széll Kálmán Square	Further Hate Incidents
11.	17th of February	Antisemitic riots at the Fény Street market on "Breakout Day"	Antisemitic Hate Incidents – Threat
12.	17th of February	APF: Unfounded accusations reduce the effectiveness of the fight against antisemitism	Community News and Responses
13.	24th of February	European Left calls on prosecutors to explain why neo-Nazis were allowed to gather in state-owned forest	Official and Civil Responses

CONTACT AND SUPPORT

Action and Protection League is the civil initiative of a number of Jewish organizations that is ready to take resolute steps to curb increasing widespread antisemitic manifestations.

The Action and Protection Foundation is the partner of the Action and Protection League in Hungary.

In case anyone faces insults or antisemitic abuse due to a supposed or real Jewish background, do not remain silent, let us know, so that we can forward the case through the appropriate channels to the official organs required to take measures!

Notifications of such incidents are received by the Foundation through any of the following means:

HOTLINE (+36 1) 5 1 00 000

The website of Action and Protection League: www.apleu.org

The Facebook page: www.facebook.com/tev-tett-es-vedelem-alapitvany

Action and Protection League's undertaking can only be successful if great numbers share in our commitment to prepare the grounds for the right to fair process for all those who have suffered offenses. In aid of this cause please support the work of the Foundation with your contribution! Donations can be made to the Foundation on the following bank account:

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2023 Budapest

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