

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 15, 2013

The Honorable György Szapáry
Ambassador of Hungary to the United States
Embassy of Hungary
3910 Shoemaker Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Szapáry,

We write to express our appreciation for the ongoing dialogue with your Embassy regarding threats to minority rights. The U.S. Government and many civil society organizations have noted with concern the resurgence of extremism and anti-Semitism in Hungary over the past few years, including personal attacks against Jews, vandalism of Jewish cemeteries, and virulently anti-Semitic statements by members of the fascist Jobbik party. The information provided by your staff regarding the Hungarian government's efforts to combat this trend is encouraging.

In order to foster a society in which diversity is valued and all citizens are free to exercise their individual liberties, it is critical that government leaders stand firmly against any and all acts of hate. Prime Minister Orbán did so when he rightly said at the World Jewish Congress meeting in May that, "anti-Semitism is unacceptable and intolerable." He made another important statement just days prior, when he said, "If we want to protect democracy, we must take a firm stand against Jobbik. Jobbik has developed a political ideology that quite obviously violates the human rights of Jews at both an individual and community level."

We are specifically encouraged by your Government's commitment to a "zero-tolerance" policy against anti-Semitism, the government's establishment of the Hungarian Holocaust 2014 Memorial Committee, and the recently passed legislation to mandate school visits to the Holocaust Memorial and Documentation Center. At the same time, we remain concerned over reports of the inclusion of anti-Semitic writers in the national curriculum, the honoring of Miklos Horthy by local governments, and the continuation of paramilitary activities by racist organizations.


The U.S. State Department's 2012 Human Rights Report also identified the LGBT, Roma/Sinti, and other minority communities as being targets of discrimination. The report notes that, "Despite legal protections, right-wing extremists continued to abuse members of the LGBT community. Law enforcement and other authorities often disregarded the hate element of these crimes, and no protocol or regular training on the subject existed." We commend the Hungarian government for passing a new law which addresses this concern by specifically designating violence on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity as a hate crime, though we remain concerned about homophobia and transphobia and the violence they precipitate. As

implementation of this law moves forward, we would appreciate an update on steps your government is taking to enforce its provisions.

With close to 100,000 Jewish residents, Hungary is home to the largest Jewish community in Central Europe. We encourage you, the Government of Hungary, to build upon your stated commitments to forcefully combat hate crimes and hate speech through political leadership, educational initiatives, and comprehensive prosecutions.

We look forward to continuing our exchanges with your Embassy and government and thank you for the commitments and efforts against anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred.

Sincerely,



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress