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HUNGARY

PÉCS PRIDE ORGANISER AT RISK OF PROSECUTION

Géza Buzás-Hábel, the organizer of Pécs Pride 2025, is under criminal investigation for planning a peaceful LGBTI+ rights march. The event went ahead on October 4 despite a ban issued under Hungary's new anti-Pride law.

Now, Géza may face formal charges, and up to one year in prison, for exercising his basic rights.

This investigation is an unnecessary and unjust interference in the rights to peaceful assembly, free expression, and non-discrimination, all protected under European and international human rights law. It also represents a deeply troubling escalation in the criminalization of LGBTI+ expression and activism in Hungary.

Write to the Chief Prosecutor of Pécs urging his office to:

- Immediately terminate the criminal proceedings against Géza Buzás-Hábel.
- Ensure that no one should face prosecution for peacefully exercising their human rights.

Write to:

District Prosecution Office of Pécs
Dr. István Takács, Chief Prosecutor
Postal Address: 7621 Pécs, Jókai utca 26., Hungary
Email: pecs@mku.hu
Salutation: Dear Chief Prosecutor,

And copy:

Mrs. Katalin Kapocsne Haas
Deputy Head of Mission & Chargé d'affaires, a.i.
Embassy of Hungary
299 Waverley Street
Ottawa, ON K2P 0V9
Tel: (613) 230-2717; (613) 230-8215
Email: mission.ott@mfa.gov.hu

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Géza Buzás Habel is a Roma gay man, a teacher, and a human rights defender from Pécs. He teaches Romani language and culture and trains future educators. He has also organized Pécs Pride for many years. It is the only Pride event outside Budapest and is known for being inclusive, peaceful, and community centered.

On September 4, 2025, Géza notified local police about the fifth Pécs Pride, planned for October 4. The next day, police issued a pre-emptive ban. They claimed the event would expose children to prohibited content because it supported same-sex marriage rights, transgender legal gender recognition, and remembrance of LGBTI+ Holocaust victims. Géza appealed the decision. However, the Kúria, Hungary's Supreme Court, rejected the appeal. Even so, Pécs Pride went ahead on October 4 without police intervention.

On October 10, Géza received an official summons that identified him as a person suspected of a criminal offence. Media reports on November 6 indicated that police had recommended charges. Under Hungarian law, the Prosecutor's Office has up to one year, with a possible six month extension, to end the case, suspend it, or bring formal charges. On November 13, Amnesty International Hungary contacted the Prosecutor's Office. The Office confirmed the next day that it had received the file and was reviewing it. The Office did not indicate whether charges would be filed.

In 2025, Hungary intensified its long standing restrictions on LGBTI+ rights. Act III of 2025, often called the anti Pride law, expanded the 2021 "Propaganda Law". The law came into force in April. It bans assemblies that authorities believe violate the 2021 law, which falsely labels LGBTI+ visibility as harmful to children. It also allows facial recognition at assemblies and fines of up to 200,000 HUF for participants. Organizers of a banned assembly may face criminal charges and up to one year in prison. Authorities used this law to ban both Budapest and Pécs Pride. Even so, both events went ahead, with Budapest Pride drawing more than 300,000 people and Pécs Pride drawing about 5,000.

Hungary is bound by several human rights instruments that require authorities to protect the right to peaceful assembly without discrimination. These include the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. These standards make it clear that banning Pride marches and criminalizing organizers is not compatible with human rights protections.

Please take action as soon as possible until May 18, 2025. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.