

URGENT ACTION

LET PRIDE MARCH FREELY

On 18 March, Hungary's Parliament swiftly passed a law that effectively bans Pride marches. The law prohibits assemblies deemed to violate the anti-LGBTI "Propaganda Law", which falsely portrays LGBTI visibility as 'harmful to children'. Under this law, authorities can ban Pride or other LGBTI events, fine participants, and sentence organisers to up to one year in prison. It also allows the use of facial recognition technology to track and identify participants, posing a serious threat to privacy and spreading fear. This law represents an urgent and severe violation of human rights, including the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, expression, privacy and non-discrimination. Hungarian authorities must uphold the right to peaceful protest and ensure the 28 June Budapest Pride march can go ahead without unjust restrictions, intimidation, or violence. They must also repeal this discriminatory legislation and protect the rights of LGBTI individuals and communities.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

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Dear Chief of Police,

I am writing to urgently address Hungary's recently adopted legislation - Act III of 2025, which not only can be used to ban Pride marches, but also imposes fines on participants and criminal charges on organizers. It also empowers authorities to use invasive facial recognition surveillance to track participants. This legislation is a clear violation of Hungary's international and regional human rights obligations, including the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, expression, the right to privacy and the right to be free from discrimination.

For three decades, Pride organisers in Hungary and the police have worked to ensure the safety and dignity of all those involved. Pride is a peaceful demonstration of equality and justice. Yet, this recently adopted law is built on falsehoods, mischaracterizing LGBTI visibility as "harmful to children," and creates fear, not safety. This law not only undermines the rights of LGBTI people but sets a dangerous precedent that impacts the rights of all.

As the police, your sworn duty is to protect all citizens and uphold human rights. Your role is also to respect, protect and facilitate people's right to peacefully protest and not to enforce discriminatory laws that infringe on the human rights of individuals. The world is watching and waiting for the 30th Budapest Pride to march on the streets.

This is a defining moment. You must choose to protect human rights and dignity, over enforcing a law that silences those demanding equality. I call on you to reject this unjust law, uphold Hungary's human rights commitments, and ensure that the 28 June Budapest Pride march proceeds unhindered and peacefully, free from discrimination, harassment, fear or violence.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Over the last decade, the Hungarian government has conducted a campaign against LGBTI rights using stigmatizing rhetoric and targeting those in civil society who stand up for equality. On 11 March, MPs of the Fidesz party that holds governing majority submitted a set of amendments to the Fundamental Law (Hungary's Constitution) to establish a constitutional basis for banning the annual Pride marches. On 17 March, another bill was introduced by the same MPs, to amend the existing legislation on assemblies. The bill was fast-tracked through Parliament the next day, without consultation, and promulgated as Act III of 2025, and has entered into force on 15 April 2025.

The new law (Act III of 2025) contains vague language which permits authorities to ban any assemblies advocating for LGBTI rights and depicting LGBTI themes. It makes it a crime to hold or organize and a petty offence to attend events that violate Hungary's 'Propaganda Law' legislation, which prohibits the 'depiction or promotion' of homosexuality and diverse gender identities to under-18s. Specifically, it introduced harsh penalties, including fines of up to 200,000 HUF (approximately 500 EUR) for individuals who participate in a banned Pride event. Those who hold or organize a banned assembly face, according to the Criminal Code already in effect, criminal charges and risk up to one year of imprisonment. The new law also widens the scope where the police may disperse a notified assembly. The new law maintained that publicly promoting any assembly before the notification is provided and accepted by the police constitutes, in itself, a petty offence. The timeframe for the notification of an assembly was amended, whereby organizers must give notice no later than 1 month. Pride organizers can start the notification process for the Budapest Pride at the earliest on 28 May.

The new legislation also widens the scope for the possible use of facial recognition technology (FRT) to any petty offences, including petty offences related to assemblies. It provides a carte blanche authorisation to police and other authorities to identify anyone's face on the streets, public spaces, if the authority deems it "necessary to prevent, deter, detect and disrupt offences and to bring offenders to justice" in relation to any petty offence. This is of particular concern in relation to a potential use to identify individuals suspected of attending assemblies which might be banned by authorities, such as the Prides.

These changes, especially when considered collectively, undermine the fundamental rights of LGBTI individuals and their allies, including their right to freedom of peaceful assembly. They effectively seek to push LGBTI people out of the public eye by labelling the "promotion" and "display" of homosexuality and transgender identities as prohibited "content" during demonstrations. This discriminatory law also represents a grave infringement on the privacy rights of every citizen in Hungary. It seeks to create an atmosphere of fear and silence for those who dare to express dissent. Such measures threaten not only personal privacy but also the very essence of freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly and must be repealed.

Ahead of the Budapest Pride, Amnesty International reminds Hungarian authorities that States have a positive obligation to protect, respect and facilitate peaceful assemblies, in law and in practice. The right to freedom of peaceful assembly is protected under international law and standards in conventions Hungary is a party to, and it should not be subject to permission from authorities. Any such mandatory requirement should not be used as a means to control protests; instead, they should be understood merely as a means of providing information that a protest will be taking place.

Any restriction on assemblies must be prescribed by law, but also, cumulatively, be aimed at protecting a legitimate public interest, be necessary and proportionate, meaning that the same result cannot be achieved through other less restrictive means. The prohibition of a specific public assembly in advance therefore must always be a measure of last resort, based on a case-by-case assessment taking into account the specific circumstances of each assembly.

Any decision to disperse an assembly should also be taken only as a last resort and carefully in line with the principles of necessity and proportionality, that is only when there are no other means available to protect a legitimate aim which outweighs the right of people to assemble peacefully. In any such situation, the police and any other law enforcement authorities must, as far as possible, avoid any use of force and, in any event, must always restrict it to the minimum level necessary and comply with the fundamental principles of proportionality, precaution and non-discrimination.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Hungarian, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 15 July 2025

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Hungarian LGBTI community (ALL)