



**United Nations Human Rights Council, 33<sup>rd</sup> Session (13 – 30 September 2016)**

**Item 6 – Hungary UPR**

**Wednesday 21 September 2016**

**Speaker: BHA representative, Cordelia Tucker O'Sullivan**

Thank you, Mr President.

This is a joint statement from the British Humanist Association and the European Humanist Federation.

While we agree with the delegation of Hungary that there is a 'joint responsibility of the international community'<sup>1</sup> to effectively respond to the recent refugee crisis,<sup>2</sup> we share the concerns of several States who noted numerous human rights violations committed against migrants and refugees attempting to enter Hungary from neighboring countries.

In September 2015, a razor wire fence was built intended to keep migrants and refugees from entering Hungary, and two 'transit zones' were constructed on the Hungarian border with Serbia, where a daily cap of 15 admissions is employed, meaning that hundreds of asylum seekers are stranded outside transit zones, without adequate shelter, shower facilities and food.<sup>3</sup> In June, Parliament adopted a law<sup>4</sup> that allows Hungarian border officials to summarily return asylum seekers to the country they are entering from. In response to this, the High Commissioner expressed concern that such a policy may result in the police not respecting the human rights of migrants, and that expelling migrants and refugees by force without due legal process violates international law.<sup>5</sup> Instead of reviewing the law, Prime Minister Orbán has said that Hungary will build a new 'more massive' fence on its southern border to defend against a possible surge in the number of migrants.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to this, there have been reports of dogs owned by the Hungarian border control police attacking asylum seekers,<sup>7</sup> vicious beatings by the police, including the use of a pepper spray-like substance, batons, and handcuffs, culminating in forcing migrants back through small openings in the razor wire fence, causing more injuries.<sup>8</sup>

The response by Hungary to the refugee crisis is both unacceptable, and illegal. It is imperative that Hungary implement a proper asylum application process, which meets international legal requirements, and ensures that border control police are not committing human rights abuses. We also call on the international community to live up to its obligations under the 1951 refugee convention, by committing to an equitable refugee acceptance scheme, and providing all necessary assistance to Hungary.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/33/9, para 48

<sup>2</sup> Under the 1951 Convention and Protocol relating to the status of refugees

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/13/hungary-migrants-abused-border>

<sup>4</sup> [http://net.jogtar.hu/ir/gen/hjegy\\_doc.cgi?docid=A0700089.TV&timeshift=20160717](http://net.jogtar.hu/ir/gen/hjegy_doc.cgi?docid=A0700089.TV&timeshift=20160717)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/13/hungary-migrants-abused-border>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/26/hungarys-pm-plans-more-massive-fence-to-keep-out-migrants>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.vocativ.com/354794/syrian-refugees-dog-attack-hungary-border/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/13/hungary-migrants-abused-border>