by gathering 39 local scholars, experts, and civil society activists specialized
in racism and human rights, the fourth edition of the European Islamophobia
Report addresses a still timely and politically important issue. All 34 country
reports included in this book follow a unique structure that is convenient, first, for com-
paring country reports and, second, for selected readings on a particular topic such as
politics, employment, or education with regards to Islamophobia across Europe.
The present report investigates in detail the underlying dynamics that directly or indirectly
support the rise of anti-Muslim racism in Europe. This extends from Islamophobic state-
ments spread in national media to laws and policies that restrain the fundamental rights
of European Muslim citizens. As a result, the European Islamophobia Report 2018 dis-
cusses the impact of anti-Muslim discourse on human rights, multiculturalism, and the
state of law in Europe.
This fourth edition of our report highlights how European societies are challenged by the
rise of violent far-right groups that do not only preach hatred of Muslims but also partici-
pate in the organization of bloody terror attacks. The rise of far-right terrorist groups such
as AFO (Action of Operational Forces) in France or the network Hannibal in Germany,
Austria, and Switzerland confirms EUROPOL’s alarming surveys on the growing danger
of right-wing terrorism.
This year, SETA worked in cooperation with the Leopold Weiss Institute, an Austrian NGO
based in Vienna dedicated to the research of Muslims in Europe. In addition, the Euro-
pean Union has funded the European Islamophobia Report 2018 through the program
“Civil Society Dialogue Between EU and Turkey (CSD-V)”.

About SETA
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research
institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and interna-
tional issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul,
Washington D.C. and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accu-
rate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform
policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural condi-
tions. Through research reports, publications, brain storming sessions, conferences and
policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and
business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.
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ABOUT EDITORS

Enes Bayraklı

Enes Bayraklı earned his BA, MA and PhD from the Department of Political Science at the University of Vienna, and conducted research for his PhD thesis at the University of Nottingham in Britain between 2009 and 2010. He was a deputy director at the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center in London in 2011-2013. Bayraklı also served as the founding director of the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers in Constanta and Bucharest, Romania in August-December 2012. He has been a faculty member at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Turkish-German University since 2013. Currently he is also the coordinator of SETA Brussels office and director of European Studies at SETA Foundation. His fields of research include Islamophobia in Europe, far-right movements in Europe, the transformation of Turkish foreign policy, foreign policy analysis, and German foreign policy.

Farid Hafez

Farid Hafez, PhD (Political Science, University of Vienna), is currently lecturer and researcher at the University of Salzburg, Department of Political Science and Sociology and senior researcher at Georgetown University’s “The Bridge Initiative” at the School of Foreign Service. He defended his habilitation thesis on “Islam-Politics in the Second Republic of Austria” at the University of Salzburg. In 2017, he was a Fulbright visiting professor at the University of California, Berkeley and in 2014, he was a visiting scholar at Columbia University, New York. Since 2010 he has been the editor of Islamophobia Studies Yearbook, and since 2016 the co-editor of European Islamophobia Report. Hafez has received the Bruno Kreisky Award for the “Political Book of the Year” for his anthology Islamophobia in Austria (co-edited with John Bunzl). He has more than 80 publications in leading journals such as Politics and Religion, Patterns of Prejudice, and German Politics and Society. His latest publications are Islamophobia in Muslim Majority Societies (Routledge, co-edited with Enes Bayraklı) and Feindbild Islam. Über die Salonfähigkeit von Rassismus (Böhlau).

For more information about the EIR:

www.islamophobiaeurope.com
islamophobia@setav.org
The Authors

Dr. Nadia Jones-Gailani is Assistant Professor of Gender Studies at the Central European University. She received her doctorate degree in 2013 from the University of Toronto in Gender and Women’s History. Her monograph Transnational Identity and Memory Making in the Lives of Iraqi Women in Diaspora is forthcoming in 2019 in the Gender and History Series of the University of Toronto Press. Email: jonesn@ceu.edu

Gabi Gőbl received her MA degree in Sociology from the Eötvös Lóránd University (ELTE), Budapest. She has worked in various non-governmental organizations in Hungary as an international project manager before joining the Center for European Neighborhood Studies (CENS) as program coordinator in October 2013. Since 2015, she has been involved in various international research projects, including the EU’s Erasmus+ Jean Monnet program and the Austrian Future Fund. Email: goblg@ceu.edu

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union and Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Directorate for EU Affairs.

Executive Summary

There is an increase in xenophobic attitudes towards Muslims over the past year, fuelled in large part by the April 2018 countrywide elections campaign in which migrants and migration were central issues of discourse. Located along the old ‘Balkan Route,’ Hungary occupies a key location for migrants seeking asylum in Europe. Over the course of the elections campaign (2018), the issue of migrants became conflated with a growing fear of Muslims and a particularly hostile reception within the transit zones along the border for those seeking to make asylum claims. As a result of well-planned and funded attacks on migrants (often depicted as Muslim) using media platforms and billboards, there has been a reported spike in open hostility towards anyone deemed to be Muslim in appearance.

Figures on crime in Hungary are reported and collected in the Unified System of Criminal Statistics of the Investigative Authorities and of Public Prosecution. The majority of cases either remain unreported or are not investigated as hate crimes since Islamophobic, xenophobic, and racially motivated attacks lack legal recognition. This makes it difficult to separate explicitly Islamophobic attacks from those targeting the Roma population. Judith Sargentini’s Report for the EU provides ample assessments of NGOs and international organizations that show clear evidence of the diminishing space for civil society organizations, and the serious lack of public access to free information. The declining desire to associate with ‘European values’ has led to a growing rift within the European People’s Party, where the government party had previously found its strongest allies.

Sargentini’s Report reiterated a long list of its deep concerns including restrictions on the following: applied rule of law; academic freedom; human rights of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees; women’s and gender protections; rights of minority groups; and the functioning of an independent judiciary system.
Összefoglaló

A korábbi évekhez képest is nőtt a muszlimokkal szembeni, nyílt idegenellenesség Magyarországon, nagymértékben a FIDESZ-kormány 2018-as, migrációellenes választási kampányának következményeként.

Magyarország 2015-ben kulcsfontosságú pozíciót töltött be az Európában me nedéket keresők „balkáni útvonalán”, csupán néhány hónap alatt rekordszámú me nedékkérő haladt át az ország területén. A 2015 elején indított, jól megtervezett és bőségesen finanszírozott kormányzati kommunikációs kampány nyíltan a menekültek és a muszlimok ellen irányult, összemosva a bevándorlást a terrorizmust. A menekült- és bevándorlásellenes narratíva olyannyira sikeresnek bizonyult, hogy a FIDESZ 2018-as választási kampányának is meghatározó eleme volt, a Magyarországon regisztrált menedékkérelmek tartósan alacsony száma ellenére.

A gyűlöletkeltő kampány jelentősen hozzájárult a kormány népszerűségének növekedéséhez, és erősen fokozta a menekültektől való félelem és az általános idegenellenes attitűdök elterjedését.

A szabad sajtó bedarálása, a civil szervezetek megfélemlítése és a demokrácia leépítése következményeként a kormányzati narratívával szemben megfogalmazódó kritikák és ellenfelelemek nem tudnak szélesebb közönséghez eljutni. Az erősödő Európa-ellenes retorika és a kormány nyílt szembenállása az európai értékekkel mára már trendet teremtett az EU-n belül is. Ezen folyamatokat a Judith Sargentini európai parlamenti képviselő által összeállított és nevével fémjelzett jelentés, valamint hazai és nemzetközi civil szervezetek beszámolói is részletesen tárgyalják. A riportok beszámolnak a jogállamiságot, az akadémiai szabadságot, a menedékkérők, nők és kisebbségek jogait, valamint a független igazságszolgáltatást erodáló folyamatokról.

Jelen riport a magyar kormány bevándorlásellenes politikai narratíváját, az arra épülő választási kampány fő motívumait, illetve a médiában megjelenő propagandaüzeneteket és azok következményeit foglalja össze. A beszámolóban civil szervezetek képviselőivel és a magyarországi muszlim közösségek tagjaival készült interjúkat is felhasználtunk.
Country Profile

Country: Hungary
Type of Regime: Democratic Republic
Form of Government: Parliamentary representative democracy
Ruling Parties: FIDESZ (Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance) (governs in coalition with the micro-party KDNP [Christian Democratic People's Party])
Opposition Parties: Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik), Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), Democratic Coalition (DK), Politics Can Be Different (LMP), Dialogue for Hungary (PM)
Last Elections: 8 April, 2018: FIDESZ-KDNP (49.27%); Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary (19.06%); Hungarian Socialist Party and Dialogue for Hungary (MSZP-P) (11.91%); Politics Can Be Different (LMP) (7.06%); Democratic Coalition (DK) (5.38%).
Total Population: 9,778,371
Major Languages: Hungarian
Official Religion: No official religion (Secularism)
Statistics on Islamophobia: N/A
Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: N/A
Major Religions (% of Population): Central Statistical Office 2011 census data: Catholics (39.0 %), Other Christianity (15%), Judaism (0.1%), Islam (0.1%), Unaffiliated (18.2%).
Muslim Population (% of Population): 5,579 Central Statistical Office 2011 Census / 30-50,000
Main Muslim Community Organizations: Organization of Muslims in Hungary (Magyarországi Muszlimok Egyháza), Hungarian Islamic Community (Magyar Izm-lám Közösség)
Main NGOs Combating Islamophobia: The Hungarian Islam Advocacy Association, Menedék Association for Migrants, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Amnesty International Hungary
Far Right Parties: Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom), Our Homeland Movement (Mi Hazánk Mozgalom)
Far Right Movements: Generation Identity (Identitás Generáció), The Army of Outlaws (Betyársereg), Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement (Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom), Hungarian Self-Defense Movement (Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom), Power and Determination (Erő és Elszántság), Hungarian Legion (Légio Hungária)
Far Right Terrorist Organizations: N/A
Limitations to Islamic Practices
- Hijab Ban: No
- Halal Slaughter Ban: No
- Minaret Ban: No
- Circumcision Ban: No
- Burka Ban: No
- Prayer Ban: No
Introduction

Hungary does not have an extensive community of Muslims, and so the rise in the rhetoric of Islamophobia is completely at odds with the current numbers of migrants or settled Muslims living in Hungary. In this sense, Muslims are a virtually invisible (and yet highly visible) minority of the Hungarian population. The 2011 census data indicates that there were 5,579 persons who identified as Muslim, and of these the majority followed Sunni Islam. Institutions that support Muslims are small in number with a few mosques in the capital of Budapest. Before their status was officially revoked by the government in 2012, the Islamic Church (IE – Iszlám Egyház) was the largest Muslim organization in Hungary. Now the two prominent organizations that cater to the Muslim population in Hungary are the Hungarian Islamic Community (MIK - Magyar Iszlám Közösség) and the Organization of Muslims in Hungary (MME – Magyarországi Muszlimok Egyháza). Of these, the latter largely represents foreign-born Muslims, while the former is mainly dominated by Hungarian-born converts and is better represented in the media. At the federal level, the leading representative organization is the Islamic Council of Hungary (MIT - Magyarországi Iszlám Tanács), which is an umbrella organization jointly created by the MIK and the MME in 2011 and recognized as one of the country’s thirty-two churches by parliament in 2012.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Islamophobia is present in the daily political discourse, and it is also a part of a broader and growing xenophobic attitude towards non-Hungarians fueled by the state media channels. General knowledge on the religion of Islam is largely superficial. Islamophobia as a discursive element in Hungarian political discourse draws upon an embedded anti-Semitic and anti-Roma attitude, with a growing focus on the figure of the migrant. Ahead of the April 2018 election, a rampantly xenophobic discourse targeted the spectre of Muslim migrants ‘invading’ Hungary with criminal intent to take over parts of the country. Given the illegalization of providing

information or resources to or for migrants, this has further driven underground organizations such as Migszol Migrant Solidarity Group of Hungary. On 4 April, 2018, they blogged a dire notice titled, “Desperate Times Call for New Measures,” announcing their mission to support migrants based on information collected with individuals “on the ground”. They argued that the FIDESZ-controlled propaganda and legal restrictions mean they can no longer gain access to detained asylum seekers. The blog makes clear that suspending their work was the only course of action that protected the personal safety of both the migrants and the organizers. 5

Islamophobia is most commonly framed within the context of the securitization of migration where the threat to the Hungarian people is three-fold: physical insecurity (threats of terrorism, rape, and violent male masses), economic insecurity (“they will take our jobs”), and the cultural homogeneity and national identity of the people (“mixing’ of race, religions, and cultures as a threat). In part, a new umbrella concept of “new security challenges” has created the precedent for all European governments to self-select refugees on the basis of protecting their population. 6 Increasingly, central and eastern European states like Hungary have reconstructed humanitarian migrants as a threat to the culture, economy, and security of nation-states. 7

Physical and Verbal Attacks

The number of verbal and physical attacks against Muslims in Hungary are on the rise, as are reports of abuses towards migrants at the border. 8 Hungarian border hunters are given licence to seriously harm asylum seekers in order to block their passage to Hungary. Doctors in the surrounding region have recorded a spike in cases of physical harm and abuse they are treating resulting in injuries inflicted at Hungary’s border wall. 9 Sultan Sulok, the president of the Organization of Muslims in Hungary claims that the members of his Mosque of Muslims are suffering physical and property-based vandalism attacks as a direct result of the political rhetoric focused on Muslims. Since there is a fear of reporting incidents, those interviewed for The National stated that in the lead-up to the election, individual members had suffered physical and verbal assaults, including women having their hijabs ripped off in pub-

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lic and being threatened at knifepoint while on a tram in Budapest. Andras Kováts, director of Menedék Hungarian Association for Migrants, claims that migrant Muslims who arrive in Hungary are unaware what kind of hostile reception awaits them on the job market, including workplace-based conflicts that can potentially arise.

In interviews within Muslim communities, most reported a rise in the number of verbal attacks against women and girls in particular, since those wearing a headscarf or head-covering are the most visibly identifiable Muslims. Participant responses demonstrate that there are a number of different kinds of assaults that regularly take place, including physical incidents as well as the more common acts of spitting, slapping, and shoving of individuals in public spaces. It remains unclear the extent to which these are being recorded and taken seriously by the police forces. The number of attacks against Muslim-affiliated institutions or those organizations that are deemed to be supporting the ‘migrant crisis’ are not officially reported for 2017-2018, although staff and community members demonstrated a lack of trust in the police and in reaching out to the authorities for assistance. A Central European University Master’s student reported, “You know, it is not every day that I feel something bad against me from the people in Budapest, but sometimes when I am waiting for the metro alone, I feel afraid. Somebody has spit on me before – it was a Hungarian man who said “go home, you Muslim” and I was surprised because how can he tell I am Muslim?!” As we discussed the incident, the student believed she was profiled because of her darker skin and her accent, since there were no other visible markers identifying her as being of Muslim faith.

**Employment**

In our discussions with legal consultants and a Human Resources manager who specializes in providing support for third-country nationals, both reported that xenophobia in general was an issue. In particular, recent Muslim migrants are unfairly assumed to have language limitations that impede their ability to be employed. Of the select few Muslim veiled women that these experts had helped over the past few years, most had sought self-employment over disclosing their religion to an employer in Hungary. Women have reported to the legal consultant that dress and prayer are very sensitive issues in the workplace, where appearing to be ‘conservative’ and praying in the open can lead to discrimination in the place of work. Most women


admitted to hiding in the staircase of the office building to pray during the workday.\textsuperscript{14} Overall, the Muslims that have been supported by these experts related their experiences in ‘coming-out’ to their colleagues in a similar confessional model to ‘coming out’ for persons announcing any non-normative sexual identity. According to the HR consultant who wishes to remain unnamed, it is often not the cultural differences that lead to conflict but rather the phenomenon of ‘foreign language fear’. Since religious affiliation cannot be legally probed during a job interview, it is often an accent or a way of dressing that can codify the expected racial elements of ‘Muslim’ for the employer. Despite there being no official restrictions according to race or religion on labor employment according to the Hungarian law, there nevertheless exists an unspoken discriminatory practice of keeping visible Muslims out of the workforce.\textsuperscript{15}

**Education**

The Hungarian National Curriculum demonstrates a lack of comprehensive insight on the religion of Islam. An overview of the curriculum suggests that it remains Eurocentric and focused inwardly on developments and histories of the surrounding region. The Association of History Teachers’ lobbied for amendments to the above, and since 2013 there have been mandatory religious studies included as part of the curriculum in primary school. One example of misinformation provided as part of the curriculum is from a chapter of the Geography 8 textbook published by the Institute for Educational Research and Development. In one section focused on Italy, the so-called migrant crisis is portrayed as a European project to keep out migrants and maintain the safety of those inside of the EU. Its key message: “Italy is one of the founders of the EU…Italy is fighting hard with the enormous flow of refugees. There are 4,300,000 refugees in Italy at the moment. People coming from Africa try to reach Europe through the country. Authorities have established detention camps for the immigrants.” It not only overestimates the number of refugees in Italy but also frames the issue of detention camps as a necessary part of securing borders.\textsuperscript{16}

**Politics**

During the election campaign of 2018, the Hungarian Islam Community, the Hungarian Islam Advocacy Association, and the Hungarian Muslim Church expressed their fear of the potential consequences of the government’s anti-Muslim and anti-migration campaign.\textsuperscript{17} In March 2018, the Hungarian Islam Community pub-

\textsuperscript{14} Anonymous interview conducted by Gabi Göbl, email correspondence received on 7 January 2019.
\textsuperscript{15} Anonymous interview conducted by Gabi Göbl, Budapest, 19 December 2018.
\textsuperscript{17} Balázs Bakó, Hungarian Islam Advocacy Association, Interview conducted by Gabi Göbl, Budapest, 12 December 2018.
lished a statement through the National Press Agency to condemn the political fear-mongering election campaign against Muslims:

We know that there is an ongoing election campaign but how is it connected to a world religion and a registered church? In the past hundred years, Muslim people were not the ones sending Jews to Auschwitz, they did not commit the Roma murders, and they did not commit terrorist attacks. Besides our center in Zugló [ed. 14th district], there are 11 mosques in districts lead by FIDESZ. We are asking everyone to stop playing the Muslim card and stop the incitement. For all atrocities committed in the present and in the future against us will be on those responsible for hate-mongering – we are ready to take such cases to international forums and courts. There is freedom of religion in Hungary, we expect the government to act accordingly and the solidarity of society, churches, and political parties. We refuse to participate in throwing mud.18

The figures below indicate a clear correlation between the far right poster campaigns that promote a hostile attitude towards those seeking asylum. Figure 1 shows UKIP leader (2016) Nigel Farage standing in front of a Brexit campaign poster promoting ‘Leave (EU)’ and the second picture has reused the same image in Hungary as part of the FIDESZ anti-migrant election campaign. As the images indicate, the same picture can tell a similar message in both cases: UKIP and FIDESZ right-wing support for migration restrictions of a ‘flood’ of what are assumed to be Muslim migrants.

Figure 1: Nigel Farage standing in front of a UKIP ‘Leave’ promotional bus.
Figure 2: UKIP image is repurposed and blanketed across Hungary as part of the FIDESZ anti-migrant election campaign.

During the April 2018 elections, the governing party (FIDESZ) used a number of tactics to ensure a favorable majority by targeting famed Hungarian-American financier and philanthropist George Soros, and his so-called liberal army. A month before the election, PM Viktor Orbán claimed, “There are two paths ahead for Hungary to choose from... We will either have a national government, in which case we will not

become an immigrant country, or the people of George Soros form a government and Hungary will become an immigrant country.”¹⁹ The government’s attacks on all Soros-funded organizations in Hungary, including the Open Society Foundation (OSF) and Central European University (CEU), have dominated the public campaign and stigmatized all smaller and subsidiary organizations that support Soros open society values or in some way assist migrants in Hungary. The OSF has already relocated to Berlin out of fear for the safety of the organization and its employees, and the CEU declared in December 2017 that it would officially begin the process of moving the university to a safer location in Vienna (as of the 2019 academic year).²⁰

During the elections campaign, there was also a widespread defamation campaign against Gábor Vona, the leader of the Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary Party. The FIDESZ campaign used citizen information to phone Hungarians with claims stating that Vona had converted to Islam. In addition, flyers were distributed that made fake allegations that Vona wanted to build a mosque in the town of Miskolc, in a working class neighborhood. Those responsible also spread a video of his visit to Turkey where he allegedly confessed to his ties to Islam.²¹

**Media**

State-run media dominates the discourse on anti-migration sentiments and is the driving force behind the anti-Muslim and openly Islamophobic rhetoric in Hungary. Among the most prevalent government-supporting channels which regularly report on “Muslim community groups” are: Origo, Magyar Idők, Hír TV, Echo Tv, and 888.hu. The named media outlets typically depict Muslims as having a hand in terror-related incidents, using their scope and authority to fuel a fake news campaign that draws attention to the securitization of the country.

Criminal acts committed by refugees or people with immigrant background are overrepresented and hyped up in the media even though these make up a very small number of overall crimes committed in Hungary. Instances of sexual violence committed by individuals with migrant backgrounds are widely reported by government-friendly media sources whereas statistics about women who are sexually assaulted in Hungary barely receive any public attention.²²

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In one case, the M1 public television channel broadcasted an interview with a Swedish-Hungarian dual citizen, who claimed to have returned to Hungary because Stockholm was “invaded by migrants”. The individual claimed that traveling on the metro had become impossible in Stockholm since she was sexually harassed on a daily basis by migrants. Index.hu, a pro-opposition media outlet, later revealed that the woman was convicted for defamation, harassment, and violating public trust. Furthermore, there was no evidence she had ever lived or worked in Stockholm.\(^{23}\)

In another example, a ‘fake news’ video produced by János Lázár, former head of the Prime Minister’s Office, depicted Lázár walking through a district of Vienna and promoting the ghettoization process that was underway as he claimed Muslim immigrants were forcing out white citizens.\(^{24}\)

There is very little space for raising objections to the state-run media campaign against migrants and Muslims. Over the past two years in particular, media outlets have been consolidated into the hands of government supporters. Diverse opinions and unbiased presentation of reality is not possible for most of the population, and it is especially problematic in terms of Hungarians who do not use English-language sources or who live outside of major urban centers. Opposition media outlets have been shut down or deprived of the income they would generate through advertising. For example, just two days after the general election in April 2018, the national daily Magyar Nemzet shut down after eighty years of serving the Hungarian population.\(^{25}\)

**Justice System**

Since 2015 the Hungarian government has gradually dismantled the asylum system by introducing a series of laws that made the access to protection very difficult, and lately, almost impossible. In addition to the legal measures, the inhumane treatment by the Hungarian authorities has included practices from systematic violence and beatings at the border\(^ {26}\) and abuse of those seeking protection to starvation of people in the transit zones. Such actions pushed the European Commission to launch an infringement procedure against Hungary.\(^ {27}\)

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Moreover, the FIDESZ government has introduced several laws to back up the security framework of their intention to keep out all migrants and to persecute those deemed to be assisting migrants or spreading information regarding immigration to Hungary. In June 2018, the Parliament passed the “Stop Soros” laws that seek to criminalize a number of activities related to the support and assistance extended by law to asylum seekers. According to the intentionally vague wording of the laws, members of NGOs and individuals are threatened with prison time for helping asylum seekers by “facilitating illegal migration”. An additionally tax law was adopted, targeting “propaganda activity that portrays immigration in a positive light...participating in a media campaign...building and operating a network” and “educational activities” in which a 25% tax is levied on all budgets associated with organizations providing legal advice regarding asylum and including unspecified activities related to migrants’ integration. The law is designed to target in particular NGOs, educational institutions, journalists, individuals, and potentially anyone who dares to disagree with the government on migration.28

In June 2018, after a series of legal changes supporting the government’s anti-Muslim narrative, the Fundamental Law of Hungary (before 2011 known as the Hungarian Constitution) was amended to include two new provisions restricting “foreign populations” attempting to settle in Hungary, and stating that “all state bodies are obliged to protect Hungary’s identity and its Christian culture.”29

The devastating consequences of the desire to identify and prosecute Muslim migrants is especially clear in the now infamous case of Ahmed H, an asylum seeker from Syria, who was convicted when trying to cross the Serbian-Hungarian border in 2015. During a conflict in which those desperate to seek help and medical attention clashed with police at Röszke, located at the Southern border of Hungary in September 2015, Ahmed was unfairly imprisoned for “complicity in an act of terror” for committing the act of “throwing stones” at the border guards. It took until early 2019 for his case to be repealed and for Ahmed to be released from prison. The law enabled authorities to ramp up the charges to terrorism, and his case then could be used to demonize all migrants irrespective of their personal background, motivation, and behavior.30

Internet
Following the widespread and mainstream Islamophobic, anti-migrant, racist, and xenophobic narratives of the government itself and related media outlets, similar

narratives are strongly present throughout cyberspace. Even though social media platforms such as Facebook are trying to shut down such accounts, it is evident that they can proliferate by rebranding every so often. Examples of this kind of virulent hate that is being circulated online can be found on the following social media sites including Facebook (Dzsihádfigyelő; Patrióta; Vadhajtások; Breitportal; Migráció-kutató Intézet) in addition to websites including dzsihadfigyelo.com, vadhajtasok.hu (commonly known as the “the wildest right portal”), generacio.eu and breitportal.hu, the latter two linked to a group called Generation Identity (please see below for descriptions of these organizations).

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

There are a number of actors spreading Islamophobic views in Hungary including many small networks that cannot be fully documented here. The Center for the Study of Political Islam (Politikai Iszlám Tanulmányok Központja), focuses on the ‘real face’ of political Islam and its values. Director Incze Nikoletta is a prominent figure of Islamophobic discourse. The Migration Research Institute’s Facebook page frequently publishes articles on the threat, crimes, and attacks committed by immigrants. Generation Identity (Identitás Generáció) is the Hungarian branch of a pan-European, far right youth movement. Generation Identity International ran a project called Defend Europe, in which it launched its own anti-migration #MeToo campaign, with supposed testimonies of women claiming they were raped by migrants. Facebook and Instagram have deleted their accounts due to the extreme homophobic, Islamophobic, xenophobic, and overall racist content. The Power and Determination Movement (Erő és Elsántság Mozgalom) was formed in 2017, and was formerly known as Identititesz, orchestrating the idea of white Europe and the end of multiculturalism.


32. Far right groups targeting Roma communities which occasionally express xenophobic, anti-Semitic, and Islamophobic views that are not listed above include: Hungarian Legion (Légio Hungária), Army of Outlaws (Betyársereg), Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement (Hativannégy Várnegyő Ifjúsági Mozgalom), Hungarian Self-Defense Movement (Magyar Onvédélem Mozgalom). Sources: Anonymous interviews conducted by Gabi Göbl, Budapest, 19 December 2018; interview with Balázs Bakó, Hungarian Islam Advocacy Association, conducted by Gabi Göbl, Budapest, 12 December 2018, Political Capital, “Radicalism and Extremism”, http://www.politicalcapital.hu/konyvtar.php?category_list=1&category_id=10&category_hun=Radikalizmus%20%C3%A9s%20extr%C3%A9mizmus, (Access date: 4 September 2019).


ISLAMOPHOBIA IN HUNGARY

Observed Civil Society and Political Assessment and Initiatives

Given the declining objectivity present in the reporting of organizations such as the Center for the Study of Political Islam Hungary (CSPI), many researchers have publicly distanced themselves from this research institute. Earlier this year, CSPI director, Incze Nikoletta, gave an interview where she called Islam a very strong and violent ideology, and supported the state’s fight against it in Hungary. Drawing upon the notion of the “clash of civilizations,” Nikoletta presented an alarmist opinion that anticipated an aggressive war launched by a “different civilization.”

As the government owns the two-third majority in the parliament, opposition parties can do little to object to government policies or legislative processes. Although the majority of opposition parties generally criticize the government’s political narratives related to migration and fearmongering, opinions diverge from each other when it comes to details. The shrinking media landscape does not allow opinions to reach wider audiences, and in most cases national coverage is not translated widely outside of Hungary.

The Two Tailed Dog Party (a satirical party) is a beacon of some hope for those who desire more balance in media and political debates. Despite mocking the ruling party on many public outlets, they have also successfully collected public donations to demonstrate that not all Hungarians wish to participate in the government’s hate campaigns. The party has a vivid social media presence, satirizing mainstream Islamophobic discourses.

Even within the limited space to confront Islamophobia and negative stereotypes about Muslims, many active NGOs and grassroots initiatives continue their mission to educate the public about the misinformation spread by the government. There are programs in schools (again, limited in numbers), public events where they present their cases (the Hungarian Helsinki Committee has held a series of talks to present information based on cases they are working with), and a growing movement to protest the shrinking space for speaking out against the growing authoritarian governance of the country. For example, Szabad Egyetem (Open University) is a movement that demonstrates a student initiative to bring together those in resistance to these measures across four Hungarian-accredited institutions. They are fighting for academic freedom and in support of the human rights of refugees and Roma populations currently under attack by the government.

39. The classes offered at the protest site, which was located directly outside of the Hungarian Parliament on Kossuth Lajos Square, can be seen at https://www.ceu.edu/event/2018-11-30/szabadegyetem-events.
The Hungarian Islam Advocacy Association (Magyar Iszlám Jogvédő Egyesület) was founded in 2016 as an advocacy group to prevent hate crime against Muslims in Hungary. The organization also takes on the task of registering hate crimes, informing the public on Islamophobia-related incidents, offering legal aid for victims of Islamophobic hate crimes and discrimination, and counteracting government propaganda on Muslims. Their main aim is to provide support for refugees and to initiate interreligious dialogue.

Menedék Association for Migrants holds sensitization workshops in local schools that attempt to educate people about strong prejudices towards ‘Muslim-majority’ countries fueled massively by government propaganda. Director András Kováts claimed that the temporary nature of their work makes it is very difficult to create momentum in the fight against Islamophobic views in Hungary.40 Hungarian Helsinki Committee is a human rights NGO protecting human dignity through legal and public activities. The organization supports refugees, detainees, and victims of law enforcement violence. Amnesty International Hungary is part of the Amnesty International movement. Its activities include participation in joint international campaigns of the movement members as well as local campaigns focusing on specifically Hungarian human rights violations and matters. Churches and individual members of churches are occasionally active, in some cases even opposing the official stance of their respective organization, including the Hungarian Reform Church, the Methodists, Islam, some of the Jewish communities, and other small religious groups.

**Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

There is a very serious need for independent and open channels of media communication in the country that offer a critical response to the fearmongering propaganda that is fueled by the state and promoted across its subsidiary channels. Independent media and a political voice for those in support of migrants and Muslims in Hungary is essential for combatting the hate and prejudice that exists openly in daily life. There is a desperate need for funding and the protection of NGOs and independent journalists and newspapers who are helping to try to change the conversation and assist the vulnerable. Oversight as well as direct action by the European Parliament would be crucial in order to curtail corruption and the misappropriation of EU funds designed to help assist the country in its economic and political transition following the 1989 change of regime. Part of a solution should come in the form of amendments to the current national curriculum to include a basic education on Islam and migration as a sociological and historical study. On a more pressing level, there is a dire need for the desecuritization of migrants across Europe, and the prevention of hate-literature and propaganda at all levels.

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40. Phone interview with András Kováts, conducted by Gabi Göbl, 14 December 2018.
ISLAMOPHOBIA IN HUNGARY

Chronology

- **08.01.2018**: PM Viktor Orbán visits Bavaria and declares Hungary does not want Muslim invaders.41
- **09.02.2018**: PM Orbán on the national stage condemns diversity and claims Hungarians do not want their colors mixed.42
- **06.03.2018**: PM Orbán’s former head of the Prime Minister’s Office János Lázár posts a video of Muslim “ghettos” in Vienna.43
- **12.03.2018**: PM Orbán meets privately with Geert Wilders, an openly-Islamophobic Dutch politician active in the EU Parliament.44
- **15.03.2018**: PM Orbán marks the commemoration of the uprising against the Habsburgs by inciting Europe to rise up against the invasion of Soros forces.45
- **04.04.2018**: Generation Identity all-male members dress in burkas to disrupt MSZP-Párbeszéd PM candidate Gergely Karácsony’s campaign event.46
- **08.04.2018**: Parliamentary election: FIDESZ wins a landslide victory, gaining a two-thirds majority in Parliament.47
- **20.06.2018**: The constitution is amended for the 7th time, with the text incorporating that “groups of foreign nationals cannot be settled” in Hungary and that state institutions are obliged to protect the Christian culture in Hungary. Provisions also include the criminalization of homelessness.
- **19.07.2018**: On the same day, parliament passes the “Stop Soros” law that criminalizes individuals and organizations helping asylum seekers.48

cedures against Hungary for the non-compliance of its asylum and return legislation with EU law.49

- **21.08.2018**: Rejected asylum seekers in the transit zones are repeatedly denied food by the Hungarian authorities.50
- **03.09.2018**: Government extends again the so-called state of crisis due to mass migration.51
- **15.10.2018**: A provision of the constitution comes into force and makes homelessness a criminal offence.52
- **23.11.2018**: MP Dúró Dóra, formerly of Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary, suggests a draft law on burkas in public.53


50. Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Twitter, 21 September 2018, https://twitter.com/hhc_helsinki/status/1031946847626117120/ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etwembed%7Ctwtsr%5Een%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctfe_sources%5Excel, (Access date: 5 September 2019).

