



**HONOURABLE FERENC GYURCSÁNY
PRIME MINISTER
KOSSUTH LAJOS TÉR 4
1055 BUDAPEST V
HUNGARY**

Brussels, 11 March 2009

Dear Prime Minister,

The European Network against Racism (ENAR) is writing to express its concern over the recent murder of two Hungarian citizens, Robert and Robika Csorba, his five-year old son, as well as over the emergence of a climate of hatred directed against Roma minorities in Hungary. This murder is the latest in a series of targeted attacks against Roma in Hungary. According to media reports, since the beginning of 2008 there have been fifteen incidents of Roma houses being firebombed, and two attacks on Roma homes with hand grenades. During this time, at least five people of Roma origin have been murdered in these and other incidents, and more seriously injured.

The initial unwillingness of the police to recognise the murder and open an investigation is a cause for concern. ENAR therefore welcomes the fact that you have now asked for an investigation to see whether police action was inadequate regarding these attacks and have stepped up the police force in areas prone to tensions.

ENAR now calls on the Hungarian government to treat this murder as a suspect hate crime and to carry out a proper and thorough investigation to find out the actual causes. If it is found to be a hate crime, it should be prosecuted as such. Unfortunately, investigations of hate crimes against Roma people have rarely succeeded in identifying and prosecuting perpetrators. We therefore urge the Hungarian Government to properly implement existing hate crime legislation.

ENAR also calls on the Hungarian government to recognise the impact of racist motivation on the victim through the adoption of aggravated sentencing policies. Hate crime has a great impact on the victim and their community. It has the effect of demonstrating the offence was not entirely random and that as a result of their ethnicity neither the victim nor other members of their community are safe from such attacks. Consequently it is essential

that racist motivation is recognised as an aggravating circumstance in the administration of justice, in a clear and consistent manner. In addition, police officers must adequately respond to, and record, racially motivated crime.

This incident also shows the importance of the EU Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia, formally adopted in December 2008. This Framework Decision is a crucial European instrument to fight racist crime and we hope the Hungarian government will transpose it into its national legislation as soon as possible.

ENAR is very worried that the Roma, as well as migrants, have become the target of organised racist violence in several European countries. We feel that adequately addressing this latest incident, by speaking out against violence against Roma motivated by racial hatred, prosecuting the perpetrators and taking appropriate steps to ensure the safety of minority communities, will show the Hungarian government's political will in fighting anti-Gypsyism and racism against minority communities as a whole.

Yours sincerely,



Pascale Charhon
Director

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National Co-ordinator



Mohammed Abdul Aziz
Chair of the ENAR Board