

URGENT ACTION

DROP CHARGES AGAINST PÉCS PRIDE ORGANISER

Géza Buzás-Hábel, a human rights defender and organiser of the 2025 Pécs Pride, is facing criminal charges filed on 9 February 2026, for planning a peaceful LGBTI+ rights march, which took place on 4 October 2025, despite the ban issued by authorities under Hungary's anti-Pride law. If convicted, he could face up to one year of imprisonment. Amnesty International calls on the Prosecutor's Office to immediately drop the criminal charges and discontinue the proceedings, which constitute an undue interference in the exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, and non-discrimination under European and international human rights law. This case marks a troubling escalation in the criminalisation of LGBTI expression and peaceful assembly in Hungary.

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

District Prosecution Office of Pécs

Dr. István Takács

Chief Prosecutor

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Dear Chief Prosecutor,

I am writing to express deep concern regarding the criminal charges formally filed against human rights defender **Géza Buzás-Hábel** for organising the Pécs Pride march that took place on 4 October 2025. Instead of concluding that organising a Pride event should not constitute a criminal offence and closing the case against Géza Buzás-Hábel, your office turned to the Pécs District Court seeking criminal proceedings against him. If the case goes to trial and Géza Buzás-Hábel is found guilty and convicted, he could face up to one year in prison.

The police decision on the Pécs Pride, effectively declaring it 'a banned assembly' in September 2025, was arbitrary and discriminatory, based solely on the 'anti-Pride' law which became effective in April 2025. This ban and the legislation itself have been widely criticized by regional and international organisations as regressive, discriminatory and to be in violation of human rights standards. The organisation of a peaceful assembly advocating for equality, human rights, and remembrance, such as Pécs Pride, is protected conduct under the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and non-discrimination, as enshrined in regional and international standards to which Hungary is bound.

The international community is closely following Géza Buzás-Hábel's situation and the recent criminal charges brought against him, which represents an alarming escalation in the criminalization of LGBTI expression and peaceful assembly in Hungary.

Organising a Pride march is an act of courage, solidarity, and hope. You have the authority to reaffirm that peaceful assembly must be protected.

Prosecuting Géza Buzás-Hábel constitutes a violation of his rights, including to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression. I urge you to immediately drop the charges and terminate the proceedings against Géza Buzás-Hábel as he should not be prosecuted simply for exercising his human rights.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Géza Buzás-Hábel is a Roma, gay man. He worked as a teacher and human rights defender and is from Pécs. He taught Romani language and culture, trained future educators, and has long organised Pécs Pride, the country's only Pride outside of Budapest, ensuring it remains inclusive, peaceful, and community-driven.

On 4 September 2025, Géza Buzás-Hábel, submitted notification to local police regarding the fifth edition of Pécs Pride, scheduled for 4 October 2025. The Pécs Police Department immediately issued a pre-emptive ban, on 5 September 2025, claiming that the assembly, which aimed to support same-sex marriage rights, transgender legal gender recognition, and commemorate LGBTI+ Holocaust victims, would expose children to prohibited content. Géza Buzás-Hábel, appealed the ban, but the Kúria, Hungary's Supreme Court, rejected the appeal. Despite the ban, Pécs Pride proceeded on 4 October 2025 without police intervention. On 10 October 2025, Géza Buzás-Hábel, received an official police summons identifying him as a person "reasonably suspected of committing a criminal offence."

On 9 February 2026, Géza Buzás-Hábel was notified that formal criminal charges were brought against him by the prosecutor's office and the file has been forwarded to the court. The prosecutorial authorities proposed that the court imposes a fine on him by a penal order, without holding a trial. The court has 1 month to decide on the next steps and can issue a penal order without a hearing. A penal order constitutes a case-deciding judicial decision, similar to a judgement. However, instead of filing an appeal, the defendant, the prosecutor and any other interested party can, within eight days from the serving of the penal order request a hearing to be held. When a hearing is requested, the court follows the normal criminal procedure rules and holds a preparatory hearing. If eventually it is decided for the case to proceed with a trial, the crime Geza is charged with – 'organising a banned assembly' - carries a penalty of up to one year imprisonment.

In 2025, Hungary escalated its decade-long crackdown on LGBTI rights. Act III of 2025, known as the 'anti-Pride' legislation, building on the 2021 anti-LGBTI+ "Propaganda Law", was rushed through Parliament in March, and entered into force in April that same year. The new legislation prohibits the holding of assemblies deemed to violate the 2021 "Propaganda Law", which falsely portrays LGBTI visibility as 'harmful' to children and bans the 'depiction and promotion' of sexuality and diverse gender identities to people under 18. It also permits authorities to use facial recognition to identify participants and to fine those who participate in any such prohibited assemblies with up to 200,000 HUF (approximately 500 EUR). Organisers of an assembly which is banned risk criminal charges carrying sanctions up to one year imprisonment. Authorities used this law to issue pre-emptive bans on both Budapest and Pécs Pride. Nevertheless, civil society resisted, with Budapest Pride in June attracting over 300,000 participants and Pécs Pride in October drawing approximately 5,000 participants.

Hungary is bound by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. These instruments require authorities to uphold the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, including assemblies promoting minority rights, to avoid discriminatory bans, and to impose restrictions only when strictly necessary and proportionate. Authorities must actively facilitate peaceful assemblies, protect participants from violence and provide remedies in cases of rights violations. Banning Pride marches and criminalising organisers is incompatible with these standards. The European Court of Human Rights has repeatedly held that assemblies promoting the rights of sexual and gender minorities fall under Article 11 protection and that restrictions based solely on moral disapproval violate Articles 11 and 14. Criminalising organisers exceeds what is necessary and fails all proportionality requirements.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Hungarian
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 13 August 2026

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Géza Buzás-Hábel (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR27/0495/2025/en/>