

Hungary - Human Rights Scorecard ¹

Hungary is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe. Following the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945, Hungary became a satellite state of the Soviet Union. The Soviets then installed a Communist government led by Mátyás Rákosi. The Rákosi government instated secret police, imprisoned intellectuals, and sent over 600,000 Hungarians to Soviet labor camps. Successive governments carried out these same policies, even stamping out an attempted revolution in 1956. Hungary's eventual transition from communism in 1989 was prompted by economic stagnation, domestic political pressure, and the decline of the Soviet Union. In 1990, József Antall became the first democratically elected Prime Minister since WWII.

Official language: Hungarian

Ethnic groups: 83.7% Hungarian; 3.1% Roma; 1.3% Germans; 14.7% Other

Government: Unitary parliamentary republic

- President: János Áder

- Prime Minister: Viktor Orbán

Death penalty: Abolitionist

Population: 9.8 million

Life expectancy: 74.5²

Under-5 mortality: 5.2 per 1000³

Adult literacy: 99.1 percent



Section 1: Overall Development

The overall development of a country – considering education, health, income, and other factors – is a strong indicator of whether average citizens have a reasonable chance to enjoy social and economic well-being and mobility.

Human Development (UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)) ⁴



0.838 – Very High Human Development ⁵

According to the UNDP, Hungarians enjoyed a gross national income per capita of \$25,393, could expect to have on average 15.1 years of schooling. Compared to other countries with comparable gross national income per capita, this is a high HDI.

Section 2: Respect for the Integrity of the Person

Respect for the integrity of the individual is the most fundamental of human rights groupings. It guarantees protection of the person to ensure the right to life, and freedom from torture. It also prevents arbitrary detention, and disappearances, and ensures the right to a free and fair trial when accused.

Freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life



Respected ⁶

There have been no reports of the government or its agents committing arbitrary or unlawful killings.

Freedom from disappearance



Respected ⁷

There have been no reports of disappearances by or on behalf of the government.

Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



Partially respected ⁸

The constitution and law prohibit such practices, yet there have been some reports of abuse. The commissioner for fundamental rights issued four reports in 2017 detailing cases of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment in places of detention.

Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



Respected ⁹

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, and guarantee the right of individuals to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention. There were no reports of arbitrary arrest or detention.

Freedom from denial of fair public trial



Partially respected¹⁰

The constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary. Courts often function independently; however, some organizations have criticized the right of the prosecutor general to take over or reassign cases at any stage of the procedure without providing any justification.

Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence



Respected¹¹

The constitution prohibits such interference, and there were no reports of the government infringing upon these rights.

Section 3: Respect for Civil Liberties

Civil liberties are a basic category of internationally recognized human rights. They include the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. These are inalienable rights which should not be breached by government, and should ensure the rights of all, including women and minority groups.

Freedom of speech and press (*Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index*)¹²



Score: 29.11, Rank: 73 / 180 – Partially free, diverse and independent¹³

Much of the media landscape in Hungary is dominated by pro-government media outlets who are obsessed with migration issues. There are a few outlets who report on government corruption, but these critical reporters are slowly beginning to disappear.

Freedom from academic censorship



Partially respected¹⁴

Academic freedoms are largely respected. In 2017, a law was passed that instated stringent criteria for foreign universities operating in the country. It was largely perceived as an attack on CEU, a university founded by George Soros.

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



Respected¹⁵

The constitution and law provide for the freedom of peaceful assembly, and the government largely respects this right. By law, demonstrations do not require a police permit, and police may not disband any spontaneous assembly that remains peaceful.

Freedom of religion



Partially respected¹⁶

Parliament has repeatedly failed to vote on pending applications for incorporation status by religious groups, despite a legal obligation to do so. Without this status, these religious groups do not have government support and cannot receive certain financial benefits.

Freedom of movement



Respected¹⁷

The constitution and law provide for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation. The government largely respects these rights.

Protection of refugees and stateless persons



Largely disrespected¹⁸

Human rights advocates and UNHCR criticize the government's treatment of refugees. There are multiple reports of violence against asylum seekers, as well as reports of migrants being pushed back beyond the border. A new law requires the temporary detention of all asylum seekers.

Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)^{19 20}



2 / 7 – Free²¹

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and the press. However, NGOs pursuing activities counter to the government have come under pressure in recent years and there have been concerns about government influence on school curriculums.

Section 4: Respect for Political Rights

Political rights ensure all members of society are able to influence the political process. The assessment of political rights includes an examination of the electoral process and the selection of representatives, the political empowerment of the general public, the tolerance of dissent, the accountability of government, etc.

Overall protection of political rights (*FreedomHouse Political Rights Index*)²²



3 / 7 – Partly free²³

Heavy state control of the media during the last election served as an advantage for the ruling party. Women remain massively underrepresented in Hungarian political life. Moreover, opposition parties often encounter government-imposed restrictions that reduce their efficacy.

Section 5: Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The civil, political, economic and social rights exercised within a country are often modulated by the degree of transparency and freedom from corruption. Various international metrics assess transparency and corruption, including the OECD anti-bribery convention, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Open Budget Index.

Transparency and freedom from corruption (*Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*)²⁴



Score: 45%, Rank: 66 / 180 – Some corruption²⁵

The government does not implement anti-corruption laws effectively, and individuals often engage in corrupt practices with impunity. Authorities are often reluctant to investigate corruption allegations in a transparent, public manner.

Section 6: Governmental Response to Criticism

This section deals specifically with the response heads of state have to civil society or international human rights reports.

Governmental attitudes vis-à-vis independent investigations of alleged human rights violations



Partially respected²⁶

The government passed the “NGO Law,” which requires all NGOs to publicly identify their foreign donors and report how these funds are being used. This law is largely seen as a veiled attempt by the government to restrict NGOs’ fundraising activities, and to discourage their activity.

Section 7: Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Legal and social discriminatory practices related to sex, race, creed or sexual orientation, are violations of human rights. Countries with strong civil liberty traditions should have a fair legal system that ensures the rule of law, allows free economic activity, and ensures equality of opportunity for all.

Endangered Minorities (*Peoples Under Threat – Minority Rights Group International*)²⁷



No threat listed – Limited dangers to minorities²⁸

According to Minorities Rights Group International, Hungary does not have any minorities which face an immediate threat of violence.

Rights of women (*World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index*)²⁹



Score: 67.0%, Rank: 103 / 144 – Very unequal rights³⁰

Inequalities in the workforce remain a problem: male executives earn 33.7% more than female executives in the same level of job. Furthermore, sexual harassment is not recognized as a crime in Hungary. Women also remain massively underrepresented in politics.

Rights of Children (*KidsRights Index Overall Score*)³¹



Score: 81.4%, Rank: 45 / 182 – Protected³²

Hungary has implemented multiple programs to combat child abuse. However, there are several reports of authorities arresting and prosecuting children exploited in sex trafficking. NGOs have strongly criticized this practice, saying that it places blame on the exploited children.

Rights of persons with disabilities



Partially respected³³

A report by the ombudsman announced that the state was failing in its duty to provide suitable and accessible education for students with disabilities. Persons with disabilities who are under guardianship are also deprived of the right to vote.

Rights of national/racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc.)



Largely disrespected³⁴

Roma are the largest ethnic minority in Hungary. Human rights NGOs continue to report that the Roma suffer exclusion and discrimination in almost all fields of life. Anti-Semitic rhetoric is also prevalent in Hungary.

Freedom from abuse and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



Respected³⁵

The law explicitly prohibits any discrimination based on sexual orientation. It also prescribes increased punishment for violent against members of the LGBTQ community.

Section 7: Workers' Rights

Workers' rights are a group of legal rights relating to labour relations between workers and their employers. At their core are things like the ability to negotiate pay, benefits, terms of employment, and safe working conditions. These rights often devolve from the right to unionize and access to collective bargaining.

Rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining



Partially respected³⁶

Under Hungarian law, workers have the right to form and join independent unions, as well as the right to strike. The government has effectively enforced laws providing for freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



Partially respected³⁷

The government failed to effectively enforce laws prohibiting forced or compulsory labor. Roma and individuals in extreme poverty remain the most vulnerable to forced labor.

Freedom from forced labour for children, and a minimum age of employment



Respected³⁸

The law prohibits children younger than 16 from working, and this was generally respected.

Right to acceptable conditions of work



Partially respected³⁹

The national monthly minimum wage for full-time employment of unskilled workers does not meet the poverty level. Furthermore, labor standards remain largely unenforced in the informal sector.

Right to employment



4.2% - Reasonable unemployment⁴⁰

Hungary's unemployment rate is very low. The share of youth not in education, employment or training is also low compared to other countries in the region.

¹ A hybrid human rights and freedoms model, leveraging both legal principles and intuitive classifications, has been used for this human rights assessment. The CJPME Foundation has sought to integrate as many independent sources and metrics into its summary analysis as possible. In many cases, for qualitative material pertaining to the respect for a particular right in a country, the CJPME Foundation has drawn on material from Human Rights Watch and the US State Department country reports. Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a World Report which assesses the respect for human rights in each country. HRW uses a methodology of local reporting and interviewing, combined with research and analysis to assess the level of respect of human rights. The U.S State Department keeps an updated publication on the state of human rights internationally. Their system of research and accountability draws from the research of official US State Department officials, as well as local civil-society and international human rights organizations.

² "Hungary: Key Demographic Indicators." UNICEF. January 1, 2015. Accessed October 12, 2018. <https://data.unicef.org/country/hun/>

³ Ibid.

⁴ The UN Development Program HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. The HDI can also be used to question national policy choices, asking how two countries with the same level of GNI per capita can end up with different human development outcomes. These contrasts can stimulate debate about government policy priorities. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living. Accessed October 12, 2018 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

⁵ "Table 1: Human Development Index and its components, Hungary" UNDP, based on 2017 or the most recent year available. Accessed October 12, 2018. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>.

⁶ "Hungary 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 12, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277417.pdf>.

⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State. For purposes of the present analysis, a "disappearance" is different than simple arbitrary detention because a "disappearance" is considered permanent.

⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁹ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

¹⁰ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

¹¹ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

¹² The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders ranks the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. This is determined through the polling of local NGOs and freedom of expression civil society organizations across the globe. This index is also determined by local correspondents and follow-up work done on reports of infringement to press freedom where ever it takes place. Their methodology looks at six different indicators: 1) Media pluralism, 2) Media independence, 3) Media atmosphere and self-censorship, 4) the Law around media, 5) Media transparency, and 6) Media infrastructure. The score from these six indicators is combined with a rating for the violence against journalists in the country to create an overall score. The CJPME Foundation classifies the Press Freedom Index as follows: 0 – 14.99 (16 countries), Largely free, diverse and independent; 15 – 24.99 (37 countries), Mostly free, diverse and independent; 25 – 29.99 (31 countries), Partially free, diverse and independent; 30 – 39.99 (39 countries), Partially controlled, limited or intimidated; 40 & higher (57 countries), Highly controlled, limited or intimidated.

¹³ "World Press Freedom Index." Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. January 1, 2018. Accessed October 12, 2018. <https://rsf.org/en/hungary>.

¹⁴ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 Bahrain." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2013. Accessed November 23, 2014.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

¹⁵ "Hungary 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 12, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277417.pdf>.

¹⁶ "Hungary: International Religious Freedoms Report for 2017." U.S. Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 12, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>.

¹⁷ "Hungary 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 12, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277417.pdf>.

¹⁸ Ibid. U.S. Department of State.

¹⁹ Freedom House is an internationally recognized NGO based in the U.S which documents and rates the quality of democratic practice in a given country. Freedom House splits its grading system between the two areas of civil and political rights in a country. On each scale, the Freedom House rating is 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free).

²⁰ Freedom House's Civil Liberties index measures things such as a) freedom of expression and belief, b) associational and organizational rights, c) the rule of law, and d) personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House rates countries as 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free). Accessed October 12, 2018.

<https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

²¹ "Hungary." Freedom in the World 2018: Hungary. January 1, 2018. Accessed November 8, 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/hungary>.

²² See footnote about the Freedom House organization above. The Freedom House Political Rights assessment looks at a) the electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, and c) the functioning of government. Accessed November 8, 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/hungary>.

²³ "Hungary." Freedom in the World 2018: Hungary. January 1, 2018. Accessed November 8, 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/hungary>.

²⁴ Transparency International (TI) publishes a "Corruption Perceptions Index" annually, which is based on independent research and polling. The main categories of corruption are broken down within the index to provide particulars on issues including things such as perceptions of corruption, control of corruption, and financial secrecy. A country receives a score on 100; the higher the score, the less corrupt the society. The CJPME foundation has classified them into categories as follows: 80-100 (11 countries): Very limited corruption; 60-79 (27 countries): Limited corruption; 40-59 (41 countries): Some corruption; 20-39 (80 countries): Highly corrupt; 0-19 (15 countries): Extremely corrupt

²⁵ "Hungary." Corruption by Country. January 1, 2018. Accessed November 8, 2014. <https://www.transparency.org/country/HUN>.

²⁶ "Hungary 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 12, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277417.pdf>.

²⁷ The Peoples under Threat assessment by Minority Rights Group International highlights countries most at risk of genocide and mass killing. The ranking is created by compiling data on the known antecedents to genocide or mass political killing. Accessed October 8, 2018. <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.

²⁸ "Hungary." Peoples under Threat, Minority Rights Group International. 2018, or most recent data. Accessed November 8, 2018. <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.

²⁹ This metric is based on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. 0.00 denotes inequality between the sexes, and 1.00 denotes fully equality between the sexes. This index looks at four subdomains: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. The CJPME Foundation classed the percentages as follows: 80-100% (5 countries): Almost equal rights; 70-79% (60 countries): Somewhat unequal rights; 0-69% (77 countries): Very unequal rights

³⁰ "The Global Gender Gap Report: 2017." World Economic Forum. January 1, 2017. Accessed November 8, 2018.

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf.

³¹ This metric is based on the KidsRights Index Overall Score. This index has five subdomains: life expectancy and maternal mortality; health; education; protection; and child rights environment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. KidsRights classes the countries according to these percentages, and the CJPME Foundation has given each class a term as follows: 70-100% (77 countries): Protected; 60-70% (29 countries): Somewhat protected; 45-50% (33 countries): Slightly vulnerable; 30-45% (12 countries): Highly vulnerable; Lower than 30% (11 countries): Extremely vulnerable

³² "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed November 8, 2018. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>

³³ "Hungary 2017 Human Rights Report." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed October 12, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277417.pdf>.

³⁴ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁵ Ibid. U.S. Department of State.

³⁶ Ibid. U.S. Department of State.

³⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁹ Ibid. U.S Department of State. See also a well-done Wikipedia comparison of wage, income and work week metrics across countries at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minimum_wages_by_country.

⁴⁰ "Hungary: Key Statistics." International Labour Organization. January 1, 2017. Accessed November 8, 2018.
https://www.ilo.org/gateway/faces/home/ctryHome?locale=EN&countryCode=HUN&_adf.ctrl-state=p23er26g8_173.