

Incitement to Hate Crime Against Roma by a Public Figure in Hungary

On the occasion of the arrest of a Roma youth in relation to the stabbing of two teenagers during New Year's Eve, Hungarian politician Zsolt Bayer made very racist remarks totally denying the very existence of Roma. He stated in his article for the online newspaper Halyar Hirlap that Roma should not exist: "They are animals. They should not be tolerated or understood. Animals should not exist. No way. This should be solved."

To strongly protest against this, Romani Rose, Chairman of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, wrote a letter to the Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban, who is the president of FIDES, the Hungarian ruling party. Mr. Bayer is a co-founder of the party. Romani Rose asked Mr. Orban to explicitly indicate that Mr. Bayer's statements do not represent the opinions of the party, and that Mr. Bayer be expelled from it.

Following is the text of his letter translated into English.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

With abhorrence and outrage, I have the remarks of Zsolt Bayer, a journalist and a member of the ruling party FIDESZ, in his contribution to the online edition of the "Magyar Hirlap" on January 5, 2013. In his article, Mr. Bayer calls members of the Roma "animals" and states that they are not entitled to "human dignity" and should not exist. He continues that someone must "solve this immediately by any means."

In the name of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, I would like to urge that your government show no connection with such reactionary, racist statements as well as the author Zsolt Bayer. This article reminds readers of the National-Socialistic terminology in its diction and incitement to racial hatred against Roma. Mr. Bayer denies the human dignity of Roma and their existence. This unequivocally contravenes the democratic principles of a legitimate state and cannot be accepted by your government. I ask Mr. Prime Minister not to remain silent about this incident. Otherwise, the prestige of Hungary in the democratic world would be seriously injured.

A member of the ruling party continues to slander the minority group in Hungary, and stirs up a pogrom mood in the irresponsible way. It must be assessed as an immediate danger for the members of Roma in Hungary. Your government must protect Roma from this outrageous and terrible attack, given the fact that 11 people from the minority community have been killed in racist attacks over the past year. Dear Mr. Prime Minister, I would ask you to understand my concern over the situation in Hungary and my commitment to the entire Roma minority group. Since Mr. Bayer

has belonged to FIDESZ, your party, since its foundation, his statements are considered to be those of FIDESZ. As remarks of a leading personality of the party, it is inevitable that his statements are perceived as the party's official remarks, and not mere e personal opinions. Therefore, I would ask you to show a clear sign that the party will keep a distance from him through your official exclusion procedure against Zsolt Bayer.

Yours truly

Romani Rose

Chairman

Central Council of German Sinti and Roma