

W O R L D
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14. WUPJ Resolution on Growing anti-Semitism in Hungary

Whereas the WUPJ has great concern for the growing anti-Semitism in Hungary, and;

Whereas the frequency of anti-Semitic incidents in Hungary is accompanied by measurable anti-Semitic tendencies in the public opinion: the percentage of those who qualify as fervent anti-Semites has risen to as high as 20%, and the percentage who say they held no anti-Jewish feelings has dropped to 50%, and;

Whereas the extreme right-wing party Jobbik uses anti-Semitism to enlarge its constituency, and;

Whereas due to growing anti-Semitism, more and more Jews are either leaving Hungary or considering it.

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that this International Assembly of the WUPJ welcomes the act of solidarity of the World Jewish Congress with Hungary's Jewish community to hold its 14th Plenary Assembly in Hungary's capital Budapest.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that this International Assembly of the WUPJ encourages the Hungarian government under the leadership of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to combat anti-Semitism effectively on national as well as local level.

IT IS FINALLY RESOLVED that this International Assembly of the WUPJ calls upon the Hungarian government to initiate zero tolerance for anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions in Hungary's society and political debate.

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15. WUPJ Resolution Supporting Hungarian Reform Judaism

Whereas Reform Judaism was the first Jewish denomination in Hungary that was given an official “Church status” by the revolutionary government during the 1848-49 anti-Habsburg uprising, led by the world-renowned freedom fighter Louis Kossuth. Reform Judaism in Hungary was abolished by the oppressive Austrian regime in 1852. The rabbi of the community, David Einhorn, left for America where he became one of the most respected leaders of the Reform Movement. After the collapse of Communism, Reform Judaism emerged once again in Hungary, and;

Whereas today, there are two Reform congregations in Budapest, Hungary: Sim Shalom, the first to form, led by the British trained Rabbi Katalin Kelemen; and more recently, Bet Orim, whose Founding Rabbi is Ferenc Raj, a member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and;

Whereas on December 30, 2011, the Hungarian Parliament enacted Act no. CCVI of 2011 on the Right to Freedom of Conscience and Religion and the Legal Status of Churches, Denominations and Religious Communities (“Religious Freedom Law”), which entered into force on January, 1, 2012, and;

Whereas apart from the recognized churches listed in the Appendix of the Religious Freedom Law, all other religious communities, previously registered as churches, lost their status as churches and could only continue their activities as associations. If intending to continue as churches, religious communities were required to apply to Parliament for individual recognition as such, and;

Whereas neither of the two Hungarian Progressive Jewish “churches” - both members of the European Union for Progressive Judaism - were listed in the Appendix of the Religious Freedom Law. They applied for individual recognition, but did not obtain re-registration from the Hungarian Parliament and consequently lost their status as churches, together with the State subsidies that had been due to them as such. They now continue their activities as associations, and;

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WORLD
UNION FOR
PROGRESSIVE
JUDAISM



האיגוד
העולמי
ליהדות
מתקדמת

Whereas the two congregations and the European Union of Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) appealed to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, stating that in not registering these two congregations as official “churches” and denying them the government funding to which they had previously been entitled, violated their rights under the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. They argued that elements of the Religious Freedom Law, combined with a discriminatory and arbitrary approach by the Hungarian government were in clear violation of the Convention, and;

Whereas the two congregations also filed their claim at the Constitutional Court of Hungary, which in all points accepted their reasoning and decided that the congregations have never lost their status. Despite the Constitutional Court’s decision, the Hungarian government still refuses the recognition of the two churches and ignores the re-registration of them, with reasoning to the 4th amendment of the Constitution which has meantime been adopted by the Hungarian Parliament directly with the purpose to reduce the scope of rights of the Constitutional Court.

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that this International Assembly of the WUPJ calls upon the Parliament of Hungary to re-register in the Appendix of the Religious Freedom Law the two Reform congregations in Budapest, Hungary, Sim Shalom and Bet Orim, and any other Jewish congregations which may form and affiliate with the European Union of Progressive Judaism.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the government of Hungary to restore the government funding denied to them and to restore to them the funds which they would have received since the time their application for re-registration was denied.

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