



## Recent Physical Assaults against Hungarians in Romania

Located in the middle of Romania, the Szekler Land includes about 700,000 ethnic Hungarians. This community endured the dark days of “forced assimilation” by Dictator Ceausescu, who sought to dissolve the Hungarian culture and identity.

The dreams of the dead dictator have been fulfilled. Under the mask of “democracy,” the artificial manipulation of ethnic proportions - by his “homogenization” policy - continues. This extreme example of “population redistribution” has been presented before the international community on numerous occasions. Further, the attempts to intimidate national minorities have continued, long after the fall of Ceausescu’s dictatorship.

“Population redistribution” has been mainly achieved through the Orthodox expansion, and the militarization of the Szekler Land. Since the fall of the communist dictatorship, more than 2,000 Romanian Orthodox churches have been built in settlements with a relative or absolute majority ethnic Hungarian population. An excessive number of military units are now located in the neighborhood of Hungarian towns.

The number of Hungarian-speaking policemen is materially insignificant in Romania. In 2010, the national Police Academy finally opened its doors to ethnic Hungarians. In Bucharest, fifteen places will be reserved each year for Hungarians.

Armed forces deployed to the Szekler Land, from other regions of Romania, receive additional “hazard” pay. Meanwhile, the number of ethnic-based atrocities against Hungarians has risen sharply. Furthermore, these “hate crimes” are often committed by members of the armed forces, the local police, or their family members.

The chronology of recent “hate crimes” against Hungarians is as follows:

On 5 April 2010, several young Hungarians were injured, who attended a program organized by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) in Medgyes (Mediaş), in Sibiu County. About 8:00 p.m., unknown individuals appeared who refused to leave the facility - even after repeated requests by the organizers. Moreover, they verbally insulted and physically assaulted the Hungarian participants. Two young persons sustained severe injuries and had to be taken to the hospital. The attackers also vandalized the facility and destroyed the furniture.

On 23 April 2010, on the night of Saint-George day, two Hungarians were beaten by the police in Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfântu Gheorghe). A police patrol intercepted the youth, during a dispute, and knocked the young men to the ground. They were pushed toward a police car. Their personal belongings were taken away. They were transported to the police station, where five officers continued beating them. They were released, without any police record.

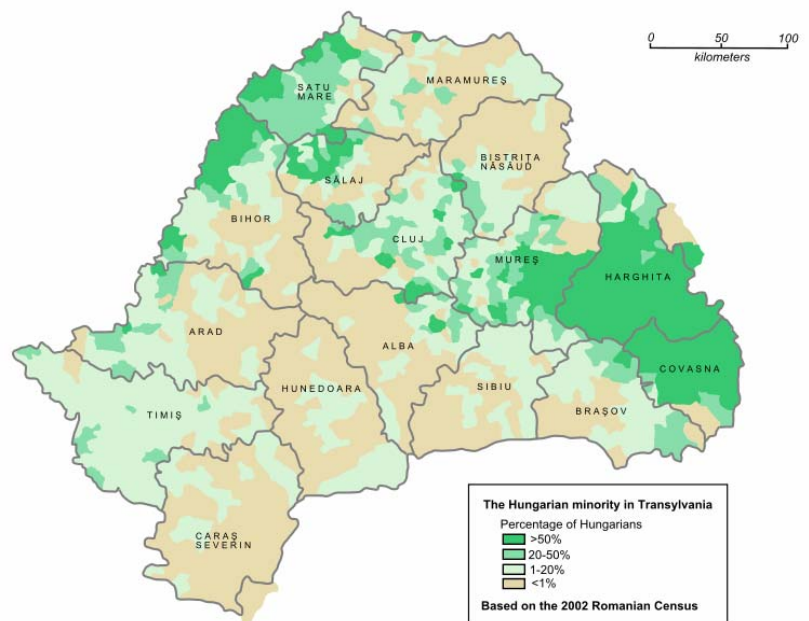
More recently, on 15 May 2010, six Hungarian young people were assaulted in Kézdivásárhely (Târgu Secuiesc). There were three journalists in the group. They were attacked because they spoke in their mother tongue, Hungarian. A group of ten people provoked the fight. The attackers shouted at them not to speak Hungarian.

On 19 May 2010, MEP László Tőkés, President of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania called upon the Romanian government, notably Mr. Vasile Blaga, Minister of Home Affairs, to immediately denounce ethnic hatred against the minority populations within Romania. The state-financed institutions (of police and military), who are also paid by minority taxpayers, should protect, not preempt their constitutional rights. President Tőkés called on the courts, judges, and national leadership to take legal action, against those individuals, who commit crimes, regardless of their personal ethnicity.

The ethnic Hungarian population, within the historic Szekler Land, is not a terrorist nest. Nor is Szekler Land a subjugated colony of Romania. Nothing can justify the anathematic animosity manifested by the very authority figures, who swore to protect, defend, and serve-to-the-death the citizens of Romania.



*The historical Szekler Land on the map of present-day Romania. Originally, the name Szekler Land denoted an autonomous region within Transylvania. The area was an autonomous region within Romania between 1952-1968. Today there are autonomy initiatives to reach self-governance for Szekler Land within Romania.*



Violence breeds violence. The escalation of aggressive and anathematic crime is unhealthy, unwarranted, and unbecoming for any nation. In difficult economic times, anger and frustration abound in greater measure. Regardless, taking out anger and frustration against people, by physical violence, verbal abuse, or any form of discrimination is not acceptable in 21st century Romania. No Romanian citizen, no matter what their ethnicity, should suffer at the hand of another.

In March 2010, Hungarians of Transylvania commemorated the twenty-year anniversary of the sad events known as “Black March.” In 1990, ethnic Hungarians, who were peacefully demonstrating in Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureș), were attacked by Romanian people that were incited to riot against them.

Internationally, the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania requests that the advocates of human rights speak-up against the internal anti-Hungarian aggression in Romania. We call for the immediate investigation of these cases. We request that international public opinion pressure the Romanian government to disavow its social practice of a national-communist state built on ethnic opposition and hatred.

## **Ethnic “Hate Crime” sends Hungarians to the Hospital in Transylvania**

In the town of Medgyes (Medias), Romanian men assaulted several members of the local Hungarian student council. The Sibiu County chapter of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) deemed the incident an ethnic “hate crime” and open attack. Medgyes, a town of 55,000 residents, has an 11% Hungarian-speaking population.

The “hate crime” occurred on Easter Monday, 5 April, when two Romanian men attempted to enter a private youth party in the DAHR facility. They were denied entry. Later, they returned with four other men and fought their way inside, beating several students. Once inside the building, they vandalized it.

One of the victims, who were beaten, Jenő Csíki described his attack, “They were swearing and cursing, they called us “Bozgars.” (Bozgor is a derogatory ethnic slur against native ethnic Hungarians in Romania.) They spit on us. The fighting lasted about 5-7 minutes, after which they left, quite pleased with their assault. Immediately, we went to the emergency room, where our wounds were treated. I suffered injuries on my face and chest. My friend had more severe injuries.”

Luciana Baltas, a spokesperson for the Sibiu County police, denied that the incident was an ethnic “hate crime” - despite racial slurs shouted by the Romanian attackers against the minority Hungarians. Regardless, DAHR has filed a legal brief for prosecution against the unknown offenders. The charges include assault and battery, and trespassing on private property.

## **Military Police Brutality Reported in on Saint George-Day**

On 23 April, the night of the Saint George-Day, the military police brutally beat up two young Hungarian men in Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfantu Gheorghe). Consequently, the injured youth requested medical and legal assistance. The incident began when 22-year old Csongor Csulak was hit by a car backing out of a parking lot. Csulak fell down and in anger splashed beer on the car windshield.

The car driver and Csulak exchanged verbal barbs, which attracted the attention of the military police, who were patrolling nearby. The military police knocked down Csulak and shoved him toward their patrol car. Twenty-seven-year old Vince Fazakas intervened. Immediately, two other military police held Fazakas down, while a third kicked him in the stomach until he could not breathe.

Both Csulak and Fazakas were beaten in route to the military headquarters. In addition, their wallets and cell phones were confiscated. One inside, Fazakas was attacked by five military police in large hall inside the building. They beat him and pulled him up by his hair.

During the beating, they asked him in Romanian, “Will you ever go against the military police again?” After a 15-minute beating, both young men were let go, without any report being filed. Their wallets cell phones were returned.

Fazakas believes that he could identify three of the attackers, because they were not wearing their black face masks.

### Assailants Shouted: “You must not speak in Hungarian!”

On 15 May, about 4 a.m., several Romanian men from Bereck (Bretcu) in an alcoholic stupor attacked and injured six ethnic Hungarian people in Kézdivásárhely. Two journalists, working in Targu Mures for *Népújság*, Botond Nagy and István Benedek, were injured during the attack. A radio correspondent, István Arendás was injured, along with Attila Nemes. Botond Nagy’s girlfriend, 23, was also beaten and punched in the face.

According to Botond Nagy’s account, they were heading to their hotel, when two strangers approached them from the opposite direction. The first stranger began to provoke them, because they had been speaking in Hungarian. Meanwhile, the second stranger entered a nearby restaurant, where he recruited a group of 11 other men, who came outside.

Once on the street, the gang attacked the six-member party, assaulting them from behind. Outnumbered, the Hungarian men were cruelly beaten, without regard for their female dates, who witnessed the violence. A judicial medical certificate indicates that Botond Nagy’s injuries required 6-7 days for healing. Similarly, Attila Nemes’s certificate reported injuries that required 8-9 days for healing. István Benedek’s arms were severely injured due to kicking, but he did not appear for forensic consultation. István Arendás suffered a concussion.



According to Botond Nagy, the assailants, from Bretcu, shouted during the brawl: “Do not speak in Hungarian.” As motorcycle club members, word of the vicious assault spread over night. By morning, the motorcycle club started a virtual hunt for the perpetrators. The bikers managed to capture three of the assailants. They were turned over to the police.

Botond Nagy claims the police report is inaccurate, since only 3 attackers were cited not the total group of 13. Nagy and Benedek filed a written complaint at the local police department.

Zsigmond Karácsonyi, assistant editor of *Népújság* (and head of the Hungarian Journalist’s Association of Romania), requested that his colleagues monitor the ongoing investigation. One assailant is the son of an army officer, while his brother is a policeman. Subsequently, it is feared that the police may bury the case and label it as a simple “street skirmish.”