

# HUNGARY'S ORBAN DEFIES EU WITH MIGRANT DETENTIONS

## RESPONSE TO RECENT ATTACKS IN EUROPE

**BUDAPEST:** Hungary's right-wing Prime Minister Viktor Orban said yesterday he has defied Brussels by reintroducing the systematic detention of migrants arriving in the country in response to recent "terror" attacks in Europe. "We have reinstated alien police detention in the cases of those whose application to enter Europe has not yet been legally judged," Orban told public radio in a regular interview.

"As long as there is a verdict outstanding (in their asylum applications) they cannot move freely in Hungary," said the 53-year-old known for his anti-immigration views. He gave no further details.

Under pressure from Brussels, the UN refugee agency and the European Court of Human Rights, Hungary in 2013 suspended the practice of detaining asylum applicants. "But since then there have been terror acts in western Europe," Orban said yesterday. "Any legal regulation that facilitates terror acts must be changed in the interests of our own self-defense."

He said he was aware that this "openly goes against the EU", putting his government in "open conflict" with the rest of the 28-nation bloc. Orban has regularly crossed swords with the European Union over migrants, including by erecting fences on Hungary's border with Serbia and refusing to take part in a scheme to share refugees around the bloc.

Over the past two years many hundreds of thousands of migrants have sought asylum in Europe, many of them fleeing the civil war in Syria and other hotspots. Orban says that allowing migrants in without proper checks poses a security threat, with some of the Islamist extremists responsible for attacks such as in Paris in November 2015 having posed as refugees.

The most recent attack was in Berlin on December 19 when a Tunisian, Anis Amri, drove a truck into a crowded Christmas market, killing 12 people. He was killed in a shootout with police in Italy four days later. Amri arrived in Italy

from Tunisia in 2011 and went to Germany in 2015. He was known to German counter-terrorism officials and was supposed to have been deported back to Tunisia.

Orban, a big admirer of US President-elect Donald Trump, also says that allowing in so many Muslims risks undermining Europe's democratic values and its Christian traditions. Some of Orban's fiercest critics, not just over refugees but also in other areas, have been non-governmental organizations.

Earlier this week a senior member of his Fidesz party announced plans to tighten regulations on NGOs that receive foreign funding. "We live in a world where attempts to influence are endemic in all countries," Orban said yesterday.

"Hungarians have the right to know about actors in the public domain who gets what money from where, whether from abroad or from Hungary, and does the support come with expectations. We want transparency." —AFP



**BOUAKE:** Ivory Coast soldiers stand guard at the airport in Bouake yesterday prior to the arrival of Ivory Coast's minister of Defense for a visit in the city where soldiers staged a two-day mutiny over pay last weekend and held him hostage for two hours. —AFP

## SOLDIERS CONFRONT PROTESTERS AS IVORY COAST TALKS START

**BOUAKE, Ivory Coast:** Soldiers fired guns into the air to disperse protesters in Ivory Coast's second city yesterday as the defence minister arrived for talks with leaders of a military mutiny that paralysed much of the country last week.

The chaotic scenes forced organisers to move the venue of the negotiations, delaying efforts to resolve a bitter dispute over soldiers' pay and conditions that has festered for years in the world's top cocoa producer. At least 100 soldiers who took part in last week's unrest poured out of their barracks in Bouake in pickups and trucks, confronting residents who had gathered to protest against the mutineers.

As locals ran to safety and shops shut, Defence Minister Alain-Richard Donwahi arrived by helicopter with other senior government and military officials at around 1 pm (1300 GMT).

"As promised, we are back to continue the discussions with our men," Donwahi said. "This is our country, our security. Our men are also ready to move in the right direction."

The mutiny, which first erupted in Bouake subsided last week when the government said it would accept many of the soldiers' demands. But negotiators for the mutineers, most of them ex-rebel fighters integrated into the army, say they have yet to receive bonuses agreed with government last week. They had expected payments to begin tomorrow. "We expect the minister to tell us when they will start to pay the 12 million CFA franc (\$19,278) bonus and when we'll have promotions and all our other demands," said one negotiator, who asked not to be named.

Ivory Coast has one of the world's fastest growing economies, but has struggled to resolve deeply entrenched problems left over from years of civil wars and political turmoil.

The army remains a patchwork of former rebel fighters and troops who stayed loyal to the government during the 2002-2011 crisis. Divisions and parallel chains of command persist.

Donwahi was briefly trapped in Bouake last Saturday during earlier negotiations with the mutineers, when shooting erupted outside the house where the talks were taking place.

Streets emptied again yesterday. "I'm going home. With this shooting starting up again, I prefer to be at home," teacher Sylvain Kouame said. —Reuters



**THESSALONIKI:** Migrants wash their faces using water from a bottle as the tap water is frozen, in a refugee camp of Diavata a west suburb of Thessaloniki yesterday. —AFP

## BELGRADE WARNS FRANCE AGAINST 'IMPUNITY' FOR KOSOVO EX-PM

**BELGRADE:** Serbia warned France yesterday against "impunity" for Kosovo's ex-premier Ramush Haradinaj after he was released on bail by a French court following his arrest on suspicion of war crimes. Haradinaj was detained on Jan 4 at the Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg airport in eastern France under an international arrest warrant issued by Serbia more than a decade ago.

Belgrade has requested the extradition of the former leader of the insurgent Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to try him for alleged atrocities committed against civilians during the 1998-99 conflict against Serbian forces.

On Thursday Haradinaj was released on bail, a move that Kosovo hailed as "a first step" towards getting him fully freed. But he must stay in France

while the extradition request is examined, which could take months.

"Serbia does not accept a judicial system that infers impunity for those who have committed crimes against the civilian population," Marko Djuric, the Serbian minister who handles Kosovo affairs, told a press conference.

Serbian Justice Minister Nela Kuburovic said they would work on the "principle of reciprocity".

"If a person accused of war crimes is not extradited to Serbia, we will respond with the same measures to any requests from France," Kuburovic said, when asked hypothetically about extraditing suspected terrorists to France. After the 1990s conflict in Kosovo, which killed 13,000 people, the predominantly ethnic Albanian province became a United

Nations protectorate. It unilaterally declared independence a decade later—a move that has never been recognised by Serbia, which sees Kosovo as the cradle of its identity and religion.

Haradinaj has twice before been acquitted of war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. He was elected Kosovo's premier in 2004 but resigned after 100 days in power to surrender to the United Nations judges. Since his acquittals he has become a political opponent of Kosovo's powerful President Hashim Thaci and is resolutely opposed to a historic 2013 agreement, brokered by the European Union, to normalise relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Ethnic Albanians have held protests across the region against Haradinaj's arrest. —AFP