

SZIKRA MOVEMENT DENOUNCES
ORBÁN CLAMPDOWN

PRESS KIT
SZIKRA MOVEMENT, HUNGARY
APRIL 2023

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IN BRIEF

In the past years, Budapest has become the site of **one of Europe's largest neo-nazi gatherings**; every February, far-right activists gather from all over Europe to commemorate the so-called 'Day of Honour'. While the event is illegal, **it is tacitly approved by the Orbán government**, enabling thousands of far-right activists to march through Buda castle. This year, the event was marked by scenes of violence linked to both neo-nazis and – allegedly – anti-fascists as well.

While some members of Szikra ('Spark', a Hungarian Green-left movement whose candidate entered parliament in 2022) participated in the legal counter-demonstration, none were involved in any acts of violence; yet **a 42 year old woman active in both Szikra and Budapest-based housing advocacy groups was arrested and held in prison for two weeks** in the aftermath of the events. While she was eventually released from prison, the investigation and the **accusations against her are ongoing**.

Although **evidence linking her to the case amounted to little more than a Facebook like**, her identity was leaked to the media and was used in a **violent — often antisemitic — smear campaign** against the Szikra Movement and its MP András Jámbor. Rather than condemning the far-right, Hungarian state-media, the openly neo-fascist parliamentarian right and affiliated media have coalesced in a further normalisation of extremist discourses and practices.

During the upcoming weeks, Szikra will be looking into all possible forms of legal action against the responsible media platforms and politicians for **defamation, hate speech and incitement to violence**. In parallel, the movement is organising acts of solidarity, care, and legal support for its unjustly accused member.

Rather than an isolated event, the case points to the **erosion of the rule of law** in an EU country, the normalisation of street, judicial and media violence, as well as the **entanglement of government, state and far-right ideology**. Despite the threats and the increased likelihood of all forms of violence, the movement will continue to **fight for an alternative in Hungary based on solidarity, equality and justice for all**.

You can watch a subtitled interview with the defendant's lawyers here.

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IN DETAIL

About Szikra

Szikra (Spark) is a Hungarian green-left political movement. Emerging from social and housing initiatives, it endorsed opposition candidates in the 2019 municipal election, before its official foundation in 2020. The movement's candidate, András Jámbor — founder of left-wing news platform Mérce — was successful in the 2021 opposition primaries and the 2022 general elections, **winning the parliamentary seat** for Budapest's 8/9th district.

Focusing primarily on housing, environmental and labour issues, the organisation engages in direct activism, civic engagement, and institutional politics. Carried by an educational mission and connecting to a wide-range of grassroots initiatives, Szikra seeks to **build a political community capable of presenting an alternative** to Hungary's authoritarian status-quo.

The 'Day of Honour'

The **'Day of Honour'** is a **neo-nazi event** that has been taking place in Budapest since the 1990s; it commemorates soldiers from Nazi Germany and allied Hungary who fought during the Soviet siege of Budapest in 1944/45. Similar to the Lukov March in Bulgaria or the Latvian SS Legion Memorial Day in Riga, the event was initially organised by the Hungarian branch of Blood&Honour — an international neo-nazi network— until Légió Hungária, a white supremacist group from Hungary, became its main organiser in the past years.

One of the largest far-right gatherings in Europe, the event has been growing in size this past decade. While not legally authorised, it has been tolerated and effectively enabled by the Orbán government; police forces accompany the marchers through Budapest castle, in the heart of the Hungarian capital.

Every year, anti-fascist groups organise a peaceful — and legally sanctioned — counter-demonstration. Szikra has never been among the event's organisers, but some of its members participated in this year's gathering. Committed to non-violence and democratic rule, Szikra believes there is no place for neo-nazi nostalgia and apology in any form; as such, the movement stands by its peaceful members who attended this year's protest.

The 2023 neo-nazi march

This year's event was held on Saturday, the 11th of February. Counter-demonstrators gathered in the castle for a legal protest under the banner of 'Nazi-Free Budapest'; many of those in attendance were thoroughly searched by police on site and pelted by the gathering far-right activists. This was followed by the illegal — albeit tacitly

approved — neo-nazi gathering during which thousands marched through the Buda castle.

The march was surrounded by incidents on both Friday the 10th and Saturday the 11th that saw both neo-nazi activists and — presumably international — members of antifascist groups engage in acts of violence resulting in injuries. While the presumed authors of far-right violence were immediately released, **a Szikra Member was arrested in her countryside home** on the evening of the 11th by the Hungarian Anti-Terrorist force. Almost entirely deprived of communication with her family, **she was held on charges of violent and armed conduct for the next two weeks.**

Arrested for a Facebook like

None of the far-right perpetrators were detained for long in relation to events surrounding the march. This stands in bleak contrast with the treatment of the arrested Szikra member: despite having no knowledge of foreign languages, no contact with international groups and having a strong alibi for the time during which the alleged attacks took place, she was not only arrested, but **her identity was immediately leaked to far-right and state-linked media.** This ushered a violent — and often antisemitic — campaign directed at the detained Szikra member, András Jámbor MP, and the movement at large. Marked by wild distortions, violent threats and ad hominem attacks, this marks an escalation in the governmental attacks against any form of dissent.

It gradually emerged that the arrest was made based on a Facebook like and **the resemblance between a mass-produced jacket worn by the movement's activist** and one seen in CCTV footage of an attack. The detained Szikra member was finally released from prison on the 24th of February, yet the investigation against her has not been closed – **and the hate campaign has relentlessly continued.**

You can watch a subtitled interview with the arrested Szikra member's lawyer [here](#).

Below, you will find a selection of news clippings and screenshots documenting the hate campaign.

Future outlooks

These events only confirm a worrying trend — not only regarding Hungary, but on a global scale. Amidst rapidly deteriorating socio-economic circumstances, the **Hungarian government is acting increasingly in tandem with white supremacist groups once reduced to the fringes of the far-right.** Openly disdainful of the rule of law, due process and civil liberties, this alliance only reinforces the potential and normalisation of political violence. Anyone suspected of dissent has already been marked by state media as a potential target for such attacks.

Through non-violent and inclusive means, **Szikra will continue to struggle for a more just, democratic and equal society in Hungary;** a society based on cooperation and solidarity rather than violence and racism. To do so, it is crucial to fight back against the slanderous accusation of the past weeks.

The Szikra Movement is currently raising funds to pursue legal action against the propagators of the hate campaign and organising a series of solidarity events. Szikra will not give up.

SELECTION OF NEWS CLIPPINGS & SCREENSHOTS
CIRCULATED AS PART OF THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN TARGETING SZIKRA
AND ANDRÁS JÁMBOR MP



Antisemitic cartoon of Jámbor András MP, the arrested Szikra member and a violent group in the background. 'Antifa' and Szikra logos clearly visible.

The image was widely circulated on government-friendly channels, portals and forums - as well as in far-right circles: for instance, it was featured on the official telegram channel of Mi Hazánk (Our Homeland), a far-right parliamentary party with the caption 'antifa terror in Hungary'.



Front page article on Magyar Nemzet's website. The title reads: 'Jámbor's activist is the expandable baton attacker'.

Magyar Nemzet (Hungarian Nation): Once a somewhat measured national- conservative newspaper, it has become the main mouthpiece of Fidesz in the past years. The biggest political daily, it also has a much-visited website.



Front page article on Magyar Jelen's website: 'Fradi Ultra Message: Jámbor, you son of a bitch'

Magyar Jelen (Hungarian Present) is an online news portal affiliated to the far-right Mi Hazánk (Our Homeland) party — the third largest party in the Hungarian parliament.

'Fradi' Ultras are supporters of Budapest-based club Ferencváros, owned by Gábor Kubatov – an entrepreneur closely linked to Orbán's closest circle. In the past years, ultras of the club have been engaging in political violence and thuggery.

Front page article on Hír TV's website. The title reads: 'Leftist András Jámbor has close connections with the antifa attacker'. The rest of the article calls the incarcerated victim by name.

Hír Tv (News television) is the oldest and one of largest private television news channel in Hungary. It is owned by a conglomerate closely linked to the government. It also runs an online news portal.

Front page article on origo.hu. The title reads: 'The expandable baton radical leftist activist attacker is colleague of left-wing MEP, András Jámbor's and is a friend of Bence Tordai'

Origo.hu is formerly an independent news and lifestyle portal that was purchased by government-linked investors in c.2015; it rapidly became one of the main propaganda organs of Fidesz. In the past year, it has been particularly noteworthy for its combination of softcore pornography, tabloid content and propaganda lifted from pro-Putin outlets.

Bence Tordai is a green MP sitting in the same parliamentary fraction as András Jámbor.

Article on kuruc.info. The title reads: 'The 'Hungarian' (more exactly 'Jewish') antifa network: MÉRCE [left-wing news portal], TETT [left-wing blog], Autonómia [anarchist group], Szikra — and András Jámbor.'

Kuruc.info is the main neo-Nazi news portal in Hungary. It features antisemitic, racist and anti-LGBTQ themes. It was founded in the middle of 2000s and became famous for doxing centre-left politicians. Most of the writers and editors are anonymous; the servers are located in the USA.

Front page article on vadhajtások.hu. The title reads: 'András Jámbor's Movement organised the Budapest antifa attacks'. It continues by claiming that Szikra organised a premeditated murder attempt on an international scale; it also calls for an immediate investigation.

Vadhajtások.hu is a far-right news portal founded by Zsolt Bede, a notorious football ultra and pro-government provocateur. The portal mainly focuses on discrediting members of the opposition and doxing activists.