
HUNGARY'S MIGRATION POLICY PROTECTS 'EUROPEAN FREEDOM,' SAYS ORBAN

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Speaking to Bavaria's state legislature, Prime Minister Viktor Orban has likened Hungary's border closure to opening its borders with Austria in 1989, allowing hundreds of East Germans to flee to the West.

[Hungary's Viktor Orban (left) and Bavaria's Horst Seehofer have met three times this year Foto: Tobias Hase/dpa +++(c) dpa - Bildfunk+++]

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Monday defended his anti-migrant stance, claiming it's his nation's "duty" to protect cherished values in Europe.

"I promise you that Hungary will ... always be on the side of European freedom," Orban told the state legislature in Germany's Bavaria.

Hungarians vote against migrant quotas

"In 1989, we acted for the freedom of Europe and now we're protecting this freedom," the Hungarian premier added, referring to Budapest's decision to open its border with Austria, allowing hundreds of Germans living under communist rule to flee to the West.

In the summer of 2015, Hungary closed its borders to asylum seekers fleeing conflict in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, leaving tens of thousands stranded during their journey towards wealthier EU nations.

Seehofer backs Orban

Bavarian State Premier Horst Seehofer, known as a vocal critic of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's open-door policy towards refugees, invited Orban to give a speech to the Bavarian parliament for the 60-year anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising against the Soviet Union.

Opposition parties, including the Social Democrats and Left Party, criticized Seehofer's Christian Social Union (CSU) for providing Orban with a platform at the state legislature. Seehofer and Orban have met on three separate occasions over the past year.

Nearly 900,000 migrants crossed Germany's borders in 2015, many of them Syrians fleeing war in their homeland.

[Ausstellung Refugee Cameras in Hamburg]

The long trip to Europe from the refugees' perspective
Leaving home - for good?

Zakaria received his camera on December 8 in Izmir, Turkey - one of the key hubs for refugees. The Syrian fled from the "Islamic State" terror militia and the government, according to McElvaney's #RefugeeCamera project. Out of safety concerns, Zakaria doesn't name his hometown. In his flight diary, Zakaria writes that only God knows if he will ever be able to return to Syria.

ls/cmk (AP, dpa)

Kaynak/Source: