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## **HUNGARY SLAMMED FOR TOUGH NEW ANTI-MIGRANT MEASURES**

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Hungary's parliament has been heavily criticised for approving plans to detain asylum seekers in converted shipping containers placed in detention camps on its border.

At present migrants can be held for up to four weeks if they are apprehended within five miles of the border, but the new rules remove the time limit and will apply countrywide.

The measures were fiercely opposed by civil liberties groups and some socialist MPs but was nevertheless a vote was passed overwhelmingly by 138 votes to six with 22 abstentions. Support came from Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party and the far-right Jobbik.

The United Nations claims the changes breach EU law and the refugee convention.

In practice, it means that every asylum-seeker, including children, will be detained in shipping containers surrounded by high razor wire fence at the border for extended periods of time. And (it) will have a terrible physical and psychological impact on women, children and men who have already greatly suffered, said UNHCR spokesperson Cecile Pouilly.

The Hungarian government has stressed that any detained asylum seekers will be free to leave at any point, as long as they drop their claim and return to either Serbia or Croatia, the two countries through which refugees have mainly been arriving.

In 2015 a total of 391,000 people arrived in Hungary illegally, according to government figures.

Prime Minister Orbán said at an oath-taking ceremony for border guards, or border-hunters as they are called by the government, that the arrival of migrants may have slowed but it had not ended.

My ladies and gentlemen, the migration crisis will last until the root causes are dealt with. It will last until it is recognised everywhere that migration is the Trojan wooden horse of terrorism.

In addition, Hungary is pressing ahead with a second electrified fence along the Serbian-Hungarian border. The new barrier, stretching for nearly 150km, will enable the frontier to be monitored using CCTV and thermal cameras.