



PERMANENT MISSION OF HUNGARY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

20 October 2017

Speech by
H.E. Ambassador Katalin Bogyay
Permanent Representative

on the occasion of the Hungarian National Day

Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,
PGA, HE Miroslav Lajcak
H.E. Amina Mohammed, DSG
Maria Luiza Viotti, Chef de Cabinet of SG
USGenerals, ASGenerals, special friends of Hungary!

Welcome to our national day!

You might wonder what this Hungarian song was about. It was collected by the great musicologist and composer, Zoltán Kodály (1912).

The song we just heard is about the profound sadness felt by someone who made the hard decision to leave his homeland. **The question of whether to remain or to leave, has been a sad struggle because of oppression, foreign occupation, lack of freedom and independence.**

To stay or to leave? That was also an important question to many Hungarians after the failed 1956 Revolution.

FREEDOM FIRST

Mandela:

I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb.... ‘Long Walk of Freedom’

We Hungarians know exactly what freedom means, having been forced to fight for it so many times throughout our history and having our territory occupied and our sovereignty lost for many centuries. This long struggle for freedom is a very important element in our national identity.

In 1956, there was a spontaneous nationwide revolt against communist dictatorship, lasting only from 23 October until 10 November 1956. Despite the failure of the uprising, it was highly influential in changing the world order of the cold war years.

The universal aspiration for fundamental freedoms and human rights are enshrined in the UN Charter. In 1956, the entire world learned about our heroic fight and love for, and dedication to freedom.

Also that time young student in South-Korea turned to the then Secretary- General of the United Nations. Ban Ki-moon was 12 years old then.

- *“It was 1956, and people in Hungary were facing a violent suppression of their aspirations. We wondered: What could we do? How could we best express support from our far-off corner of the world? Then it came to us. We will write to Dag Hammarskjöld! As the student chair, I read the letter to my entire school at an assembly. “Dear Mr. Secretary- General,” we pleaded, “help the people of Hungary so they can have freedom and democracy.”*

The Secretary General of NATO, that time, called the Hungarian revolt "the collective suicide of a whole people".

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It is a less known that the other historic event we, Hungarians celebrate on the 23rd of October is the very day of 1989, the eventual completion of the goals and dreams of the 1956 Revolution. In 1989 on 23rd of October, the new Republic of Hungary was proclaimed.

Our 1956 revolution has a very special relationship with the United Nations, which Hungary entered in 1955.

On the 4th of November 1956, when it became clear that the revolution will be crushed by the Soviet military forces, the renowned Hungarian lawyer and political theorist, István Bibó, then Minister of State in the revolutionary Government of Imre Nagy, decided to stay in the Parliament building “as the only representative of the existing legal Hungarian government”. He wrote a proclamation entitled “*For Freedom and Truth*”, in which he turned to the UN and the international community for assistance.

Despite many powerful pleas for help, the UN was unable to take timely and decisive action that would have been necessary to ensure our country’s freedom. While the Security Council was unable to act, the General Assembly adopted a number of resolutions in 1956, which unfortunately had no real effect on the actual course of events. Nevertheless, it was precisely the relentless disregard for the resolutions that finally induced the General Assembly to establish a Special Committee to study the Hungarian problem: „Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary” it was called.

The Committee, with representatives from Australia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Denmark, Tunisia, and Uruguay, conducted hearings in New York, Geneva, Rome, Vienna, and

London. Over 100 refugees were interviewed including ministers, military commanders and other officials, workers, revolutionary council members, factory managers and technicians, Communists and non-Communists, students, writers, teachers, medical personnel, and Hungarian soldiers. The committee created two major reports about the outbreak and the aftermath of the revolution. Its secretary, Danish diplomat Paul Bang Jensen refused to share the names of the testifying witnesses, because he was concerned **that if they found out who these people were in communist Hungary, their families would be persecuted.**

He lost his job, and later his life, because of his conscience and moral values. The courageous actions of Povl Bang-Jensen deservedly have made him a real hero in Hungary as he saved many lives, and put the protection of others above his own. His spirit, for me, is the real spirit of the UN. **Responsibility to Protect** as a global political commitment has been fully supported by Hungary.

The Hungarian Revolution provides us with useful lessons, as we witness current events. We see the consequences of inaction and we see the power but also the limits of the Security Council and we see what an important role the General assembly can play in history. The GA with its reports and hearings managed to put a real political pressure on the oppressive regime which finally was forced by the international flora to give general amnesty to all political prisoners in 1963 who would have been persecuted for their involvement in the revolution. Of course by then many have already been hanged and executed.

So, for many Hungarians the GA itself symbolically has an important part in our freedom fight. At this point I would like to present the symbolic statue of our freedom fight, it is called A CRY for Freedom, to the President of the GA and ask him to say a few words.

PGA H.E. Miroslaw Lajcak

We believe in a **strong and representative Security Council**, we support comprehensive **Security Council reform and enlargement efforts** aimed at reflecting the realities of the 21st century, and it is of no surprise that Hungary – as one of the member of the ACT Group and supporter of the **ACT's Code of Conduct** - advocates for not using the veto in situations involving atrocity crimes.

One of the cornerstones of Hungary's foreign policy traditionally lays in **commitment to international cooperation** aimed at securing peace, welfare

and development through **promoting effective multilateralism**, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We strive for **freedom and prosperity** not just for ourselves but **for our children and grandchildren**, for them having a chance to live in a more peaceful and just world. **Safeguarding our planet for the next generations** is our common responsibility.

Freedom cannot be taken for granted, and **needs protection, especially when it comes to vulnerable groups**. For historical and moral reasons, the international protection and promotion of minority rights - especially the rights of persons belonging to national, religious and ethnic minorities - is one of the main objectives of our foreign policy. **We believe that, violating ethnic, religious, racial or linguistic freedoms poses a great risk on future of societies.**

The **victims of modern day slavery are deprived not only their freedom but also human dignity**. Hungary is proud to be an active member of the group of countries who are vocal about the horrible crime of modern day slavery and human trafficking in the UN. There must **be effective cooperation and partnership** between the countries of origin, destination and transit as well as **among states**, international organizations, civil society, and business groups,

Mr President, dear friends,

Each century has its defining moral issue. If slavery was the towering moral issue of 19th century, the fight against totalitarianism dominated the 20th century. The rights of women – and the struggle to uphold them in every corner of the world, will be the moral imperative of the 21st century.

Hungary remains committed to learn from the lessons of history and continue to work with our partners and friends. The UN remains an indispensable instrument for addressing the challenges we face. Hungary, as a proud and active member of the United Nations is ready to do her utmost to assist in these endeavors.

**No culture can live
if it attempts to be exclusive**

Mahatma Gandhi

**My guiding philosophy has always been the idea of
different nations uniting into brotherhood, in spite of all the
wars and hostility. I have tried to serve the aims of this
idea, as best as I can, in my music! So for that reason I do
not shrink away from any influence ... no matter the source,
as long as it is pure, natural and vital.**

Béla Bartók

MUSIC.2. A csitári hegyek alatt - (Szakács Réka, Fornwald László)

After the remembrance let us start the celebration with the symphony of Hungarian cuisine and wine! The buffet is open! Thank you all for coming.