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ELECTORAL VULNERABILITY INDEX 2025-2026

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

HUNGARY

GENERAL ELECTIONS: NOVEMBER 2025



BACKGROUND

After a successful transition from communism, Hungary's once vibrant democracy is widely recognized as experiencing severe backsliding over the past decade. The European Parliament and leading democracy indices, like V-Dem, now classify Hungary not as a full democracy, but as an "electoral autocracy", the first EU member state to fall into this category.

Erosion of Checks and Balances: Since 2010, the ruling Fidesz party, led by Viktor Orbán, has implemented sweeping constitutional and legislative changes that have weakened the independence of the judiciary, reduced the authority of the Constitutional Court, and increased government control over the media.

Electoral System Manipulation: The disproportionality of Hungary's electoral system has allowed Fidesz to convert electoral pluralities into parliamentary supermajorities, enabling further centralization of power and marginalization of opposition parties.

Civil Liberties and Media Freedom: There has been a marked decline in media pluralism, freedom of expression, and academic freedom. The government has also been criticized for restricting the rights of minorities, migrants, and the LGBTQ+ community.

Corruption and Neopatrimonialism: Public offices and independent institutions have increasingly been filled by party loyalists, and public resources allegedly used for political purposes.

UPCOMING ELECTIONS

The 2026 Hungarian parliamentary election is shaping up to be one of the most consequential in decades. After 15 years of Viktor Orbán's rule and the dominance of his Fidesz-KDNP coalition, the political landscape is undergoing a dramatic transformation, with major implications for Hungary's democracy, governance, and relationship with the European Union.

Against the backdrop of declining living standards, widespread corruption, and shabby public services, for the first time since 2010, Orbán's grip on power is seriously threatened. Recent polling shows the opposition TISZA party, led by Péter Magyar, leading with 42.8% of the vote, ahead of Fidesz/KDNP at 36.9%.

The election could determine whether Hungary continues on its current path of "illiberal democracy" and proximity with Russia or pivots back towards European democratic standards. Péter Magyar's TISZA party has positioned itself as a champion of good governance and EU values, directly challenging the corruption and autocracy associated with the current regime.

Hungary's electoral system amplifies the winner's advantage, making it possible to secure a parliamentary supermajority with as little as 35-40% of the vote. TISZA wins decisively, it could gain the power to rapidly dismantle Orbán's institutional legacy and enact sweeping reforms.



UPCOMING ELECTIONS CONT.

Fidesz has recently redrawn electoral boundaries, reducing districts in opposition-leaning Budapest and increasing them in pro-government areas, a move widely seen as an attempt to shore up its position. Whether these changes will be enough to counter the opposition surge remains to be seen.

POTENTIAL DRIVERS OF CONFLICT

According to the Electoral Vulnerability Index (EVI), these are the factors that contribute most to the increased potential for violence:

- Government intimidation during the last election
- Score on V-DEM 'Free and Fair Election' Index
- Number of consecutive previous elections with moderate violence
- Boycotts during the last election
- Other forms of violence during the last election
- Lack of autonomy of the Electoral Management Body
- Government dissemination of false information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROMOTE TRANSPARENT AND INCLUSIVE ELECTORAL PROCESSES

- Guarantee the integrity of the electoral process through transparent administration, independent oversight, and the presence of both domestic and international election observers. This enhances public trust and can deter attempts at violence or intimidation.
- Ensure that all stakeholders, including marginalized communities and opposition groups, have meaningful opportunities to participate.

MONITOR AND RESPOND TO EARLY WARNING SIGNS

- Set up early warning systems to detect and respond to signs of escalating tensions, hate speech, or planned violence. This includes monitoring both online and offline spaces.
- Hold security forces accountable for any abuses and ensure their actions are guided by the rule of law and respect for human rights.

ADDRESS UNDERLYING GRIEVANCES AND SUPPORT VICTIMS

- Establish mechanisms for national dialogue to address political, social, or ethnic grievances that could fuel violence. Inclusive dialogue helps build consensus and reduce polarization.
- Provide support and protection for victims of political violence.

PREVENT AND COUNTER HATE SPEECH AND EXTREMISM

- Implement targeted programs to mitigate hate and violent extremism, especially in the run-up to elections. This includes public awareness campaigns, education, and community engagement to counter divisive rhetoric and prevent the escalation of tensions.
- Provide training for law enforcement and election officials on nonviolent conflict management, de-escalation techniques, and the protection of vulnerable groups.