



CMC AUSTRIA
AUSTRIAN SECTION OF THE CLUSTER MUNITION COALITION (CMC)

AUSTRIAN AID FOR MINE VICTIMS
AAMV
Co-Laureate Nobel Peace Prize 1997

AUSTRIAN SECTION
INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES (ICBL)

H.E. Viktor Orban
Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary
Kossuth Lajos tér 1-3
1055 Budapest
HUNGARY

London/Vienna, 10th March 2011

Dear Prime Minister Orban,

My name is Judith Majlath, sister of the late Eva Rhodes, a British citizen, who was brutally murdered in Hungary on 10 September 2008.

After two-and-a-half incredibly difficult and painful years, the Hungarian authorities -even at a time when they hold the EU presidency- refuse to cooperate

I would appeal to you to help secure truth and justice for my late sister and her family for as I will outline below we have sadly so far been denied both by the Hungarian authorities.

As someone who has devoted the last 15 years to issues of Human Rights and in particular disarmament - for which we were awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1997 - I, like you, believe in those fundamental values

of truth and justice for all. You are our last chance of achieving both.

Eva, who had run an Animal Rescue Sanctuary for 12 years, disappeared on 10 September 2008 in the west of Hungary. More than seven months later – after her disappearance was first raised by her family - her skull and a few of her bones were found on her estate in Böny/Szölöhegy.

Augusztinyi Csaba, 31, an unemployed, trained boxer, subsequently confessed to the murder. He admitted punching her in the face, striking her down, setting her on fire (it is unclear whether she was still alive when he burned her) burying her remains, and stealing her valuables before disappearing with the help of others.

For this horrific and barbaric crime, the murderer was sentenced to just 10 years imprisonment on 10 September 2010. (subject to appeal)

The case and investigations have been filled with grave mistakes, which raises deeply disturbing questions about the judicial process and denies us truth and justice. It is a case which reflects badly on Hungary.

The police have failed to conduct a thorough inquiry, evidence has been destroyed and contaminated, crucial forensic tests which would have established the truth refused and the family denied a voice. Indeed, during their drive for truth and justice the family have themselves suffered intimidation while coming-up against what we view as a conspiracy of silence orchestrated by those who should be helping. The continued refusal of Hungary to invite British assistance in my sister's murder case, merely compounds our pain and adds to a cover-up that shames a country supposedly setting an example for the rest of Europe during its EU presidency.

Prime Minister, now is the time for Hungary to show political will and do everything in its power to cooperate and act in the spirit of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The victim's daughter, Sophie Barta, who is suffering from multiple sclerosis, was falsely accused of disturbing the court, fined £2,000/500.000 HUF and ordered out of the courtroom; threatened with arrest by six armed policemen and denied the chance to challenge flawed evidence. The family was denied the right to sit next to their lawyer throughout the trial; instead the victim's family was forced to sit behind the murderer. On several occasions the family was exposed to cynical remarks and abuse by the judge.

This bias has its roots in 2001. Since then, the Court and the Police have been in litigation against Eva Rhodes and her daughter. Sophie Barta took the police to the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg alleging Human Rights abuses, after she and her mother were physically assaulted by a Győr policeman. The Hungarian state was found guilty and ordered to pay compensation in connection with the case.

This background raises questions about the impartiality of the police, the prosecution and the court in the murder case of my sister. What has taken place would support the case the court has been prejudiced against both Eva and her family, who have been denied a fair trial. This incontestably suggests that the case must be moved from the Győr-Moson-Sopron judiciary.

Early on in the investigation, I, as the victim's sister, was threatened with legal action by Győr's chief of police, Szabadfi Arpad, in the presence of the local government for "criticism" over the police's handling of their inquiries. There is little doubt that evidence in the case was mishandled, destroyed and deliberately lost. **The Hungarian forensic examination is incomplete and inconclusive and to this day Eva's torso is missing. Due to the Hungarian incomplete and thus inconclusive forensic examination, to this day neither the circumstances nor the cause of Eva's death could be established.**

Faced with so many problems, the case was taken up by the distinguished former British Foreign Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind, the family's London Member of Parliament.

There are tests available that would provide many answers and as Eva was a British citizen both Scotland Yard and scientists there are willing to help but you will appreciate they must first be invited to do so by your government. The family's appeal to the courts in Győr to allow British assistance was formally rejected by the county court in Győr on 5 September 2010; this despite

Hungarian forensic experts acknowledging in court that the examinations gave insufficient clarity and questions remained unanswered.

This is a family tragedy both in Eva's death but also in our denial in of justice and explanation Hungary - a denial highlighted in the international media.

The remains of Eva - such as they are - are held by the British Coroner in London (due to the authorities' and the family's decision), forensic experts of international standing are on stand-by and Scotland Yard has indicated its willingness to assist, if asked.

All we are desperately waiting for is for Hungary to hand over all the documentation requested by the British government and fully co operate given that we are dealing with the murder of a British citizen; and thereby achieve surely what we all want and demand for our loved ones, truth and justice.

On behalf of my sister and her family, I would appeal to you to sanction this move without further delay. I would obviously be very happy to provide you with a full, detailed briefing of the case and what, after examination I am sure you will agree, are in the very least incompetence followed by a **cover-up**.

For further information please visit www.csizmaskandur.com

[e-mail:Justiceforevarhodes@gmail.com](mailto:Justiceforevarhodes@gmail.com)

Judith Majlath

Executive Director and project-coordinator
Judith.majlath@aon.at

CMC Austria, www.stopstreubomben.at
Austrian Section & Founder Committee Member of the Cluster Munition Coalition, CMC,
www.stopclustermunitions.org
Austrian Aid for Mine Victims
Austrian Section/International Campaign to Ban Landmines, www.icbl.org,

1997 Nobel Peace Prize Co-Laureate * Intl. Tipperary Peace Award 2009

The Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) is a network of 350 civil society organizations working in 95 countries to end the harm caused by cluster munitions. Founding members include Austrian Aid for Mine Victims,(CMC-Austria)Human Rights Watch, Handicap International and other leaders from the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Ban Landmines which secured the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.
www.stopclustermunitions.org/

Political solutions cannot be replaced by humanitarian aid – both must go hand in hand !

We thank our partners for their cooperation and support:



Norwegian People's Aid
Solidarity in Action



Actiongroup
landmine.de



MAG

www.magclearmines.org

