

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, speaks at the informal UNGA session in New York

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monetary Council holds rate-setting meeting

Plenary session of parliament

Events connected to the wars in Ukraine, Israel

European Parliament holds plenary session

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: PREVENT CONFLICT SPIRAL IN MIDDLE EAST

A united effort from the international community can prevent the conflict from spiralling in the Middle East, the foreign minister said in New York.

It should not be forgotten that the current conflict began with a “really brutal terrorist attack” a month and a half ago, Péter Szijjártó told an informal session of the United Nations General Assembly, adding that the countries in the region could return to the hopeful path towards peace carved by the Abraham Accords. Preventing a repeat of “such a heinous attack” was in the interest of not just Israel, but the entire world, he said, adding successful actions against terrorism were also a global interest. Szijjártó said the Hungarian citizens who had been stuck in Gaza and wanted to leave had been successfully evacuated. He expressed thanks to his Egyptian and Israeli counterparts without whom, he said, “it would not have been possible to evacuate those 14 Hungarian citizens who wanted to leave the Gaza Strip”. He also called for the immediate and unconditional release of the five Hungarian citizens held hostage by Hamas. For this reason, he said, Hungary could only accept resolutions, decisions and statements that called for the immediate release of those being held captive.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: VITAL TO PRESERVE EGYPT’S STABILITY

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó underlined the critical need to preserve Egypt’s stability, calling the north African country “one of the major bastions of European security”. While the international community asks Cairo to take in everyone fleeing Gaza, it should also contribute to preserving the country’s stability, he said, noting that Hungary has offered 100,000 euros in aid to Egypt for the procurement of medical supplies to treat those who have fled Gaza.

Addressing an informal session of the United Nations General Assembly, Szijjártó said Europe was facing severe security challenges, and the situation in the Middle East had a direct impact on the entire continent. Hungarians, he said, therefore had a vested interest in the peace and security of the Middle East. He said that in the short term, the international community must do everything possible to prevent escalation and an interstate war in the region. “Because if this action against terror becomes war between countries, then in the Middle East it would have absolutely ... unpredictable consequences, which I think none of us would like to see,” he said, urging members of the international community to “behave very responsibly”. In the long run, Szijjártó said, it was

important to return to the principle of the Abraham Accords which were “the best attempt to offer hope” for peace in the Middle East. He asked the signatories of the normalisation agreements and those “who plan to be part of it” not to give up and to “try to come back to the Abraham Accords”. “And we do believe that if we join our forces, then we can avoid escalation ... in the Middle East, and we will be able to come back to a hopeful path of ensuring that all people in the Middle East can live in peace and under a stable situation,” Szijjártó said.

Meanwhile, addressing the issue of migration in an interview given before the meeting, the minister said the Hungarian authorities last year prevented 275,000 illegal entries and more than 170,000 so far this year, adding that the migrants coming to Hungary’s borders were increasingly aggressive. “This is, unfortunately, a direct consequence of Brussels pursuing a migration policy that encourages and inspires migration, and constantly fuels the business model of people-smuggling rings,” the minister said. “We have to put a stop to this, because it will have tragic consequences.” Szijjártó said migration pressure on Europe originating from Africa would become “unbearable” later on if it was left unaddressed. This requires Europe to combat terrorism, as it is one of the root causes of migration waves, he said, noting that this was why Hungary was sending 200 soldiers to Chad in the interest of upholding

the stability of the Sahel region. The minister also underlined the need to bring economic development to the region. “That’s why it’s important that Europe bring developments and investments there that will create jobs, instead of attracting migrants from Africa,” he said. He noted that Hungary is providing 140 million dollars in tied aid to Africa in addition to carrying out 30 million dollars’ worth of social development schemes. Hungary also supports the survival of Christian communities in 18 countries and offers scholarships to 1,425 students each year to study at Hungarian universities, he added.

Meanwhile, Szijjártó said Hungary’s foreign policy was “highly respected” on the world stage because the government pursued “an honest and sovereign policy”. “So when it comes to Hungarian foreign policy, everyone knows full well that its rules are written in Budapest instead of being dictated from somewhere else,” he said. “And this sovereign Hungarian foreign policy is indeed respected here in New York, in the UN and on the world political stage.”

On the subject of migration, Szijjártó said that instead of encouraging migration, the international community should bolster security and the economy in migrants’ countries of origin the way Hungary is working to do. Hungary, he said, was protecting not just its own border, but also the European Union’s external border against a “massive illegal wave of migration” on the busiest migration



route leading to Europe. He lamented that some in the European Union considered border protection a human rights issue rather than a security issue. He added that the Hungarian government favoured strict border protection and made it clear “that violating a border is a crime and it has to be addressed properly”. Szijjarto said migration could only be stopped by tackling its root causes, such as security problems, the threat of terrorism and poverty. Terrorism and migration, he said, formed “an evil cycle”, arguing that former was both a cause and a consequence of the latter. He said migration waves could be infiltrated by terrorists, making the threat of terrorism in Europe greater, while certain western European countries were seeing the emergence of parallel societies, “no-go zones” and rising anti-Semitism.

Hungarians, he said, had a vested interest in the success of the fight against terrorism, and the country contributed to that international effort. He said Africa, and specifically the Sahel, was one of the top origin region of migration towards Europe. Hungary is therefore sending 200 troops to Chad in cooperation with its government to support the military there and prevent further migration waves, he added. The minister also underlined the importance of developing the region’s economy, emphasising the need for investments, job creation and technology exports, in which, he said, Hungary was doing its part.

OFFICIAL: HUNGARY REJECTS WHAT BRUSSELS HAS TO OFFER

If Hungary accepts the model Brussels “offers” on migration, the war in Ukraine and on “how our children should be raised”, the country would “cease to exist” in a few decades, the prime minister’s political director told public radio. Referring to the prime minister’s speech at the weekend party congress of ruling Fidesz, Balázs Orbán rejected the notion that Hungary was a country that constantly said “no”. Rather, it had developed a “European counter-model” showing that “it is possible to set different government policy and operate a successful country”, he said. The two models can exist in Europe simultaneously, Orbán said, adding, however, that “we would obviously be glad if an increasing number of countries were proud of their sovereignty, and define supporting families and enhancing competitiveness as future political priorities ... instead of sanctions”.

As regards “big issues”, he said Hungarians and the majority of people in other countries in Europe shared the position represented by the Hungarian government. “If you ask people whether they want to get dragged into a war with Russia or to have illegal migrants in their own country, they will clearly say ‘no’. And if asked whether they want Ukraine and Russia to make peace, the answer in most countries is ‘yes’,” he said. “Hungary is today

the voice of the European people,” Orbán said, adding that only Hungary was able “to consistently express the opinion of the European majority on a government level”.

MINIMUM WAGE AGREEMENT SIGNED

Unions and employers associations signed on Monday an agreement to raise the minimum wages, the economic development ministry said. The agreement was signed by all members of the VKF, a forum of employers, unions and the government, with the exception of unions association MASZSZ. Under the deal, the monthly minimum wage for unskilled labourers will rise by 15% to 266,800 forints (EUR 704), while the minimum wage for skilled workers will increase by 10% to 326,000 forints as of December 1. The agreement contains a recommendation for businesses to increase pay to a degree that ensures real wage growth. It also paves the way for talks on changes to the minimum wage system that would preserve earners’ purchasing power and expresses a commitment to encouraging collective contracts. Sándor Czomba, state secretary at the economic development ministry, said the agreement would favourably impact the whole of the national economy. He said the deadlines agreed on were “such signal points of direction that convey an important message to all players of the economy.” During the wage negotiations, he added, the



sides had seen eye to eye. "It is worth making joint decisions in the longer run and focusing on strengthening the economy following this year's measures aimed at reining in inflation," he said, noting the government's commitment to increasing real wages "every year in line with economic performance".

Trade union federation MOSZ head Imre Palkovics said the agreement was "an acceptable compromise in light of the circumstances and economic reality". Ferenc Rolek, deputy head of national employer federation MGYOSZ, said the early date on which the agreement had been reached indicated "a positive attitude" on the part of the sides in the talks. In view of a planned 6% inflation next year, the real income of minimum wage earners will increase by 9%, he said, adding that it was a great achievement by "an economy just recovering from recession".

FINMIN: HUNGARY, KAZAKHSTAN AIM TO BOOST BILATERAL TRADE TO REACH USD 1 BN

Hungary and Kazakhstan aim to increase bilateral trade turnover to an annual 1 billion US dollars, Finance Minister Mihály Varga said after a meeting of the Hungarian-Kazakh Strategic Council on Monday. According to a finance ministry statement, trade turnover with Kazakhstan was 465 million dollars in the first 8 months of 2023. Varga said the 240 companies registered

in Hungary that export goods to Kazakhstan provided solid foundations for meeting that goal.

He mentioned Hungarian energy company MOL's gas extraction project in northern Kazakhstan, to be launched in a few weeks, as well as Hungarian companies active in Kazakhstan's health industry as "successful projects indicating that we're going in the right direction". He said the largest Kazakh private laboratories were using Hungarian equipment to test urine and blood samples, adding that the Hungarian distributor's exports to Kazakhstan amounted to 1.2 million dollars last year. At the session, representatives of Hungary and Kazakhstan signed cooperation agreements on the application of Hungarian technologies as well as setting up a fish farming pilot project there.

MINISTER: HUNGARIAN- TURKISH CULTURAL YEAR GETS UNDER WAY ON DEC 18

Hungarian-Turkish cultural year will start on Dec 18 to mark the centenary that diplomatic ties were established between the two countries, the minister of culture said on Monday. János Csák said the programme had been designed to "support decades-long excellent ties by way of culture and to reinforce our cultural presence in the other country". Gülşen Karanis, the Turkish ambassador to Hungary, said the cultural year was "a best way to highlight our comprehensive and

deep-rooted ties", adding that cultural years were "the best examples" of cultural diplomacy. Péter Hoppál, government commissioner in charge of the programme, said it will offer more than one hundred art, scientific and innovation events aimed "not only at promoting Hungarian culture in Türkiye in general but to launch long-term cooperation to build tighter relations in particular areas."

OFFICIAL: HUNGARY TO HOST COE'S CULTURAL ROUTES ANNUAL ADVISORY FORUM

Hungary will host the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Annual Advisory Forum in Visegrad, near Budapest, next year, a government official said on Monday. It is important that Hungary recognises opportunities arising from its strength in soft-power diplomacy, Máté Vincze, deputy state secretary for cultural development, said in Szentendre. József Antall, Hungary's first post-communist prime minister, acknowledged this when he signed the accession documents of the Council of Europe and invited its youth organisation to set up its base in Budapest, he added. Cultural Routes next year will focus on cultural transmission and sustainability, as well as cultural transfer between the generations, Vincze said. Professionals from Council of Europe member states will attend the forum, where they can witness Hungary's cultural diversity for themselves, he said.

HUNGARY, CROATIA SIGN CULTURAL COOPERATION EXTENSION PACT

Hungary and Croatia are extending a cultural cooperation agreement. János Csák, the culture and innovation minister, and counterpart Nina Obuljen signed the relevant document on Monday in Budapest. Csák noted that both countries maintain cultural institutes in each other's capital and a two year programme of events was agreed on. Obuljen said the pact provided a supportive framework for artists and cultural institutions in future collaborations and contributed to the expansion of cultural relations between the two countries in multiple areas such as theatre, music and dance, as well as the visual and applied arts, photography, literature, cultural heritage, audiovisual fields, and literary, museum and archival cooperation.

SZÁZADVÉG: HUNGARIANS SYMPATHISING WITH ISRAEL, WORRIED ABOUT ISLAMIST TERRORISM

Respondents in a recent survey have expressed sympathy with Israel and

“there is significant concern” about Islamist terrorism among the general population, Századvég said. The survey results put “Israel’s popularity index in the positive range” while 94% of those asked had heard about the Hamas organisation’s slaying more than 1,000 civilians on Israeli ground, the think-tank said. “The Hungarian population is definitely critical about anti-Israeli public figures” with “the popularity index of Hungarian and EU politicians supporting Palestine and Hamas is strongly negative,” it said. Fully 87% of respondents said they were concerned that “Islamist terrorism could resurface in Europe in the near future”.

MORE THAN 10,000 UKRAINIAN CITIZENS ENTER HUNGARY ON SUNDAY

Fully 4,988 Ukrainian citizens entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Sunday, while 5,030 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 71 people, ORFK said on Monday.

BIRD FLU DETECTED IN BÉKÉS COUNTY, SE HUNGARY

H5N1 bird flu has been detected in Békés County, in south-eastern Hungary, the national food safety authority (Nébih) said on Monday, after the virus was confirmed in a sample taken from a poultry farm in Orosháza rearing 7,400 mallard geese, which are in the process of being destroyed. An epidemiological investigation to reveal the cause of the outbreak is also under way, and a 3km radius observation zone has been demarcated around the farm. H5N1 has already appeared in the counties of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, Csongrád-Csanád; Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg; Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Bács-Kiskun and Hajdú-Bihar. The mandatory confinement of poultry only applies in high-risk counties, while indoor feeding and drinking, as well as the storage of feed and litter, is required in closed places nationwide, Nébih noted.