

Minister Constantinos Petrides

Ministry of Interior

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Dear Minister,

I am writing regarding Ahmed H., a Syrian national and former long-term resident of Cyprus who is currently being held in immigration detention in Hungary. Ahmed H.'s wife and his two young daughters are Cypriot nationals.

In August 2015, Ahmed H. left his family home in Cyprus to help his elderly parents and six other family members flee the conflict in Syria and find safety in Europe. One month later, they found themselves among hundreds of refugees stranded at the Hungarian border after police fenced off the crossing with Serbia. Clashes broke out as some refugees attempted to get through. Ahmed H. was one of eleven people arrested, but the only one charged with a terrorism-related offence under Hungary's vague and overly broad terrorism law. He was eventually found guilty of "complicity in an act of terrorism".

Nothing Ahmed H. allegedly did during the disturbance at the border could reasonably be considered "complicity in an act of terrorism". The Hungarian authorities misapplied Hungary's draconian counter-terrorism laws to Ahmed H. in an attempt to label refugees and migrants as "terrorists". Both the European Parliament and the US State Department expressed concern about the misuse of terrorism-related charges by Hungary in Ahmed H.'s case.

Ahmed H. has been separated from his wife and young daughters for almost four years. He was conditionally released from prison on 19 January 2019 and is currently held in immigration detention in Hungary, where he is potentially at risk of return to Syria.

I call on you to take all necessary measures to allow Ahmed H. to return to Cyprus promptly and be finally reunited with his family.

Yours sincerely,