

# [***Former Hungarian insider releases audio he says is proof of corruption in embattled Orbán government***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMY-XXX1-JC5B-G3SF-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

BUDAPEST, Hungary — A former Hungarian government insider turned critic released an audio recording on Tuesday that he says proves that top officials conspired to cover up corruption, the latest development in a scandal that has shaken Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's domination of the country's ***politics***.

The country's largest protests in years erupted in early February when it was revealed that the president had issued a pardon to a man imprisoned for covering up child sexual abuses by the director of a state-run orphanage.

Close Orbán allies, including the president and Justice Minister Judit Varga, were [*forced to resign*](https://apnews.com/article/hungary-president-katalin-novak-resigns-child-abuse-fde3223061df720b6af8b4b6fae8025a) in the face of public outrage.

The latest allegations come from Varga's ex-husband, Peter Magyar, a former political insider who says he has turned whistleblower to reveal the extent of impropriety within Orbán's government.

He posted a recording on Facebook and YouTube on Tuesday featuring what appeared to be Varga's voice describing how other government officials caused evidence to be removed from court records to cover up their roles in corrupt business dealings.

“They suggested to the prosecutors what should be removed," Varga says in the recording, which Magyar says he made during a conversation in the former couple’s apartment. Varga also says that one of her state secretaries was tipped off by senior officials that he was the subject of a corruption investigation.

Magyar gave the recording to the Metropolitan Public Prosecutor's Office in Budapest on Tuesday to be used as evidence.

In a Facebook post on Tuesday, Varga accused Magyar of domestic violence during their marriage and claimed she had made the statements under duress, but didn't deny that it was her in the recording.

“I said what he wanted to hear so I could get away as soon as possible. In a situation like this, any person can say things they don’t mean in a state of intimidation,” Varga wrote. Magyar later denied those claims in a separate post on Facebook.

Once a senior but little-known member of Orbán’s political circle, Magyar shot to prominence when he gave an interview in February to popular YouTube channel Partizan in which he accused Orbán's government of widespread corruption and of using smear campaigns to discredit its opponents.

On March 15, he [*addressed a crowd of tens of thousands*](https://apnews.com/article/hungary-orban-rails-against-eu-west-speech-5e1e0c25560de5623752c0955e358c54) in Budapest and announced plans to form a new political party to challenge the governing party's 14-year grip on power as an alternative to Hungary’s fragmented opposition.

The scandal caused an unprecedented political crisis within Orbán’s government, which has led Hungary since 2010. Magyar’s followers hope his position as a former insider can help to disrupt Hungary’s political system, which many see as a deeply entrenched autocracy.

In his recent public appearances, Magyar has particularly targeted Antal Rogan, a close Orbán ally who is responsible for the government’s communications as well as the country’s secret services. The recording released Tuesday purports to show that Rogan led the effort to alter evidence.

The government has dismissed Magyar as an opportunist seeking to forge a new career after his divorce with Varga and his loss of positions in several state companies. But his rise has compounded political headaches for Orbán that have included the resignation of members of his government and a painful economic crisis.

After spending nearly four hours inside the prosecutor's office on Tuesday, Magyar told journalists that the alleged evidence tampering was cause for Orbán's government to step down, and called for a spontaneous protest later in the day.

On Tuesday evening, thousands of demonstrators gathered at Magyar's urging at the Public Prosecutor's Office in Budapest where he demanded the resignation of the attorney general, whom he accused of acting in the interests of Orbán's governing party.

“Let us send a message from here, together, that we will not let them cover up the biggest legal and political scandal of the last 30 years! We will not allow it!” he said, adding that he demanded that the alleged misconduct “be investigated independently, objectively and free from political interference.”

One demonstrator, Katalin Varga, said that she identifies with Magyar's political message that corruption in Hungary has led to a disintegration of the country's political, cultural and social life.

“Finally, there is a force, a character who represents what for me is the problem with the current situation: the political system, the abuses, and the fact that we are slowly cooking like frogs and not realizing that we are going to be the soup,” she said.

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