



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

WARSAW – NHRI ACADEMY 2025

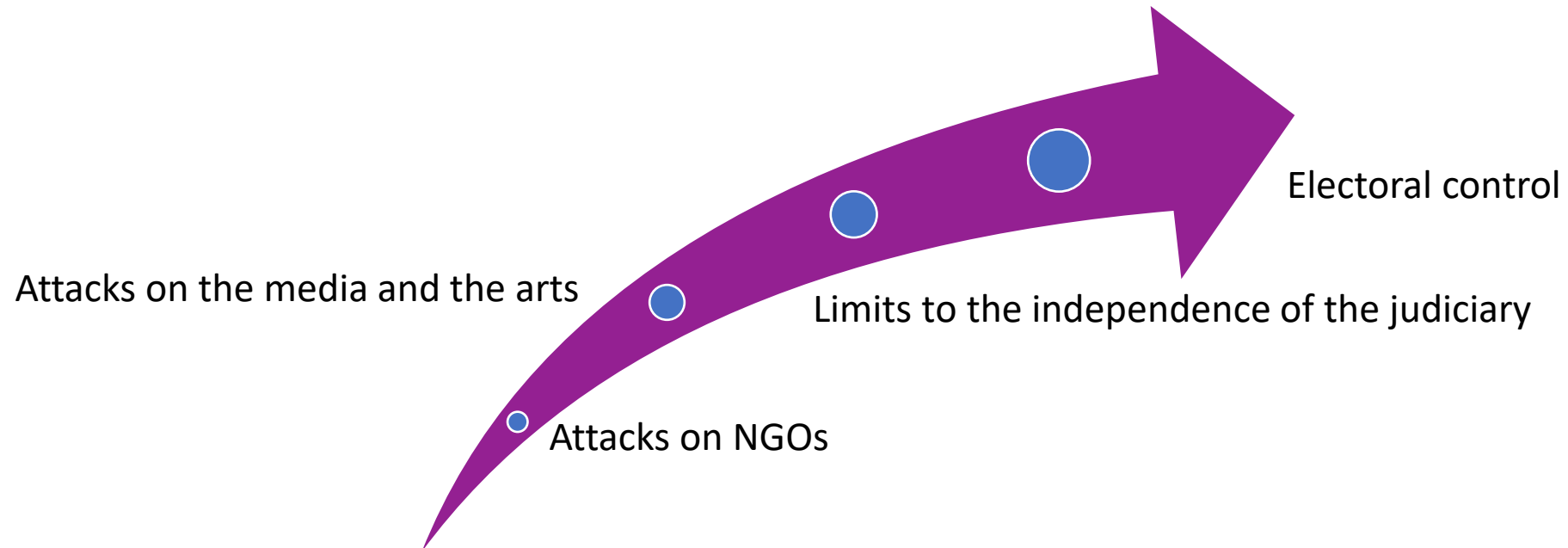
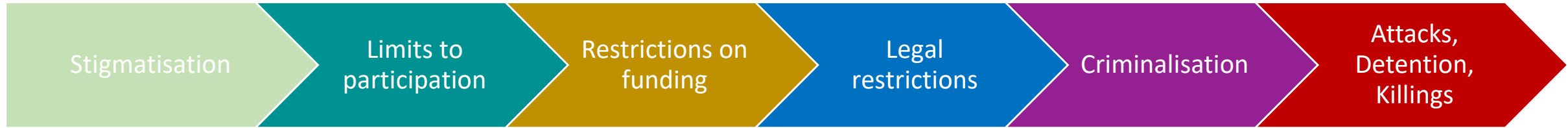
Kersty McCourt

DAY 2

- Early Warning Signs
- Freedom of Association and Assembly
- Legal Restrictions on the Rights to Defend Rights
- Challenges faced by particular groups of HRDs

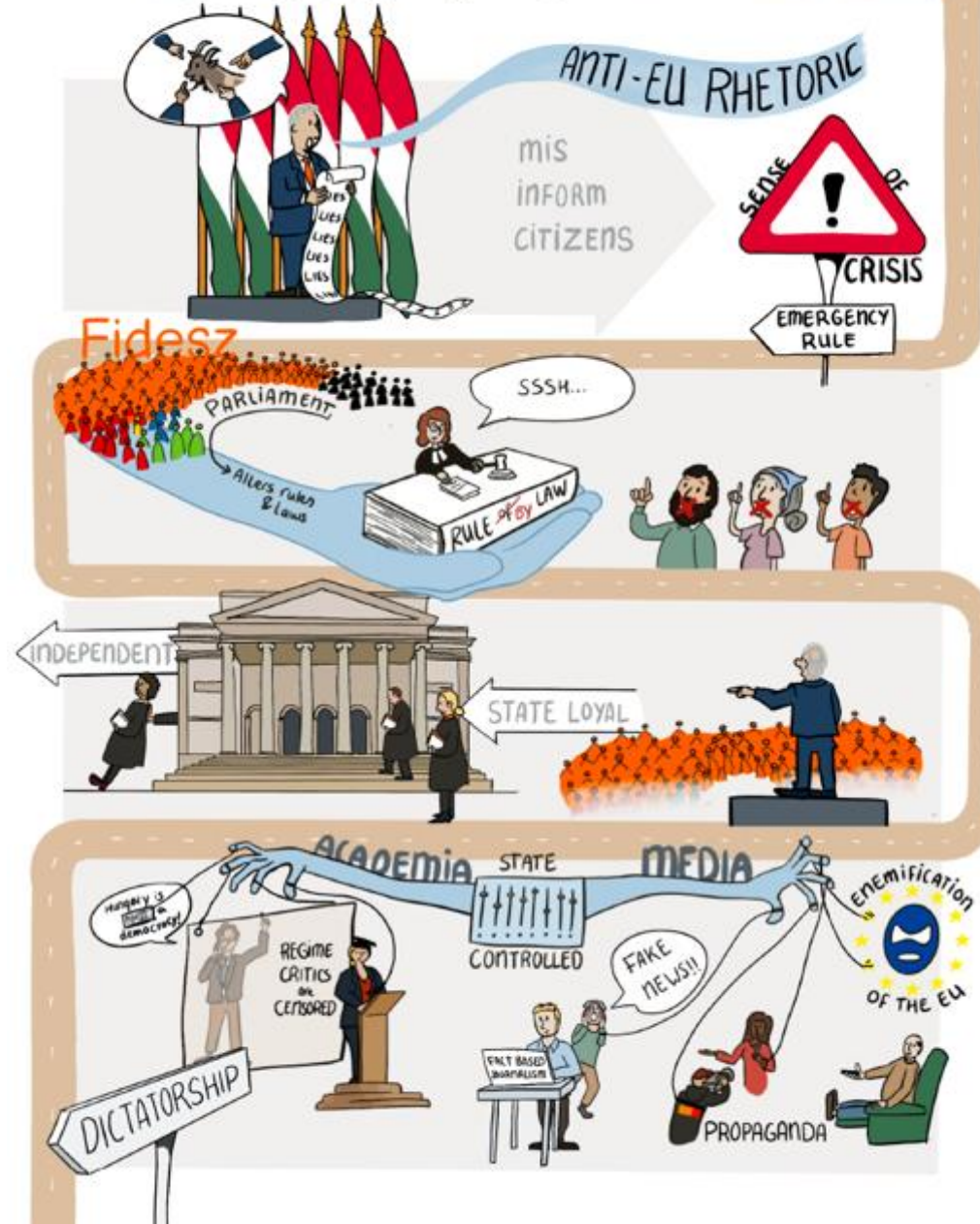


Pattern of restrictions

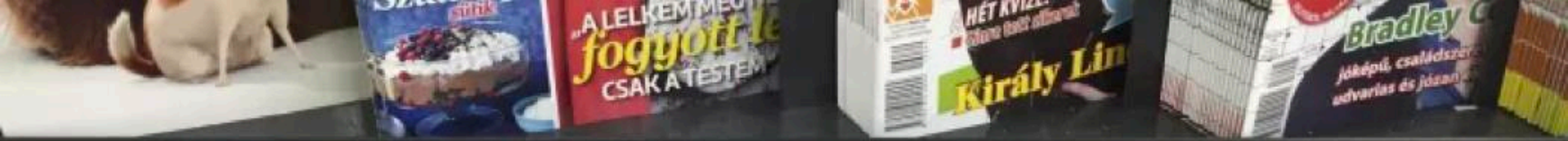


LEGAL RESTRICTIONS	POLICIES	PRACTICE
• Restrictive NGO laws • Criminalisation of HRDs • Other laws that impact on civil society – e.g. counter-terrorism, anti-money laundering • Legal restrictions on independent media	• Bureaucratic obstacles • Burdensome registration requirements • Limits to participation. • Tick-boxing exercises • Limits to funding	• Stigmatization, smear campaigns • Closure of independent media houses • Attacks, disappearances, killings

HUNGARY'S BACKSLIDING PATH



Civil Rights Defenders:
<https://crd.org/2019/04/04/civil-rights-defender-of-the-year-2019-marta-pardavi/>





Nemzeti
Konzultáció
2017



99% elutasított
az illegális

**NE HAGYJUK,
SOROS NEVE
A VÉGÉN**



**The Politicization of Arts
and Culture in Slovakia.**

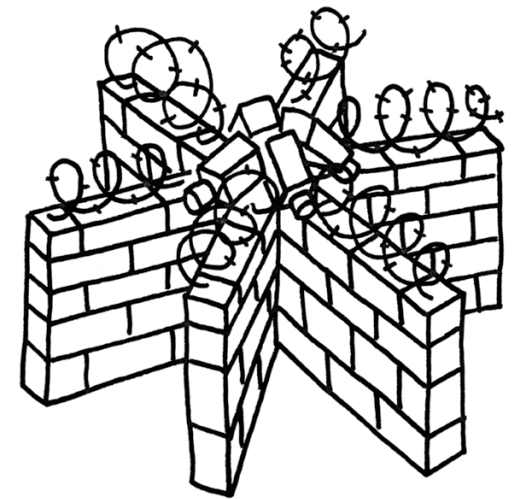
Early Warning



4 ways governments have sought to control diverse arts sectors:

- Censorship
- Control of the media
- Bureaucratic encroachment
- Legal and financial controls

Mirrors threats to HRDs



Example from
Georgia





THE OBSERVATORY
for the Protection of
Human Rights Defenders

Turkey: Selçuk Kozağaçlı and other ÇHD lawyers on trial once again

26 May 2025, Geneva – Paris - Ankara – *The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OMCT – FIDH) condemns the continued attacks on members of the Progressive Lawyers Association (ÇHD) as the new trial approaches against six of their members, including former chair Selçuk Kozağaçlı for charges of “Propaganda for an Illegal Organisation”. The retrial follows appeal court reversals launched by the aforementioned six lawyers, and a Constitutional Court ruling that found violations of fair trial rights in favor of Güçlü Sevimli and Gülvin Aydın Savran.*

Former chair of the Progressive Lawyers Association (ÇHD) and lawyer Selçuk Kozağaçlı, and five other lawyers from ÇHD (Barkın Timtik, Oya Aslan, Özgür Yılmaz, **Güçlü Sevimli** and **Gülvin Aydın Savran**), are on trial for alleged "Propaganda for an Illegal Organisation" under Article 7/2 of the Anti-Terror Law (Law No. 3713). The Observatory has been informed that the new trial, which has been scheduled for 27 May 2025, is based on previous accusations of “propaganda” for which convictions had been reversed by higher courts. It is expected that, on Tuesday, the Court will reassess the validity of the charges and then establish a new judgment based on the merits and on the statute of limitations.



THE OBSERVATORY
for the Protection of
Human Rights Defenders

Hungary: Open letter to the European Commission calling for the withdrawal the "Transparency of Public Life" bill

On 13 May 2025, Hungary's ruling Fidesz party submitted the Transparency of Public Life bill, which poses a significant threat to democratic principles and civil society in Hungary. Civil society and human rights organisations, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (FIDH-OMCT), have issued a joint letter urging the European Commission to take action to ensure the bill's withdrawal.



THE OBSERVATORY
for the Protection of
Human Rights Defenders

Russian Federation : Designation of Amnesty International as “undesirable organisation”

The Observatory has been informed about the designation of Amnesty International, a renowned international human rights organisation, as an “undesirable organisation” by the Russian authorities. In the last years, Amnesty International has undertaken crucial work to document and ensure accountability for the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Russian armed forces in Ukraine, and has taken a vocal stance on Russia’s crackdown on dissenting voices inside the country.

On 19 May 2025, the Russian Prosecutor’s General Office announced that it had declared Amnesty International an “undesirable organisation”, accusing the organisation of being a “center for the preparation of global Russophobic projects” and “justifying the crimes of Ukrainian neo-Nazis”.

Georgia: Judicial harassment and home searches targeting human rights defenders and activists

The Observatory has been informed about the searches at the homes of civil society organisations' leaders, including Mr. **Aleko Tskitishvili**, the Executive Director of the Human Rights Center, a member organisation of FIDH. Human Rights Center is a founding member of the Human Rights House Tbilisi.

On the morning of 29 April 2025, Mr. Aleko Tskitishvili was stopped near his home in Tbilisi and searched by representatives of the Prosecutor's Office. Subsequently, searches were conducted in his home, and his work computer, phone, and memory sticks, as well as notebooks, legal documents and other materials concerning the Human Rights Center were seized. In parallel, searches were conducted in the homes of pregnant activist Mariam Bajelidze and Mariam Geguchadze from the Shame Movement, an organisation that is currently inactive, as well as journalist Nanuka Zhorzholiani, founder of Nanuka's Fund, Prosperity Georgia representative Lasha Arveladze, and the founder of Foundation For Each Other 24/7, Guga Khelaia.



THE OBSERVATORY
for the Protection of
Human Rights Defenders

Case of Polish Ombudsman – April 2021

Poland's Constitutional Tribunal ruled that the Polish Ombudsman, Adam Bodnar will have to vacate his post within three months.

- Vera Jourová, Vice-President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency said, “It’s of great importance to ensure that this institution, which defends citizens’ rights and plays an important role for upholding the rule of law, remains independent.” She said to a newspaper that the Ombudsman’s office “was the last bastion that those wanting an honest assessment of their cases could count on.”
- Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatović tweeted that it “creates a worrying gap in the functioning of the Ombudsman institution in-btw [sic] terms and the protection of human rights in Poland”.
- Human Rights Watch said “With the courts compromised, the Ombudsman’s office under Bodnar has been one of a few remaining checks on the executive. His removal comes days after his office blocked the take-over of news- agency Polska Press by a state-owned oil company - a move that would have further reduced media pluralism.”