

Hungary: New Law Uses Covid-19 to Tackle Press Freedom

31 March 2020

<https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/hungary-new-law-uses-covid-19-to-tackle-press-freedom.html>

The Hungarian Parliament passed a bill on 30 March allowing the government of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to rule by decree without a set time limit. Under the new law, people who spread so-called misinformation will face up to five years jail terms.



credit: Michal Cizek / AFP

Following Hungarian government's request for an indefinite extension of the state of emergency, the law voted by parliament on 30 March grant Prime Minister Viktor Orbán sweeping powers to rule by decree, and the power to impose prison sentences of up to five years for promoting false information. The government has portrayed its request as a necessary response to the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

The International and European Federation of Journalists (IFJ and EFJ) believe that the Hungarian government is taking advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to threaten and intimidate journalists.