

# Hungary rejects EU court ruling on asylum-seekers held at border

BUDAPEST (Reuters) – Hungary will not accept a ruling by the European Union’s top court that four asylum-seekers stuck in a transit zone on the Hungarian-Serbian border should be released, a security aide to Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Tuesday.

The Court of Justice of the European Union reviewed the case of two Afghan and two Iranian nationals who arrived in Hungary from Serbia in late 2018 and early 2019 and applied for asylum from the Roszke transit zone on the border.

Their applications were rejected by Hungary, which ordered them to return to Serbia, but Belgrade would not admit them.

The EU court ruled last week that the asylum-seekers had effectively been detained in the transit zone camp on the border and that a local court should release them immediately.

“The government does not accept the ruling of the EU’s top court...about the transit zones,” Gyorgy Bakondi said, according to a government statement.

Bakondi said the transit zones were a part of Hungary’s system of border protection and migrants currently stuck on the Balkans route posed a “public health threat” amid the coronavirus outbreak.

He said Hungary would use all legal means to get the EU ruling reviewed. A government spokesman did not say what concrete steps the government would take but said the ruling unacceptable “in a political sense”.

Nationalist Orban, one of the most vocal opponents of immigration into Europe, won a third term in power in 2018 on a strong anti-immigration agenda which he has pushed ever since the 2015 migration crisis.

Then Hungary was a transit route for hundreds of thousands of migrants heading through the Balkans to western Europe. In recent years the number of migrants arriving at Hungary’s border has dropped to a trickle.

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