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September 17, 2007

H.E. Dr. Kinga Göncz
Minister of Foreign Affairs
1027 Budapest, Bem rkp. 47.
Hungary

Dear Minister Göncz:

We write regarding the efforts of Martha Nierenberg to regain artwork stolen from her family during the Holocaust and now held by Hungary. We urge your government to ensure the speedy and now long-overdue restoration of this property to its rightful owner.

Martha Nierenberg seeks the return of ten paintings currently held by two Hungarian-state-owned museums (the Museum of Fine Arts and the Hungarian National Gallery). These paintings were originally owned by her grandfather, Mor Lipot Herzog, and were stolen after the German invasion of Hungary in 1944. (Mor Lipot Herzog perished in the Holocaust. Ms. Nierenberg, with some other surviving family members, was able to escape Hungary in 1944 and eventually relocated in the United States.)

In the early 1990s, after the fall of communism in Hungary, Ms. Nierenberg's mother, Elizabeth Weiss de Csepel, began efforts to locate and secure the return of her family's art collection. She eventually determined that many pieces were being openly exhibited in state-owned museums, explicitly identified as the "Herzog Collection." After Ms. de Csepel passed away, Ms. Nierenberg continued her mother's efforts.

A Hungarian Government Committee of Experts (formed in 1996 under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture) and subsequent Hungarian court decisions have all confirmed that the paintings in question belonged to Mor Lipot Herzog. It is undisputed that the paintings were stolen from the Herzog family during the Holocaust. All the family heirs to this property have agreed, in papers submitted to Hungarian courts, that Ms. Nierenberg is the owner of the property she seeks. (That is, there are no competing claims by other family members.)

Nevertheless, the paintings have not been returned to Ms. Nierenberg. Why? Because the Hungarian Government has not exercised the political will to ensure the return. Instead, it has repeatedly appealed legal decisions favorable to Ms. Nierenberg, created bureaucratic obstacles to consideration of this matter, and simply failed to act in good faith.


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We are most troubled by reports that it has been argued in court by representatives of those currently holding the paintings that Ms. Nierenberg's claim is barred by a statute of limitations that expired in 1986, i.e., that Ms. Nierenberg's family should have expected a good-faith resolution of this matter *from the totalitarian communist regime* and it is her fault for not filing a claim sooner.

Minister Göncz, the Nierenberg family has been trying to resolve this matter for more than fifteen years. (We would also recall for you that this case was considered and discussed during a hearing by the House of Representatives Committee on Banking and Financial Services in 2000.)

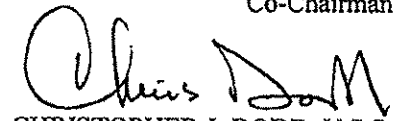
Many wrongs of the Holocaust can never, ever be undone. But this one can be. Whether a court actually orders the return of these paintings or not, it is within the power of the Hungarian Government to just do the right thing: please return to Ms. Nierenberg without further delay the paintings that were stolen from her family.

Sincerely,



ALCEE L. HASTINGS, M.C.
Chairman

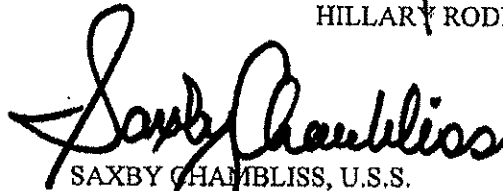

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Cc: Ambassador Ferenc Somogyi