

# Ethnic rivals agree to truce

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Ian Traynor and Susan Vista  
in Budapest, and Chris  
Stephen in Tîrgu Mureş

**L**EADERS of the feuding Romanian and ethnic Hungarian communities in this divided Transylvanian city yesterday agreed to moves to end the tensions which have caused three deaths and a wave of strikes.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Gelu Voican, headed compromise talks between the Hungarian Democratic Union (HDU) and the Vatra Românească (Romanian Hearth) nationalist movement.

The Rompres news agency said the Hungarian minority had won a demand for its children and students to be educated exclusively in Hungarian.

A statement said Vatra Românească accepted that the Hungarians, outnumbered four-to-one by Romanians in Transylvania, did not want to separate the northern province from Romania.

It said both sides called for an end to political strikes apparently called mainly by Hungarians in support of their demands.

Earlier yesterday, Budapest launched a verbal attack on the Romanian government, accusing it of behaviour reminiscent of Ceausescu, and warning of the danger of civil war in the region.

In reply to a Romanian government statement that Hungary was helping to foment the unrest in Transylvania, an angry Mr Horn said Bucharest was ignoring an agreement reached by both countries following the Romanian revolution. This guaranteed minority rights for the two million ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania.

In Tîrgu Mureş, about 2,000 Romanians massed at one end of the city's main square, cordoned off by a line of soldiers and two lines of tanks. They shouted support for their government and many said they were worried that Hungarians wanted too much.

One young man said the Hungarians had done well in previous years and had been helped by Romanians. "We feed a dog all this time and now it turns round and bites you," he complained.

Hungary's Minister of State, Imre Pozsgay, said that Romanian allegations of official Hungarian interference in Transylvania were a "forgery".

"The situation means that

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Romania is not ready for freedom because freedom means that the minorities must also have their rights," said Mr Pozsgay.

He called on the Romanian authorities to act decisively to end the "lynching atmosphere and pogroms", claiming that the rightwing Romanian organisation, Vatra Românească, which the Hungarians are convinced is behind the trouble, was employing tactics that recalled Ceausescu's Securitate and the inter-war fascist Iron Guard movement.

However, in the first statement since the Tuesday riots, the executive committee of Vatra Românească said it is a cultural organisation and does not take part in political operations.

"Vatra Românească regrets the way the events on the street developed. The Romanians were provoked by Magyar extremist elements," it said.

The statement blamed the main Romanian-based Hungarian political party, the Hungarian Democratic Union, for starting the trouble, by organising

an anti-Romanian demonstration on Tuesday. It is uncertain what role Vatra played in the recent disturbances, but banners supporting the group were carried by Romanians.

Mr Horn said Budapest had tried for three days to discuss the crisis with Romania's President, Ion Iliescu, the Prime Minister, Petre Roman, and the Romanian foreign ministry, but without success.

Reports from Tîrgu Mureş said an ethnic Hungarian professor of microbiology was attacked by Romanians and had

to be taken to hospital. Reports added that Hungarians in the town were black-clad and some carried "bloody chauvinists" and banners supporting them to obtain Hungarian passports while they could.

In the Transylvanian town of Cluj, a Hungarian resident said the city was quite tense. The Hungarian minority in the city was fearing a Romanian student demonstration planned for next week.

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