

Netherlands Briefing: July and August 2024

Reporting period: 1st July – 31st August 2024

Netherlands National Developments

Hague Vlogger Arrested for Terrorist Threats and Public Harassment

A 31-year-old vlogger from The Hague, known as Valentino, was arrested for inciting terrorist acts after posting on Telegram about wanting to attack a mosque. He's the same person who recently verbally abused a tram passenger in a viral video. Valentino is known for harassing people in his vlogs and has been charged with incitement and group defamation.

Dutch Government Ordered to Compensate Islamic School for Unjust Treatment

A Dutch court has ruled that the government wrongfully portrayed the Cornelius Haga Lyceum, an Islamic school in Amsterdam, as harbouring anti-democratic ideologies. This misrepresentation led to several punitive actions, including withholding funding and demanding leadership changes. The court determined that the state deliberately attempted to impede the school's growth, causing financial harm. As a result, the government must compensate the school, with the exact amount to be determined later.

Zomergasten' Hit by Viewer Backlash Over 'Painful' Interview with Palestinian-Dutch Filmmaker

The latest episode of "Zomergasten" (Summer Guests), featuring Palestinian-Dutch photographer Sakir Khader interviewed by Joris Luyendijk, has drawn sharp criticism and record-low viewership of 122,000. Viewers lambasted Luyendijk's interviewing style, calling it "cringeworthy" and "painful." Many were frustrated by Luyendijk's frequent interruptions and his condescending explanation of journalism to his guest. Despite the backlash and declining ratings, the Dutch public broadcaster NPO states it won't intervene, citing the Olympics as a factor affecting viewership.

Dutch-Moroccans Trapped in Melilla: Victims of Bureaucracy and Suspected Discrimination



Two Dutch-Moroccan men, Oussama and Youssef, have been detained for nearly three weeks in the Spanish enclave of Melilla on false accusations of car theft. Despite the car rental company retracting their complaint and confirming the men's paperwork was in order, Spanish authorities continue to hold them due to bureaucratic hurdles. The men describe poor detention conditions and frustration with the slow process. Dutch officials, including Arnhem's mayor Ahmed Marcouch and MEP Mohamed Chahim, have intervened, criticizing the treatment as potentially discriminatory and calling for an investigation into Melilla's practices.

Dutch Human Rights Institute Rules ING Bank's Anti-Terror Checks Discriminatory

The Dutch National Institute on Human Rights (NIHR) has ruled that ING Bank discriminated against customers based on their ethnicity during checks for terrorist financing. The bank wrongfully froze accounts and questioned transactions solely due to "non-Dutch-sounding" names. Two out of three cases brought before the NIHR were found to be discriminatory, with the third case pending. The NIHR rejected ING's argument that these checks were necessary due to name similarities with terrorism sanctions lists. The ruling is seen as applicable to all financial institutions in the Netherlands using similar screening methods. The NIHR also criticized ING for negligent handling of discrimination complaints. Advocacy groups PILP and Discriminatie.nl supported the customers in this case.

Murder of Muslim Man in Netherlands Ignites Islamophobia Debate

The murder of a young Muslim man by his neighbour has sparked controversy in the Netherlands. Initially reported as a parking dispute, critics argue the killing was motivated by Islamophobia, citing the accused's history of anti-Muslim social media posts. The case has prompted discussions about media bias and societal attitudes towards Muslims, with many claiming the hate crime aspect is being downplayed in public discourse.