

# The Netherlands briefing

## July/August 2023

### Moroccan-Dutch man wrongfully detained in Spain, allegedly due to Dutch misinformation

- A 35-year-old Moroccan-Dutch man has been detained in Spain for five weeks on terrorism suspicions, while vacationing with his wife.
- Rayan and his family claim his arrest stems from misinformation provided by the Netherlands to Spain.
- Despite family efforts and a petition with 4,700 signatures, he remains detained, and his health is deteriorating. The Dutch authorities have stated he's not wanted for terrorism in the Netherlands.  
Muslim Rights Watch is advocating for the detained individual and his family.

### Dutch politicians and police deny their responsibility to support individual wrongfully flagged as a terror suspect

- Bilal, a 32-year-old from Tilburg, found himself unexpectedly placed on an international list of potential terrorism suspects.

When attempting to rectify the situation, he was met with a shocking admission from Dilan Yesilgöz, the outgoing Minister of Justice and Security: she recognised that innocent Dutch citizens like Bilal had been wrongly flagged but insisted that the victims should take primary responsibility for correcting the situation.

- This proved difficult for Bilal, who, during travels, was denied entry to Turkey and later detained in Sri Lanka due to these false allegations.

The Dutch police, although apologetic, admitted their limits in assisting him and emphasised that the way other countries respond to such notifications is "beyond their control."

- Bilal appeared in court in August, seeking complete access to his police record, and is now awaiting the judgment, with advocacy support from Muslim Rights Watch.

## Muslim Community Challenges Banking Discrimination in the Netherlands

- Muslim representatives in the Netherlands claim systemic discrimination by banks due to the Dutch Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorist Financing Act (WWFT).

They claim the law is being used to profile Muslims, particularly during Ramadan when donations to mosques and charities increase.

- The National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism (NCDR), Rabin Baldewsingh, confirmed the rise in discrimination reports during Ramadan. A previous investigation highlighted the Dutch Tax Department's heightened scrutiny of mosque donations.
- While the Dutch Banking Association condemns discrimination and commits to investigating reports, both the National Coordinator and Muslim representatives find their response lacking and demand more proactive action against discrimination.

## Dutch tax department under fire: Unlawful status revocation targets major mosque

- The Dutch Tax Department is accused of discriminatory practices against Islamic organisations, particularly after the unlawful revocation of the *ANBI* status for the as Soennah mosque, one of the largest mosques in The Netherlands.

ANBI is a Dutch designation for institutions that primarily serve the public interest. Mosque federations are demanding transparency and preventative measures from the government in response to these practices.

## Dutch debate over Quran burnings continue

- Debate ensues in the Netherlands about whether burning the Quran is protected by freedom of expression.

While the Minister of Justice and Security deems it permissible under free speech, some believe it incites religious intolerance.

- Proponents of prohibition reference the European Court of Human Right's "key judgment" in *E.S. vs. Austria*, advocating for the Netherlands to uphold religious harmony by prohibiting the act in alignment with the ECHR's precedent.