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Dutch Muslim TV recognises Ahmadiyya sect

Radio Netherlands Worldwide (17.12.2009) - HRWF Int. (18.12.2009) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> - Email: info@hrwf.net - A Dutch Muslim broadcasting company which applied for airtime has recognised the Ahmadiyya sect as a major current in Islam. Such a recognition is unique in the world.

Ahmadiyya is a sectarian movement within Islam which is not recognised as Islamic by the main institutions of orthodox Islam. Many Dutchmen of Surinamese origin belong to Ahmadiyya.

Its recognition by the aspiring broadcaster (SMO) was revealed in a leaked e-mail message of which Radio Netherlands Worldwide possesses a copy. In the message SMO expresses its willingness to share its hoped-for broadcasting licence with another company, provided that it too recognises Ahmadiyya.

The Dutch public radio and tv system allots time to one religious broadcaster per denomination. The previous Muslim licence holder is to cease transmissions after internal strife between groups representing differing approaches to Islam.

SMO is one of five broadcasters having applied for the Islamic airtime slots. It is expected that the Dutch broadcasting authorities will announce next week which of them will be licensed and hence subsidised.

Emergency debate about As-Siddieq school

Trouw (01.09.2009) - HRWF Int. (03.09.2009) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> - Email: info@hrwf.net - This week, the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament will have an emergency debate with the Secretary of State for School Education Sharon Dijksma (PvdA) about the problems posed by the Islamic school As Siddieq in Amsterdam. A proposal introduced by PVV Geert Wilders enjoyed sufficient support to open such a parliamentary debate.

Last week, Dijksma said that the financing of the school would be partly interrupted because a number of classes at As-Siddieq fall short of the fundamental criteria of school education fixed by the state. For example, the school does not do enough to

promote the social integration and the active citizenship of its students. The city of Amsterdam also withdrew its trust from the school and stopped financing it.

The management board of the school said that they would go to court in order to get the full public allowance. The directors do not intend to give it up as Amsterdam wants it.

The request for a debate about "disturbing stories and practices concerning the school" was supported by three political parties: SP, PvdA and VVD.

Bosma (PVV) thinks that the Secretary of State must be more active and not only suspend a part of the public allowance. "The school is keeping 95% of its allowance. According to us, it could be less."

HRWF Footnote about the political parties and their leaders:

SP: Socialist Party (Agnes Kant)

PvdA: Labor Party (Wouter Bos)

PVV: Party for Freedom (Geert Wilders)

Parliament rejects repeal of blasphemy law

International Religious Freedom News (29.05.2009) / HRWF Int. (09.06.2009) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> - Email: info@hrwf.net - National Secular Society - Despite a majority of MPs in the Dutch parliament wanting to repeal the country's blasphemy law, the cabinet has decided that it must stay.

The decision follows a high court ruling earlier this year, in which a man was found not guilty of insulting an entire group of people on the grounds of their religion by hanging up a poster saying "Stop the tumour that is Islam".

The Government says that anti-discrimination legislation is inadequate.

Islam film Dutch MP to be charged

BBC (21.01.2009) / HRWF Int. (23.01.2009) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> - Email: info@hrwf.net - A Dutch court has ordered prosecutors to put a right-wing politician on trial for making anti-Islamic statements.

Freedom Party leader Geert Wilders made a controversial film last year equating Islam with violence and has likened the Koran to Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf.

"In a democratic system, hate speech is considered so serious that it is in the general interest to... draw a clear line," the court in Amsterdam said.

Mr Wilders said the judgment was an "attack on the freedom of expression".

"Participation in the public debate has become a dangerous activity. If you give your opinion, you risk being prosecuted," he said.

Not only he, but all Dutch citizens opposed to the "Islamisation" of their country would be on trial, Mr Wilders warned.

"Who will stand up for our culture if I am silenced?" he added.

'Incitement'

The three judges said that they had weighed Mr Wilders's "one-sided generalisations" against his right to free speech, and ruled that he had gone beyond the normal leeway granted to politicians.

"The Amsterdam appeals court has ordered the prosecution of member of parliament Geert Wilders for inciting hatred and discrimination, based on comments by him in various media on Muslims and their beliefs," the court said in a statement.

"The court also considers appropriate criminal prosecution for insulting Muslim worshippers because of comparisons between Islam and Nazism made by Wilders," it added.

The court's ruling reverses a decision last year by the public prosecutor's office, which said Mr Wilders's comments had been made outside parliament as a contribution to the debate on Islam in Dutch society and that no criminal offence had been committed.

Prosecutors said on Wednesday that they could not appeal against the judgement and would open an investigation immediately.

Gerard Spong, a prominent lawyer who pushed for Mr Wilders's prosecution, welcomed the court's decision.

"This is a happy day for all followers of Islam who do not want to be tossed on the garbage dump of Nazism," he told reporters.

'Fascist book'

In March 2008, Mr Wilders posted a film about the Koran on the internet, prompting angry protests across the Muslim World.

The opening scenes of Fitna - a Koranic term sometimes translated as "strife" - show a copy of the holy book followed by footage of the bomb attacks on the US on 11 September 2001, London in July 2005 and Madrid in March 2004.

Pictures appearing to show Muslim demonstrators holding up placards saying "God bless Hitler" and "Freedom goes to hell" also feature.

The film ends with the statement: "Stop Islamisation. Defend our freedom."

Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende said at the time that the film wrongly equated Islam with violence and served "no purpose other than to offend".

A year earlier, Mr Wilders described the Koran as a "fascist book" and called for it to be banned in "the same way we ban Mein Kampf", in a letter published in the De Volkskrant newspaper.
