



Document #2111929

USDOS – US Department of State (Author)

2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Netherlands

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The constitution prohibits religious discrimination and protects the freedom of individuals to profess their religion or belief. It is a crime to engage in public speech inciting religious hatred. The constitution allows the government to restrict the exercise of religious beliefs outside of buildings or enclosed spaces to protect health, ensure traffic safety, and prevent disorder. The law bans full-face coverings, including niqabs and burqas in schools, hospitals, public transportation, and government buildings.

The Minister for Social Affairs stated that the ministry as well as municipalities participated in secret investigations into mosques. The investigators were monitoring for signs of extremism and radicalization. In a letter to the parliament, the Minister said the investigations were not transparent, which she regretted. Muslim community leaders said the secret investigations damaged their trust in the government. Authorities said the government continued to work with representatives of the Muslim community to reinforce their “resilience” against Wahhabism, including meeting with community representatives to discuss challenges faced by mosques and supporting Muslim youth vulnerable to extremism related to religion. The national police reported that authorities had not issued any fines during the year to women wearing a burqa under the law banning full-face coverings; there are no records of fines being imposed since inception of the law in 2019. The media reported increasing demands by Muslim students for prayer rooms in high schools and resistance from some schools, including some that did not want to allow any prayer. In September, the Office of the National Coordinator on Racism and Discrimination organized the country’s first National Congress

against Discrimination and Racism, which was attended by a wide variety of public officials and NGO representatives. One of the topics of discussion was anti-Muslim discrimination. In July, the government instituted a change to criminal law prohibiting Holocaust denial, and denial or trivialization of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The government reported it implemented the change to fulfill EU obligations; there were no reports of arrests or prosecutions under the new law. In cooperation with the National Coordinator for Combatting Antisemitism, the city of Amsterdam set up a support point for schools to respond to inquiries concerning Holocaust education and antisemitism. A study by the Anne Frank House showed that 14 percent of secondary school teachers experienced Holocaust denial or trivialization in the past year, and 42 percent witnessed antisemitic incidents.

Government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) continued to report hundreds of anti-Muslim and antisemitic incidents involving nonlethal violence, threats, harassment, discrimination, hate speech, and vandalism, although the data collected by agencies often differed because of varied reporting, collection, and analysis methods. There were reports of antisemitic incidents at soccer matches, and contrary to an agreement stipulating play would be halted if antisemitic chanting occurred during a match and the chanting did not stop, the matches were rarely paused.

Officials from the U.S. embassy and the consulate general emphasized the importance of supporting and protecting all faiths and engaging in interfaith dialogue in both formal meetings and informal conversations with government officials from multiple ministries and with parliamentarians. Embassy and consulate general representatives discussed religious freedom issues with leaders of several different faith communities and a broad range of civil society groups. U.S. officials met with the representatives of the Dutch Jewish Council (CJO), the National Coordinator against Antisemitism (NCAB), Jewish leaders, and the Jewish Cultural Quarter regarding cooperation with the Jewish community on Holocaust remembrance and combatting antisemitism. Since the October 7 Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel, the Ambassador met with many Jewish and Islamic groups and discussed combatting antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred; she delivered closing remarks at the National Kristallnacht Commemoration, during which she condemned antisemitism, anti-Muslim sentiment, and all forms of discrimination and hate.

Section I.

Religious Demography

The Netherlands, along with the Dutch Caribbean islands of Aruba, Curacao, and Sint Maarten, form the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 17.7 million (midyear 2023). In a 2022 survey, the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS), the official source for government statistics, reported that 57 percent of

the population age 15 or older declared no religious affiliation, 18 percent identifies as Roman Catholic, 13 percent as Protestant, 6 percent as Muslim, and 6 percent as "other," including Hindus, Jews, Buddhists, and Baha'is.

The U.S. government estimates the total population of Curacao at 153,000 (midyear 2023). According to 2011 census data, the latest data available, 72.8 percent of the population in Curacao identifies as Roman Catholic, 18.4 percent another denomination of Christianity, 2.3 percent another religion (including Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslim, Jewish, and "other"), and 6.0 percent not religious.

The U.S. government estimates the total population of Aruba at 124,000 (midyear 2023). According to 2010 census data, 75.3 percent of the population in Aruba identifies as Roman Catholic, 4.9 percent Protestant, 1.7 percent Jehovah's Witnesses, 12 percent "other," 5.5 percent "none," and 0.5 percent "unspecified."

The U.S. government estimates the total population of Sint Maarten at 33,000 (midyear 2023). According to 2011 census data, 41.9 percent of the population in Sint Maarten identifies as Protestant, 33.1 percent Roman Catholic, 5.2 percent Hindu, 4.1 percent another denomination of Christianity, 1.7 percent Jehovah's Witness, 1.7 percent evangelical, 1.4 percent Muslim or Jewish, 1.3 percent "other," 7.9 percent "none," and 2.4 percent "no response."

Most Muslims in the Netherlands live in urban areas and are of Turkish, Moroccan, or Surinamese descent. The Muslim population also includes recent immigrants and asylum seekers from other countries, including Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. While there are no official estimates, most Muslims are Sunni. According to a 2023 CBS study, 15 percent of youth between the ages of 15 and 18 identify as Muslim, compared with 9 percent in 2010. The Reform Jewish Congregation, the largest Jewish community in the country, estimates there are 40,000-50,000 Jews, including Reform and Orthodox Jews. A 2015 CBS study (the most recent available) estimates the number of Hindus at 10,000, of whom approximately 85 percent are of Surinamese descent and 10 percent of Indian descent. The Buddhist community has approximately 55,000 members, according to a 2018 CBS study, the most recent estimate available. Boston University's World Religion Database estimates there are 206,000 Buddhists in the country (1.2 percent of the population).

Section II.

Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The constitution prohibits discrimination on religious grounds and provides for the freedom of individuals to profess their religion or belief, individually or in community with others, provided it does not affect their responsibilities under the law. The constitution allows the government to restrict the exercise of religious belief outside of buildings or enclosed spaces to protect health, ensure traffic safety, and prevent disorder.

The law makes it a crime to engage in public speech that incites religious hatred and provides a penalty of imprisonment for up to two years, a fine of up to €8,100 (\$9,000), or both. To qualify as hate speech, statements must be directed at an individual or a group of persons; the law does not consider statements targeted at a philosophy or religion, such as "Islam" (as opposed to "Muslims"), to be criminal hate speech.

The law does not require religious groups to register with the government. Under the law, if the tax authorities determine a group is "of a philosophical or religious nature," contributes to the general welfare of society, and is nonprofit and nonviolent, they grant it exemptions from all taxes, including income, value-added, and property taxes.

The law bans full-face coverings – including niqabs and burqas, as well as other nonreligious attire such as ski masks and helmets – in schools, hospitals, public transportation, and government buildings. According to the law, authorities must first ask individuals violating the ban to remove the face covering or to leave the premises. Those refusing to comply may be fined €150 euros (\$170). No fine has been imposed since the law came into effect.

The law permits employees to refuse to work on Sundays for religious reasons, but employers may deny employees such an exception depending on the nature of the work, such as employment in the health sector. Members of religious communities for whom the day of worship is not Sunday may request similar exemptions.

Local governments appoint antidiscrimination boards that work independently under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations. These local boards provide information on how to report complaints and mediate disputes, including those pertaining to discrimination based on religion.

The Council of State and the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (NIHR) are responsible for reviewing complaints of religious discrimination. The Council of State is the highest administrative court in the country, and its rulings are binding. The NIHR serves as the government's independent human rights watchdog, responsible for advising the government and monitoring and highlighting human rights issues, including those pertaining to religion. The NIHR hears complaints of religious discrimination, often involving labor disputes, and issues

opinions that do not carry the force of law but with which the involved parties tend to comply. If respondents do not comply with NIHR's opinion, complainants may take their case to a regular court. Local boards do not have the final say with parties involved in disputes unless the parties accept a board's decision.

The government provides funding to religious schools, other religious educational institutions, and religious healthcare facilities. To qualify for funding, institutions must meet government educational standards as well as minimum class size and healthcare requirements. The constitution says standards required of religious or ideology-based (termed "special") schools, financed either in part or fully by the government, shall be regulated by law with due regard for the freedom of these schools to provide education according to their religion or ideology.

The constitution stipulates public education shall pay due respect to the individual's religion or belief. The law permits, but does not require, religious education in public schools. Teachers with relevant training approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science teach classes about a specific religion or its theology in some public schools, but enrollment in these classes is optional. All schools are required to familiarize students with the various religious movements in society, regardless of the school's religious affiliation. Religion-based schools that are government funded are free to determine the content of their religious classes and make them mandatory, provided the education inspectorate agrees that such education does not encourage criminal offenses such as inciting hate speech or action. Approximately 71 percent of government-funded schools have a religious, humanist, or philosophical basis. The Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science is responsible for setting national curriculum standards with which all schools must comply and for monitoring compliance.

Courts may issue fines and arrest warrants against a spouse who refuses to give the other spouse a religious divorce.

The country is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

GOVERNMENT PRACTICES

Abuses Involving the Ability of Individuals to Engage in Religious Activities Alone or In Community with Others

In a September letter to parliament, Minister for Social Affairs Karien van Gennip stated that the Ministry of Social Affairs as well as local municipalities conducted secret investigations into mosques. The investigators were monitoring for signs of extremism and radicalization. Although the municipalities' investigations had been previously reported in the local press, the participation and involvement of the Ministry of Social Affairs had not. According to the letter and subsequent press

reporting, the targets of investigations were mainly Salafists. According to van Gennip's letter, the method of investigation was not "transparent," which she stated she deeply regretted, and from which she would draw lessons for the future. Van Gennip's letter followed revelations in 2021 that at least 10 municipalities conducted undercover investigations into mosques in recent years. Following the most recent revelations, the Ministry of Social Affairs conducted discussions with 150 members of mosques under investigation. Officials stated this was part of a broader plan to restore trust between the Muslim community and the government. Muslim community leaders stated that the secret investigations did serious damage to their trust in the government.

Officials from the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science, Justice and Security, Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations, and Social Affairs and Employment said the government continued to work with various Muslim communities to reinforce their "resilience" against Wahhabism, including meeting with community representatives to discuss challenges faced by mosques, providing training on recognizing signs of radicalization, and supporting Muslim youth vulnerable to polarization, radicalization, and extremism related to religion. The government also supported measures in schools to prevent and counter radicalization and extremism, including civic education programs, websites for students and educators on recognizing signs of radicalization, and specialized intervention programs. A member of a prominent Muslim civil society organization stated, however, that the Muslim community did not trust the government, and that cooperation with these government efforts remained minimal, with low rates of attendance and participant engagement in government-sponsored events.

According to an April report by Middle East Eye, a coalition of Muslim groups filed a complaint with the UN against a parliamentary committee that had been investigating foreign funding and its impact on mosques and Islamic associations. The groups stated that the committee's investigation was the equivalent of "waging a witch-hunt" against the Muslim community.

In June, two members of parliament from the governing coalition and the opposition co-sponsored a resolution to increase criminal penalties for hate crimes by one-third. The bill generated generally positive coverage and discussion, but parliament had not adopted it as of year's end.

The national police reported that authorities had not issued any fines during the year to women wearing a burqa under the law banning full-face coverings in schools, hospitals, public transportation, and government buildings. When the law banning full-face covering passed in 2019, the government said it would re-evaluate it in 2022. A corresponding study conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2022

revealed that police had never issued a fine under the law. However, the law remained in effect.

The Central Body for Accommodating Asylum Seekers, the agency charged with overseeing asylum centers, continued to prohibit religious proselytizing in the centers to avoid inflaming tensions among different religious groups housed together in an already sensitive environment. Other than inside the asylum centers, the government permitted proselytizing within society.

Local and national authorities, the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security (NCTV), and police said they consulted closely on security issues with representatives from religious communities. Local governments, in consultation with the national government, continued to provide security to all Jewish institutions. The volunteer organization For Life and Welfare said it also provided private security to Jewish institutions and events. Following the Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel on October 7, Dutch security bodies including the NCTV conducted outreach through leading Jewish community organizations to re-evaluate and increase security around Jewish locations, including synagogues, schools, community centers, and Holocaust memorials.

Local governments stated that they continued to provide security to mosques and Islamic institutions as necessary or in response to threats, and local authorities worked with Islamic institutions on enhancing the security of mosques and other religious institutions. The national government stated it continued to support this local approach and developed materials to assist religious institutes and local governments in implementing such measures. The government continued to disseminate the 2019 *Security of Religious Institutes* manual, created in consultation with the Muslim community, local governments, and police. A representative of a prominent Muslim civil society organization, however, stated that extra security was rarely provided, even when necessary.

In March, media reported that in high schools, Muslim students were increasingly circulating petitions for prayer rooms, while some schools were trying to ban praying in school altogether. The Dutch press quoted a representative of the Association for Public Education saying, "In view of our pluralistic identity in which all philosophies are equal, a quiet room at school would not be out of place...For the Muslim with his Quran, but also for the hipster who wants to meditate." According to a ruling by the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, public schools are not required to provide a prayer room, but schools also may not prohibit students from praying, since that falls under freedom of religion.

The government continued to require imams and other spiritual leaders hired from abroad, including from EU countries, to complete a course on integrating into Dutch society before preaching in the country. The

government continued to sponsor leadership courses intended to facilitate imam training in Dutch; since 2002, Turkish imams are also required to complete a civic integration course. A representative of a prominent Muslim civil society organization stated, however, that two earlier government-sponsored imam training sessions were canceled due to lack of participants, which reflected suspicion from the community towards the government efforts. The individual stated that a new attempt would begin in 2024.

Government ministers met regularly with the Jewish community to discuss measures to counter antisemitism. Among the measures discussed as responses to rising antisemitism within the Turkish-Dutch community were: setting up a national help desk; organizing roundtables with teachers; reaching out to social media groups; promoting interreligious dialogue; and conducting a public information campaign against discrimination and antisemitism.

Government ministers, including Prime Minister Mark Rutte and Minister of Justice Yesilgoz-Zegerius, spoke out against antisemitism in speeches, such as at the annual Auschwitz and Kristallnacht commemorations.

During the annual budget session of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the House of Representatives adopted an amendment releasing an additional €200,000 (\$220,000) for combating antisemitism, through programs such as lectures by Holocaust survivors and their descendants. Also included was a grant to the Na de Oorlog ("After the War") Foundation, which trains guest speakers who share their war stories with primary and secondary school students.

In cooperation with the National Coordinator Against Antisemitism (NCAB), the city of Amsterdam set up a website and call center for schools to respond to inquiries concerning Holocaust education and antisemitism. Recent research by the Anne Frank House showed that 14 percent of secondary school teachers experienced Holocaust denial or trivialization in the past year, and 42 percent witnessed antisemitic incidents in the classroom.

Government and security officials reported they met throughout the year with the Jewish community to discuss matters of concern, such as security, antisemitism, and animal slaughter. The CJO, Netherlands-Jewish Congregation, Netherlands Alliance of Progressive Judaism, Christian NGO Only Jesus Christian Ministries (OJCM), and NGO Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI) took part in these meetings.

In a well-attended annual national Holocaust remembrance event on January 29, Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema said that, 78 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, antisemitism was still very present in society and that she would visit Auschwitz with a group of young people from

Amsterdam. Jacques Grishaver, chair of the Dutch Auschwitz Committee, which organized the commemoration, said that he was increasingly worried about a resurgence of antisemitism. Other participants included Prime Minister Rutte, President of the Senate Jan Anthonie Bruijn, President of the House of Representatives Vera Bergkamp, and the U.S. Ambassador.

In May, the Amsterdam Court of Appeal upheld a ruling that MP Thierry Baudet of the Forum for Democracy (FvD) party remained prohibited from making comparisons between the Holocaust and COVID policy. The case was brought by the NGO Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI), Central Jewish Consultation (CJO), and four Holocaust survivors.

In July, the government instituted a change to criminal law prohibiting Holocaust denial, and denial or trivialization of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. According to a government press release, the change implemented EU obligations to criminalize explicitly certain forms of publicly condoning, denying, or substantially trivializing genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, which became punishable by a maximum prison sentence of one year. No individuals were charged or prosecuted under this statute during the year.

In July, the government established an advisory council to the national coordinator for combating antisemitism (NCAB). The establishment of the advisory council followed the establishment in 2022 of the NCAB as a permanent government office headed by national coordinator on countering antisemitism, Eddo Verdoner. The council is committed to providing increased resources for countering antisemitism. The national coordinator reports directly to the Minister of Justice and Security and worked to strengthen cooperation between government and civil society stakeholders in combating antisemitism. The national budget ultimately provided an annual budget of €500,000 (\$551,000).

In September, National Coordinator on Racism and Discrimination Rabin Baldewsingh organized the country's first National Congress against Discrimination and Racism, which was attended by approximately 500 persons. These included representatives of various ministries, the national police, and NGOs. Topics included various forms of discrimination, including anti-Muslim discrimination. Speakers included the EU Coordinator Against Racism Michaela Moua and the EU Coordinator against Anti-Muslim Hatred Marion Lalissee.

In October, the Public Prosecution Office recommended a six-month jail sentence and a five-year ban from Amsterdam for a Canadian Polish dual national arrested in connection with an antisemitic laser-light projection onto the Anne Frank House in February. He had projected the statement: "Anne Frank invented the ballpoint pen." The phrase refers to a conspiracy

theory used by Holocaust deniers to question the authenticity of Anne Frank's diary based on the presence of ballpoint ink annotations (made by a researcher). The court ultimately imposed a two-month sentence (effectively time-served) and no ban.

On October 10, Prime Minister Rutte met with representatives of various Jewish organizations following the Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel the weekend before; other ministry officials conducted inter-faith dialogues in the weeks following the attacks. Prime Minister Rutte, Deputy Prime Minister Sigrid Kaag, Minister of Justice Dilan Yesilgoz-Zegerius, and other government officials spoke out forcefully against antisemitism in October and November. One representative said the government's strong condemnation of the attacks and rising antisemitism was much appreciated. Mayor of Amsterdam Femke Halsema also met with several representatives of Jewish organizations in the aftermath of the attacks.

October 12, Prime Minister Rutte, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hanke Bruins Slot, and State Secretary for Health, Welfare, and Sport Maarten Van Ooijen attended the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the 1943 uprising at the Sobibor Nazi extermination camp in Poland. The Prime Minister gave remarks calling on people to stand up against antisemitism and other forms of exclusion.

On November 9, Deputy Prime Minister Sigrid Kaag gave remarks at the annual National Kristallnacht Memorial. Dutch press and social media reported some level of opposition to the invitation by the CJO for Kaag to speak due to some previously stated support for Palestinian causes and her marriage to a former Palestinian Authority Deputy Minister and Palestinian Authority representative in Switzerland who served under the late Palestinian Liberation Organization chairman Yasser Arafat. Despite this opposition, Kaag's speech condemning antisemitism and explaining Dutch policy post-October 7 was positively received by the audience and received favorable coverage in Dutch press.

The Netherlands is a member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA); the government continued to state it accepted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism but that it was not legally bound by it. The government said it shared indicators from this definition with police and the Public Prosecutor's Office so they could take the indicators into account when dealing with incidents of antisemitism. The government said it used the IHRA definition as a practical tool for registration and detection of criminal offenses that could have a discriminatory element.

The Anne Frank Foundation continued to organize government-sponsored and government-funded projects, such as the "Fair Play" project, which promoted discussion about countering discrimination, including religious discrimination, among soccer fans, particularly youth and young adults.

The foundation also provided materials for teaching about antisemitism in schools and a virtual library to showcase stories of youth who had experienced discrimination, including antisemitism.

Throughout the year, Party for Freedom leader Geert Wilders continued to call for the "de-Islamization of the Netherlands," advocating a series of measures including closing all mosques and Islamic schools, banning the Quran, and barring all asylum seekers and immigrants from Muslim-majority countries. He used social media to disseminate his anti-Islam message almost daily. One such message on October 31 in advance of the November 22 elections, in which the Party for Freedom won a plurality of seats in parliament, stated: "My 4 points for the Netherlands: 1. Stop Asylum: close borders. 2. Criminals, jihadists, terrorists and all their fans: leave the country. 3. Netherlands is no Islamic country: less Islam. 4. Own people first: Dutch people first."

The FvD stated that freedom of expression should prevail over freedom of religion. According to its election platform, the party opposed foreign funding of religious schools and institutions as well as the wearing of niqabs and other full face-coverings in public.

Section III.

Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were reports of violence, threats, discrimination, verbal abuse, and vandalism against Jews and Muslims. Agencies collecting data on such incidents stated many occurrences went unreported or were reported to NGOs but not to police and vice versa. The data collected by agencies often differed because of varied reporting, collection, and analysis methods. Because religion and ethnicity are often closely linked, it was difficult to categorize many incidents as being solely based on religious identity.

The police recorded numerous incidents in public spaces in which insults or threats were made towards Muslims or people believed to be Muslim. These included both women wearing headscarves as well as men in traditional clothing or with a beard. In addition, there were reports that groups described as far-right placed anti-Muslim stickers in public spaces, and at least 20 reports of vandalism or of threats at mosques.

The Public Prosecution Service registered a 39 percent increase of antisemitic incidents in 2022, the most recent data available, compared with a 31 percent increase in 2021.

In 2023, municipal antidiscrimination boards around the country registered 299 religious discrimination incidents not related to antisemitism, of which the majority (230 or 77 percent) targeted Muslims, compared with 165 such incidents in 2021. Examples of anti-Muslim

incidents included letters or cards delivered to mosques with discriminatory texts and images regarding Christian holidays.

MiND Nederland registered 20 inflammatory statements made against Muslims on the internet in 2022, compared with 18 in 2021.

The police recorded 549 antisemitic incidents in 2022, compared with 627 in 2021, a 10 percent decrease. Almost three quarters of these incidents involved antisemitic slurs. The number of violent incidents that also included slurs increased from 26 in 2020 to 40 in 2021. The National Expertise Center for Discrimination, a part of the Public Prosecutor's Office, reported that it processed 144 new cases of discrimination in 2022, compared with 157 in 2021. Of the 2022 cases, 39 percent were related to antisemitism, compared with 31 percent in 2020, while 7 percent involved anti-Muslim sentiment.

In the month after the October 7 Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel and the subsequent Israeli government response, CIDI reported an 818 percent increase in antisemitic incidents as compared to the monthly average for the three years prior; CIDI had previously reported an overall decrease in antisemitic incidents from 183 to 155 from 2021 to 2022, but an increase in incidences of antisemitic graffiti or vandalism.

In the weeks after October 7, numerous Jewish schools closed due to security threats and the Dutch press reported many Jewish families removed their children from secular schools and enrolled them in Jewish schools, citing increased threats, bullying, and hate speech as their reasons.

Additionally, Jewish organizations were increasingly targeted with antisemitic messages. CIDI also found that Jewish individuals in public were often subjected to name-calling or intimidation. Common incidents included vandalism, physical abuse, verbal abuse, bullying at school, and hate emails.

In June, CIDI reported 155 antisemitic incidents in 2022, compared with 188 incidents in 2021. CIDI reported an increased number of sports-related incidents of antisemitism, particularly regarding soccer. CIDI also noted a rise in the number of reported incidents involving antisemitic graffiti and vandalism targeting Jewish sites. Examples included the desecration of a memorial plaque honoring Jewish children deported during the Holocaust and the defacement of a synagogue with swastikas.

Although government authorities, the Dutch national soccer team, other soccer teams, and the Anne Frank Foundation had multiple agreements in place to discourage antisemitic behavior at soccer matches, the teams reportedly did not always carry out the terms of the agreements. For example, one agreement stipulated that if antisemitic chanting occurred during a match, teams would ask fans to stop immediately and if they did

not, the teams would suspend the match. In practice, however, matches were rarely paused.

According to CIDI, the proliferation of antisemitism online was accelerating at an alarming rate. CIDI stated that platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter), TikTok, and Telegram witnessed the rapid dissemination, liking, and sharing of antisemitic posts and comments, and that antisemitic posts persisted even after being brought to the attention of moderators and web hosts. According to an earlier 2022 CIDI report, of 1.8 million Dutch language posts using search terms such as "Judaism" and "Israel," 200,000 contained antisemitic expressions.

The National Coordinator Against Discrimination and Racism spoke frequently on the prevalence of anti-Muslim sentiment and discrimination towards individuals from Muslim-majority countries.

In August, the leader of the Dutch branch of pan-European far-right anti-Muslim group PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West) desecrated a Quran in front of the Turkish Embassy in The Hague. The Hague Mayor Jan van Zanen condemned the desecration but stated he was unable to prevent the desecration or order the individual arrested due to Dutch protections on freedom of speech and assembly.

The NIHR reported receiving 95 complaints of religious discrimination in 2022 (the most recent data available), compared with 94 in 2021. These were mostly in the workplace, and the NIHR issued opinions in 29 cases.

CIDI reported it continued to work with educators who conducted online classroom programs to counter prejudice against Jews and other minorities, working with a network of teachers to improve education on the Holocaust with Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust remembrance center. CIDI also organized online symposia and lectures. In the months after the October 7 attacks, CIDI organized trainings at schools and community centers, conducted media outreach and education for media organizations, and provided briefings for lawmakers on the situation facing Jews in the Netherlands and across Europe.

NGOs such as the OJCM and Belief in Living Together continued to promote interfaith dialogue among Jews, Muslims, and Christians. The Yalla! Foundation promoted mutual solidarity to counter anti-Muslim sentiment and antisemitism through meetings, guest lectures, and social gatherings. After the October 7 terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel, several faith organizations and faith leaders engaged in inter-faith dialogue and solidarity programming, including a candlelight vigil outside the Peace Palace in The Hague.

Section IV.

U.S. Government Policy and Engagement

In meetings with the Ministries of Justice and Security; Social Affairs and Employment; and Education, Culture, and Science, as well as with local governments and parliamentarians, officials from the U.S. embassy and the consulate general in Amsterdam emphasized the importance of religious freedom and tolerance and discussed measures to safeguard religious freedom and religious sites. In the months following the October 7 Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel, the embassy engaged in outreach and public messaging on inter-faith dialogue, Holocaust remembrance, and countering antisemitism and anti-Muslim sentiment.

The embassy continued to advocate the Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies' research studying the role of the Dutch Railways during World War II, in particular its responsibility in the deportation of victims of the Holocaust.

The embassy and consulate general highlighted the need for religious tolerance and interfaith understanding and discussed issues of religious integration and countering violent extremism related to religion in outreach to youth, academics, and religious leaders from various backgrounds, including Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Embassy staff also engaged community organizations such as the CJO, CIDI, Dutch Muslim Council, Organization of Jewish Communities in the Netherlands, Jewish Cultural Quarter, and the Platform of Islamic Organizations in the Rijnmond, the umbrella organization of Rotterdam mosques. Embassy staff conducted regular outreach to Muslim communities and civil society organizations. Among her key issues and activities, the Ambassador prioritized outreach to (predominantly Muslim) migrant communities, countering antisemitism, and Holocaust Remembrance.

In March, the Ambassador attended the installation of a Stolperstein ("Stumbling Stone") commemorating a Holocaust victim in Amsterdam and participated in a documentary interview as part of the installation, during which she spoke on the importance of Holocaust remembrance.

In April, the Ambassador participated in and gave remarks at an annual commemoration for victims and survivors of the Ravensbruck concentration camp at the site of the Ravensbruck memorial in Amsterdam. Following the event, the Ambassador hosted a group of 35 survivors and relatives for a lunch, where Holocaust remembrance, antisemitism, and interfaith issues were discussed. The Ambassador's participation was noted in social media.

In June, embassy staff visited an interactive museum on Islam founded by a former far-right anti-Muslim politician who converted to Islam and who now serves as a Muslim community leader affiliated with a respected Muslim community umbrella organization in Rotterdam.

On June 30, the Ambassador hosted a roundtable of Jewish community and thought leaders, and discussed issues affecting the Jewish community, such as antisemitism, declining rates of religious observance among Jewish youth, interfaith dialogue, and the high incidence of anti-Muslim and anti-migrant sentiment in Dutch society.

Following the Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel on October 7, the Ambassador and the embassy conducted extensive private engagement with Jewish and Muslim community leaders, and both posted original content and amplified Department messaging on the conflict via social media.

On October 28, the Ambassador attended and gave remarks at the annual (Hindu) Diwali Festival in Amstelveen and posted on social media about her participation.

On November 2, the Ambassador participated in the installation of a Stolperstein in Wassenaar, near the embassy, and posted online regarding the importance of Holocaust remembrance.

On November 6, the Ambassador also participated alongside Prime Minister Rutte and faith leaders in the opening of "Respect Week," an annual week focused on cultivating interfaith and cross-cultural tolerance, respect, and civility; the Ambassador led a youth dialogue with teens of different faith, ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds, during which she talked about her experiences growing up in Ohio as member of a religious and ethnic minority. The Ambassador's participation was noted in the Dutch press and amplified by social media.

On November 8, the Ambassador engaged with the imam and a group of prominent Muslim leaders at a mosque in Utrecht, where they discussed anti-Muslim discrimination and interfaith tensions in the context of the Israel-Hamas conflict.

On November 9, the Ambassador gave keynote remarks at the annual Kristallnacht Commemoration; in her speech, she discussed her own family's experience of expulsion from Kashmir as Hindus and quoted the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism's warning about the "interconnectedness of hate" in antisemitic and anti-Muslim sentiment. Deputy Prime Minister Kaag, the Chairman of the CJO, and the Israeli Ambassador also spoke during the commemoration; this marked the first time the U.S. Ambassador had been invited to give remarks at the Kristallnacht Commemoration. The Ambassador's attendance and speech was covered in Dutch press and amplified by social media.

ecoi.net description:

Annual report on religious freedom (covering 2023)

Country:
Netherlands

Source:
USDOS – US Department of State (Author)

Published:
30 June 2024

Original link:
<https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/netherlands/>

Document type:
Periodical Report

Language:
English

Available on ecoi.net since:
3 July 2024

Document ID:
2111929

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Asylum Research and	F +43 1 589 00 589	Data Protection Notice
Documentation	info@ecoi.net	
(ACCORD)		

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