

Summary: Racism and Extreme Right Monitor (Fifth Report)

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Introduction

In the fifth report on *Monitoring Racism and the Extreme Right*, the focus is on the years 2001 and – wherever possible – 2002. The attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 and the murder of Pim Fortuyn on 6 May 2002 have greatly influenced the total picture from this period. Each year, the monitoring project takes stock of the most important expressions and incidents of racial discrimination, racism and extreme right-wing activity on the basis of a ‘fixed yardstick’, and it also reports the development of strategies for combating these problems. The annual reports are produced jointly by the Leiden University and the Anne Frank Stichting. This fifth Monitoring Report was made possible with support from the Ministry of Justice.

Racial violence and violence incited by the extreme right

Immediately after the terrorist attacks in the United States (11 September 2001), numerous hostile incidents took place in the Netherlands that were aimed at Muslims and property belonging to Muslims. The incidents varied from harassment and verbal abuse to arson and vandalism. This brief but intense series of violent incidents had died down for the most part by early December 2001, but they were still a critical feature of the year 2001. Nevertheless, there was a decrease in the number of registered incidents of racial violence and violence incited by the extreme right, taken over the whole year (from 345 in 1999 and 406 in 2000 to 317 in 2001).

Table 1: Racial violence and violence incited by the extreme right, by category, in 1999, 2000 and 2001

Category	1999	2000	2001
Racist graffiti	144	157	68
Threats	62	86	88
Bomb scares	18	2	10
Confrontations	18	20	15
Vandalism	50	37	52
Arson	11	20	37
Bombings	-	-	-
Assault	41	83	46
Manslaughter	1	1	1
Total	345	406	317

Sources: police/General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), authors' own archives/research, Kafka, Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI), Dutch Monitoring Center (DUMC).

In previous years there was evidence of increasing violence towards asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands (see Monitor 4). This development did not continue into 2001; asylum seekers and refugees were less often and less pointedly the targets of racial violence. The same is true for anti-Semitic violence. There were a number of salient incidents – anti-Semitic graffiti in a Jewish cemetery in Oosterhout and at Westerbork, the former Nazi transit camp – but despite these, 2001 was not characterized by a striking increase as in former years.

There are still no statistical data available for racial violence and violence incited by the extreme right for the year 2002, although a few notable developments and impressions can be reported. In the first five months of the year there was a visible increase in anti-Semitic incidents and expressions of anti-Semitism (almost exclusively having to do with harassment, verbal abuse and verbal threats). These incidents were for the most part connected with the violent conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The murder of Pim Fortuyn (6 May 2002) triggered a wave of threats, some of them with a 'vague' extreme-right basis. A number of prominent Dutch people were sent bullets in the mail or other forms of anonymous threats. There is talk of a culture of threats having begun in 2002. The internet in particular functions as an indisputable vehicle and forum in this culture of threats.

The extreme right in the Netherlands, 2001-2002

The parliamentary election of 15 May 2002 was dominated by the List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) and its murdered party leader. For the first time in twenty-five years, no racist, extreme right parties participated in the election. Since 1998 there has been an electoral decline among extreme right-wing groups, and the organized extreme right has expressed itself in ways that are varied and inconsistent. A few political parties (the Centre Democrats and the Netherlands Bloc) have disappeared entirely from view; a few other parties (especially the New National Party, NNP) were more successful and even booked slight electoral recoveries at the local level (two seats in a Rotterdam borough council during the municipal elections of March 2002). But for the time being the NNP can in no way be regarded as a successor to the Centre Democrats (CD), which was so successful during the nineties.

Neo-Nazi groups such as the Netherlands People's Party (the Nederlandse Volks Unie, or the NVU) and Stormfront Netherlands were beset by internal squabbles in 2001 and 2002 and have become unstable. In the NVU these problems are connected with following the relatively moderate course, the 'politics of consensus', which has been the cause of much controversy within the party and has put party unity under enormous pressure. Stormfront, which broke off from the NVU and is now its rival, shot up like a mushroom in 2001 and promoted itself as a genuine platform of violence and anti-Semitism. But in 2002 it fell into decline after confrontations with the police and political opponents and due to a lack of coordination and leadership.

Expressions of right-wing extremism on the internet are legion and diverse. One phenomenon that has increased in significance involves activists who make anonymous and very radical statements on extreme right-wing web forums. In the period under consideration there were two demonstrations of public right-wing extremism that were prohibited by the mayor but were finally permitted by order of the administrative courts. This is likely to greatly increase the chance of extreme right-wing groups organizing public demonstrations in the near future. Numerically speaking, the total membership of extreme right-wing groups has remained nearly stable (approximately 650 persons), but there is evidence of change when we look at their composition. The number of activists in the neo-Nazi world shrank, while the number of supporters of the NNP in particular increased.

Inherent right-wing extremism and racism in the LPF/Liveable political movement

In many respects, Pim Fortuyn and his followers form an exceptional phenomenon in our modern political history. Never before has a novice political movement come to occupy such a large number of seats (26 seats in parliament in the parliamentary elections of May 2001) in such a short time – just a few months. And never before has there been such a rapid ascendance of a new politician, who might even have become prime minister had he not been killed on 6 May 2002. The LPF and the earlier political grouping of which Pim Fortuyn was leader, Liveable Netherlands, are not a subject of study as such in this Monitor. But because they are so often mentioned in connection with 'right-wing extremism', 'racism' and 'fascism', they deserve some attention here. The question concerning inherent right-wing extremism and/or racism in the LPF/Liveable movement can be broken down into sub-questions: (a) the ideology, (b) the social

genealogy, and (c) the magnet function in terms of positive identification and personnel overlapping.

First the ideology. Whether a number of Fortuyn's ideas can be characterized as racist depends on how the word is defined and is therefore to a certain extent arbitrary. Whether Fortuyn transgressed criminal boundaries is quite probable, although it has not been established; after his death, reports that were made against him were nullified, so no legal decisions have been made. Undoubtedly there were persons of outspoken racist views among Fortuyn's followers. The ideology of the LPF/Liveable movement was/is (at least in 2001/2002) appealing for persons with far more radical views.

Social genealogy: no persons from extreme right-wing circles were involved in the emergence of either Liveable Netherlands or the LPF – as far as we can determine. So there is no evidence of social genealogy, at least not in the formative phase of the various groups. Yet when the LPF was established in particular, attempts were made from within extreme right-wing circles to actively mingle and connect with the new party. The failure of these attempts is due to the work of the founders themselves, who prevented extreme right-wing activists from becoming involved.

Magnet function. Pim Fortuyn's rallying cry – 'at your service' – has acquired a positive identity within extreme right-wing circles and has gained a solid foothold. This positive identification was also observed outside the Netherlands, as in the case of the Flemish Bloc. One remarkable development was the positive support for the LPF from extreme right-wing circles in order to obtain a sufficient number of declarations of support for participation in the election. Yet in terms of numbers, the personnel overlapping between extreme right-wing groups on the one hand and the LPF/Liveable movement on the other is quite modest (especially on account of the defensive attitude within the leadership of the LPF and Liveable movements).

Racial discrimination: complaint and settlement

There are forty Anti-Discrimination Agencies (Anti Discriminatie Bureaus, or ADBs) in the Netherlands, which form an important chain in the fight against discrimination. The total number of complaints registered with the ADBs in 2001 was 11% higher than in the previous year. Most of the complaints had to do with discrimination on the basis of race.

The number of complaints of anti-Semitism continued at an unabated high in 2001. This applies to anti-Semitism on the internet as well as beyond it. According to information from the Israeli Centre for Information and Documentation, the increase in the number of anti-Semitic threats was especially steep. This accords with the general trend indicating a rise in verbal discrimination.

Reports of racist material on the *internet* rose once again in 2001, but less steeply than during the previous report period. In the fight against racism and discrimination on the internet, the Hotline for Discrimination on the Internet (the Meldpunt Discriminatie Internet, or MDI) is of great importance. In the Netherlands the MDI was very successful during the monitoring study's period under review: almost 90% of the observed discriminatory material was removed at its request. Nevertheless, in an increasingly larger number of cases the MDI is unable to take action because the provider is located in the United States and refuses to cooperate. In this regard, it is disappointing that the US was not prepared to accept the inclusion of a passage on discrimination in the Cybercrime Treaty of November 2001. The other contracting countries have now placed this passage in a separate protocol.

The number of judgements pronounced by the Equal Treatment Commission (the Commissie Gelijke Behandeling, or CGB) rose to 150 in 2001 (the 'old' level of 1998). The number of petitions submitted to the CGB in 2001 was twice that of the previous year (increasing from 232 in 2000 to 464 in 2001). Most CGB cases had to do with discrimination on the grounds of sex, race and nationality, and length of employment. Unlike previous years, a majority of the cases submitted in 2001 having to do with race and nationality were introduced by women.

Investigation and prosecution

At the Public Prosecutions Department (Openbaar Ministerie, or the OM), the influx of charges of discrimination as well as the settlement of those charges decreased in volume with respect to the year 2000. This decrease does not correspond with the rise in the number of complaints submitted to the ADBs mentioned earlier. It seems probable that there is but a slight connection between the matters that are first lodged with the ADBs and those that are first reported to the police. Remarkably, there is a total absence of reports made to the OM of discrimination in the carrying out of work-related duties, professions or business.

Table 2: Number of new charges of discrimination (influx) reported to the OM per article of the law, 1998-2001

Article of the law	1998	1999	2000	2001
137c	177	145	178	167
137d	23	17	15	11
137e	8	19	6	19
137f	0	1	9	1
137g	6	6	6	0
429quater	2	5	0	0
Total	216	193	214	198

Source: National Discrimination Expertise Centre

Equally remarkable is the fact that the percentage of dismissed cases in the Public Prosecutions Department has been dropping during the last two years. Even so, it is still twice as high (22%) as the national average for all offences (11%). In cases of discrimination, the success rate of the public prosecutors in court is very high: 94% of all cases result in a conviction. One of the reasons for this high percentage is that the police fail to adequately comply with the *Instructions concerning discrimination*. Because of this, only the most obvious cases are brought to the Public Prosecutions Department; the other (less evident) cases are not dealt with.

With regard to the location of the offence, most occur in public areas, and the bans on discrimination are increasing annually in these areas. As far as the victim is concerned, discrimination has been rising since 1999 on account of ethnic characteristics. An increasing number of suspects were persons with extreme right-wing backgrounds in 2001. In September 2002, the police launched the National Department of Discrimination (Landelijk Bureau Discriminatie, or the LBD). This department is comparable to the National Discrimination Expertise Centre (Landelijk Expertise Centrum Discriminatie, or the LECD) of the Public Prosecutions Department. Hopefully this new department will be as successful as the LECD.

Social domains

Although the statistical basis is weak, it can generally be said that the effects of '11 September 2001' are evident in virtually all the sectors of society – not only in labour and education, but also in the offering of goods and services.

The volume of complaints of unequal treatment in the *labour* sector that are handled by the Equal Treatment Commission increased once again. Conversely, the number reported to the ADBs dropped, and so did the number reported to the Public Prosecutions Department. The most important points of interest in the labour sector are recruitment and selection, treatment, remuneration and termination. In cases of discrimination in the labour market there are two important thorny areas: inadequate proof and fear of victimization (being put at a disadvantage because you lodged a complaint). This means that in most cases of ill treatment, the plaintiff is

unable to substantiate his complaint. In terminations for 2001 this percentage was even lower than 20%. Another reoccurring phenomenon is the resistance that the wearing of headscarves can incite among employers. This problem occurs mostly among Muslim women trying to get an internship.

Examination of the complaints with regard to *residence* shows that the housing of asylum seekers often evokes enormous resistance within the population and sometimes results in taking steps that are in violation of the equal treatment legislation. It was also noted that in granting rental houses to people searching for a place to live, ethnic minorities are at a practical disadvantage because length of residence is one of the allocation criteria.

Education. The so-called concentration districts in many large and medium-sized cities (districts where more than the average number of ethnic minorities reside) in turn tend to stimulate a separation into 'black' and 'white' schools. At this moment, the question whether the distribution of students can reduce segregation in education is being considered. We believe that in the future when a school decides not to admit a particular applicant, it would be wise to issue a clearly substantiated letter of refusal. This way misunderstandings can be avoided and abuses can be identified. In 2001, the discussion as to whether Islamic schools are hotbeds of hatred became more heated. For the time being, research undertaken by the General Intelligence and Security Service (Algemene Inlichtingen en Veiligheids Dienst, or the AIVD) has shown that this fear is not justified, but this does not alter the fact that Islamic education should be closely watched in this regard.

One final social area that was scrutinized was *police and the judicial authorities*. According to the *Instructions concerning discrimination*, the police are obliged to take down a written deposition of every reported incident and to bring it to the attention of the Public Prosecution Department. This rule is not being sufficiently carried out. It is time that the Minister of Justice look into why enforcement of the *Instructions concerning discrimination* is so problematic. One positive development is that the number of complaints of racist treatment by the police corps is very low.

Deteriorating climate

The previous Monitoring Report indicated a steady tendency towards slow but definite deterioration across the board. This report emphasizes that the picture is a) less unequivocal and b) relatively strongly influenced by the events of 11 September and its aftermath, which to a greater or lesser degree have left their mark on almost every area covered by the Monitor. Despite the shocking events that took place during the period under review ('11 September' and the murder of Pim Fortuyn on 6 May 2002), there is evidence of a reduction in the number of violent racist incidents (at least as far as can be deduced from the available figures and statistics). But these shocking events have led to what for many has become a deteriorating climate in inter-ethnic relations. The picture of right-wing extremism did not undergo any fundamental change during the last period.

In the *investigation and prosecution of discriminatory offences* a number of stubborn problems have occurred, such as the exceedingly low level of activity by the Public Prosecutions Department in internet cases, the relatively large number of case dismissals and a number of thorny areas having to do with the police (for which attention has been alerted in earlier reports). In the available figures for the various *social domains* mentioned earlier, '11 September' and '6 May' are not highly visible. This is probably due to the fact that the figures are mainly related to 2001, and no figures were yet available for the year 2002.