

Urgent call to protect Palestinian asylum seekers now!

To: Deputy Minister Eric van der Burg

The ongoing, horrific bombardments on Gaza and attacks on innocent civilians on the West Bank painfully show that the conditions in Palestine are too dangerous for citizens to return to. Therefore, we express grave concerns about the decision of the our Deputy Minister to refrain from assessing any asylum applications from individuals from the Palestinian territories for the next six months.

We find it unacceptable that Palestinian asylum seekers in the Netherlands will be kept in uncertainty through this decision, especially when it is now more evident than ever that their asylum requests should be granted. Additionally, we fear that the formation of a new government leaning towards the extreme right poses a significant risk to the further development of asylum policies concerning Palestinians.

Given the continuous dire conditions in the Palestinian territories, it is essential that the Dutch government immediately provides protection to people from Palestine applying for asylum here. With this petition, we demand that the Netherlands takes responsibility and offers Palestinians the safety they are entitled to!

Sign our petition and share it with as many people as possible!

Why is this important?

On December 19th 2023, Deputy Minister Eric van der Burg decided to impose a “besluit- en vertrekmoratorium” for Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank applying for asylum in the Netherlands.* This essentially means that the Dutch government won't make formal decisions regarding individual asylum applications from Palestinians for the next six months, and that there will be no forced returns to the Palestinian territories. The Dutch government typically adopts such policies when the situation in a specific country is deemed “too uncertain” to assess asylum applications.

This decision not only extends the period of uncertainty for the individuals involved, it once again highlights the Dutch state's failure to fully recognize the severity of the situation in Palestine.

Considering the ongoing dreadful conditions in Gaza and the West Bank, we argue that the Dutch government is obliged to provide immediate international protection to Palestinians from those territories. A moratorium is not intended for situations such as in Palestine, where the devastation is clearly permanent and thus requires direct action. Furthermore, the legal possibility of extending a moratorium could prolong the uncertainty even more than the initial six months.

In light of this, we urge the Dutch government to apply Article 15c of the EU Qualification Directive. This provision prescribes that asylum should be granted to all asylum seekers from a country or area where there is a serious and individual threat to their life due to the general, indiscriminate form of violence in the context of an international or domestic armed conflict. Examples of countries for which the Dutch government has recognized this in the past include Syria and Yemen.

We call on the Dutch government to acknowledge the severity and structural nature of violence in Palestine and to ensure a dignified level of protection for all asylum seekers from Palestinian territories. Join us and sign the petition!

[*https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2023/12/19/tk-besluit-en-vertrekmoratorium-palestijnse-gebieden](https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2023/12/19/tk-besluit-en-vertrekmoratorium-palestijnse-gebieden)