

PRESS RELEASE

The Dutch State compensates nine surviving relatives of the bloodbath in Rawagede and offers its apologies

Amsterdam, 5 December 2011 - The Dutch State has reached a settlement with nine surviving relatives of the bloodbath that took place in the Indonesian village of Rawagede in 1947.

In September, the court in The Hague ruled that the Dutch State is liable for the damages that the surviving relatives suffered as a result of war crimes committed in the Javanese village. The State cannot invoke the statute of limitations. The matter concerns direct victims of the war crimes committed by Dutch soldiers.

Over the past few weeks, talks were held between the State and the lawyer representing the surviving relatives, Liesbeth Zegveld. The outcome of those talks was that the State will pay damages to the nine surviving relatives. Aside from that, the State will offer its apologies for the executions on 9 December 1947.

Liesbeth Zegveld: 'It is good that the surviving relatives can now close this case. While it happened 64 years ago, and required a firm court-judgment, the fact that the State is not appealing the verdict and is apologizing is very much appreciated by the surviving relatives.'

On 6 December, Liesbeth Zegveld will travel to Rawagede together with the foundation *Committee for Dutch Debts of Honor* (in Dutch: 'Comité Nederlandse Ereschulden', or K.U.K.B.)—an organization that has consistently represented the interests of the surviving relatives—in order to attend a memorial service for the bloodbath in Rawagede. Zegveld will also speak to the *Indonesian Human Rights Commission* (in Indonesian: 'Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia', or Komnas HAM).

Background – On 9 December 1947, Dutch troops attacked the village Rawagede on Java (Indonesia) and killed hundreds of male villagers. Prisoners and those who tried to escape were also executed. In a 1948-report, the investigative commission of the United Nations Security Council called these acts 'deliberate and ruthless'. The soldiers that were responsible for the bloodbath in Rawagede were never prosecuted. The Dutch State has never offered its apologies or compensation to the surviving relatives. The widows are the first Indonesian victims of the 1945-1949 battle who have subpoenaed the Dutch State for crimes committed in Indonesia.

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