

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Dutch State compensates ten widows of the summary executions on Sulawesi and offers apologies**

Amsterdam, 9 August 2013 - The Dutch State has reached an out-of-court settlement with ten widows of the summary executions conducted in 1947 by Dutch soldiers on the island of Celebes (present-day: Sulawesi), Indonesia.

During the past few months negotiations were held between the State and the lawyer of the surviving relatives, Liesbeth Zegveld. The outcome of these talks is that the State will pay a sum in compensation to the ten widows. Additionally, the State will offer its apologies for the executions that took place in Suppa, Galung Lombok, Bulukumba and Paré-Paré in January and February 1947.

A similar settlement was previously reached with one survivor and a number of surviving relatives of men who had been executed in the Javanese village of Rawagedeh, where a mass-execution by Dutch soldiers also took place in December 1947.

Liesbeth Zegveld: “It is good that the surviving relatives can close the book on this case. It is now also time for the State to compensate all the other victims of its execution-policy and offer its apologies to all the surviving relatives.”

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, is happy with the settlement that the Netherlands has reached with the widows. Chairman Jeffry Pondaag hopes that a broad apology will be made.

Legal proceedings against the State will be continued on behalf of five plaintiffs whose fathers were summarily executed in that time.

**Background** - During the decolonization-war between the Netherlands and Indonesia, the Dutch special-command troops (in Dutch: *Depot Speciale Troepen*) were given the order to ‘cleanse’ South-Celebes (present day South- and West Sulawesi) of insurgents at the end of 1946. The operations were conducted under the command of captain R.P.P. Westerling and Second Lieutenant J.B. Vermeulen and lasted approximately three months. The rapid success of the operations was owed to tough military action, also known as the ‘Westerling-method’. This method consisted of summarily executing all Indonesians harboring anti-Dutch sentiments. Within three months, a total of more than 3,000 Indonesians were killed in South-Celebes.

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