

PERSBERICHT

Widows request that the Dutch State offers apologies on South-Sulawesi

Amsterdam, 2 September 2013 - The ten widows of the summary executions carried out by the Dutch army on South-Sulawesi, Indonesia, in 1947 have asked the Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister Timmermans to offer the apologies on South-Sulawesi. They are too old to travel to Jakarta.

Last Friday the Dutch government decided that it would apologize for all summary executions by Dutch soldiers that took place in the former Dutch East-Indies in the period 1946-1949, and would do so on 12 September 2013 in Jakarta. These apologies are part of a settlement that was reached between the Dutch State and the widows of South-Sulawesi. Conscientious implementation of the settlement agreement requires that the State allows the widows to be present when the apologies are offered.

Liesbeth Zegveld, lawyer for the widows, says:

“My clients are too old to travel. They are between 90 and 100 years of age. It would not be easy to understand that they have to travel to the ambassador, and the ambassador not to them. It is also lies in the nature of making an apology that you go to the person as opposed to making them come to you.”

Moreover, Zegveld –as well as the foundation *Committee for Dutch Debts of Honor* (in Dutch: ‘Comité Nederlandse Ereschulden’, or ‘K.U.K.B.’), an organization that represents the interests of the victims on South-Sulawesi– that the haste that is being made is not conducive to the proper conclusion of this case. Apparently, the apologies need to be offered before the Dutch prime minister Rutte travels to Indonesia in November this year on a trade mission; this case must be off the table by then. The question is why prime minister Rutte does not offer the apologies himself seeing as how he will be in Indonesia soon. Furthermore, 12 September is not a meaningful date for the victims of South-Sulawesi: they commemorate the victims on 11 December. Also, 12 days is a very short amount of time within which to bring this case to a close.

Today, Zegveld asked the State Attorney to let her know by 4 September 2013 at the latest whether or not the State is prepared to allow the ambassador to go to South-Sulawesi. If the State is not prepared to comply with this request, neither she nor the widows will be present at the ceremony on 12 September 2013 in Jakarta, says Zegveld.

Contact person: Prof. Liesbeth Zegveld, attorney at law – Böhler Advocaten, Keizersgracht 560-562, 1017 EM Amsterdam. Tel.: +31 (0)20-344 62 00, email: LZegveld@bohler.eu