

---PRESS RELEASE---

"International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague" opens its doors in The Hague on 31 May

On 31 May, outgoing Minister Verhagen of Foreign Affairs will officially open the new International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) – The Hague during a meeting in the Peace Palace. This new independent knowledge centre, which will be located in The Hague, is being established on the initiative of the House of Representatives (motion Çörüz April 2008) and with financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It takes shape through cooperation between three existing and leading parties in the field of law and security in The Hague. These are the T.M.C. Asser Institute, the Clingendael Institute and the Centre for Terrorism and Counterterrorism of the Campus The Hague/Leiden University.

Two major issues will determine the agenda of ICCT – The Hague. Firstly, the international legal aspect of the fight against terrorism and the possible impunity of perpetrators of terrorism are central. Issues concerning the international prosecution of terrorists and the legal instruments that are needed for this are addressed by ICCT – The Hague and, where necessary and possible, provided with answers. As a result, situations such as those at Guantanamo Bay will have to be prevented in the future.

In addition, ICCT – The Hague will examine the factors that contribute to a possible choice of people and groups for political violence. Answers to the question of why people use violence to get their point of view heard can form the basis for solutions. Only then can measures be taken to prevent groups or individuals from taking violent action.

Human rights and justice form the basis of the research and policy advice that ICCT – The Hague pursues. By linking the knowledge of experts in both subfields to the issues faced by policymakers, ICCT – The Hague can contribute to strengthening both research and policy. As a result, paths are found to new and inventive solutions that aim to strengthen human rights and security.

The field of activity of ICCT – The Hague is not limited to the Netherlands. The speeches at the opening on 31 May by the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator (Gilles de Kerchove) and the representative of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (Richard Barrett) discuss the role that the new Hague institution can play in the international arena. Michèle Coninx (Vice-President of Eurojust) will discuss the relationship between human rights and terrorism and the fight against them.

Finally, during the opening Michael Buback (the son of the German prosecutor Siegfried Buback, murdered by the RAF) will discuss counterterrorism and "justice" from the position of victims of terrorism.

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Note to editors (not intended for publication)

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