

## **AIVD warns of gap between Muslims and non-Muslims**

According to a conservative estimate by the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), in the Netherlands some dozens of young Muslims are being prepared for the jihad, the holy Islamic war. This recruitment is an expression of a violent radical-Islamic (Islamistic) movement that has crept into the Dutch society. This is what the AIVD says in its paper 'Recruitment for the jihad in the Netherlands, from incident to trend', which Minister Remkes recently presented to the Dutch Parliament. According to Mr Remkes, it is extremely undesirable that Muslims resident in the Netherlands get caught up in the web of radical and violent networks and thus become involved in hostilities or terrorist actions at home or abroad. He said that first and foremost the emergence of a gap between Muslims and non-Muslims in society should be prevented. This requires a wide-ranging approach, involving an early identification of recruitment activities, first of all within the Islamic community itself. Parents, imams and mosques have a responsibility to take action against recruitment attempts at the earliest possible stage, while the authorities should focus on investigation and prosecution and on enforcing the integration policy. Recruitment is a phenomenon that manifests itself not only in the Netherlands, however, but in all Western countries.

### **Recruitment process**

Most of the youths who are recruited in the Netherlands at the moment - but definitely not all - are young men of Moroccan origin who were born in the Netherlands or grew up there from early childhood. Practically all of them have Dutch nationality. These youths are often going through an identity crisis and find something to hold on to in a very radical perception of Islamic faith. They are recruited by immigrants who are either legally or illegally resident in the Netherlands. Practically all of the recruiters have a mujahedeen background. Most of them underwent religious-ideological and military training, mostly in Al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan, and some of them actually participated in the Islamistic war. They approach the young Muslims while visiting, for example, orthodox mosques. Islamic centres, coffee shops and especially prisons have also turned out to be suitable places for making contacts. Following a successful approach, the recruited youths are isolated from their environment and subjected to indoctrination. The recruitment process is completed by a testimony for posterity and a paramilitary training.

### **Jihad in the West?**

The AIVD points out that over the past few decades, the originally nationally oriented Islamic fight in pursuit of the establishment of Islamic states in the Middle East (e.g. Iran, Algeria) has more and more developed into an internationally oriented movement targeted against the West. Since the late 1960s, radical-Islamic networks have also increasingly tried to link up with the established Islamic communities in the West. The attacks in New York in 2001 were committed by originally non-radical Islamic immigrants who were recruited by members of these networks. A substantial number of members of the international network of Islamist fighters have by now settled and set up structured cells in western Europe. The fact that they succeed in recruiting new fighters for the jihad in western Europe means a further increase in the threat emanating from Islamistic terrorism to Western countries, including the Netherlands.