

NPK-info

Nederlands Palestina Komitee www.palestina-komitee.nl

Inhoud

N.B. De Kamercommissie voor Buitenlandse Zaken komt niet bijeen op dinsdag 19 maart.

Woensdag 20 maart heeft de commissie een gesprek met een delegatie van het Palestijnse Negotiation Affairs Department. Aanwezig zijn:

- * de heer Maen Araikat
- * mevrouw Diana Buttu en
- * mevrouw Enas Abu Laban

Van 14:30 uur tot ca. 15:30 uur in de Suze Groenewegzaal De publieke tribune heeft 60 plaatsen.

Vorbereid wordt het standpunt van Nederland op de VN-mensenrechtenconferentie te Geneve deze maand.

Bron: <http://www.parlement.nl/ver/vci/hfdframe/vci001.html> Check agenda's altijd nog op de vergaderdag zelf!

Vrijdag a.s. toont het TV-programma Zembla om 21.15 uur Nederlanders in het Israelische leger.

Wanneer komen hierover en over Nederlandse kolonisten Kamervragen zoals wat te doen tegen betrokkenheid van Nederlanders bij de Israelische bezettingspolitiek inclusief haar oorlogsmisdaden?

Kan de Kamercommissie worden meegegeven.

* inhoud bericht van BADIL hierna.

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* <http://www.lawsociety.org/Press/Preleases/2002/March/marw2.html>

* <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,667715,00.html>

Why do Britain and the EU do nothing about Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians?

Khader Shkirat, 15-3-2002

* <http://www.ahram.org.eg/weekly/2002/577/op2.html>

What Price Oslo? Edward Said Al-Ahram Weekly 14 - 20 March 2002

Hierna: Kamerlid Koenders pessimistisch terug uit Israël en de bezette gebieden.

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NPK/WL, 19-3-2002 ■

Kamerlid Koenders pessimistisch terug uit Israël

Gepubliceerd op zondag 17 maart 2002 20:23

RIJSWIJK (ANP) - Het PvdA-Tweede-Kamerlid Koenders denkt niet dat er onder de regering Sharon een doorbraak zal komen in de onderhandelingen tussen Israël en de Palestijnen. Hij keerde zondag terug van een reis van enkele dagen naar Israël en de Palestijnse gebieden. Koenders sprak samen met vertegenwoordigers van enkele andere socialistische partijen uit Europa ruim drie uur met de Palestijnse leider Arafat in Ramallah. Daarnaast voerde hij gesprekken met de Israëlische minister van Buitenlandse Zaken en van Defensie.

De PvdA'er zegt „pessimistisch” te zijn teruggekomen van zijn reis. Hij gelooft niet dat er onder Sharon een doorbraak zal komen. Israel is vooral tactisch bezig, maar ook Arafat lijkt geen haast te hebben. De geweld-dadige reacties van het Israëlische leger hebben tot felle kritiek van de internationale gemeenschap geleid.

Dat speelt de Palestijnse leider alleen maar in de kaart. Zijn positie is dan ook niet verzwakt, denkt Koenders.

Europa

Na zijn gesprekken is Koenders er wel van overtuigd dat Europa een veel grotere rol moet spelen in het conflict. Israël en de Palestijnen komen er met de bemiddeling van alleen de VS niet uit. Er is een derde partij nodig die actief betrokken wordt bij de bemiddelingspogingen, aldus de PvdA'er.

Minister Van Aartsen (Buitenlandse Zaken) spreekt maandag in Washington met zijn Amerikaanse collega Powell over de crisis in het Midden-Oosten.

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http://www.planet.nl/news/0,2031,80_467_456861,00.html ■

Prevent another massacre

End Ariël Sharon's impunity for ware crimes NOW

Laurie King-Irani, March 12, 2002

Imagine that it is September 2010. The site of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan is just a garbage dump now. Weather permitting, teenagers meet to play pick-up games of soccer or baseball in this space filled with the ashes of thousands. The photos of the innocents who perished unjustly in the shocking attacks nine years earlier have faded into oblivion. All of the makeshift altars and memorials to the dead are long gone, and no one remembers their names. Not a single monument to their senseless erasure from the world of the living has ever been erected.

Worse still, no one has been punished for these heinous crimes. Not one person has ever stood trial for the murders of thousands of innocent office workers and airplane passengers that bright September day nearly a decade ago. The whole event has, in fact, been pushed off the public stage and relegated to the private memories of the bereaved. They have gradually come to realize that their grief must remain unspoken. No one responds when they raise questions of justice, accountability, or the sacred duty to honor the dead. People get annoyed whenever they bring up the troubling events of September 11, 2001, so they have learned, after nine years, to suffer in silence and pretend that it was no big deal, after all.

Such a scenario is not only impossible to imagine, but offensive as well. Six months have passed since planes full of terrified civilians plowed into the twin towers, the Pentagon, and a field in western Pennsylvania. The US has launched a "global war on terror" with no end in sight, countless memorial services have been held, various monuments to the dead are on the drawing table, and the lives mercilessly and unjustly extinguished last September are being commemorated in songs by Neil Young, in special television features, as well as in the pages of the New York Times. No American would stand for the heartless, unjust, and inhumane scenario depicted above. Nor should they--or anyone.

That scenario, however absurd and obscene, is not a hypothetical one, but rather, the daily reality for survivors of one of the most shocking war crimes committed during the last half of the 20th century: the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacres in Beirut. Over 1000 unarmed individuals--women, men, children, and the aged--were brutally tortured, raped and slaughtered in September 1982 by Lebanese militiamen allied with and supplied by the Israeli Defense Forces, which, at the time of the massacre, were in complete control of Beirut and under

the command of Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. As Israel's top general at the time of the massacres, Sharon had command responsibility, according to the Geneva Conventions and international law, for anything that happened in Beirut. Israeli units controlled access to and from the camps while the massacre unfolded. The IDF allowed the Lebanese militia to enter the camps and then launched flares into the night skies to assist the killers in their gruesome tasks. The burden of the massacres rests ultimately on Sharon's shoulders, and indeed, a 1983 Israeli commission of inquiry (which was not legally binding and lacked judicial force) found that Sharon bore "personal responsibility" for the deaths of hundreds of innocent civilians.

The survivors of Sabra and Shatila watched in mute horror, powerless to stop marauding militiamen from exterminating, mutilating, and raping their children, parents, husbands, wives, and friends. The lucky ones know where their loved ones' bodies are buried; many more, however, still have no clue about the final resting place of their dead. And in the hours and days after the massacres, many Palestinian men and boys were rounded up and trucked away, never to be seen again, most notably from a sports stadium near the refugee camps where Israeli military and intelligence officers were present. A mass grave site at the edge of the refugee camp now does double duty as a garbage dump and an occasional soccer field. Nearly 20 years after the massacre, not a single permanent memorial has been erected to commemorate the dead, not a single person--Israeli or Lebanese--has stood trial for the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the camps of Sabra and Shatila in September 1982. Such impunity is not only morally reprehensible and psychologically unbearable, but also politically dangerous because of the precedent it sets and the hearts and minds it poisons.

For those who covered the Sabra and Shatila massacre as journalists, no less than for those who served as medical workers in the camps' hospitals that scorching September twenty years ago, this week's televised images of Israeli tanks surrounding refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza and the photographs of young men lined up, blindfolded and separated from their families as Israeli soldiers point guns at them, are chillingly familiar. Those who have witnessed massacres fear another may unfold at any minute. Those who survived the massacres are incredulous that it might happen again, but this time with the entire world witnessing the killings on prime time television. Those who have followed Ariel Sharon's biography closely-- from the cold-blooded attack on the village of Qibya in 1953 that he

orchestrated as leader of the notorious Unit 101, resulting in the deaths of nearly 70 innocent civilians, to his latest threats to wreak large scale destruction and collective punishment on Palestinians who have been trapped in their towns and villages under a long siege--urgently warn that Sharon must be stopped before mass graves are dug again in other refugee camps.

The disturbing events of the last week in the West Bank and Gaza Strip underline the pressing need to dismantle the settlements, end the occupation, and most importantly, to consolidate the rule of law by ensuring international oversight of the occupied territories. What the alarming increase in killings and the disturbing trends in IDF strategy also indicate is an urgent need to end Ariel Sharon's impunity for war crimes once and for all. And if the recent legal efforts of 23 survivors of the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre bear fruit, that may happen sooner than many imagine. A judicial forum for raising these issues and attaining justice did not exist in September 1982. It does now. On May 15, 2002 arguments will continue before a Belgian court concerning a complaint lodged by massacre survivors accusing Sharon and other Israelis and Lebanese with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and international law. In the 1990s, Belgium incorporated into its criminal law system the principle of Universal Jurisdiction for war crimes, which is embodied in the Geneva Conventions and international customary law. This has enabled the bereaved sons, daughters, parents, sisters, brothers, and widows of those killed in September 1982 to seek justice, not revenge; to aim for closure, not retaliation; and to honor their dead by taking their case before a court of law and thereby affirming an international order based on universal principles of justice, not a world blinded by the ancient and fruitless principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

Bringing Ariel Sharon and others to trial for the heinous crimes committed in Sabra and Shatila twenty Septembers ago is just and proper compensation for the victims, and a long overdue remedy for the survivors. They have inhabited a limbo of grief, fear, and bitterness for two decades, suffering not only the horrifying deaths of their loved ones, but the denial of any psychological, moral, or legal closure. But bringing Sharon to trial is equally imperative for those now living under the threat of new massacres in the West Bank and the Gaza

Strip as the IDF, again under Sharon's command, displays utter disregard for international law.

The innocents who perished in the camps of Sabra and Shatila in September 1982 are no less human, no less worthy, than the innocents incinerated in New York City, Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania in September 2001. After 20 years of waiting, it is time to lay the dead of Sabra and Shatila to rest, it is time to honor the murdered by holding the murderers accountable. No one would expect Americans to forget the dead of 9/11 and "just get over it and move on," nor should Americans accept that those directly responsible for the crimes of September 2001 might escape justice before a court of law. If the universal principles undergirding international law are to have any meaning and substance for the coming generations, we should not allow those who committed the crimes of September 1982 to enjoy impunity either.

Please support the global campaign against impunity for war crimes. If you are in the USA, demand that your congressperson and senators take a stand on this issue; write letters to the editor and ask why newspapers and the electronic media in the US have not addressed Ariel Sharon's long history of war crimes; raise these important issues of justice, morality, and human rights with your colleagues, friends, and neighbors. Join with all those throughout the world who are demanding that the trial in Belgium go forward until justice is done. Ariel Sharon and others must be held accountable for the grave crimes against humanity committed in Sabra and Shatila in 1982.

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BADIL Resource Center aims to provide a resource pool of alternative, critical and progressive information and analysis on the question of Palestinian refugees in or quest to achieve a just and durable solution for exiled

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