

Press Release

Ban on the Muslim Brotherhood: Security or Ideological Control?

The House of Representatives has just adopted a motion that seeks to ban the Muslim Brotherhood and “affiliated organizations” in The Netherlands. This is presented as an urgent security measure against an Islamic movement. But anyone who looks beyond the rhetoric and examines the facts, the context, and the French blueprint explicitly referenced, will see something else: a systematic attack on the Islamic and political awareness of Muslims.

The French approach, which is explicitly referred to and from which the motion itself adopts terminology, is telling in this regard. Under the pretext of combating “separatism,” France has developed a model in which not only actions, but above all the ideas of Muslims are targeted. Numerous mosques have been closed, organizations dissolved, and institutions placed under supervision—not because of proven criminal offenses, but due to alleged influence, beliefs, or vague terms such as “long-term infiltration.”

This approach is now being further normalized in other European countries, including the Netherlands. However, both members of parliament and the AIVD acknowledge that the Muslim Brotherhood in The Netherlands does not exist as a formal organization. According to them, there is no clear structure, no membership base, and no legal entity that can easily be banned. Moreover, the AIVD has repeatedly indicated that it does not pose a direct threat.

And yet, a ban is being discussed. This raises a fundamental question: what exactly is being banned here? If no concrete organization exists, only a label remains: a broad and elastic umbrella term that can be flexibly used against various forms of Islamic thought, activism, and self-organization. This mechanism is not new. Previously, “Salafism” was used in the same way. Today, we see the same pattern reappear, this time under the label “Muslim Brotherhood.”

In this light, it becomes clear that this is not truly about the Muslim Brotherhood as a concrete organization, but about something broader. The term “Muslim Brotherhood” functions as a label through which Islamic ideas and positions are framed and contested. What is designated under this label, in practice, affects all Muslims. Thus, it is not so much an organization that is being targeted, but an Islamic worldview that is visible and widely held within the Muslim community.

Moreover, the label is deliberately linked to Hamas, “terrorism,” and “security.” As a result, any criticism of the Zionist occupying state or support for Palestine is immediately pushed into a framework of extremism, infiltration, and antisemitism. Substantive discussion is thereby replaced with stigmatization.

In this way, an attempt is being made to establish a legal foundation to structurally restrict both Islamic identity and political positions, opinions, and activities, while simultaneously neutralizing critical voices that oppose the occupation and injustice of Western countries in the Islamic world.

However, this course of action will produce the opposite effect. It will increase awareness among Muslims and strengthen their motivation to speak out against injustice—both in The Netherlands and beyond.

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