



14 juni 2024

Foreword

We have taken important steps together in recent months following the apology. Today the eight ministers involved informed the House of Representatives about the establishment of the Slavery Past Memorial Committee (Herdenkingscomité Slavernijverleden) and its purpose. A chairperson has been nominated and she was also officially appointed by the cabinet today. You can read more about her in this newsletter.

The letter to parliament also contained an announcement that the subsidy schemes for the Netherlands and the Caribbean part of the Kingdom will be published on the 1st of July this year.

On Monday the 1st, the 22nd edition of the National Slavery Memorial Day ceremony is going to take place near the slavery monument in the Oosterpark in Amsterdam. This year, the 1st of July 2024 also marks the official end of the Memorial Year during which activities and events were organised throughout the country.

Establishment of the Slavery Past Memorial Committee

The country's slavery past is a past that belongs to all of us. It is important to join together in memorial in order to focus on this episode in our country's history and to keep the memory of our slavery past alive. In a previous letter to parliament dated the 19th of December 2022 we announced the establishment of a Slavery Past Memorial Committee, for which an amount of € 8 million is being made available every year.

[The tasks of the new established Slavery Past Memorial Committee are as follows:](#)

- Responsibility for organising the National Memorial ceremonies throughout the entire Kingdom on the 1st of July. This means, in the first instance, remembering the transatlantic slavery past, with attention also being paid to the importance of memorial, the inclusion of all communities (in any event the Afro-Suriname, Afro Caribbean, Marron and indigenous communities) and the link between the Kingdom and with Surinam, insofar as Surinam wishes the same.
- Responsibility for increasing social awareness of the country's slavery past and the consequences of that past for life in the Kingdom today.
- Encouraging research into our slavery past.
- Facilitating and supporting the (continued) development of other memorial ceremonies and celebrations which are important for remembering our slavery past within the Kingdom.
- Conducting consultations with Surinam about the country's participation in the Slavery Memorial Committee.

• Investigating, together with the communities involved, whether the scope of the memorial ceremonies should eventually be broadened, either geographically or thematically.

- Exploring the possibility, together with social partners, of making the 1st of July a day off and a national holiday throughout the Kingdom.

When establishing this committee, we cooperated closely with descendants and other interested parties from all over the Kingdom and Surinam. In the process we discussed the form the Memorial Committee should take and the profile of its members and chairperson. One key conclusion was that memorial can take various forms. Each person has a need to structure memorial events on the basis of their own history, community and culture, with attention being paid to various dates and memorial cultures. However, there is also a need for a general memorial event. The new Memorial Committee is going to continue investigating and developing ways of putting these needs into practice.

For many years the National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (NiNsee) has been committed to ensuring recognition of the country's slavery past and has made an important contribution to the annual memorial ceremony in the Oosterpark on the 1st of July. The NiNsee's expertise, experience and network are essential for the new Memorial Committee. That is why the NiNsee is, in any event, going to organise the national memorial ceremony on the 1st of July in 2025 and 2026, under the supervision of the Memorial Committee. In addition, the NiNsee will put forward a candidate for one of the posts on the new Slavery Memorial Committee.

You can read the complete letter, along with a clarification of the structure and establishment of the Memorial Committee, [here](#).

An introduction to the chair of the Slavery Memorial Committee

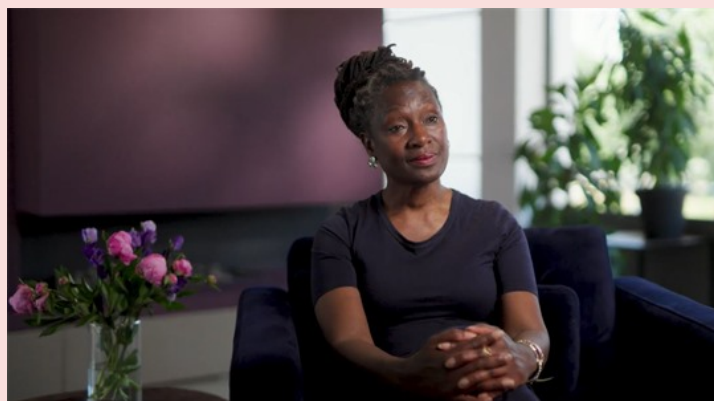
Today, 14th of June, the Cabinet agreed to the appointment of Astrid Elburg as chair of this new committee.

The committee members are going to be appointed in the autumn of 2024. The point of departure for the appointments will be geographical representation. The governments of the islands and countries have each been asked to nominate one member.

Astrid Elburg was born in Paramaribo, Surinam on the 14th of June 1958. She currently lives in Amsterdam. She is an organisation consultant and supports organisations in the area of inclusive leadership. She is also a lecturer at VU Amsterdam and Nyenrode Business University. Astrid also has administrative experience and is, among other things, chair of the Muiderslot Supervisory Board.

Astrid Elburg introduces herself in more detail in the following video.

[Voorzitter Herdenkingscomité Slavernijverleden stelt zich voor | ENG \(youtube.com\)](#)



Subsidy scheme for social initiatives

On the 1st of July 2024 the subsidy schemes for social projects in the Netherlands and the Caribbean part of the Kingdom were published in the Government Gazette (*Staatscourant*). The schemes are going to come into effect at a later date which will be made known in due course. Information sessions are to be organised for applicants between the moment of publication of the schemes and the moment at which applications can be submitted. During this period more information will also be provided about the advisory committee, the application timeframes and the exact start date.

In Surinam a document is being worked on for grants for social projects which explains who can apply for a subsidy, how an application can be made, what the purpose is and which conditions apply. It is useful when assessing and awarding grants. The related discussions between Surinam and the Netherlands are proceeding at their own pace. Surinam wants to set up a platform for descendants of people who were enslaved and other parties involved. The president of Surinam is personally going to set up this platform.

Monday July 1st National Slavery Memorial Day ceremony in the Oosterpark

The National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (NiNsee) is organising the 22nd National Slavery Memorial Day ceremony on Monday the 1st of July from 2 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. near the slavery monument in the Oosterpark in Amsterdam. This year's ceremony will focus on the very painful history of transatlantic slavery.

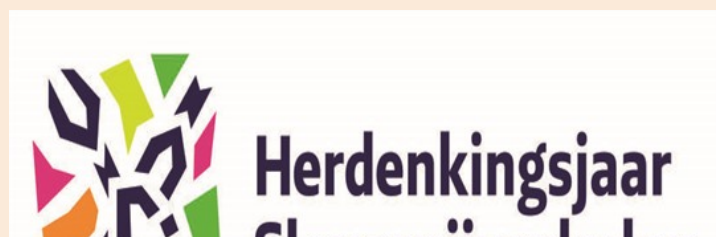
The memorial ceremony is going to start in the Oosterpark at 14.00 and is to be broadcast live on NPO 1, BVN and via NOS.nl. The ceremony will also be available as a live stream and will therefore also be accessible online for people living in Surinam and the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. The annual Keti Koti Festival, which will take place at Museumplein in Amsterdam immediately afterwards, will be a celebration to mark the abolition of slavery.

End of the Slavery Memorial Year

This year, the 1st of July 2024 will mark the official end of the Memorial Year to mark 160 years since the legal abolition of slavery. During the 2023/2024 memorial year, the focus throughout the Dutch Kingdom has been on the Dutch history of transatlantic slavery and the impact of that history on life today. Various activities and events were organised throughout the country.

"The end of the Slavery Memorial Year is in sight and a great deal has been achieved during the past year in terms of the wide variety of cultural initiatives that were organised, as well as the various memorial ceremonies throughout the Kingdom. However it's still important to keep working together in order to continue raising awareness of the impact of our transatlantic slavery past. After all, the effects of this history go beyond the symbolism of memorial. Our constant focus must now be on the new process of healing and redress," explains Linda Nooitmeer, chair of the NiNsee board.

In the words of Minister Dijkgraaf, who is the minister responsible for coordinating the Slavery Memorial Year, "It's special to return together to the place where the king made an apology one year ago and asked for forgiveness for the Netherlands' slavery past. Since then, people at hundreds of locations throughout the country have taken new initiatives in order to reflect together on this painful period in our shared history and to celebrate the resilience of the descendants of those who were enslaved. Together we have initiated an irreversible movement. It is worth reflecting on that together and we want to commit to continuing the hard work even after the Memorial Year has ended."



'Who are we' – a social dialogue

After the 1st of July we are going to continue focusing on our slavery history. The country's slavery past is a past that belongs to all of us. It is therefore important to understand what happened and what is needed in terms of redress. The fact is that many people know little about our slavery past and its impact on today's society. Discussions with descendants revealed the need for central government to conduct a broad social dialogue on the issue.

That is why all kinds of discussion starter events are going to be organised between now and November at 25 locations throughout the country, ranging from festivals and markets to village and town squares. 'Who are we' is an invitation to people to engage in a dialogue about our slavery past. The inspiration for the discussion starter events is a life-size variation on the 'Who is it' game. The idea is for participants to discover the impact that our slavery past is having on our society and the aim is for them to increase their knowledge of that shared past.

The 'Who are we' event will include portraits of people who are linked in a particular way to our slavery past. Participants will question their own perspective and that of others, with the discussion being guided by a moderator. This project is a joint initiative with 'bureau Public Cinema', the 'De Balie' foundation and artistic designer, Mathieu Wijdeven.



Working visits by State Secretary van Huffelen

Dordrecht 6th of May 2024

During a visit to Dordrecht the state secretary held talks with the Dordrecht Cultural and Educational Centre foundation (*Cultureel Educatief Centrum Dordrecht*, CECD) whose work is intended to increase people's knowledge and awareness of Dordrecht's slavery past. Its founders, Sidney Breidel and Ilse van Donkelaar, received a visit from the state secretary and told her about their work. One highlight was the opening of their new head office in the station building in Dordrecht, made possible through cooperation with Dutch Railways (*Nederlandse Spoorwegen*, NS) and the Insinger Family.

The CECD, NS, and Stichting Insinger are working together to shine the spotlight on our slavery past. The CECD is organising educational projects, such as exhibitions and meetings, under the motto of 'Discover, meet, embrace' (*Ontdek, ontmoet, omarm*). Councillor Rik van der Linden emphasised the importance of this investigation.

A large number of parties are working together in Dordrecht to create an inclusive city. One example is the Mama Asia Dordrecht work of art, which is a symbol of hope and inspiration.

The children's mayor has expressed a desire for lessons on discrimination and racism to make children more aware of history and to eradicate discrimination.



Zwolle, 13th May 2024

In Zwolle State Secretary Alexandra van Huffelen held talks with Shirley Kambel and representatives from the ANNO Stadsmuseum Zwolle, a partnership between the 'Allemaal Zwolle' foundation, 'Collectie Overijssel' and the Heritage department at the municipality of Zwolle.

Zwolle has a rich history and is home to the first colonial museum in the Netherlands. During the visit important discussions were held about how to deal with our slavery past and the necessary steps for redress and healing.

Last June the King's Commissioner in the province of Overijssel, Andries Heidema, apologised for the region's role in our slavery past and emphasized the importance of this acknowledgement and the impact of inequality in society.



Hoorn, 10th June 2024

During her visit to Hoorn, Alexandra Van Huffelen talked to participants in the documentary entitled HUMAN 2Doc: The city, the Statue and our Slavery past' (*De stad, het Standbeeld and het Slavernijverleden*) about the impact of our slavery past in the city. Mayor Jan Nieuwenburg was there to welcome her and the team in the historic former town hall building, the 'Statenlogement', and talk about how the town of Hoorn is dealing with this past, including ongoing research.

Although there were different opinions on how to deal with our slavery past, the dialogue was respectful. This demonstrates the fact that, although people view this period in our history from different perspectives, there is a shared realisation of its horrors.

The discussion emphasised the importance of working together to create a more inclusive town and country and provided more substance for the implementation of the process following the apology.





Finally

If you would like to read more about the issues referred to in this newsletter, or would like to discuss things with us, please do not hesitate to let us know. You can contact us by sending an email to: PostbusProgrammaSlavernijverleden@minbzk.nl