

BUILDING SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN POLICE AND MEDIA: THE NETHERLANDS CASE STUDY

THE NETHERLANDS: PERSVEILIG (PRESS SAFE)

[HTTPS://PERSVEILIG.NL/ABOUT-US](https://persveilig.nl/about-us)

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About Persveilig

The media sector, the police and the Prosecutors Office took steps in 2019 against violence and aggression against journalists. This resulted in the platform PersVeilig. With PersVeilig the various parties aim to reduce threat, violence and aggression against journalists and people in the media. The parties involved all signed a Press Safety Protocol for the purpose of this goal. The media has drawn up a collective norm. This means that journalists always file a complaint by the police when something happens within the norm. The parties involved within PersVeilig underline the importance of this collective norm to make it known that such behavior is not accepted and action will be taken...

Joint initiative of the Dutch Journalism Association, Editors-in-Chief of national media, the Police and the Public Prosecution, and led by a steering committee consisting of all these stakeholders

Aims to strengthen the position of journalists against violence and aggression on the street, online (social media) and in legal claims

History:

2017: Investigation by the National Ombudsman of the Netherlands:

- ▶ 61% of journalists experienced violence or threats
- ▶ 79% experienced threats in the execution of their jobs

2019 : Introduction of Persveiligw

2020-2024

2020: National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security flags up an extreme and radical undercurrent in relation to attacks on journalists

2021-2024: strong polarisation in society as a result of COVID, migration, war in Ukraine, Israel-Palestine conflict, etc.

Result: increase in attacks on journalists (not related to Persveilig introduction, but Persveilig means police and others are well-placed to deal with the increase in attacks)

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- ▶ Press safety protocol PersVeilig
- ▶ Collective norm PersVeilig
- ▶ Security Plan Dutch Media

PERSVEILIG PROTOCOL

- ▶ media sector, the police and the Public Prosecution Service are taking steps against violence and aggression against journalists

Employers:

Employers in the media sector are responsible for the safety, health and well-being of the journalists working for them. This means that employers ensure sufficient preparation time and preventive measures, such as effective training, for any form of reporting or publication that may involve risks. For this purpose, a training budget is included in the collective labor agreement, which is earmarked for this purpose. In addition, the employer ensures that the company itself is also prepared for threats.

PERSVEILIG PROTOCOL

Employers:

In case of safety incidents, the employer stands with the employee or contractor. Full support is required. The experiences can be traumatic. The employer provides psychosocial assistance.

The employer makes a declaration instead of the journalist. After unpleasant events, this may be part of the employer's duty of care. In addition, the address of the employer is then included in the declaration, which offers extra protection to the journalist.

PERSVEILIG PROTOCOL

Journalists:

Journalists employed or with a regular client in the media sector attend training courses that the employer offers and will act in accordance with the responsibilities set out in the Dutch Media Security Plan. For freelancers without a client, training courses will be offered by or via PersVeilig.

For journalists, it is of the utmost importance that all incidents are reported to the employer and to the PersVeilig helpdesk. The employer then has the responsibility to support the journalist in the next steps. For freelancers, they report incidents to their regular client. Freelancers without a client can go to the PersVeilig helpdesk.

PERSVEILIG PROTOCOL

Law enforcement:

Journalists have been given a preferential position with the police. This means that police and the Public Prosecution Service give high priority to the investigation and prosecution of the suspects of aggression and violence against journalists. Journalists have been given the same legal status as employees with a public function (such as police officers, firefighters, teachers, paramedics, etc.). The preferential position only applies if the offense is related to the performance of the position of journalist.

Violence and aggression against the journalist as a private person does not lead to a preferential position, unless a threat occurs in the private sphere with the aim of having the journalist report differently than he would under normal circumstances.

PERSVEILIG PROTOCOL

Police have committed to, amongst others:

- ▶ Reports of aggression and / or violence against journalists receive immediate follow-up.
- ▶ If it appears that aggression and / or violence against a journalist extends to the private sphere, then the declarant and / or employer is advised about measures to be taken.
- ▶ Employers can report aggression and violence against their employees.
- ▶ The employer's address can be specified as the home address.
- ▶ Police optimally inform the injured party and support the recovery of damages.
- ▶ Each police regio (10) have a contact officer who is available 24/7
- ▶ Internal instructions on how to safeguard the freedom and rights of journalists

PERSVEILIG PROTOCOL

Prosecution have committed to, amongst others:

- ▶ High priority to the prosecution of aggression and violence against journalists
- ▶ Demand 200% 'normal' penalty
- ▶ Public Prosecution Service optimally informs the injured party and supports the recovery of the damage from the perpetrator

Collective norm media sector

The media sector agrees that PersVeilig is always notified of behaviors that are perceived as threatening and intimidating in relation to journalistic work. This is necessary to stay up to date with regard to threats.

The media sector also agrees with the collective norm below. The police and the Public Prosecution Service support this standard and, in the event of a violation of the collective standard, will act in accordance with the agreements in the PersVeilig protocol .

A declaration is always made in the following cases. This is the collective norm of the media sector:

- Threat (for example, verbally, via a threatening letter, via social media or via sources, unless the journalist decides for ethical reasons that no declaration must be made (disclosing sources, for example)
- Physical violence (if there is injury and / or damage)
- Sexual violence (rape , assault, attack , etc.)
- Discrimination (based on skin color, religion, gender, sexual orientation or preference)
- Stalking / systematic intimidation (whether or not via social media)
- Theft
- Destruction

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COLLECTIVE NORM

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- ▶ Theft
- ▶ Destruction of property

Threat

- With open violence
- With any crime that may endanger the general safety or health of persons or cause a general danger to property.
- With rape / actual assault of honor
- Targeted against life with any crime
- With hostage, severe mistreatment, arson or terrorism
- Via social media. The threat must be direct, not 'wishful thinking'. Since the wording of the threat is very close, it must be considered at a time whether it is punishable.

Physical violence

- Pushing, pulling, grabbing is punishable under certain circumstances if it causes pain or causes injury
- Beating if there is pain or injury
- Kicking if there is pain or injury
- Injured if it happens intentionally

Sexual violence

- Rape
- Sexual assault, grinding, squeezing, etc. if it involves sexual acts

Discrimination

- By sex, skin color, religious beliefs and sexual orientation or preference if it is offensive

Stalking / systematic intimidation

- If there is systematicity. Therefore keep all the evidence to prove this

Theft

- Punishable at all times. Also applies to robbery.

Destruction

- Punishable at all times. This also includes damaging or rendering unusable equipment or other journalistic aids.

<https://a.storyblok.com/f/285119/x/5ae829586f/security-plan.pdf>

