

Press Release

## Halsema takes over the anti-Islam Banner from her Predecessors

Former GroenLinks political leader, Femke Halsema, is not wasting any time. She wants to lash out on Islam and the Muslims. Quickly after she took office as the new mayor of Amsterdam she let the Amsterdam city council know that she does not want to work with “Salafist” organizations and that she, different from her predecessors, has less patience with “orthodox Islamic” organizations. According to her fighting “radicalism” by involving “orthodox” Muslims into social activities is a waste of time, because the number of mosques “of which the board, the regular imam, external speakers and visitors adhere to or preach the Salafist faith” seems to grow. “Sometimes it shifts from orthodoxy to a fundamentalist, aggressive aversion to the democratic rule of law,” according to Halsema. But if it were up to the mayor, not only the cooperation with the “orthodox” Muslims should come to an end, foreign funding of mosques should be put to an end and “radical” preachers should be given less space.

By doing this Halsema goes further based on the anti-radicalization course that the municipality of Amsterdam had already set in motion years ago. The main goal of the municipality of Amsterdam, or any other municipality for that matter, in regards to Islam and the Muslims, is not apart from the national assimilation policy. The differences of opinion, if you will, are centered around the “how” this should be realized on municipal level.

As such, former mayor Van der Laan wanted to realize this by using a well-trained team consisting of 150 key-figures. Acting Mayor Jozias van Aartsen pleaded to “transform” these key figures into a “broad-based network of city-contacts which is built from the bottom up.” In turn, Halsema wants to enter into dialogue with more individuals in and around the “orthodox” communities, restore ties with the existing key-figures and tap into new volunteer organizations. Halsema also states that mothers, sisters and (female) friends “people whose voices sounds soft” should be sought. Also a “solid scientific network” will be made as to advise her about radicalism.

Thus, it does not make any difference if someone is from the PvdA (social-democratic), VVD (liberal) or GroenLinks (green). When it comes to combating and countering Islam, all are unanimous and unified behind one policy.

We have set out in multiple publications that the so called anti-radicalization policy is nothing more than a vicious and repressive policy to counter Islamic norms and values and to keep Muslims away from their religion. And that terms and descriptions like “Salafist”, “radical”, “orthodox”, “people whom voices sound soft”, are meant to place Muslims into boxes, to turn and to play them off against one another.

It was the same Halsema who unequivocally said in previous interviews that she had difficulty with the headscarf and found Islam a problem. She literally said: “But I cannot wait until the moment that women will throw off their headscarves in freedom. I prefer seeing every woman in the Netherlands without a headscarf...” and that it is hard on her that her children who attend a school in Amsterdam-East sit between “all kinds of veiled women.” Furthermore she states that she will not hesitate to attack “orthodox Islam.” And “of course Islam is the problem.”

In other words, she considers wearing the headscarf with “orthodox Islam” which she wants to combat. With this in mind you can comprehend what the anti-radicalization policy in Amsterdam is aimed at.

Lastly, We hope that the Muslims realize this and take a clear stance, and by doing so will not be tricked into serving the municipality and government by participating in anti-radicalization projects whose goal is to combat the Islam which purifies and protects the Muslim community.

**Okay Pala**

**Media Representative of Hizb ut Tahrir in The Netherlands**