

Beat: Miscellaneous

Dutch far-right politician Wilders to be tried over anti-Moroccan chant

-, 18.12.2014, 14:28 Time

USPA News - Dutch far-right politician Geert Wilders will be prosecuted on charges of discrimination and inciting hatred over his anti-Moroccan chant at an election rally earlier this year, prosecutors said on Thursday, three years after the politician was acquitted of similar charges. Wilders, 51, made the controversial remarks in March while addressing supporters in The Hague where the Party for Freedom (PVV) party scored second place in municipal elections.

"Do you want, in this city, and in the Netherlands, more or less Moroccans?" Wilders asked his supporters, to which they responded with: "Fewer! Fewer! Fewer!" Wilders added: "Then we'll arrange that." The right-wing politician and his party has long been known for its fierce stance against immigration and Islam, but the public chant against Moroccans was met with shock, even among PVV supporters, and caused some to draw comparisons to German dictator Adolf Hitler. More than 6,400 people across the Netherlands filed police complaints against Wilders following the chant. Responding to the criticism in March, Wilders had said he did not understand the outrage, claiming that he was only referring to Moroccan criminals. Alexandra Oswald, a spokeswoman for the Public Prosecution Service (OM), said Thursday that there was enough reason to take the matter to court and said the politician would be tried on suspicion of insulting a population group based on race and inciting hatred and discrimination. "Freedom of speech means that politicians can go very far in their statements, but that freedom is limited by the prohibition of discrimination," Oswald explained. Wilders, responding to the decision, said that prosecution is "incomprehensible." "I have said what millions of people think and agree. For the second time it appears that they want to deal with someone who speaks the truth. It is a travesty that I have to defend myself for that in court," he said. "The Public Prosecution Service should be working to prosecute jihadists instead of me. The PVV is the largest in the polls and that apparently does not suit the elite." The Public Prosecution Service said Wilders was questioned as a suspect on December 8 but the politician refused to answer questions. "Geert Wilders rendered a statement and did not answer the questions from the National Criminal Investigation Service," the prosecutor's office said. "After this examination, the final decision to prosecute him was taken." The Party for Freedom is the fourth largest party in the Dutch parliament but currently leads national opinion polls. The next general election is not expected to take place before March 2017, but all cabinets for more than a decade have failed to complete their full four-year term. In 2011, Wilders was acquitted of inciting hatred and discrimination against Muslims after comparing the Koran to Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-3119/dutch-far-right-politician-wilders-to-be-tried-over-anti-moroccan-chant.html>

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619