

1. Discouragement policy

The government tries to discourage asylum seekers from coming to the Netherlands by:

- adopting a so-called “yo-yo policy”, meaning reception centres are closed when the influx of migrants decreases, while new facilities must be set up last minute in case of shortages. Also, municipalities are often reluctant to take in migrants or to set up new asylum centers. As a result, the government is structurally unable to respond timely and adequately to the influxes of asylum seekers;
- staff shortages at the necessary institutions. The capacity of the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) also follows influx numbers, resulting in lengthy procedures with inexperienced caseworkers in times of increased influx;
- discriminating between refugees fleeing armed conflicts. Both on national and local level there is a different, much more welcoming, attitude towards refugees from the Ukraine, leading to a discriminatory asylum reception policy.

2. Inhuman circumstances in overcrowded reception centres

- For years, the national government has been unable and/or unwilling to handle the influx of migrants, creating significant delays with the start of the asylum procedure and being unable to decide within the legal time frame. In addition, it fails to facilitate an efficient outflow as many people with a valid residence permit are waiting for a home, amongst others because of the national housing crisis.
- Reception centres, including emergency shelters, are overcrowded. The conditions are inhuman and do not meet an adequate standard of living. Moreover, hundreds of people need to sleep outside awaiting to be admitted into the reception system, which will become even more worrisome during the upcoming winter months. Others sleep on the floor, on chairs or stretchers at the application center. There is not enough to eat and to drink, and there’s a lack of privacy. Many people who are in the system, are reported being replaced to different locations multiple times. Recently, the hopeless situation for many asylum seekers led to unrest and unsafe situations. On multiple occasions there have been fights among asylum seekers, resulting in numerous injured people. For the first time in Dutch history Doctors without Borders have been involved to give emergency medical assistance in the Netherlands (at Ter Apel).
- The NJCM is especially worried about the impact of this situation on families with young children and unaccompanied minors. Recently a three-month old baby died in the sports facility at Ter Apel, which is being used as a dorm due to a lack of capacity. The cause of death is being investigated.

3. Recommendations:

- I. **We urge the Dutch government to provide sufficient accommodation for asylum seekers that uphold the right to an adequate standard of living, and to eliminate unnecessary delays in the asylum procedure.**
- II. **We urge the Dutch government to implement policies ensuring that executive organisations are structurally prepared for increases in the migration influx.**
- III. **We urge the national and local governments to treat migrants equally independent of country of origin.**