

Version 2020

# Changing Islamic landscape of the Netherlands – Key statistics

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**IslamRU – Changing Islamic landscape of the Netherland: key statistics**

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# The Changing Islamic Landscape in the Netherlands 2020: key statistics

Together with colleagues from the KASKI Institute at Radboud University Nijmegen we collect key data on the Muslim communities in the Netherlands (as KASKI also does for the Christian communities). These data are based upon our own research and on the findings of Statistics Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek – CBS) and The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau – SCP). The data will be updated annually. A more elaborate version which also includes the key organisations, key debates and changes in laws in policies, can be found at the annual Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, published by Brill: <https://brill.com/view/serial/YME>.

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<http://religionresearch.org/closer/interventions/>

## Muslim Population

The overall percentage of people in the Netherlands categorising themselves as Muslim in the surveys of Statistics Netherlands has been relatively stable in recent years: 4.5% in 2010 and 4.9% in 2018 (825,000 Muslims). Among 18-25 year olds, the percentage of Muslims has risen from 6.8% in 2010 to 8.2% in 2014, and among 35-45 year olds it has risen from 6.5% to 8.0%. Within the category of “non-Western”<sup>1</sup> persons (meaning a person from a non-Western country, or with one parent from a non-Western country, meaning all countries outside the EU, US, Australia and Japan), 40% identify themselves as Muslim.<sup>2</sup> Based upon another survey which asks for self-identification among adults, *Huijnk* concludes that 6% of the adult population is Muslim.<sup>3</sup>

## Ethnic/National Backgrounds

Percentages of ethnic/national groups self-identifying as Muslim: <sup>4</sup>

Turkish: 86%

Moroccan: 94%

Somali: 95%

Surinamese: 9%.

## Inner-Islamic Groups

The Muslim population includes Sunnis, Shi'is, Alevis, and Ahmadis.

Self-identification as Sunni:

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<sup>1</sup> For more on this, and related, categories, see Yanow, Dvora and Marleen van der Haar. “People out of place: allochthony and autochthony in the Netherlands’ identity discourse—metaphors and categories in action”, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol. 16, no. 2 (2013), pp. 227-261.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Netherlands 2015, *Religieuze betrokkenheid van bevolkingsgroepen 2010–2014 (Religious Involvement of Groups in the Population 2010–2014)* (The Hague: Statistics Netherlands, 2015), pp. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> Huijnk, Willem, *De religieuze beleving van moslims in Nederland (The Religious Experience of Muslims in The Netherlands)* (The Hague: SCP, 2018), pp. 24-49.

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the numbers in this section and below are taken from Huijnk, *De religieuze beleving van moslims in Nederland*.

Turkish: 80%

Moroccan: 84%

Somali: 91%.

This does not mean that the other ethnic groups identify themselves as Shi'i, Alevi, or Ahmadi, since all of these groups, in particular the Turkish, Moroccan, and Somali, contain individuals who identify themselves only as Muslim, without mentioning a specific branch. In the Turkish group, 6% identify themselves as Alevi. Shi'i Muslims in the Netherlands are mainly part of the Iranian diaspora (81% of Iranians).<sup>5</sup> Among Surinamese Muslims, the Ahmadi-Lahore community is well-represented (although no reliable statistics exist), and is very active with its own mosques and a national organisation. Turkish migrants are divided along other lines: the *Milli Görüş* movement, the Nurcus, Hizmet (Gülen), and the Sülyemancıs, all have strong networks in Dutch society. The differences between the branches of Islam matter, but Muslims are divided predominantly along ethnic lines when it comes to representation and (mosque) organisations.

## Geographical Spread

Most Muslims live in the Western part of the Netherlands, in particular in the provinces of Noord-Holland, Zuid-Holland, Utrecht, and Flevoland.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hessels, Thomas, *Iraniërs in Nederland: een profiel (Iranians in The Netherlands: a Profile)* (The Hague: Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2004), [www.justitie.nl/images/Iraniers\\_in\\_Nederland\\_tcm74-38879\\_tcm34-18120.pdf](http://www.justitie.nl/images/Iraniers_in_Nederland_tcm74-38879_tcm34-18120.pdf), accessed 16 March 2004; Ghorashi, Halleh, *Ways to Survive, Battles to Win: Iranian Women Exiles in The Netherlands and the US* (Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Netherlands 2015, *Religieuze betrokkenheid*, p. 5

## Number of Mosques

About 453 mosques exist in the Netherlands (ca. 100 purpose built).<sup>7</sup>

Turkish:

- *Diyanet*: 140 mosques
- *Milli Görüş*: 35 mosques
- Sülyemancı: 38 mosques

Moroccan mosques: 150

Surinamese: 77

- World Islamic Mission: 25 mosques
- Ahmadiyya: 5 mosques

Others (including Somali): 62 mosques.<sup>8</sup>

## Muslim Burial Sites

There are more than 80 Muslim burial sites (out of a total of 3,500 in the Netherlands), all of them situated within municipal cemeteries. The first one was established in The Hague in 1932. In 2007, the city of Almere founded the first dedicated Islamic cemetery, Raza Ul Mawa. In 2012, a second one was established in Nuenen and, although part of a municipal burial site, it is managed by an Islamic institution: the Islamic Burial Society (*Islamitisch Begraffeniswezen Ibw*, [www.stichtingibw.nl](http://www.stichtingibw.nl)). Negotiations with local authorities to establish more dedicated Islamic cemeteries are still ongoing.<sup>9</sup> Almere and Nuenen wish to maintain “eternal peace” for buried Muslims, meaning the graves will not be removed. The municipal cemeteries in Utrecht

<sup>7</sup> Allievi, Stefano, *Conflicts over Mosques in Europe: Policy Issues and Trends* (London: Alliance Publishing Trust-Network of European Foundations, 2009), p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> Douwes, Dick, Martijn de Koning, and Welmoet Boender, *Nederlandse moslims: van migrant tot burger (Dutch Muslims: from Migrant to Citizen)* (Amsterdam: Salomé/Amsterdam University Press, 2005), pp. 166 – 170.

<sup>9</sup> Wojtkowiak, Joanna, and Gerard Wiegiers, “Moslims doen het helemaal zelf: veranderende islamitische uitvaartrituelen in Nederland” (“Muslims do it all themselves: changing Islamic burial rituals in the Netherlands”), in Eric Venbrux, Meike Heessels, and Sophie Bolt (eds.), *Rituele Creativiteit (Ritual Creativity)* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2008), pp.31-44.



and Zwolle also maintain an “eternal peace” approach for their Islamic sections. The *Stichting Bijzondere Islamitische Begraafplaatsen in Nederland* (Foundation of Islamic Special Cemeteries in the Netherlands – BIBIN) announced plans to establish a large cemetery in the North of the Netherlands of about 5400m<sup>2</sup> for 1400 graves with “eternal peace”. The plans are still only in an initial phase.<sup>10</sup>

### “Chaplaincy” in State Institutions

There are Muslim chaplains (*geestelijk verzorgers*) in several hospitals, prisons, and homes for the elderly. Several universities have prayer rooms for Muslims, paid for by the universities. In 2009, the Dutch army recruited two Muslim clerics (one Moroccan and one Turkish) to give spiritual support to both Muslims and non-Muslims in the armed forces. They are civilian employees, but are required to wear a uniform. The Dutch army and prisons still use the denominational model for chaplaincy: religious institutions (such as Churches, and in the case of Muslims the CMO organisation) send chaplaincies to prisons and the army. In health care and the police this model is fully implemented.

### Halal Products

Under Dutch law, animals must be rendered unconscious before slaughter, but exceptions are

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<sup>10</sup> Broesder, Pieter “De grootste islamitische begraafplaats van West-Europa moet in Zuidlaren komen. Dat wil de stichting Bijzondere Islamitische Begraafplaatsen In Nederland (BIBIN)” (“The largest Islamic cemetery in Western Europe is to be in Zuidlaren. That is what the Foundation of Islamic Special Cemeteries in the Netherlands (BIBIN) wants”), *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 3 December 2018, [www.dvhn.nl/drenthe/Zuidlaren-moet-grootste-islamitische-begraafplaats-West-Europa-krijgen-23895785.html](http://www.dvhn.nl/drenthe/Zuidlaren-moet-grootste-islamitische-begraafplaats-West-Europa-krijgen-23895785.html), accessed 18 January 2020.



made for Jewish and Islamic ritual slaughter. This is opposed by some political parties and animal rights groups.

There have been attempts to produce a unified certification for halal food but so far these have not been successful and are resulting in a lack of trust among consumers.

Almost every city with a Muslim minority has at least one or two halal butcher shops. Several of the larger supermarket chains have special shelves with halal products.

## Dress Code

A proposal for a partial ban on the face veil was accepted by the Dutch parliament in 2018, but is still to be implemented.<sup>11</sup> There have been several cases of women with head scarves being discriminated against at work or when applying for employment.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/34349\\_wet\\_gedeeltelijk\\_verbod](http://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/34349_wet_gedeeltelijk_verbod), accessed 21 February 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Jung, Mariska, "Forgotten women: the impact of Islamophobia on Muslim women in the Netherlands", *ENAR*, 31 May 2016, [www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/forgotten\\_women\\_report\\_netherlands\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/forgotten_women_report_netherlands_-_final.pdf), accessed 18 January 2020.