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Dutch refuse entry to Islamic militant

17 May 2004

AMSTERDAM — The Netherlands will refuse entry to Pakistani Muslim militant Qazi Hussain Ahmed, who was controversially booked to speak at meeting organised by the Dutch-Belgian Arab European League (AEL) later this month.

A Justice Ministry spokesman confirmed on Sunday that Hussain Ahmed will be denied entry to the Netherlands based on national security and public order reasons, news agency ANP reported.

Colleagues of Hussain Ahmed also told the Dutch branch of the AEL on Saturday night that the leader of Pakistan's largest Islamic party is not welcome in the Netherlands.

The AEL — which campaigns for the rights of Muslims living in both the Netherlands and Belgium — had invited Hussain Ahmed to visit the Netherlands and speak at a public meeting. He was due to arrive on Wednesday.

According to the AEL, the Pakistani politician possesses a diplomatic passport and his party is investigating legal options in a last-ditch bid to allow him to enter the Netherlands.

The Hague-based Centre for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI) has warned the visit will endanger national security due to Hussain Ahmed's incitement against non-Muslims. It urged the Dutch government to refuse entry to the Pakistani.

CIDI director Ronny Naftaniel also said on Sunday the decision to refuse Hussain Ahmed entry is more than justified.

Hussain Ahmed is the leader of the Pakistani fundamentalist party Jamaat-i-Islami. He is known to have supported the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and has in the past expressed sympathy for Osama bin Laden, the leader of terror network Al Qaeda.

The AEL had planned to hold its public meeting on 21 May, but has run into difficulties in finding a venue. Both the Nederlands Congress Centrum in The Hague and the Haagse Hogeschool have refused to host the event.

The AEL was founded in 2001 in Antwerp, Belgium. The organisation — which later set up a branch in the Netherlands — claims to support integration, but not assimilation of Muslim and Arab immigrants into

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