**Beat: News**

# Dutch mayor allows pedophile to stay despite protests

-, 22.02.2014, 02:32 Time

**USPA News -** A Dutch man who served his sentence after being convicted of sexually abusing dozens of young children will be allowed to live in an apartment building where hundreds of people had protested, the mayor of a city near The Hague decided on Friday. Leiden Mayor Henri Lenferink told residents he was "convinced" that the presence of Benno L. would not threaten safety.

"Expulsion, in my opinion, is not an answer to this social issue. We will have to find a solution together to give these people a place in our society," Lenferink said in a letter to residents. Hundreds of people had gathered outside the apartment building on Sunday after a Dutch newspaper revealed that Benno L. had moved into an apartment building in Leiden, which is close to The Hague and Amsterdam. Benno L. sexually abused around 60 children while working as a swimming instructor in the southern city of Den Bosch but completed the mandatory portion of his 6-year sentence. Benno L. has been banned from going to nearly a dozen municipalities where his victims live, and his relocation to Leiden had been kept secret by authorities. The revelation sparked outrage in Leiden, with some citizens threatening Benno L. and Lenferink, who defended his decision by saying the convicted pedophile is unlikely to re-offend and even pledging to resign if he turns out to be wrong. Fred Teeven, the State Secretary for Security and Justice, had publicly voiced his support for Lenferink, saying mayors such as him were needed. As part of Friday`s decision to allow Benno L. to remain in Leiden, Lenferink said additional measures had been taken to reassure neighbors. Among those measures is banning Benno L. from having any contact with children while a group of volunteers will guide the former swimming instructor during outdoor activities. Earlier this week, security cameras were installed at the apartment building while the mayor imposed a ban on assembly to prevent incidents and to stop protests that had worried residents. "Of course anyone in Leiden can speak out for their opinion and demonstration is a right, but there are rules for it. The neighborhood can not suffer from this," Lenferink explained on Friday. Han Moraal, the chief advocate-general of the Dutch Public Prosecution Service, said he understood the emotional response from citizens but praised Lenferink for taking on a social issue that needs to be addressed. "I have much praise for the mayor for accommodating [Benno L.] on my request," he said. "With this he puts an already simmering social issue on the map." In recent years, the Netherlands has seen similar protests with the release of high-profile child sex offenders, leading to homelessness for the offenders that makes appropriate monitoring impossible and complicates their return to society. One such case involves convicted sex offender Sytze van der V., whose current location is unknown after having to leave an Amsterdam apartment where he was temporarily staying. "During the past week, both proponents and opponents have made their opinions and emotions clear about this sensitive issue. There is and will continue to be a place for that," Moraal said. "I have to explain to no one, especially to parents with children, that these emotions exist." Moraal added: "I sympathize with this but I do not sympathize with the threats resulting from these emotions that have been made against L. The protests and threats against L. have caused unrest in the neighborhood. The Public Prosecution Service will work with the police to take action against specific threats towards L." The Public Prosecution Service said it will soon meet with the Dutch Association of Mayors to discuss issues surrounding the return of other sex offenders into society.

**Article online:**
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1924/dutch-mayor-allows-pedophile-to-stay-despite-protests.html

**Editorial office and responsibility:**
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement):

**Exemption from liability:**
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report.

**Editorial program service of General News Agency:**
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619