

Monday March 31, 2008

## **Wilders withdraws cartoon from film**

Dutch politician Geert Wilders has now stated that he will withdraw Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard's cartoon from his controversial film after being threatened with legal proceedings on the part of the Danish Union of Journalists (DUJ) and the Netherlands Union of Journalists (NVJ).

Geert Wilders released his controversial, much-debated propaganda film, *Fitna*, on the Internet last Thursday. The film showed Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard's cartoon without his permission – which involves misuse of the cartoon which is a violation of Kurt Westergaard's author's right (copyright).

As early as the next day, DUJ contacted Geert Wilders in collaboration with NVJ ordering him to remove the Danish cartoon from the film immediately. DUJ received a reply to this today, Monday, in which Geert Wilders allegedly stated that he would withdraw Kurt Westergaard's cartoon from the film, and so that the film will no longer be shown on Wilders' own web site.

Kurt Westergaard and DUJ is now going to decide whether to continue with legal proceeding against the Dutch politician for injury to Kurt Westergaard as a result of his cartoon being used in the political film.

### **Background**

Geert Wilders announced several weeks ago that he would be releasing a film that was critical of Islam. Until Thursday, however, the film's content was not known to the public, nor were DUJ or Kurt Westergaard aware that Kurt Westergaard's cartoon was shown in the film, twice, and in a manipulated form. As a result of this, on Friday morning DUJ contacted the Netherlands Union of Journalists' solicitors with the aim of jointly drafting an indictment against Geert Wilders for violating Kurt Westergaard's author's right. This has now prompted the politician to state that he would withdraw the cartoon from his film.

DUJ has also prevented the misuse of Kurt Westergaard's cartoon in Denmark in connection with its intended use at a demonstration in Aalborg by the organisation "Stop the Islamisation of Denmark" (SIAD). DUJ drew up an injunction against the use of the cartoon which was approved by a court of law.

Kurt Westergaard's cartoon can solely be used in serious editorial coverage in the media or by agreement with the cartoonist. DUJ will continue to keep an eye on whether the cartoon is used in violation of his author's rights.