

Serious objections to journalists' imprisonment

(27 November 2006)

The Dutch Association of Journalists (NVJ) and the Dutch Society of Chief Editors (GvH) have made serious objections to the imprisonment of the *Telegraaf* journalists Bart Mos and Joost de Haas, announced by the Court of The Hague this afternoon.

Mos and De Haas refused to inform the examining magistrate of the source from whom they had received the secret information in the criminal case against former secret agent Paul H., who is suspected of having leaked state secret dossiers of the AIVD, the Dutch intelligence service, to the underworld. The journalists Bart Mos and Joost de Haas reported on this in de *Telegraaf* in January 2006. The examining magistrate is using these means of coercion to obtain information regarding the sources used by Mos and De Haas.

The NVJ and GvH believe that these means employed by the examining magistrate are out of all proportion to the intended purpose of obtaining information regarding the sources used by journalists in the execution of their work. If a journalist were no longer able to honour his agreements regarding the confidentiality of his sources, his sources of information would eventually dry up. It is press freedom, therefore, that is at issue here. An unhindered flow of information is of major social importance. It is, after all, when journalists bring to light serious social wrongdoing that journalism depends on anonymous sources. We therefore consider this coercive measure of imprisonment by the examining magistrate, in an attempt to discover these sources, harmful to the functioning of the press and to the position of Mr Mos and Mr De Haas in particular. NVJ, GvH and the chief editors of the *Telegraaf* have registered a protest against this imprisonment. An appeal to the Chamber to overturn the imprisonment will be lodged as soon as possible.

For further information:

Thomas Bruning 020-6766771 / 06-20495245.

General secretary Dutch Association of Journalists (Nederlandse Vereniging van Journalisten, NVJ)

Arendo Joustra 06-55302787

Chairman Dutch Society of Chief Editors (Genootschap van Hoofdredacteuren, GvH)