

Rotterdam fires Tariq Ramadan over Iranian TV show

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Rotterdam fires Tariq Ramadan over Iranian TV show



The Rotterdam city government wants to break ties with the Muslim philosopher Tariq Ramadan, sources at city hall say.

By Mark Hoogstad

Ramadan (46) has been an adviser on integration for the city of Rotterdam for two years. Recently, he has come under criticism because he hosts a weekly talk show on the Iranian TV station PressTV, which is financed by the Tehran regime.

The sources at Rotterdam city hall said the board of council executives and the mayor feel Ramadan has lost credibility as an adviser on integration issues. The decision was expected to be made official after a 2 p.m. board meeting on Tuesday.

Rotterdam hired the Egyptian-Swiss theologist to help 'bridge the divide' between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The city government also funds Ramadan's chair at the Erasmus University, where he has been a visiting professor of Identity and Citizenship since 2007.

Ramadan, whose principal message is that Islam and European culture do not have to be at odds, is a controversial figure. He already came under fire in the Netherlands in April because of statements that were allegedly homophobic and misogynistic.

The right-wing liberal party VVD dropped out of the local coalition after the city decided to extend Ramadan's contract for another two years. An investigation commissioned by the city had come to the conclusion that the allegations against Ramadan were unfounded.

The Rotterdam city government was surprised last week when it learned about Ramadan's cooperation with the Iranian TV channel. Three local opposition parties immediately called for his resignation, as did the ruling Christian democrats, CDA, in the Dutch parliament.

Ramadan defended his position in a letter to *NRC Handelsblad* on Tuesday saying: "The present controversy says far more about the alarming state of politics in the Netherlands than about my person."

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