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Amsterdam - Dutch Animal Rights Party Tries Again To Ban A Kosher Slaughter Method

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FILE - An ultra-Orthodox Jewish boy peers around the corner of a slaughter house to watch chickens that have had their feathers burned off. EPA

Amsterdam - Despite opposition by the Dutch constitutional court, the local animal rights party has filed its second bill seeking to ban a kosher slaughter method it considers cruel.





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The bill would ban the slaughter of animals without stunning them first. Jewish religious laws require that animals be conscious when they are slaughtered for their meat to be kosher. Islam has similar rules for the production of halal meat.

The Party for the Animals filed the bill Monday in the Tweede Kamer, the Dutch lower house, the RTL broadcaster reported. It was after Netherlands' highest general administrative court issued an unusual warning about the bill, saying it would unreasonably compromise religious freedoms.

In 2012, the Dutch Senate scrapped a ban, which the party had initiated, on the practice. Submitted by the Party for Freedom, the bill received support from various political parties, including the anti-Islam Party for Freedom. But the Senate voted down the bill, citing reasons similar to those cited by the Council of State.

The Organization of Jewish Communities in the Netherlands, or NIK, in a statement Thursday said it "strongly rejects" the new bill. NIK Chairman Ruben Vis said it ignores both the Council of State's position and understandings reached between the government and the Jewish and Muslim communities in 2017.

Defenders of kosher slaughter say the swift cutting of an animal's neck is no more cruel or painful than stunning the animal with an electric charge or a bolt driven into its brain. The agreement includes a 40-second limit on the amount of time an animal is allowed to go without stunning after its neck is cut.

On Monday, the U.S. envoy on anti-Semitism called legislation in Europe that limits the kosher slaughter of animals, or shechitah, "disgraceful" and "intolerable."

"We have these disgraceful, these disgraceful pieces of legislation that ban shechitah," Elan Carr said during a speech at the Conference of European Rabbis in the Antwerp, Belgium. "This is nothing but a forced expulsion of Jewish communities from the countries that adopt such legislation. A forced expulsion and it is intolerable."

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