

Hague court orders Dutch state to pay out over colonial massacres

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Indonesian man forced to watch his father's execution is among those who will get compensation

An Indonesian man forced to watch his father's summary execution by a Dutch soldier when he was 10 years old has spoken of his gratitude after a court in The Hague ordered the Dutch state to pay compensation to victims of colonial massacres in the 1940s.

Andi Monji, 83, who travelled to the [Netherlands](#) to tell his story to the court, was awarded €10,000 (£9,000) while eight widows and three children of other executed men, mainly farmers, were awarded compensation of between €123.48 and €3,634 for loss of income.

The cases concerned men killed by soldiers in the Indonesian province of South Sulawesi between December 1946 and April 1947 during so-called "cleansing actions" as the Dutch sought to repress moves towards independence.

The court found that 11 men had been killed as a result of misbehaviour by Dutch soldiers, mostly by summary executions. One man was randomly shot.

Monji's father was executed on 28 January 1947 in the village of Suppa. More than 200 men are believed to have been executed by the Dutch military that day.

Monji, who still lives in Suppa, said: "I'm grateful for the court's ruling. I was 10 years old when I was forced to witness my father being executed by Dutch military after first being heavily beaten. I was crying.

"I'm also grateful that I had the chance to travel to the Netherlands to attend the court hearing so I could explain the court what had happened."

Japan occupied the then Dutch colony of the Dutch East Indies during the second world war, and after its capitulation the nationalist leaders Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed the Republic of [Indonesia](#) on 17 August 1945.

For the following four years, the Netherlands fought to prolong its 350 years of colonial rule of the country, often through barbaric means.

The Dutch state had argued for the claims to be struck out given the time that had passed since the acts were committed.

Liesbeth Zegveld, the claimants' lawyer, said: "We're pleased with the ruling. It wasn't easy; it took eight years of proceedings. It's a pity that the Netherlands government hasn't been more forthcoming, as many of our clients passed away during the proceedings.

“Nevertheless, for those still alive and all the families, the court’s recognition of their suffering and their entitlement to compensation is important.”

The court recognised in its ruling that the sums granted the relatives of victims were “disproportionate” to the suffering caused.

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