

## MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 25 April 2023

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### **The Netherlands is backtracking on its prostitution legalisation**

Sex work in the Netherlands got out of control. After more than 20 years of experiencing legal prostitution, it is now obvious that the rules and regulations, and even restrictions, do not work. Despite the legislation in place which is attempting to create a safe environment for sex work, there is a great lack of safety, protection and regulation in the Red-Light District, admitted by Femke Halsema, the mayor of Amsterdam.

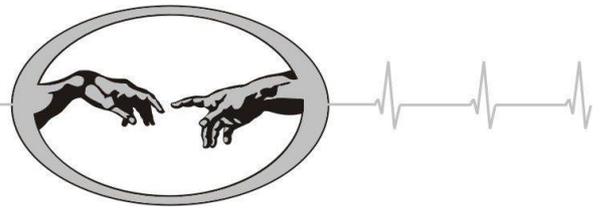
Crime is escalating, clients are becoming increasingly disrespectful towards prostitutes and residents are complaining about the swelling nuisance caused by drug addicts. It is proven that prostitutes are one of the most vulnerable populations in the Netherlands. 71% has been physically assaulted and 63% has been raped while working as prostitutes. Most struggle with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD). The Netherlands has been listed as one of the top destinations for human trafficking victims.

Since the start of the Red-Light District, gradual restrictions have been put in place. The previous mayor, Job Cohen, planned to close half of the city's 400 prostitution windows because of the criminal activity going on there.

As a proposed solution, Amsterdam now wants to move prostitutes from the Red-Light District, creating an erotic centre at another place in Amsterdam. However, the suggested locations are in neighbourhoods with families, schools and parks. Parents are concerned about their children's safety would a sex centre be launched in their vicinity. The European Medical Agency's head office is located in Amsterdam, due to the proposed safety of the city. They are concerned that putting up an erotic centre will endanger their employees, as they have to work late night shifts and have accommodations in hotels in the area. The Dutch government has guaranteed that the neighbourhood will be kept safe, and no unrest will occur. However, being incapable to control the Red-Light District as it is, they will not be able to control an erotic centre.

# Doctors For Life

I N T E R N A T I O N A L



The city's mayor confesses, "Unacceptable situations have arisen, and the council is ready to consider far-reaching solutions." She has already put even stricter regulations in place concerning the district, including earlier closing times and a cannabis smoking ban. Moving prostitutes to a sex work centre will not remove the crime related to prostitution, it will just relocate the crime scene causing nuisance to a different neighbourhood. It will also cause many prostitutes to go underground, because they do not want to register.

Doctors For Life believes that the solution to the various problems related to prostitution is not to move the prostitution to an erotic centre, but to criminalise prostitution completely. Prostitution is a basis for criminal exploitation and a state should not participate in it, but rather warn and protect its society against it. The continuous restrictions put in place in the Netherlands are proof of the failure of decriminalising prostitution and should serve as a warning to the South African government as it seeks to legalise prostitution and the use of cannabis.