



Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification
University of Dundee
Dundee DD1 5EH
Scotland, UK.

Tel. 0044 1382 385776

The Honourable Mr. A.G. Van der Steur
Minister of Security and Justice
Ministry of Security and Justice
P.O. Box 20301
2500 EH The Hague
The Netherlands

Cc:

art. 10 lid 2 sub e

1st May 2015

Dear Minister Van der Steur,

The undersigned represent international colleagues and friends of Professor George Maat who wish to bring their views to your attention. In recent days there have been many regrettable media articles in relation to a lecture intended for medical students but which unfortunately resulted in public exposure to images and dialogue associated with the victims of the MH17 airplane crash.

George Maat is a world leading authority and one of the most experienced forensic practitioners in disaster victim identification. His expertise has been called upon, without incident, in response to mass fatality events which include Balkan War Crimes, S.A. Fireworks in Enschede, the South East Asian Tsunami and many airplanes crashes across the world. With his colleagues, he has worked tirelessly and to the best of his ability to bring comfort and closure to the families and friends of victims whilst unreservedly supporting justice.

He is a highly regarded and frequently cited academic and his research has had great impact on forensic and medical education at a global scale. His outstanding leadership has been recognised by his community on many occasions resulting in a long list of national and international awards. Professor Maat is a consummate professional, a man of integrity and empathy and a role model for aspiring young scientists and practitioners.

It is with great regret that the incident unfolded and escalated as it did and we are certain there was no malfeasance or mal intent intended. Knowing Professor Maat as we all do, and in light of his heartfelt and genuine public apology, we are all of the firm belief that the situation was borne out of



miscalculation and, somewhat ironically, both his trust in his students and his passion to inspire them to become the next generation of forensic experts who will follow in his footsteps and serve the Netherlands. He could not have known that journalists would infiltrate his lecture and it is so disappointing to see his police colleagues and the political authorities so quick to condemn and turn away from him after so many years of blameless service. Our community seeks your assistance to start to redress this injustice and begin to repair the damage done to the legacy of a long and dedicated career and to the standing of forensic anthropology and DVI in the Netherlands.

Whilst there is no doubt that a valuable but painful lesson has been learned by us all, it serves no purpose to deny his skills and talents to the Dutch and international families who are victims of the next disaster and nor can his suspension aid the MH17 investigation other than aiding those who choose to use this event as a means to undermine the investigation thus far.

With great respect, we ask you please to consider the value that Professor Maat has been to your country and to international relations. We the undersigned request that Professor Maat be recognised for the professional practitioner that we all know him to be and that he be permitted to continue the work which so desperately needs his expertise and which he so passionately wishes to continue.

Yours sincerely,

1. Prof. [REDACTED],
University of Dundee, Scotland. United Kingdom.
2. Dr. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Academisch Medisch
Centrum, Amsterdam.
3. Prof. [REDACTED],
[REDACTED], University of Copenhagen, Denmark.
4. Prof. [REDACTED], University of Pretoria,
South Africa.
5. Prof. [REDACTED], Smithsonian Institution,
Washington DC, United States of America.
6. Dr [REDACTED], Faculté de Médecine,
Université Lille-Nord de France.
7. Prof. [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], Academisch Medisch Centrum, Amsterdam
8. Prof. [REDACTED], Institute
of Basic Medical Sciences, University of Oslo.
9. Prof. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at the
University Hospitals Leuven, Belgium.
10. [REDACTED],
International Committee of the Red Cross.
11. Prof [REDACTED],
Bournemouth University, United Kingdom.

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12. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], G.A. August
University Goettingen, Germany.
13. [REDACTED], Grimbergen, Belgium.
14. Prof. [REDACTED], Academisch Medisch Centrum,
Amsterdam.
15. Prof. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], Faculté de Médecine, Centre de
Médecine Légale de Charleroi, Belgium.
16. Prof. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], Moscow State University, Russian Federation.
17. Prof. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], Faculté de Médecine, Centre de Médecine Légale de Charleroi,
Belgium.
18. Prof. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], Vilnius University, Leading Specialist at the State Forensic
Medicine Service at the Ministry of Justice, Lithuania.

