

SITUATION REPORT SPECIAL - WALID HEARINGS

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[The summary of the first 3 hearing days can be accessed on the EEPA website.](#)

Walid hearing: Summary of Day 3 (per 17 November 2025)

- Day 4 of the court hearing in the case of alleged human trafficker Tewelde Goitom "Walid" covered four personal statements of impact from victims, and the personal circumstances of Walid.
- Tomorrow's (18 November) reserve day which was scheduled for a potential hearing of Kidane will be cancelled as the suspect has not yet been extradited from The United Arab to The Netherlands.
- The public prosecutor confirmed that all steps for his extradition have been completed and the court confirmed that space will be made to hear him in Walid's case if he arrives before the verdict is expected, at the end of January 2026.
- The next hearing will cover the indictment, and will take place on Wednesday, 19 November, starting at 9.30am CET.
- The injured parties claimed material and non-material damage totaling tens of thousands of euros.

Right to speak for the victims (per 17 November 2025)

- Four survivors exerted their right to speak, two of whom spoke in person, and two spoke through their lawyers. The lawyers also spoke on behalf of the victims who could not be in court and the victims of other smugglers.
- "Our clients do want to speak, in contrast to the suspect," the victims' lawyers stated.
- Although the question of the identity of the suspect has not yet been resolved and may not be resolved in court, the lawyers stated that for the clients the most important question is: "Is he the person that they recognise as Walid, the person who decided for them about life and death?"
- Survivors recognised Walid from the pictures, and also recognised Walid as they saw him in court, the lawyers stated.
- "At the moment Mr. Walid is a suspect to you. To me he is not. I was there, I am a victim and a witness, I saw everything. To you he may be a suspect; to me he is a perpetrator," Witness E. stated.
- The victims' lawyers emphasised that the Dutch National Rapporteur on Human Trafficking looked at the witness testimonies for this case and concluded that the practices described therein can also be labeled as human trafficking, although the suspect is prosecuted here for smuggling.
- Witness E. spoke about how Walid hit him with a garden hose until his back was bleeding profusely, and then Walid put a gun to his head and threatened: "I will shoot you to pieces".
- Witness E. also saw a severely sick young man begging for medical attention. Although Walid claimed the man would be sent to the sea, this did not happen and the man died.
- Witness E. asked Walid about the man who died: "I would like to get peace of mind, therefore I would like to ask Mr. Walid: have you buried him?" However, Walid called upon his right to remain silent.
- Witness E. also tried to protect a young girl of around 16-17 years old, who was approached by the henchmen of Walid because he wanted to rape her. "He had men whom he could command like he was a king."

- Witness E. was shocked when he saw that he and others had paid thousands of dollars to cross the sea in a boat which did not even have a motor. "How could he [Walid] be so indifferent about us?"
- Witness N. said he has been experiencing a lot of stress when talking about his experiences in Libya.
- "The worst of it all is not that we were beaten or that we were hungry. I think about women who were taken away and raped and because of our culture they cannot talk about it. It is always in my mind and I am wondering how they are doing," said Witness N.
- The judge in response to Witness N. said that it makes one question "how can a human being do such things to another human being," adding that "power, greed for money, or other things are apparently already enough to trample on human worth."
- The suspect continued to remain silent when asked questions to react to the witness testimonies
- "Even though we understand that the suspect exercises his right not to speak, our clients hoped to receive some answers from him," spoke the lawyers of the injured party, adding that "this attitude worries us".

Examination of personal circumstances (per 17 November 2025)

- It was revealed that Walid had applied for asylum in The Netherlands in 2025, but his application was rejected. However, an appeal to this decision is still ongoing. When asked about the context in which this application was submitted, he invoked his right to remain silent.
- The details of the examination report from Pieter Baan Centrum (PBC), a psychiatric observation clinic, were exclusively discussed in the courtroom, while the livestream was closed for privacy reasons.
- The judge read the PBC report where the suspect spent 3 months in 2023 and was examined by different specialists, including psychologists, psychiatrists and mentors.
- At the PBC, Walid spoke about what he claims to be his family circumstances in Eritrea, being brought up by an Eritrean single mother. He stated his Ethiopian father was part of the Ethiopian military.
- Walid claims he was part of the national service since he was 18, working as a driver for the military.
- He claimed he fled Eritrea with his friend and talked about settling in Sudan where he first worked as a driver and then opened a cafe and leased a piece of land.
- Walid claimed at the PBC he got to know the Eritrean opposition group "Saho" and became "more or less" part of the group. After the Eritrean intelligence gained information about his involvement, he received warnings to stop this activity from his friends and network.
- He stated he decided to go into hiding for which he needed to arrange false identity documents.
- Walid claimed he visited the Eritrean embassy in Sudan for documents, where he received a letter warning him to stop his activities with the opposition group, otherwise there will be consequences.
- There is a discrepancy with the dates of his arrest by the Ethiopian authorities, while the official version states Walid was arrested in 2020, the suspect claims to have been arrested in 2018.
- He spoke of being held in an Ethiopian underground prison where he was mistreated and tortured.
- The PBC investigation report notes that while Walid tells factually and without apparent emotion about the horrors he says to have experienced in Eritrea, and even smiles while speaking about it, he does show emotion about the torture he claims to have experienced in the Ethiopian prison.
- The report further reads there was no indication for the existence of psychological or mood disorders, post-traumatic stress or trauma-related disorders. The examiner did not get any insights into the empathy, conscience capabilities and self-image of the suspect.
- The PBC report notes that he scored worse than random answering would on an intelligence test, which might be an indicator he pretended to be "more stupid than he is." It was noted he was good at the strategic game of draughts.
- "I recognize myself in the image that has been drawn of me," said Walid in response to the PBC report.

Links of interest

[The "quite extraordinary" trial of human trafficker Walid](#)

['You belong to Walid': Trial begins for man accused of running notorious human trafficking network](#)

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