

Re: Today's *Netwerk* broadcast

8 July 2010

Import of "blood coal" has to become transparent.

A wide-ranging majority in the Lower House wants to force power companies by law to clarify where they get their coal from. The parliamentary groups decided this following the *Netwerk* broadcast showing that Dutch power companies were importing 'bad coal' from South Africa and Colombia and, in doing so, were partly to blame for major human rights violations and murder.

#### **Compulsory publication**

CDA member [Ger Koopmans](#) has a legislative bill in preparation, which will oblige Dutch electricity generation companies to publish the source of their coal. The power suppliers have not so far made any statements about the mines they buy their coal from.

#### **Human rights violations**

This requirement for greater transparency is being supported by the Dutch Liberal Party, Labour Party, GreenLeft, SP, D66, Party for the Animals and the Christian Union. It will let the Dutch people and the government see which mining companies are the sources for the coal bought by the power generators, and whether there are any foreign mines involved that are guilty of human rights violations.

#### **Debate**

The debate surrounding 'blood coal' was started by CDA member of parliament [Ger Koopmans](#). Following the *Netwerk* investigation, he tabled parliamentary questions to Mr. Huizinga, the outgoing Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning & the Environment. According to Koopmans, the Netherlands can only force major coal producers into ceasing their human rights violations by means of compulsory 'source reports'. Liberal Party member Zijlstra wants consumers to be able to make their own choices, based on information from the power companies.

#### **'Blood coal'**

*Netwerk* demonstrated, following its investigation, that digging for coal in South Africa is leading to wide-scale environmental pollution and health problems. Ninety percent of the coal imported from Colombia comes from mining companies that finance paramilitary operations. These have resulted in dozens of people being killed.