

## Dutch police failed to seize opportunities for de-escalation at student protests

Amnesty International calls for an evaluation of the intervention by the local government and police during the demonstrations around the University of Amsterdam since last Monday. The use of force by the police must be scrutinized.

Amnesty International would like to stress that especially in times of social unrest and political uncertainty, the right to protest is essential. We saw that the situation last night was complex and some of the protesters used violence against the police. This is unacceptable.

Our observers saw that the police failed to seize opportunities for de-escalation at a number of crucial moments. Insufficient distinction was made between the peaceful protesters and the group that used violence.

The student protests are at the centre of a politically sensitive debate. The protests in recent months were almost entirely peaceful. Yesterday's incidents should not give rise to a repressive approach.

The current repressive political climate must be factored into the assessment, with politicians simplifying and calling for 'blank sweeps'. This makes the work of police and local authorities more difficult. Amnesty International is looking forward to the Amsterdam municipality's response after the planned council meeting.