



**POLITIET**

## Press release from Nordland Police District

Date: August [..], 2019

### **The Norwegian Police concludes its investigation of the missing persons case Arjen Kamphuis – disappearance most likely due to kayaking accident**

#### **Summary:**

The Norwegian Police has concluded its investigation in the missing persons case of Arjen Kamphuis. Mr. Kamphuis was reported missing in late August last year after failing to return home to the Netherlands.

The Police has concluded that Mr. Kamphuis most likely suffered an accident in the evening of August 20th 2018 while kayaking in the Skjerstad Fjord, a few kilometers north of the village of Rognan in Nordland County in Northern Norway, and was subsequently lost at sea. His body has still not been recovered.

Mr. Kamphuis was last seen by a witness on the afternoon of August 20th 2018 near the town center of Rognan while walking from the train station to the town centre. Earlier the same day, Mr. Kamphuis had checked out from his hotel in Bodø, Norway, before travelling by train from Bodø to Rognan.

The conclusion that Mr. Kamphuis suffered an accident while kayaking and fell into the sea is an assessment based on the evidence in the case. A few days after Mr. Kamphuis was reported missing, a kayak with a hole in the hull and a kayaking oar was found on the shore of the Skjerstad fjord north of Rognan. Other personal items belonging to Mr. Kamphuis were also found floating in the sea.

The police would have reached this conclusion at an earlier stage of the investigation had it not been for the fact that a sim-card belonging to Mr. Kamphuis made a connection to three cell phone towers outside of Stavanger in Southern Norway shortly before midnight on August 30th 2018. The investigation has now revealed that this cell phone, a computer and other items, were found by two truck drivers from Eastern Europe in the same place the kayak was found. The truck drivers found these items while fishing from the shore during a rest period, believing the items to have been discarded as they had been exposed to weather. The truck drivers did however take the items with them, and the sim-card in question was in the possession of the truck drivers when they later were driving from Northern Norway to Stavanger in Southern Norway, passing the three cell phone towers on August 30th 2018. The police have no reason to believe that the truck drivers were involved in the disappearance of Mr. Kamphuis in any other way.

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Contact information:

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Nordland politidistrikt

## **The press release in detail:**

### ***Investigation hypotheses***

Since Arjen Kamphuis was reported missing in late August last year, the Norwegian Police has conducted its investigation in this missing persons case, and with the co-operation of the Dutch Police. The police conducted this investigation based on three hypotheses, which were a) that Arjen Kamphuis had suffered an accident, b) that Arjen Kamphuis had been the victim of a crime, and c) that Arjen Kamphuis out of his own free will had chosen to stay out of contact with family, friends and acquaintances. The investigation conducted through these past months have now brought us to a conclusion as to which of these hypotheses are strengthened, and which are weakened.

The Norwegian Police regrets the fact that it has not been able to recover the body of Mr. Kamphuis, and we find do not consider it likely that his body will be recovered at a later stage.

### ***Likely kayaking accident***

A few days after initiating the investigation, the Norwegian Police received reports from members of the public that a white kayak of the same type as the one belonging to Arjen Kamphuis had been found at the seashore near a small mountain called Kvænflåget. In addition to the kayak, a rowing oar was found nearby, and a few days later, a local fisherman found a small bag containing Arjen Kamphuis' passport, credit cards and other small belongings floating in the sea. This kayak was found with a small hole in its hull, and these findings were viewed as indicating that Arjen Kamphuis had suffered an accident while kayaking, most likely on the evening of August 20th. This was the same day as he had checked out from his hotel in Bodø, whereupon he had taken the train south to Rognan, where a witness claims to have seen him walking from the train station to the town centre. The place where his kayak was found, are a few kilometers north of Rognan.

Across the fjord from where the kayak was found is a salmon farm, which had surveillance equipment that also covered parts of the seashore on the other side of the fjord. When the police secured and went through these surveillance videos, it did find that in the early evening of August 20th, a small white-coloured vessel went along the seashore in approximately the same speed one might expect from a kayak or rowing boat. The police can not say for certain that this was in fact a kayak, or if so that it was Arjen Kamphuis on board, but with no other witnesses coming forward, we assess that there is some likelihood that this seems to be the case. All these pieces of information, drew in the direction of strengthening the accident hypothesis mentioned above.

### ***How Mr. Kamphuis' sim-card made a connection to cell phone towers in Rogaland ten days after disappearing***

As earlier stated by the police, with these pieces of information strengthening the accident hypothesis, while little or none of the other information gathered seemed to strengthen the other hypotheses, nor weakening the accident hypothesis, it would have been natural for the Norwegian Police to conclude that a fatal accident had occurred. The only pieces of information that prevented such a conclusion, was for one thing the question of why no other of the belongings Arjen Kamphuis had brought with him had been found, but more significantly the fact that a sim-card which belonged to Arjen Kamphuis was used in a mobile phone that connected to three cell phone towers outside Stavanger in Rogaland, in the opposite part of Norway, in the minutes before midnight on August 30th. The sim-card remained active for several minutes, and the movement of the connections led police to believe that the sim-card was on board a vehicle driving along the E18-road northbound for Stavanger. Information from a toll station in the area about all the vehicles having passed the toll station in this direction were secured by the police, and the drivers of 38 of the 39 cars passing through in the time frame in question were contacted by the police.

A few months ago the police had only two vehicles remaining; one was a vehicle that had passed through the toll station without a licence plate in front, and which could therefore not be identified

due to the fact that no photos were possible to retrieve. The other vehicle, a trailer registered in Lithuania, the police later found to have been driven by two drivers residing in a different eastern European country. Further investigations regarding this trailer showed that the trailer had arrived in Norway at Svinesund border crossing just south of Oslo, on August 21st 2018. This trailer had continued north, and did on the morning of August 23rd pass the only toll station between Fauske, situated between Bodø and Rognan, and Mo i Rana, some kilometers south of Rognan, in a northbound direction. On the morning of the day after, August 24th, this trailer passed the same toll station, this time in the southbound direction.

With the assistance of the Lithuanian Police, the two drivers of this trailer were questioned. Both drivers have confirmed that they arrived with the trailer in Norway on August 21st, and that they did drive north to Fauske with cargo, arriving there on August 23rd, before returning south the same day. However, some 15 kilometers south of Fauske, they stopped on a truck stop as it was time for them to have their mandatory resting period. The Norwegian Police finds that this corresponds well with the location where the kayak was later reported found. The two drivers told Lithuanian police that they went down to the seashore to do some fishing, and while fishing, one of the drivers found a kayak which he describes to be the same as the one later found, with a small hole in the hull. In addition to this, the driver also found cell phones, sim-cards, a computer and several other belongings of a camper. These items were in or by the kayak. The driver explains that to him these items appeared to be discarded due to the state the items were in. The driver goes on to tell that he decided to take some of these items with him in the event that they might still prove to be of any value.

The drivers remained in Norway for the next days, and explain that they were in fact driving along the E18, heading north to Stavanger, late in the evening of August 30th. This puts them in the time and place for the connection between the sim-card we know they were in possession of, and does thereby explain the most inconsistent piece of evidence in this case, while at the same time extinguish the hope that it might actually had been Arjen Kamphuis himself who caused the cell phone towers to catch a connection with his sim-card. The last verified time of connection between any cell phone tower and any of Arjen Kamphuis' mobile phones is therefore late in the evening of August 20th, and to a cell phone tower covering the area where the kayak was found.

The two drivers held on to the the items they found, and these items were handed over to the Norwegian Police a few weeks ago. The Norwegian Police has found the statements of the two drivers to be credible and forthcoming, and does not at this time find any reason to doubt the explanation given from them that the items were deemed to be discarded items. Based on the dates for the whereabouts of these two drivers the police finds no reason to suspect any further or other involvement in the disappearance of Arjen Kamphuis, and also find it credible that the two drivers did not have any knowledge of the relevance of the items before being questioned by the Lithuanian Police.

### ***Conclusion based on likelihood out from the evidence***

The Norwegian Police has not been able to find the body of Arjen Kamphuis, and the conclusion reached in this investigation is therefore based on an assessment of likelihood in relation to the three hypotheses of the investigation. The conclusion is that what most likely has happened is that Arjen Kamphuis, in the evening of August 20th 2018, near Kvænflåget between Fauske and Rognan, suffered an accident while kayaking, and was lost at sea thereafter. The police also believes that he might have brought his belongings with him in the kayak, and that these belongings were later found by the the two earlier mentioned drivers. The items, having been subjected to rain and wind, were then taken by these two drivers, while the kayak was left behind. The investigation has not been able to determine any further what type of accident occurred, including whether the accident was caused by a medical condition, external causes such as waves or winds, the wake from a passing ship, or manouvering errors. The police is therefore not able to conclude with certainty that this is the case, but we are able to determine that based on the evidence, this offers the most likely explanation as to what caused the disappearance of Arjen Kamphuis.

As for the other two hypotheses, the Norwegian Police does not find any reasonable likelihood for Arjen Kamphuis having out of his own volition chosen to remain without any contact with family, friends or known acquaintances. The abandonment of all of his personal papers such as passport and credit cards, as well as leaving behind his personal computer, cell phones and other belongings at the location in question, seem to offer an unnecessary obstacle if this was his intention. The most significant factor weakening this hypothesis is however the time that has passed since his disappearance in late August last year, and the fact that no likely or verified observations have been made of Arjen Kamphuis in this time. It is the character of most missing person-cases that are brought to public attention to have reports of observations of a missing person from both likely and unlikely locations. This has also been the case here, but none of these observations reported to the Norwegian police from both the local area, as well as in Rogaland and other places in Norway and Europe, has been proven to be correct.

As for the last hypothesis, the police has also not been able to find any support in the evidence indicating that Arjen Kamphuis has been the victim of any form of criminal act. No piece of information gathered so far has given any concrete indications that this has been the case. Based on the evidence, the likelihood that someone is responsible for any wrongdoing against Arjen Kamphuis is considered to be mere theoretical.

***No further active investigation***

The Norwegian Police, having finally concluded that Arjen Kamphuis suffered an accident while kayaking on the evening of August 20th 2018 is considered the most likely cause for his disappearance, has also decided to end its active investigation in this case. By ending its active investigation, this only means that the police considers that it has exhausted those steps of an investigation that is feasible and reasonable to carry out on its own initiative. Should new information be received that might lead to the still pending questions in the investigation being answered, the Norwegian Police are still at liberty to carry out further investigation.

***No further searches in the fjord***

The police will not be carrying out any further searches in the fjord where Mr. Kamphuis is believed to have been lost. This body of water is well known to the police, and several other persons have through the years been lost in this fjord, and never recovered. The expanse of the fjord, combined with the topographical conditions on the sea floor, as well as currents and wind conditions, makes it practically impossible to expect any results from further searches. The chances that were to be for any person to be found with searches of this kind in this area requires the searches to be carried out in close proximity in time and area to a person being lost at sea. Extensive searches were carried out in September last year without results, and further searches will be unlikely to lead to Arjen Kamphuis being found.

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