

## Dutch coalition collapses after Wilders sparks migration standoff



Published on June 5, 2025

Document Date: Sun, Apr 26 2026 04:11:31 pm

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

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The Dutch government has collapsed less than a year after taking office, following far-right leader Geert Wilders' withdrawal from the coalition amid a bitter dispute over asylum policy.

Prime Minister Dick Schoof confirmed his resignation on Tuesday, submitting the cabinet's resignation to King Willem-Alexander. Schoof condemned Wilders' decision to exit the coalition as "irresponsible and unnecessary," expressing regret over the abrupt end to the fragile alliance.

Wilders' Party for Freedom (PVV), the largest in the four-party coalition, had demanded 10 hardline asylum measures, including a freeze on applications, cancellation of new reception centres, and tighter family reunification rules. When his proposals failed to gain full support, Wilders walked out of a critical meeting, later declaring on X: "No signature for our asylum plans. PVV leaves the coalition."

The coalition, formed in July 2024 after lengthy post-election talks, also included the conservative VVD, the centrist New Social Contract (NSC), and the Farmers' Citizen Movement (BBB). From the outset, the alliance was seen as fragile, marked by internal strife and limited legislative progress. Opposition leaders reacted sharply, accusing Wilders of manufacturing a crisis. BBB's Mona Keijzer said, "Wilders is betraying the Netherlands," while VVD leader Dilan Yesilgoz called the move "super irresponsible."

Despite the fallout, Wilders appeared undeterred, stating his intention to become prime minister and expand PVV's reach in the next election. However, analysts warn that his decision could damage future coalition prospects, as trust among potential allies erodes.

Caretaker ministers will remain in place until elections likely in autumn are scheduled. With migration and cost-of-living issues dominating Dutch politics, the next vote is expected to be fiercely contested, especially with Wilders placing asylum at the centre of his renewed campaign.

