Following the introduction of controlled access to Ter Apel since May 2026 due to a structural shortage of reception places, asylum seekers who could not be accommodated stayed on the forecourt outside the centre. This led to incidents including disturbances, intimidation and two instances which involved stabbing. Due to the safety concerns, the Red Cross and the Dutch Council for Refugees temporarily suspended their assistance on the forecourt.

The government announced plans to take immediate measures to ensure safety and public order around the application centre in Ter Apel. The first measure to be implemented is using the building where the former DISA used to operate as a place for day care for new applicants who are waiting for a reception place. COA will then organise bus transport to the emergency night shelter in the region to prevent wandering behaviour. A second measure introduces stricter house rules to the DISA building, including the possibility to deny access in case of nuisance. Additionally, the site is designated as a safety risk area, making preventative searches possible. Extra cameras, enforcement officers (BOAS) and security guards will also be deployed. The Minister for Asylum and Migration emphasises that these are short-term solutions, and a sustainable solution requires lower influx, higher returns, a faster outflow to municipal housing and a proper implementation of the Dispersion Act.

Source(s)

- Government | Rijksoverheid (13 July, 2026), Extra maatregelen voor veiligheid en opvang in Ter Apel [Extra measures for safety and shelter in Ter Apel], https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2026/07/13/extra-maatregelen-voor-veiligheid-en-opvang-in-ter-apel

Related development(s)
COA introduces controlled access to the reception centre in Ter Apel
Date of development
13.07.2026
Country
Netherlands
Thematic area(s)
Reception
Development type
Practice

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