

# User Guide for the Website:

## *Accident Investigation EL AL 1862*

### Purpose of this Guide

This guide is intended for relatives of victims, Bijlmermeer residents, journalists, students, researchers, teachers, and other interested readers who wish to use Henk Prais's website in a focused and responsible manner.

The website provides access to original source material concerning the accident involving EL AL Flight 1862 and aims to offer a fact-based alternative to later books, articles, documentaries, and dramatizations in which, according to the author, fundamental errors, inaccuracies, and misconceptions have appeared.

The site serves not only an informative purpose, but also an archival and educational one. The Royal Library of the Netherlands (Koninklijke Bibliotheek) included the website in its web collection for long-term digital preservation as of 1 March 2025, and since October 2025 the Dutch National Archives have included a reference to the website in their research guide on the Bijlmer air disaster.

### Homepage as a Starting Point

The homepage offers the best entry point for a first orientation. It explains who Henk Prais is, what role he fulfilled in 1992–1993 within the preliminary investigation team of the Dutch Aviation Safety Board (Raad voor de Luchtvaart), and why the website was created.

Visitors using the site for the first time are advised to read the introduction carefully before opening individual themes. The homepage makes clear that the website is intended as access to verifiable sources and technical context, rather than as a journalistic summary of the entire Bijlmer disaster history.

### The “Investigation” Page as the Core Section

For most users, the page **Investigation** is the central and most important section of the website, because it explains the logic of aviation accident investigation on the basis of the ICAO Annex 13 protocol. The page explicitly clarifies that such investigations are focused on aviation safety and prevention, not on assigning blame.

For proper use of the website as a whole, this distinction is essential. The page demonstrates that not all social, criminal, political, or emotional questions could or needed to be answered within the technical accident investigation itself, and that some

issues therefore need to be followed through other thematic pages or institutional processes.

## Documentation and Primary Sources

The website is most useful when it is approached as a guide to original documents. The page **Documentation** directs users to reports, comparative material, and other records needed to verify statements about the disaster and the investigation.

For theses, articles, lessons, or research projects, it is recommended to always return to the primary source behind a particular claim. When official reports or investigative publications are located through the website, users are encouraged to cite the original source in their own work and to use the website primarily as a gateway or reference tool.

## Parliament and Politicization

For readers wishing to understand the political and administrative aftermath of the disaster, the page **Dutch Parliament** is important. It describes how the parliamentary handling of the disaster related to the independent ICAO investigation and how, according to the author, the file gradually became further politicized over time.

This page is especially useful for journalists, historians, and students studying the interaction between technology, politics, and media. It illustrates that technical investigative conclusions, public unrest, and political dynamics do not automatically coincide.

## Practical Method of Use

A practical approach for responsible use of the website is as follows:

- First read the homepage completely for context and positioning.
- Then proceed to the thematic page that best matches your question, such as **Investigation**, **Documentation**, **Dutch Parliament**, or **Depleted Uranium**.
- Take note of the documents, reports, or external sources mentioned on that page.
- Consult the original documents themselves before adopting conclusions.
- Only afterwards compare the findings with media reports, books, or audiovisual productions about the Bijlmer disaster.

## Use by Different Target Groups

For relatives of victims and Bijlmermeer residents, the website can serve as a factual entry point into what remains an emotionally and socially sensitive subject. For this group, a calm and gradual reading path is recommended: first the homepage, then the most relevant thematic page, and only afterwards the more extensive documentation.

For journalists, the website is especially useful as a verification tool. The combination of primary sources, technical explanations, and corrections of misconceptions makes the site suitable for reassessing existing narratives and factual claims.

For students, teachers, and researchers, the site is particularly valuable as an educational and research environment. The combination of explanations, source references, and thematic organization makes it possible to practice source criticism, reconstruction, and the analysis of institutional framing.

## **Responsible Use and Source Criticism**

The value of the website increases when it is used carefully, precisely, and with awareness of source criticism. Users are encouraged to continuously distinguish between what is directly supported by documents, what constitutes a technical reconstruction, and what represents a broader historical or societal interpretation.

It is also important not to approach the website as a closed final answer to all discussion, but rather as a well-documented gateway to verifiable material. Precisely because the site is built around original sources, it is most convincing when users actually consult the referenced documents themselves.