

Beat: Politics

No evidence of burglary in `criminal death` of Dutch ex-minister Borst

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USPA News - Investigators have not found any evidence that suggests a burglary took place at the house of former Dutch Deputy Prime Minister Els Borst, whose death earlier this month is believed to have been the result of a crime, police said on Tuesday. It raises the question whether the politician was deliberately targeted.

Borst, 81, was found deceased at around 6:19 p.m. local time on February 10 in the garage of her house in Bilthoven, a small village located about 7.5 kilometers (4.6 miles) northeast of Utrecht, the country's fourth-largest city. An autopsy found she died of injuries that were found on her body, ruling out a natural death, and investigators believe she "most likely" was the victim of a crime. Police spokesman Bernhard Jens, appearing on Dutch TV to make an appeal for information from members of the public, said on late Tuesday evening that no evidence has so far been found that suggests a burglary took place at Borst's house. It leaves, among others, the possibility that the politician, who served as health minister and briefly led the Democrats 66 (D66) party in the 1990s, may have been deliberately targeted. "We know that Mrs. Borst on Saturday 8 February, at the end of the day, left Amsterdam where she attended a D66 party congress," Jens said. "From there she took public transportation to Bilthoven and from there drove [to her home]. And beyond that we know she was discovered by friends on 10 February in her garage of which the door was still open." Jens said investigators are hoping to hear from anyone who may have noticed anything out of the ordinary in the area around Borst's house between February 8 and February 10. "We realize this is a very broad appeal, but every small detail can be important to us in our investigation," the spokesman said, adding that he could not be more specific "in this stage" of the investigation. "For now we have found no indications that a burglary occurred," Jens said when asked about a theory that Borst may have encountered a burglar. After Tuesday's TV appeal, investigators had received at least 23 tips by Wednesday afternoon, but it was not immediately known if any of them contained useful information. Borst served as minister of health under then-Prime Minister Wim Kok between August 1994 and July 2002, helping push through legislation that made the Netherlands the first country in the world to legalize euthanasia. She briefly led the D66 party in 1998 and was named deputy prime minister in August of that year. She was given the honorary title Minister of State by Queen Beatrix in December 2012, making her only the second woman to have ever received the title.

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