

# Dutch police launch biggest-ever DNA hunt for boy's killer

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Dutch police on Friday launched the country's biggest ever DNA search, asking over 20,000 men to come forward as they seek to resolve the 1998 murder of a young boy.

"Some 21,500 men will receive a personal invitation in February to voluntarily give DNA samples," [police](#) said in a statement.

"It's the largest such DNA investigation in search of family ties ever carried out in The Netherlands."

Eleven-year-old Nicky Verstappen disappeared during the night of August 9, 1998, while on a summer camp at the Brunssumerheide nature reserve, near the German border.

His body was found the next evening, close to the camp site.

"This large-scale DNA research comes as a final attempt to answer the question who left traces" on Nicky's clothes, the police said.

They stressed the men, aged between 18 to 75, were not suspects in the murder, but could help "make a major contribution to finally shine a light on what happened to Nicky in August 1998".

The police were searching to see "if the DNA donor has any family ties to the person who left traces in the place where Nicky was found."

The men are all from Heibloem, where Nicky lived, and villages surrounding the [nature reserve](#), the public broadcaster NOS said.

Analysis of the DNA samples is likely to take between six to 12 months, and if any matches are found then further research will have to be carried out.

Several collection points will be set up and remain open for three weeks.

Since October police have been also carrying out a voluntary DNA drive among some 1,500 men who were regular visitors to the camp. But so far it has not turned up any clues.

Dutch police however may have cracked another cold case in December, when the collection of 130 DNA samples led to the arrest of a suspect in the 1992 [murder](#) and rape of a young woman in Zaandam, close to Amsterdam.

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