Dutch government sites attacked
Correspondents in Amsterdam
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SEVERAL Dutch government web sites remained offline on Tuesday after an attack by hackers protesting against unpopular policies of the right-wing cabinet, the government said. In a denial-of-service attack, the hackers continually made fake requests for information from the web sites, effectively shutting out legitimate users, a government statement said.

No security sites had been breached, and only public information sites were disabled, said Henk Brons, a spokesman for the government information agency known by its Dutch acronym RVD. Two sites carrying information about government institutions and their activities were affected.

A group calling itself the "Hacking Crew 10pht" claimed responsibility for the attacks on a Dutch web forum.

Mr Brons said he had no further details on the hackers, adding that police were investigating.

The sites crashed when they became overloaded Monday afternoon. Technicians were still working on the problem more than 24 hours later. Mr Brons could not say when the sites would be back online.

The Dutch government has come under public criticism over planned spending cuts in 2005 on health care and early retirement benefits. On Saturday, 200,000 staged a protest in Amsterdam, the largest in the Netherlands in 20 years.

The Associated Press

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