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14 January 1999

Further information on 315/98 (AFR 38/08/98, 22 December 1998) - Held incommunicado/fear of ill-treatment/prisoners of conscience

**MAURITANIA Ahmed Ould Daddah, opposition party leader,
Mohameden Ould Babah, opposition party leader,
Maître Mohameden Ould Ichiddou, human rights lawyer**

The three men named above remain under *résidence surveillée*, house arrest, outside of any legal process, in the remote town of Boumdeid. They are now reportedly under constant armed guard in a room so small that they cannot all lie down at the same moment, and they are denied access to news media. Between 16 December 1998 and 3 January 1999 they were allowed out to exercise only once. After 17 days in incommunicado detention, they were each allowed a visit by one family member. A delegation from the Mauritanian Bar Association had previously travelled to Boumdeid, but was denied access to the prisoners.

Boumdeid is remote, making access to medical facilities difficult. This raises concerns about the health of the prisoners, particularly Ahmed Ould Daddah, who has a heart condition.

There have been numerous demonstrations in the capital, Nouakchott, demanding the release of the three prisoners. These have been suppressed by the security forces and several women have reportedly been injured.

Maître Ichiddou is a supporter (not a member, as stated in UA 315/98) of the *Union des Forces Démocratiques - Ere Nouvelle* (UFD-EN), Union of Democratic Forces - New Era party, and he is a human rights lawyer.

The UFD-EN has cited appeals from Urgent Action participants in its daily electronic bulletin to back up its campaign for the release of the prisoners.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/ airmail letters in French or Arabic or in your own language:

- reiterating concern that Ahmed Ould Daddah, Mohameden Ould Babah and Maître Mohameden Ould Ichiddou remain under house arrest, with no legal basis, for their non-violent political activities;
- urging that as a minimum they are immediately allowed to consult doctors and lawyers of their choice and granted regular access to their families;
- stating that Amnesty International believes them to be prisoners of conscience and urging that they are immediately and unconditionally released;

- urging that the security forces respect the right of those demonstrating for the prisoners' release to exercise their right to freedom of expression and association;
- reminding the government of Mauritania of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 19: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression" and Article 20: "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association".

APPEALS TO:

Son Excellence

Monsieur Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya

Président de la République

La Présidence - BP 184

NOUAKCHOTT - Mauritania

Telegrams: Le President, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Telexes: 5580 PRIM MTN

Faxes: +222 2 56890 / +222 2 52636

Salutation: Monsieur Le President / Dear Mr President

Monsieur Cheikh El Avia Ould Mohamed Khouna

Ministre des Affaires étrangères et de la Coopération

Ministère des Affaires étrangères,

BP 230

NOUAKCHOTT - Mauritania

Telegrams:Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Faxes: +222 2 52860

Salutation: Monsieur Le Ministre / Dear Minister

Monsieur Dah Ould Abdel Jelil

Ministre de l'Intérieur, Postes et Télécommunications

Ministère de l'Intérieur

BP 195

NOUAKCHOTT

Mauritania

Telegrams: Ministre de l'Intérieur, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Faxes:+222 2 52020

Salutation: Monsieur Le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

La Tribune (newspaper), BP 6227, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Faxes:+222 2 50209

Union des Forces Démocratiques, BP 5290, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Faxes: +222 2 56570

E-mail:mailbox@ufd-en.org

Monsieur le Préfet

Boumdeid
Mauritania

and to diplomatic representatives of Mauritania accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 February 1999.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression"
Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

"Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association"
Article 20, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on
<http://www.amnesty.excite.com>