

PUBLIC

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Held incommunicado/fear of ill-treatment/  
prisoners of conscience

22 December 1998

MAURITANIA

Ahmed Ould Daddah, opposition party leader  
Mohameden Ould Babah, opposition party leader  
Maître Mohameden Ould Ichiddou, lawyer and opposition  
party member

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The three opposition activists named above have been detained for their non-violent political activities, and denied access to lawyers and their families. It is feared the government is holding them in an unofficial place of detention, where they risk ill-treatment. Amnesty International considers them prisoners of conscience.

Ahmed Ould Daddah is President of *Le Front des Partis d'opposition* (FPO), Opposition Parties Front, an umbrella group of opposition parties. He is also Secretary General of *l'Union des Forces Démocratiques - Ere nouvelle* (UFD-EN), Union of Democratic Forces - New Era, one of the four parties that make up the FPO. Mohameden Ould Babah is a member of the UFD-EN executive bureau. Maître Mohameden Ould Ichiddou is a UFD-EN member.

The men were arrested on 16 December 1998 in the capital, Nouakchott, apparently after allegations were made at an FPO meeting that the government was planning to accept Israeli nuclear waste for dumping. This allegation had appeared earlier in the Moroccan press.

The following day the Minister of the Interior announced that they were to be charged with "*atteinte aux intérêts du pays et à son image de marque à travers des accusations non fondées*", "attacking the national interest and the country's reputation by making baseless accusations". However, no charges have been brought, and the men are believed to have been moved to a remote unofficial place of detention in Boumdeid, at least 500 kilometres from the capital.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In late November 1998 the FPO announced it would boycott municipal elections due to take place in January 1999, because the government had refused to involve them in organising elections. In 1997 several opposition parties boycotted the Presidential elections when their demands for an independent electoral commission were not met.

Ahmed Ould Daddah was previously arrested in January 1995 and held as a prisoner of conscience for some two weeks. In January 1997 at least 10 other opposition politicians were arrested for their political activities.

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

- expressing concern that Ahmed Ould Daddah, Mohameden Ould Babah and Maître Mohameden Ould Ichiddou have been detained without charge for non-violent political activities, and urging that they are not ill-treated;
- urging the authorities to make public their place of detention and their legal status, and immediately grant them access to their families, and to doctors and lawyers of their choice;

- stating that Amnesty International believes them to be prisoners of conscience, and urging that they are immediately and unconditionally released;
- 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**

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 2 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*

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