



Mauritanian authorities must guarantee the protection of human rights defender Aminetou Mint El Moctar

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12 June 2014, Paris, Geneva, London; our organisations wish to express their deep concern about the safety of the human rights defender Aminetou Mint El Moctar, President of the Women's Association of Heads of Household (Association des femmes chefs de familles, AFCF), whose physical and psychological integrity is at present threatened in Mauritania. Our organisations also call upon the authorities to ensure, without delay, her protection and that of the members of her association.

Aminetou Mint El Moctar is facing a fatwa with death threats issued by Yehdhih Ould Dahi, leader of a radical Islamist group called Ahbab Errassoul (Friends of the Prophet) because she asked, in a newspaper article, for a fair trial for Cheikh Ould Mkheitir, a young 28 year old man charged with apostasy and currently being held in the Nouadhibou Prison. "Whoever kills her or rips out both her eyes will be rewarded by Allah," says the fatwa, published online on 5 June 2014. Her contact details, those of her association and the number plate of her car were also subsequently made public.

Aminetou Mint El Moctar tried to file a complaint on 6 June 2014 concerning this call for murder. The police authority refused, advising her instead to discuss with Yehdhih Ould Dahi.

Our organisations strongly condemn the death threats made against this human rights defender, recognised at both national and international levels¹, and are concerned about the lack of protection received by Aminetou Mint El Moctar that could be offered by relevant authorities. To date, no governmental authority has, to our knowledge, condemned the fatwa of death threats against this human rights defender and no action has been taken to ensure her safety or that of her association. Only members of the civil society have made themselves heard on this issue and have come to the defence of Aminetou Mint El Moctar.

In accordance with the Declaration on human rights defenders adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1998 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political

¹ The AFCF is a human rights organisation created in 1999 that works in favour of women and children, particularly with regard to the fight against slavery. Aminetou Mint El Moctar was awarded the Human Rights Prize of the French Republic in 2006. In 2010, she received an award for her fight against modern slavery from the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Rights, ratified by Mauritania in 2004, the Mauritanian authorities must ensure, in all circumstances, the physical and psychological integrity of the human rights defender Aminetou Mint El Moctar. They must also put an immediate end to the death threats made against her and take all necessary steps to ensure that the perpetrator of these acts be brought to justice.