

# URGENT ACTION

## ANTI-SLAVERY ACTIVISTS RELEASED

**The seven members of the anti-slavery organisation IRA Mauritania, who remained in detention after their court hearing on 27 June have been provisionally released.**

The seven activists were detained at the Central Prison in Nouakchott after they had been arrested at the end of April for protesting against the writing of Islamic Scholars.

They were accused of “offence to national security”, “contempt to good morals”, “management of a non-authorised organisation” and “crime of Apostasy” for Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, the president of IRA-Mauritania.

They have been extremely weakened by these 4 months in detention, especially Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid and Boumediene Ould Bata. They were all released on 3 September after a request for provisional release by their lawyers.

**Many thanks to all those who sent appeals. No further action is required.**

This is the third update of UA 127/12. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR38/005/2012/en>



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Eleven members of IRA-Mauritanie (*Initiative pour la Résurgence du mouvement Abolitionniste en Mauritanie*, Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement in Mauritania) were arrested on 28 April after the burning of several books written by Islamic scholars, in Nouakchott, the capital city of Mauritania.

**Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid** has said that they had burned the books because of their concerns at references they made which according to them, offered a justification for slavery.

The Mauritanian authorities have often placed restrictions on freedom of expression in Mauritania. Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Mauritania is a state party, protects freedom of expression, which includes “freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds”. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has stated that this right “embraces even expression that may be regarded as deeply offensive.” Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, freedom of expression may only be subject to restrictions that satisfy the conditions laid out in Article 19 of the Covenant.

Slavery in Mauritania was officially abolished in 1981. Since 2007, slavery has been recognized as a crime in Mauritanian law. However, the practice remains and IRA-Mauritanie and other organizations, including SOS-Esclaves, have been reporting and denouncing cases of slavery.

Names: Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, Yacoub Diarra, Ahmed Hamdy Ould Hamat Fall, Abidine Ould Salem, El Id Ould Lemlih, Oubeid Ould Imijine and Boumediene Ould Bata.

Gender m/f: all male

Further information on UA: 127/12 Index: AFR 38/007/2012 Issue Date: 5 September 2012

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