

URGENT ACTION

BLOGGERS FREED ON BAIL STILL FACING CHARGES

Bloggers Cheikh Ould Jiddou and Abderrahmane Weddady were released on bail on 3 June. However, they are still facing the charge of 'malicious accusation' and their travel documents and national identification cards are being held by the economic crimes police. The two bloggers were arrested and detained on 22 March after posting comments on Facebook condemning corruption.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz
President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
Office of the president
BP 184
Nouakchott, Mauritania

Your Excellency,

I welcome the release of bloggers **Cheikh Ould Jiddou** and **Abderrahmane Weddady** who were freed on bail on 3 June.

The two bloggers were arbitrarily arrested on 22 March by the economic crimes police in Nouakchott. This is after they posted comments on Facebook condemning corruption. Their comments came after media articles were published alleging that some Mauritanian officials had acquired wealth illegally and stashed it abroad.

They were detained by the economic crimes police until 27 March, when they were taken to the prosecutor of West Nouakchott for questioning. Afterwards, they were transferred to the Central prison of Nouakchott.

Despite their release, the two bloggers are still facing the charge of 'malicious accusation'. Also, the economic crimes police are holding on to their travel documents and national identification cards which they confiscated on 7 March.

I urge you to ensure that:

- The charges against Cheikh Ould Jiddou and Abderrahmane Weddady are dropped as they stem solely from the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression;
- Their travel and identification documents be returned to them;
- The right to freedom of expression is fully respected, protected and fulfilled in Mauritania.

Yours sincerely,

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 3 June, the Nouakchott Court ordered the release on bail of two high-profile Mauritanian bloggers, Abderrahmane Weddady and Cheikh Ould Jiddou.

Cheikh Ould Jiddou and Abderrahmane Weddady were arrested on 22 March by the Economic Crimes Police in Mauritania's capital Nouakchott, charged with 'malicious accusation', and detained at the central prison.

Before their arrest, international and national media including Al-Jazeera, Al-Quds and Al-Arabiya published articles alleging that authorities in the United Arab Emirates had frozen an account containing two billion dollars that was set up by persons close to the Mauritanian government. The two bloggers posted comments on Facebook condemning the alleged corruption based on information shared in the media articles.

Although Abderrahmane and Cheikh Jiddou have been released, they cannot travel and cannot vote in the upcoming 22 June presidential elections as their national ID cards and passports are still confiscated by the authorities. They can also be jailed at any moment as the charge against them is still pending.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: [FRENCH, ARABIC]

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [24 July 2019]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Cheikh Jiddou (he/his); Abderrahmane Weddady (he/his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr38/0208/2019/en/>