

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 38/001/2004

7 January 2004

Further Information on UA 333/03 (AFR 38/010/2003, 14 November 2003) and follow-ups (AFR 38/011/2003, 19 November 2003 and AFR 38/013/2003, 28 November 2003) Torture or ill-treatment/ Incommunicado detention/Absence of medical treatment and new concern: Unfair trial

MAURITANIA

Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla (m)
Sidi Mohamed Ould Haidalla (m) - his first son
Sid'Ahmed Ould Haidalla (m) – his second son
Habba Ould Mohamed Vall (m)
Mohamed Yehdhi Ould Breideleil (m)
Ismaël Ould Amar (m)
Cheikh El Moctar Ould Horma Babana (m)
Mohamed Said Ould Zergane (m)
At least eight others

Sid'Ahmed Ould Haidalla, the son of former presidential candidate Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla, is being detained at a prison in the town of Aleg, which is about 350km southeast of the capital Nouakchott. He is still being subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment amounting to torture as his feet are said to be constantly tied, restricting his movement and causing him pain. He has been charged with "conspiracy and rebellion against public order" (*association de malfaiteurs et rebellion à l'ordre public*) in connection with a case which began in 2002. A request for his provisional release was rejected by Aleg's investigating judge, though his lawyers have lodged an appeal against this decision.

On 28 December 2003, Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla and eight other detainees were found guilty of crimes related to state security by the criminal court in Nouakchott. Five received suspended sentences of five years' imprisonment, as well as a fine, and were also deprived of civil and political rights such as the right to vote or to stand for public office. Four received suspended sentences of two years' imprisonment and various fines. Independent observers noted several irregularities at the trial.

The remaining detainees prosecuted on the same charges were acquitted.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French, Arabic or your own language:

- expressing concern at the reports of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment amounting to torture inflicted on Sid'Ahmed Ould Haidalla, who is being held at a prison in the town of Aleg;
- calling for an immediate and impartial inquiry into the allegations of torture, for the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- expressing concern that the trial of the nine people convicted, including Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla, does not appear to conform to international standards;
- calling for the sentences against them to be overturned at appeal.

APPEALS TO: (It may be very difficult to send faxes to Mauritania.)

President of the Republic

Président de la République

Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya

Présidence de la République

B.P. 184
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Telegram: **President de la Republique, Nouakchott, Mauritania**
Salutation: **Monsieur le Président / Dear Mr President**

Minister for the Interior, Post and Telecommunications
Ministre de l'Intérieur, des Postes et Télécommunications
M. Kaba Ould Aléwa
B.P. 195
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Telegram: **Ministre de l'Interieur, des Postes et Telecommunications, Nouakchott, Mauritania**
Salutation: **Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister**

Minister of Justice
Ministre de la Justice
M. Diabira Bakary
B.P. 350
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Telegram: **Ministre de la Justice, Nouakchott, Mauritania**
Fax: **+ 222 525 7002 (if someone answers, say "je voudrais envoyer un fax, s'il vous plaît - I'd like to send a fax, please")**
Salutation: **Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister**

COPIES 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 18 February 2004.