

UA 315/98

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

**Maitre** 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. *Maitre* 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 *Maitre* 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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