

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 38/013/2003

28 November 2003

**Further Information on UA 333/03 (AFR 38/010/2003, 14 November 2003) and follow-up (AFR 38/011/2003, 19 November 2003) Fear of torture or ill-treatment/ Incommunicado detention/Absence of medical treatment**

**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 (names unknown)**

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On 23 November, the at least 15 detainees held at Beyla prison in the capital Nouakchott were charged with crimes related to state security. Judicial authorities have announced that their trial will take place imminently. According to reports, it could take place on 1 December. They could be sentenced to up to a life term of forced labour (*travaux forcés à perpétuité*).

The detainees have been granted the right to meet relatives and lawyers after more than two weeks' incommunicado detention. However, the lawyers were only allowed access to the case files on 27 November. Sidi Mohamed Ould Haidalla has told his lawyers that he was beaten during interrogation while he was detained in the Central Police Station. He was also reportedly deprived of sleep and subjected to the "jaguar" torture technique, which involves suspending the victim upside down from a metal bar and beating the soles of the feet.

Sid'Ahmed Ould Haidalla, brother of Sidi Mohamed Ould Haidalla and son of Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla, a candidate in the recent presidential election, is currently detained in prison in the town of Aleg, about 350km southeast of Nouakchott. He is still reportedly 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. The charges against him are not clear.

The detainees have apparently still not been granted access to medical treatment which they reportedly require urgently, despite repeated requests.

The 16, possibly more men were detained around the time of the presidential elections on 7 November, on suspicion of planning a coup d'état. President Maaouya Ould Sidi Mohammed Taya was re-elected, although there have been widespread allegations of fraud.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French or 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 Aleg prison, and calling for all detainees to be protected from torture, ill-treatment, or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in detention;
- calling for an immediate and impartial inquiry into allegations that Sidi Mohamed Ould Haidalla has been tortured in detention, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;

- acknowledging that the at least fifteen detainees at Beyla prison in Nouakchott have been charged with state security offences, requesting that the authorities to uphold their rights to fair trial including the right to adequate time and facilities to prepare a defence;
- calling on the authorities to grant all detainees, particularly Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla, Habba Ould Mohamed Vall, Ismaël Ould Amar and Mohamed Yehdhi Ould Breideleil, immediate access to the medical attention they require.

**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**

**Fax :** **+ 222 525 36 61**

**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 70 02 (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 10 January 2004.