URGENT ACTION

THIRTEEN ANTI-SLAVERY ACTIVISTS CONVICTED

13 Mauritanian anti-slavery activists who are members of the anti-slavery organization Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement in Mauritania (IRA) have been sentenced to between three and 15 years in prison. Amnesty International believes that they are prisoners of conscience.

13 Mauritanian anti-slavery activists were convicted for the charges of rebellion, use of violence, attacks against the police and agents of justice and membership of an unrecognized organization on 18 August.

Amadou Tidjane Diop, Abdallahi Abdou Diop, Abdallahi Maatalla Seck, Moussa Biram and **Jemal Beylil** were sentenced to 15 years in prison. **Balla Touré** and **Hamady Lehbouss** were sentenced to five years in prison. **Mohamed Daty, Khatri Rahel Mbareck Ousmane Lô, Ousmane Anne, Mohamed Jaroullah** and **Ahmed Hamarvall** were sentenced to three years in prison. Their lawyer will appeal the convictions.

The 13 anti-slavery activists were all arrested between 29 June and 9 July after a protest by communities who had been living in a slum in the area of Gazra in Nouakchott for at least 20 years who resisted being forcefully moved to another neighbourhood. None of the activists arrested participated in the organisation of the protest nor were they present at the protest.

The prosecutor has requested their transfer to the prison of Nouadhibou (500 km from Nouakchott where they are currently held).

Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience, who have been convicted and detained solely due to their peaceful human rights work.

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to quash the convictions and sentences against the 13 anti-slavery activists and immediately and unconditionally release them as they have been convicted and detained solely for their peaceful human rights work;
- Urging them to ensure that, pending their release, the activists are not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment and have regular access to their families and a lawyer of their choice and to any medical attention they require;
- Urging them to ensure that anti-slavery activists and other human rights defenders in Mauritania are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities free of restrictions and without fear of reprisals;
- Urging them not to transfer the prisoners to the prison of Nouadhibou, far from their relatives.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 OCTOBER 2016 TO:

President
General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz
President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
Presidency BP 184 Nouakchott
Mauritania
Fax: +222 45 25 98 01
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister Of Justice
Me. Brahim Ould Daddah
Ministry of Justice
BP 350 Nouakchott
Mauritania

Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 159/16. Further information: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr38/4504/2016/en/

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

URGENT ACTION

THIRTEEN ANTI-SLAVERY ACTIVISTS CONVICTED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Slavery in Mauritania was officially abolished in 1981 and has been recognized as a crime in domestic law since 2007. However, the practice remains and IRA-Mauritania and other organizations, including SOS-Esclaves, have been reporting and denouncing cases of slavery. The Mauritanian authorities often restrict the freedom of expression of human rights defenders and organizations that are campaigning against slavery.

In January 2015, the Court of Rosso sentenced two members of IRA, Brahim Bilal Ramdane and Biram Dah Abeid, a former presidential candidate and president of the IRA-Mauritania, to two years in prison for belonging to an unrecognized organization, participating in an unauthorized assembly and assaulting security officers. IRA members have been requesting authorization for their organization since 2008 and it is still not recognized by Mauritanian authorities. The activists were campaigning against slavery and raising awareness among the local population of the land rights of people of slave descent. Their sentences were upheld by the Appeal Court of Aleg in August 2015. The Supreme Court released the anti-slavery activists on 17 May 2016 after 18 months in jail.

In the past five years, Biram Dah Abeid (anti-slavery activist) has been imprisoned three times.

Name: Amadou Tidjane Diop, Abdallahi Abdou Diop, Abdallahi Maatalla Seck, Moussa Biram, Jemal Beylil, Balla Touré, Hamady Lehbouss, Mohamed Daty, Khatri Rahel Mbareck Ousmane Lô, Ousmane Anne, Mohamed Jaroullah and Ahmed Hamarvall

Gender: m

Further information on UA: 159/16 Index: AFR 38/4703/2016 Issue Date: 5 September 2016