

**Question for written answer P-010225/2014**  
**to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**  
Rule 130  
**Charles Tannock (ECR) and Mark Demesmaeker (ECR)**

Subject: VP/HR - Arrest of leading anti-slavery activist Biram Dah Abeid

The leading Mauritanian anti-slavery activist and opposition politician Biram Dah Abeid was arrested on 11 November 2014 during a peaceful protest near the town of Rosso, together with eight other activists.

The government has since continued its crackdown on the anti-slavery movement, and imprisoned further members of Dah Abeid's organisation IRA-Mauritania. Torture is alleged in some cases. These actions increase suspicions that the Mauritanian authorities are attempting to silence their critics who highlight Mauritania's deeply inadequate record on fighting modern-day slavery: despite the 2007 legislation, this week's Global Slavery Index confirms that Mauritania has the highest proportion of slaves in the world.

1. Is the VP/HR aware of the arrest of Biram Dah Abeid and other activists, and of the Mauritanian Government's renewed crackdown on the anti-slavery movement?
2. Will she call on the Mauritanian Government to release the activists, and emphasise to the authorities their obligations to permit free and peaceful assembly and freedom of speech, in line with UN conventions and the EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement?
3. Will she step up the Commission's efforts to encourage concrete action against slavery by the Mauritanian Government, specifically by implementing its own legislation and pursuing a clear roadmap towards full abolition?