



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Plenary sitting*

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16.12.2014

B8-0386/2014

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on on Mauritania, in particular the case of Biram Dah Arbeid  
(2014/2999(RSP))

**Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Ignazio Corrao**  
on behalf of the EFDD Group

**B8-0386/2014**

**European Parliament resolution on on Mauritania, in particular the case of Biram Dah  
Arbeid  
(2014/2999(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its resolution on the situation of human rights in the Sahel region of 22 October 2013,
  - having regard to the Council conclusions on implementation of the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel of 17 March 2014,
  - having regard to the statements by the Vice-President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy of 25 June 2014 on the presidential elections in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania,
  - having regard to the UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery - Mission to Mauritania of 26 August 2014,
  - having regard to Statement by Ms. Gulnara Shahinian, Special rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, its causes and consequences, at the 24th session of the Human Rights Council
  - having regard to Mauritanian Slavery Act and mainly its articles 2 and 3 prohibiting all forms of discrimination against persons “alleged to be a slave”,
  - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the human rights and security situation in Mauritania has deteriorated in recent months due to the adverse climatic conditions, unsecured border, poverty, instability resulting from the growing presence of Islamic radical movements;
- B. whereas despite the ratification by the State party of the main International human rights instruments including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, (2007); the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, on 3 October 2012; The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, on 3 October 2012, the situation has weakened;
- C. whereas despite the legal abolition of slavery in Mauritania and the Government's refusal to acknowledge its persistence, slavery remains endemic, accounting for between 10% and 20% of the population
- D. whereas several attempts have been made to abolish slavery in Mauritania through different scheme of compensation according to the *sharia* law

- E. whereas the general difficulties experienced by rights-holders in their access to the judicial sector and the sociocultural obstacles encountered when filing cases of slavery, the lack of effective compensation for discrimination and of support for the integration of victims beyond a criminal justice approach
- F. whereas the recent Slavery Act does not cover all forms of slavery in Mauritania excluding any form of serfdom
- G. whereas a number of immigrant were subject to kidnappings and slavery in Mauritania and salafis and jihadis groups are on the rise, leading to a islamisation of the society and growing cases of discrimination against minorities;
- H. whereas the misinterpretation of religion to justify slavery and slavery-like practices is a powerful means to keep slaves in subordination and to perpetuate manifestations of slavery;
- I. whereas the death penalty is still provided for in the Criminal Code and it is not restricted to the most serious crimes and is imposed following convictions based on confessions obtained under torture;
- L. whereas several reports of killings of individuals following repression by the security forces during various demonstrations and strike in the country;
- M. whereas already on 28 April 2012, Biram Dah Abeid, the president of the Mauritanian anti-slavery movement Initiative (IRA) was arrested in Nouakchott, along with some other members, after he burned several pages of a Malikite theological book, that asserts that slavery is a practice encompassed by the Islamic faith;
- N. whereas on November 11, 2014, Biram Dab Abeid, was beaten and arrested again for his participation in an anti-slavery protest and remain imprisoned today
- O. whereas on the same day, IRA – Mauritania’s offices in Nouakchott were raided and sealed off by the Mauritanian authorities. IRA – Mauritania members held solidarity rallies elsewhere in Mauritania protesting these detentions, and were themselves arrested, bringing the estimated number of individuals arrested to 21
1. Is particularly concerned by the human rights and security situation in the country and stresses the importance of reinforcing effective good governance and the State of law;
  2. Strongly condemns any form of slavery and unjustified detentions
  3. Urges the HR/VP to raise the subject of the arrest of Mr. Biram Dah Abeid with the Mauritanian authorities; calls on Mauritanian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Biram Dah Abeid granting him without delay visitation rights and access to adequate legal support;
  4. calls on the Government of Mauritania to ensure the application and implementation of the Mauritanian rule of law, specifically the anti-slavery laws of 1905, 1961, 1981 and 2007, the law of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders of 1998 and the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights and to ratify ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011;

5. Calls on the government of Mauritania, without delay, to stop using violence against civilians participating in peaceful public protests and media campaigns in support of Mr Biram Dah Abeid. Calls on the Government of Mauritania to guarantee the peaceful exercise of the freedoms of expression, association and assembly in line with its international obligations

6. Invites the HR/VP to elaborate in coordination with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States a comprehensive approach towards the region based on targeted development and human rights strategies to prevent slavery, persecutions and imprisoning. Stress the need for affirmative action concerning former slaves given that land ownership and land tenure as central to ensuring a sustainable livelihood, effectively “freeing” former slaves and preventing voluntary servitude.

7. Calls on Mauritanian authorities to raise awareness, peoples’ attitudes and beliefs towards slavery at all levels of society. Anti-slavery Sensitization campaign shall be conducted to educate victims of slavery about their rights and the remedies available to enable them to pursue legal action and exercise their rights.

8. Invites the HR/PV to support in coordination with Mauritanian authorities mandatory, specialized training seminars for judges and representatives of local authorities, gendarmeries, police, the media and non-governmental organizations in order to respect the right of demonstration, to incentive slavery cases to the trial and to ensure that allegations of slavery and slavery-like practices are effectively investigated and prosecuted.

9. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.