



### A Call For Increased Foreign Policy and Action

As the world celebrates both International Human Rights Day on December 10th and the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Abolition Institute remains seriously concerned by the increasing repression against anti-slavery activists in Mauritania. This concern is heightened by the manner in which Mauritanian security personnel recently escorted newly-elected Parliamentarian, Biram Dah Abeid (President of the ***Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA)***) to the emergency room of the National Cardiology Center of Nouakchott, Mauritania. At the time of escort, Mr. Abeid was in need of urgent medical assistance to address escalating heart problems. It is unconscionable that, in light of the seriousness of his health condition, he remained handcuffed while under heavy security. Abolition Institute stresses that the international community should not tolerate such inhumane and degrading treatment. Note, Mr. Abeid was arbitrarily arrested on August 7, 2018, yet successfully elected into the National Assembly as a member of Parliament on September 1, 2018 – even while incarcerated. Under the rule of law, Mr. Abeid should have received protection by parliamentary immunity; but, in this case, such was not the outcome.

According to Honorable Coumba Dada (also a member of the National Assembly and Vice President of ***IRA***), despite his deteriorating health, Mr. Abeid has been denied adequate medical assistance. During the December 3, 2018 National Assembly Plenary Session, she vigorously criticized the legislators for condoning the plight of Honorable Biram Dah Abeid and launched an SOS to protect his health and save his life. A strong response including swift action from the international community is necessary.

### **The time is Now!**

Let it also be noted that five years ago, on December 10, 2013, Mr. Abeid received the United Nations Human Rights Award in recognition of his outstanding contribution in the struggle to eradicate slavery and defend human rights in Mauritania. Considering the illicit nature of his current detention coupled with Mr. Abeid's deteriorating health, we urge His Excellency Antóniío Gutierres, Secretariat General of the United Nations and the international community to use their powerful influence to press for the immediate release of Honorable Biram Dah Abeid, as well as his colleague Abdallahi Houssein Messaoud. Simultaneously, we appeal for the release of Senator Mohamed Ould Ghadda and Mohamed Cheikh Ould Mkhaitir, the Mauritanian blogger whose release was ordered after being wrongfully sentenced to death for apostasy.

While we appreciate the recent US Government's decision to vacate Mauritania's eligibility for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) because of ongoing slavery and human rights violations, we continue to urge the US Government to exert greater pressure on Mauritania.

Sponsoring organizations:

Abolition Institute, Trinity United Church of Christ - Chicago, Masjid Al-Taqwa, Zakat Foundation.