

NON C'È PACE SENZA GIUSTIZIA
NO PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST ANTI-SLAVERY ACTIVISTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

29 February 2024 14:00 – 15:00
Room XXV, Palais des Nations
United Nations Office in Geneva

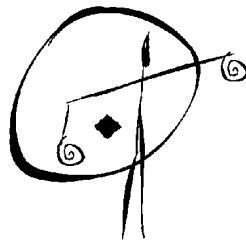
This side event is intended as an opportunity for prominent representatives of the Mauritanian anti-slavery movement to brief United Nations Member States, relevant UN Bodies and Special Procedures, NGOs and other interested parties and provide an in-person update on the situation on the ground which continue to represent a blatant violation of Human Rights which need to be addressed by the international community to find justice and redress for victims and accountability for perpetrators.

Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that ‘No one shall be held in slavery or servitude: slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms’. Slavery was the first human rights issue to arouse wide international concern. Yet it continues today and slavery-like practices also remain a grave breach of human rights and persistent problem, including in Mauritania.

In the absence of official figures, anti-slavery organisations working in Mauritania estimate there to be approximately 100,000 persons living in slavery in the country. The Haratin community, who accounts for more than 40 per cent of the country’s population, are the main victims of slavery, continuing to suffer from economic dependence and political exclusion.

Despite the adoption of an anti-slavery law in 2015, which criminalise slavery and provide for the establishment of special courts to try slavery cases, the law remains only partially implemented and the courts remain largely inactive. The legal instruments established pursuant to the law are still rarely used, which constituted an obstacle to its implementation. Several cases of slavery reported to the authorities had been reclassified as cases of labour disputes or exploitation of minors or had been resolved through out-of-court settlements.

Anti-slavery NGOs and human rights defenders, including activists, members of the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA-Mauritania) and specifically United Nations Human Rights Prize Laureate and Member of the Mauritanian Parliament Hon Biram Dah Abeid, continue to be victims of judicial harassment, public slander and political attacks, as exemplified by the recent stripping of parliamentary immunity to Hon. Abeid on 20 February 2024.



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PROGRAM

Chair: Tara O’Grady, President, No Peace Without Justice

Panel: Jeddou Abdel Wahab, anti-slavery activist
Vincent Diko, anti-slavery activist
Hamadi Diarra, anti-slavery activist

Questions and Answers

Closing remarks: Marco Perduca, Board member, No Peace Without Justice

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