

Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz
President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
Office of the president
BP 184
Nouakchott, Mauritania

Your Excellency,

I am concerned about the arrest of bloggers Cheikh Ould Jiddou and Abderrahmane Weddady.

The two bloggers were arbitrarily arrested on 22 March by the economic crimes police in Nouakchott. This is after they posted comments on Facebook condemning corruption. Their comments came after media articles were published alleging that some Mauritanian officials had acquired wealth illegally and stashed it abroad.

They were detained by the economic crimes police until 27 March, when they were taken to the prosecutor of West Nouakchott for questioning. Afterwards, they were transferred to the Central prison of Nouakchott. They have been charged with 'malicious accusation'.

Previously, the two had been questioned over the Facebook comments by the economic crimes police on 7 March and had their national ID cards and passports confiscated after the questioning.

I urge you to ensure that:

- Cheikh Ould Jiddou and Abderrahmane Weddady are immediately and unconditionally released as they have been detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom expression;
- Their identification documents are returned to them immediately;
- The right to freedom of expression is fully respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled in Mauritania.

Yours sincerely,