



President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz
Secrétariat Général de la Présidence
B.P. 184, Nouakchott
Islamic Republic of Mauritania

January 16, 2018

Dear Honorable Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz,

We, the undersigned, humbly appeal to your mercy, compassion, and influence in requesting the immediate release of Mr. Mohamed Cheikh Ould Mohamed M'khaitir and to halt the newest appeal of Mauritanian prosecutors for the death penalty to be issued again, despite his declaration of repentance in 2014, and paying due attention to the fact that his imprisonment contradicts Mauritania's most basic human rights obligations but above all, Islamic values.

Furthermore, we call on the government of Mauritania to urgently revisit and repeal the apostasy law, including its new amendment of November 16, 2017 of Article 306 of the Penal Code, that will see the death penalty applied to "every Muslim, man or woman, who ridicules or insults Allah, his messenger, his teachings, or any of his prophets, even if [the accused] repents".

Recognizing that the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the prophet, peace be upon him, are the ultimate foundation of an Islamic society, we note with significance that his detainment and the new amendment are in complete contradiction to the teachings of the Prophet, peace be upon him, who has been ridiculed, mocked, insulted and attacked numerous times, always maintained his grace and dignity by extending his mercy to those who insulted him: It has been reported that when the Prophet, peace be upon him, had suffered a great deal at the hands of the people of Taif, his reply to Angel Jibrael who offered "to bury the city between two mountains", was that he "did not wish destruction for them because maybe their offspring would proclaim the religion of truth".

Moreover, legal precedent can be drawn from the recent ruling of Morocco's High Religious Committee, which noted that the death penalty for apostasy has been served as a political tool, and not religious purposes, and was only reserved to those found guilty of treason in early Islamic society. In the same vein, we implore you, as leader of an Islamic society, to consider with importance the moral and ethical obligation that Muslims bear to prevent the unjust killing of another human being: "That if anyone slew a person... it would be as if he slew the whole people. And if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people." (Qur'an 5:32).

Lastly, we would remind you of the narration "Beware of the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between it and Allah." and to grant Mr. Mohamed Cheikh Ould Mohamed M'khaitir's please and prayers.

As President of Mauritania, we implore you to uphold the Qur'anic principles of mercy and forgiveness in consideration of Mr. M'khaitir's case, and to repudiate the new amendment of Article 306 to facilitate repentance as: "whoever shows patience and forgives, indeed that is of the actions recommended by Allah" (Quran 42:43).

We welcome your response and to working with you in securing the release of M'khaitir. I can be reached at aizat@aim.ngo.

Sincerely,

Mr. Aizat Shamsuddin
Chair, Alliance of Inclusive Muslims