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Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

Brussels, 6 September 2018

Dear Federica,

I am writing to you regarding the arrest of Mr Biram Dah Abeid, a Mauritanian political activist, leader of the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement in Mauritania (IRA-Mauritanie).

Last time Mr Biram Dah Abeid was arrested was in 2014, when he ran for Presidency and came in second. He got a two-year sentence on false charges of “inciting trouble” and belonging to an “unrecognized organisation”. He was released 20 months later, in May 2016.

Now, his arrest comes in a similar timing: Mr Abeid was arrested on the past 7 August, the same day when he was supposed to receive an official acknowledgment of his candidacy to the legislative elections taking place on 1 September. Moreover, there was the possibility that Mr Biram Dah Abeid would be a candidate to the 2019 Presidential election.

It took 6 days for Mr Abeid to be indicted by a judge, in charges of “incitement to hatred and violence”. The accusation comes from a journalist who says he was threatened by him.

I therefore urge you and the EEAS to monitor the situation closely and clarify whether these charges are false and politically motivated. Mr Biram Dah Abeid has been a very important actor in the fight for human rights in Mauritania, especially regarding slavery. He should be immediately released if the charges are false, and able to present his candidacy to the 2019 Presidential elections.

*Best regards,
Ana Gomes*

Ana Gomes

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