



Mr. President,

Dear guests,

The Association of the Mauritania Haratins in Europe (A.H.M.E) draws attention to the discrimination suffered by the Haratin community regarding access to decent employment.

Slavery victims, as soon as they brake free from their slave masters, are abandoned on their own without qualifications. The State does not train Haratins in trades which allow them to enter the job market.

Haratins who wish to start a business do not receive loans from public or private banks. This is because the country's economy, the financial organisations, the public and private companies, the safety apparatus and the executive and legislative power are under the control of the Arab-Berber elite.

The Haratins have endured Arab-Berber slavery for many centuries. Ethnic groups and the Arabic, Berber, Haalpoular, Soninke and Wolof people are recognised in the constitution of 20 July 1991. The Haratin group legitimately claims the same rights in this matter.

Castes exists within all the Mauritanian ethnic groups, namely the Arabic, Berber, Haalpoular, Soninke and Wolof ones. Let's take the example of the Moors (Arabs and Berbers), there are discriminated castes which are the griots (*iggawins*) whose function lies in the praises and music for the benefit of the upper castes, the blacksmiths (*lil-allimins*) who make objects

useful to society, and finally, the Haritins, slaves who serve Moorish masters.

The black Mauritanian ethnic groups harbour the same social structures and are also victims of social and political discrimination. The last ones in the caste hierarchy are the Maccubé, slaves of the Haalpoulars; the Komo, slaves of the Soninkes; and the Diam, slaves of the Wolof.

The Association of the Mauritania Haratins in Europe (A.H.M.E) requests the Mauritanian State to:

- 1- Recognise the Haratin community in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and their language, *Hassaniya*. Nowadays, the Arabisation of Mauritanian society tends to make the Hassaniya dialect, the only language mastered by the Haratins, disappear;
- 2- Reinforce Law 0031-2015 which incriminates slavery through support measures: creation of a mixed brigade responsible for supporting the abolitionists in their missions to free slaves all over Mauritania;
- 3- Guarantee the continuity of slavery-related litigations before the courts, despite the possible pressure exercised by slavery supporters, and ensuring, especially, that the justice system is impartial;
- 4- Create hospitality structures for victims, financed and managed by the State. Following their release from slavery, the victims are impoverished and require comprehensive care. Also, professional training centres to ensure effective integration of Haratins into Mauritanian society;
- 5- Build schools, water wells, health centres and cooperatives financed by the State, in order to offer Haratins coming from Adwaba, Moorish camps and slums, the possibility to lead a decent life;
- 6- Set up a positive discrimination system for the Haratins to facilitate their integration into the public and private sectors, thus allowing them to catch up with the other ethnic groups;

- 7- Become a fair, equal and inseparable Republic, favouring the equal sharing of power and wealth for the benefit of all components of Mauritanian society;
- 8- Guarantee the efficiency of the education of all kids aged 3 to 16, as well as the participation in national service from the age of 18, thus offering professional opportunities for the future;
- 9- Include slavery and racism as crimes against humanity in textbooks, and make the teaching of them mandatory;
- 10- Legally and politically recognise the social actors, political parties and movements, trade unions and associations which work to improve citizens' living conditions;
- 11- Establish health insurance and a minimum income for all Mauritanian citizens to guarantee a standard of living which will let them cover their basic needs.
- 12- Equally include Haratins in the enrolment process by ensuring that all members of the community, including the rebellious adwaba, benefit from it so that they do not become stateless in their own country. The absence of proof of ID makes access to education for Haratin children impossible.
- 13- Stop the expropriation of lands farmed by the adwaba inhabitants.

Traditionally, the latter are used for agricultural production for the benefit of slave masters who appropriate a significant share of the annual production. New facts show that the slave masters sell the lands to the highest bidder, often Middle Eastern inhabitants, or transform them into modern agricultural farms. This situation leads to the dispossession of the Haratins who lose the lands which they have always farmed and which were their only source of income.

Due to their cultural, social, political and economic identity, the Haratins are discriminated on work and descent, a stigmatising and degrading status which affects many other communities all over the world. It is therefore vital to act in a concerted and

immediate manner to tackle the complex challenges faced by the Haratins. The recommendations made aim to eliminate any obstacles which hinder their access to fundamental rights and their full participation in Mauritania social and economic life.

Thank you.

Association of the Mauritania Haratins in Europe (A.H.M.E)

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