

18 May 2016

Update: Mauritania – Release of Human Rights Defenders Biram Dah Abeid and Brahim Bilal Ramdhane

On 17 May 2016, the Supreme Court of Mauritania ruled for the immediate release of anti-slavery human rights defenders Mr **Biram Dah Abeid** and Mr **Brahim Bilal Ramdhane**.

[Biram Dah Abeid](#) and [Brahim Bilal Ramdhane](#) are President and Vice President of *Initiative pour la Résurgence du Mouvement Abolitionniste - IRA* (Initiative for the Resurgence of an Abolitionist Movement), respectively. *IRA* works for the eradication of slavery in Mauritania. In 2013, Biram Dah Abeid received the Front Line Defenders Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk as well as, subsequently, the UN Human Rights Prize.

In the ruling on 17 May 2016, the Supreme Court judge noted that the charges brought against the two human rights defenders should incur a maximum one year prison sentence. Biram Dah Abeid and Brahim Bilal Ramdhane were arrested and arbitrarily detained on [11 November 2014](#). The human rights defenders were sentenced to two years imprisonment on [15 January 2015](#) on charges of “illegal assembly and rebellion”, “encouraging rebellion” and “refusing to comply with the orders of administrative authorities”. As they had already served an eighteen-month sentence, the judge ruled for their immediate release.

Front Line Defenders welcomes the release of human rights defenders Biram Dah Abeid and Brahim Bilal Ramdhane, and calls on the Mauritanian authorities to guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in the country are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities, without fear of reprisals and free of all undue restrictions.