

2013-01-21

## Fråga-svar

### Mauretanien. Slaveri

#### Fråga

1. Hur ser situationen ut för slavar i Mauretanien?
2. Hur skulle situationen se ut för en återvändande som tillhör wolof folket?

#### Svar

##### 1. Situationen för slavar i Mauretanien

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), *Mauritania: Anti-slavery law still tough to enforce*, 2012-12-11:

"Government reluctant to focus on slavery SOS Enclaves says this is the government's responsibility, but many in government are reluctant to focus on slavery, they say, as they do not see it as a widespread problem."

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"For anti-slavery campaigners, progress on bringing an end to slavery has been painfully slow. The movement suffered a setback when seven IRA protesters were arrested in April 2012 after their head, Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, burned religious texts at a protest. They were freed in September."

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"As for public pressure, one Western diplomat said: "We are happy with the progress that's been made, but there is clearly a lot left to do.""

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Submission to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the 49th session during the consideration of the Initial report of Mauritania*, 2012-09-03:

sid. 3

"As they are descended from slaves, the Haratine are the group most likely to be living in slavery in Mauritania today, even though slavery affects all groups in Mauritania. More than half of the Haratine community are estimated to live in slavery, through domestic servitude and bonded or forced labour<sup>1</sup>. This is despite the adoption of the 2007 Anti-Slavery Law prohibiting slavery and related discrimination in Mauritania<sup>2</sup> which criminalised slavery and slavery apologists but which has suffered from lack of implementation. After a visit to Mauritania in 2009, the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery was unequivocal in qualifying the situations she encountered in Mauritania as slavery, stating that it results in the 'social death of many thousands of women and men'<sup>3</sup>.

7. By preventing individual choice, it is submitted that the practice of slavery in Mauritania violates the whole range of human rights of those affected. The Haratine who are no longer in slavery (the majority) face discrimination related to their status as descendants of slaves and have limited access to and even less control over resources such as land, education, water and health services."

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"9. To date, the implementation of the 2007 anti-slavery law has been almost non-existent. Different cases supported by SOS-Esclaves, MRG and Anti-Slavery International reflect the lack of will at the political and judicial level to enforce the law criminalising slavery."

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sid.6

"...18. The practice of slavery in Mauritania violates not only the right to work of those who are still considered the property of their masters but also of those who manage to escape or who have been freed. Due to Mauritania's stratified society, those who are former slaves or descendants of slaves still live under the stigma of their slave status and are ostracised within society."

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), *Alternative Report to CESCR – Mauritania*, August 2012:

sid. 3

"This alternative report will focus on the situation of the Haratin population in Mauritania and the Mauritanian government's compliance with and implementation of the provisions in the International Covenant as it affects this particular group. The major issue dealt with in this report is the continued existence and widespread practice of slavery in Mauritania as well as the lack of

educational, training and employment opportunities for freed slaves."

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sid. 8

"...The government made no efforts aimed at reducing demand for forced labor and the 2007 Act lacks any measures to provide rehabilitation and aid programs for former slaves. Such measures would prevent slaves from being forced into 'voluntary' servitude out of economic necessity. The Mauritanian government had good intentions for a while to change this and established literacy programs. However those ceased to exist after a short while. Furthermore, government organized programs and job training schemes do not benefit the Haratin since a certain degree of education is pre-requisite, hence freed slaves who are illiterate are being excluded."

US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2012 - Mauritania*, 2012-06-19:

"Mauritania is a source, transit, and destination country for women, men, and children subjected to conditions of forced labor and sex trafficking. Adults and children from traditional slave castes are subjected to slavery-related practices rooted in ancestral master-slave relationships. Reliable data on the total number of slaves do not exist, but according to the estimate of a respected Mauritanian NGO, slavery may affect up to 20 percent of the population in both rural and urban settings. Held for generations by slave-holding families, persons subjected to slavery are forced to work without pay as cattle herders and domestic servants. Some boys from within Mauritania and other West African countries who study at Koranic schools – referred to as talibes – are subsequently subjected to forced begging by corrupt religious teachers known as marabouts. Mauritanian girls as well as girls from Mali, Senegal, The Gambia, and other West African countries are forced into domestic servitude. Mauritanian women and girls are forced into prostitution in the country or transported to countries in the Middle East for the same purpose. Men from Middle Eastern countries use legally contracted "temporary marriages" as a means to sexually exploit young girls and women in Mauritania."

US Department of State, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2011 - Mauritania*, 2012-05-24:

"Continuing slavery, slavery-related practices, and trafficking in persons were central human rights problems. Popular concern over control of the security forces was highlighted when police clashed with demonstrators protesting social, political, and economic problems, resulting in at least one death attributed to police. Prison conditions remained far below acceptable standards"

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"On August 4, according to Amnesty International, authorities arrested four antislavery activists, members of the IRA, for participating in a protest against the alleged enslavement of a 10-year-old girl. The four men were charged with "unauthorized gathering" and "rebellion" and were given six-month suspended sentences by a Nouakchott court. Another participant whom police detained alleged that police kicked and punched him."

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"The government's Program to Eradicate the Effects of Slavery, begun in 2009, continued during the year. Its goals were to reduce poverty among the 44,750 former slaves in the Assaba, Brakna, Gorgol, and Hodh Chargui regions and improve their access to water, health, education, and income-generating opportunities. However, the program's activities were reduced during the year after former human rights commissioner Ould Daddeh was arrested along with and senior-level staff, including its coordinator and its financial director, on findings of corruption in a government inspection. NGOs maintained that the commissioner was arrested for political reasons.

The government also continued its collaborative program with the UN on conflict prevention aimed at promoting democratic values and the rights of marginalized populations, including former slaves. According to the NGO SOS Esclaves, these programs focused on fighting poverty and the effects of slavery rather than the practice of slavery itself"

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"The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including by children. The law criminalizes the practice of slavery and imposes penalties on government officials who do not take action on reported cases. The law includes criminal penalties also for contracting to benefit from forced labor and for exploiting forced labor as part of an organized criminal network. Although significant advances were made during the year, government efforts to enforce the antislavery law were widely acknowledged to be inadequate when compared with the dimensions of the problem."

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"Despite the law, labor unions pointed to conditions approaching modern slavery in several sectors, including the food processing industry. In these sectors, workers do not have contracts or receive pay stubs. Their salaries were below the official minimum wage, and they worked in very unfavorable conditions. Sometimes they were not paid for several months.

Despite the law, workers could not remove themselves from hazardous conditions without risking loss of employment. "

Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2012 - Mauritania*, Mai 2012:

"Despite a 1981 law banning slavery in Mauritania, an estimated half a million black Mauritians are believed to live in conditions of servitude. A 2007 law set penalties of 5 to 10 years in prison for all forms of slavery, but the law is hampered by a requirement that slaves themselves file a legal complaint before any prosecution can

occur. In November 2011, six individuals were successfully prosecuted for enslavement and sentenced to jail, to pay a fine, and to make financial restitution to the victims. In January 2011, Biram Dah Abeid, the head of the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA) antislavery group, was arrested along with seven other activists. In August, four IRA activists were arrested for taking part in an antislavery protest, which was violently dispersed; the activists were later handed six-month suspended sentences."

CNN, *Slavery's last stronghold*, March 2012:

"More important, getting caught talking about slavery could have put our sources at risk. Anti-slavery activists say they have been arrested and tortured for their work."

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"Slave masters in Mauritania exercise full ownership over their slaves. They can send them away at will, and it's common for a master to give away a young slave as a wedding present. This practice tears families apart"

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"Most slave families in Mauritania consist of dark-skinned people whose ancestors were captured by lighter-skinned Arab Berbers centuries ago. Slaves typically are not bought and sold — only given as gifts, and bound for life. Their offspring automatically become slaves, too."

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"In a strange twist, some masters who no longer need a slave's help send the servants away to slave-only villages in the countryside. They check on them only occasionally or employ informants who make sure the slaves tend to the land and don't leave it."

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"So far, 30 women have enrolled at the center, he said, with funding coming from SOS Slaves and the European Union. Much more is needed to meet the country's demand for training of former slaves. Only one other such center exists, also in Nouakchott. There's no help for slaves in rural areas, and many thousands of former slaves live on the fringes of the capital city in abject poverty. Slaves who don't receive training are at more risk of being re-enslaved."

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), Briefing note, *Haratin, The Mauritanian Citizens Shackled by Slavery*, 2012-02-16:

sid. 2

"Anti-slavery human rights defenders regularly meet with contempt or lack of cooperation from the responsible authorities. A persistent denial of slavery still pervades Mauritania and plays a major role in the discrimination against Haratin anti-slavery advocates. Although grassroots NGOs seek out the enslaved and with their consent bring many to the authorities, instead of

redress they can face arrest, physical abuse and detention on false or arbitrary charges. In 2011, peaceful sit-ins and demonstrations protesting the failure to observe the Anti-Slavery Law were met with violence and intimidation. The leaders of such peaceful protests are particularly targeted and report receiving death threats and being put under surveillance. Authorities also find ways to deny anti-slavery NGOs the ability to register as official civil society organisations. In addition, attempts to infiltrate and co-opt anti-slavery NGOs through bribery or other means have been reported. Those that report such stories also receive threats....”

## **Wolof**

CNN beskriver olika etniska grupper i Mauretanien, ”White Moors”, ”Black Moors”, ”Black Africans” och Haratine. Enligt källan från CNN tillhör Wolof ”Black Africans”.

Social diskriminering av etniska grupper så som Wolof är vanlig enligt UDs rapportering.

CNN, *Slavery’s last stronghold*, March 2012:

” Black Africans  
Mauritania’s other darker-skinned people come from several ethnic groups, including the Pulaar, Soninke and Wolof. These groups also are found in Senegal, which shares Mauritania’s southern border. They look similar to Black Moors, but never were enslaved and are quite different in terms of culture and language”

UD, *Mänskliga rättigheter i Mauretanien 2010*, 2011-07-07:

Sid. 11

” Mauretaniens befolkning utgörs till större delen av morer. Dessa kan indelas i två grupper med gemensamt språk och kultur men av olika ursprung. ”Ljushyade” morer som är av arabiskt eller berberursprung dominerar och talar den arabiska dialekten hassania. Det gör även de ”svarta” morerna (haratin) som är tidigare slavar eller slavättlingar till de förstnämnda men av afrikanskt ursprung. I södra delen av landet finns svarta afrikanska folkgrupper som pular, soninké och wolof.

Social diskriminering av etniska grupper är vanlig. Etniska grupper som pular, soninké och wolof är underrepresenterade i politiken, inom polisen och militären samt inom näringslivet. Nationella organisationer för mänskliga rättigheter har anklagat myndigheterna för diskriminering av den svarta befolkningen. FN:s rasdiskrimineringskommitté har uppmanat Mauretanien att tillåta statliga skolor att ha undervisning på andra språk än arabiska.”

U.S. Center for World Mission, Joshua Project , *Wolof of Mauritania*,  
[odaterad]:

“What are their lives like?

Traditionally the Wolof were divided into three classes: the freeborn, those born into slavery, and the artisans. The freeborn class ranged from high-ranking noblemen to common peasant farmers. The slave class was made up of the Wolof whose parents were slaves. They were born into slavery and continued to serve their parent's masters. Finally, the artisans were considered a low class in Wolof society. This group included blacksmiths, leather workers, and musicians. Inter-marriage among the three classes was a very rare occurrence.”

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“While many of the Wolof have settled in cities and work as merchants, teachers, or government officials, most of them still live in rural areas and work as peasant farmers.”

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## Källförteckning

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