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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
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FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Note verbale dated 29 August 1997 from the delegation of
Mauritania to the forty-ninth session of the Sub-Commission
on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities
addressed to the secretariat of the Sub-Commission

The delegation of Mauritania to the forty-ninth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Sub-Commission and has the honour to request it to distribute the attached statement as an official document under agenda item 10 of the forty-ninth session.

This statement is made in reply to the allegations by the non-governmental organization France-Libertés concerning Mauritania.

STATEMENT

The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the other relevant international instruments clearly define refugee status.

This definition cannot apply to any Mauritanian national, since no one can fear persecution in Mauritania for reasons of race, membership of a particular group, public opinions or any other consideration.

The Constitution guarantees public and individual freedoms, protects all citizens against any form of abuse and offers them remedies against acts contrary to their constitutionally or legally established rights.

The State guarantees the security and integrity of all persons living in the territory of the Republic, without any distinction.

Freedom of movement and the right to leave and return to the country are not subject to any restriction, except for persons under judicial supervision.

No Mauritanian can thus give any valid reason based on a well-founded fear in order to claim refugee status.

Ignoring this fact and choosing to live in other countries cannot justify the applicability of such status because this is an option for which the persons concerned assume sole responsibility and which is in any event not covered by the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.
