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## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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19 September 2005

### MRT100546.FE

Mauritania: The Patriotic Alliance (Alliance patriotique); specifically, when it was founded, its position on the 3 August 2005 coup d'état in Mauritania, and the treatment of its members by government authorities (September 2005)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Although they did not provide the exact date of its foundation, sources indicated that the Patriotic Alliance (Alliance patriotique) was created in 2004 (UN 6 July 2004; *Nouakchott-Info Quotidien* 14 July 2004). A Radio France Internationale (RFI) article indicated that the Alliance was formed in June 2004 outside Mauritania (6 Jan. 2005), in Dakar, Senegal, according to a RFI broadcast cited by the Mauritanian newspaper *Nouakchott-Info Quotidien* (14 July 2004).

Labelled a [translation] "radical opposition movement" (*La Lettre du Continent* 7 Apr. 2005), the Patriotic Alliance [translation] "advocates armed struggle" in its bid to topple the regime of President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya (*Nouakchott-Info Quotidien* 18 July 2004; *ibid.* 14 July 2004), which it deems [translation] "dictatorial, bigoted, racist, and pro-slavery" (AFP 10 Aug. 2004). According to one source, the Alliance is made up of approximately [translation] "15 key figures, including Diop Moustapha, Breika Ould Mbrareck, Ely Ould Sneiba and members of the so-called radical opposition who have been in self-imposed exile for a number of years, all of whom share the will to fight the powers they call 'despotic and anti-unity'" (*Nouakchott-Info Quotidien* 14 July 2004).

Regarding the Patriotic Alliance's position in relation to the 3 August 2005 coup d'état in Mauritania, the Senegalese newspaper *Wal Fadjri* reported that the opposition movement's spokesperson issued a statement saying that the Alliance was pleased the coup of 3 August 2005 had [translation] "'ended a reign of terror and dictatorship'" and would [translation] "support the proposal for democratic transition announced by the new government" (16 Aug. 2005b). In addition, the same Senegalese newspaper indicated that a [translation] "coalition of Mauritanian political movements (external opposition) and civil society organizations," which includes the Patriotic Alliance, declared its [translation] "support of the putsch that occurred in Mauritania and strongly renounced armed struggle 'as a way of resolving conflicts'" (*Wal Fadjri* 16 Aug. 2005a). Moreover, Seydou Kane, President of the Mauritanian Patriotic Alliance, announced on 6 September 2005 that he would be returning to the country (*ibid.* 6 Sept. 2005).

No current information on the treatment of members of the Patriotic Alliance by Mauritanian authorities could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, regarding the attempted coup of 8 June 2003 and the Patriotic Alliance's support of the putschists, a RFI article reported that Ely Ould Sneiba, then spokesperson for the opposition movement, was among those sentenced, in absentia, to 10 years in prison (6 Jan. 2005). According to *La Lettre du Continent*, Diop Moustapha then replaced Ely Ould Sneiba as the Patriotic Alliance's spokesperson (7 Apr. 2005).

In addition, The Canadian Press, in an 11 August 2004 article about a coup d'état of an unspecified date, reported that Mohamed Jemil Ould Mansour, Secretary General of the Patriotic Alliance, was [translation]

"taken in for questioning" by Mauritanian authorities and then released after [translation] "several hours in detention and a search of his home."

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Publications:** *Africa Confidential*, *Africa Research Bulletin*, *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent*, *Keesing's Record of World Events*, Resource Centre country file, *West Africa News*.

**Internet sites, including:** AllAfrica, Amnesty International, BBC Africa, *Europa World Year Book*, European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI.net), Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group (ICG), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), IRIN, MISNA, *Mondes rebelles*, *Political Parties of the World*, United States Department of State.

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