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22 March 2006

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Mauritania: Terrorist acts or violence against civilians committed by the African Liberation Forces of Mauritania (Forces de libération africaines de Mauritanie, FLAM) since their formation in 1983
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

No information on terrorist acts or on violence against civilians committed by the African Liberation Forces of Mauritania (Forces de libération africaines de Mauritanie, FLAM) could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, according to the *Political Handbook of the World 2005-2006*, following the deportation and exile of a number of FLAM supporters to Senegal in 1989, the FLAM "subsequently engaged in guerrilla activity" (Dec. 2005, 753). According to *Mondes rebelles*, the FLAM participated in pacifist initiatives as well as [translation] "more devious adventures," including the October 1987 and November 1990 plots to overthrow the government (2001, 649). The same source indicated that [translation] "while some operations were indeed carried out in the 1990s, violence was limited and was often confused with smuggling or with raids aimed at recovering livestock abandoned during the 1989 exile" (*Mondes rebelles* 2001, 649). The FLAM now tends to use the media and the courts rather than arms to advance its cause (ibid., 650).

According to *Political Handbook of the World 2005-2006*, FLAM leaders announced in July 1991 that they were suspending 'armed struggle' in response to the government's general amnesty and promulgation of a new Mauritanian constitution" (Dec. 2005, 753). Agence France-Presse, however, reported that the FLAM announced its "renunciation of armed struggle" in August 2005 (AFP 14 August 2005; ibid. 16 Feb. 2006). Since the FLAM has not been very active since its formation, according to Global Insight Daily Analysis, the end of its "armed struggle is not a significant development from a security perspective" (17 Feb. 2006). The FLAM's lack of activity was corroborated by *Wal Fadji's* report that no meeting of its National Executive Office has been held since 1998, nor did congress convene as planned in 2002 (6 Oct. 2004). However, the current events section of the FLAM's Website proves that the organization is still active: a general assembly of its Western Europe branch was to be held on 4 March 2006 in Paris (n.d.). According to *Mondes rebelles*, the FLAM was in decline at the end of the 1990s and then underwent a revival in 2000 (2001, 649-650).

In February 2006, a branch of the FLAM seceded, the "breakaway wing" calling itself FLAM-Renovation (UN 3 Mar. 2006; Agence PANAPRESS 15 Feb. 2006). FLAM-Renovation advocates abandoning the armed struggle (Global Insight Daily Analysis 17 Feb. 2006; *Nouvel Horizon* 2-8 Mar. 2006; CRIDEM 14 Mar. 2006). According to the FLAM-Renovation spokesperson, cited in an Agence France-Presse article, the split occurred as a result of certain FLAM supporters wanting to reverse the initial August 2005 decision to give up the armed struggle (16 Feb. 2006).

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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