Mauritania: Update to MRT39363.E of 25 September 2002 on the Union of Democratic Forces-New Era (Union des forces démocratiques-Ère nouvelle, UFD-EN) and its successor, the Rally of Democratic Forces (Rassemblement des forces démocratiques, RFD), including the treatment of its members by government authorities (2002-October 2004)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa


The UFD-EN was later replaced by the Rally of Democratic Forces (Rassemblement des forces démocratiques, RFD) (EIU 18 Aug. 2004a; Europa 2004 2004, 2841) and, in January 2002, the former UFD-EN leader, Ahmed Ould Daddah, was elected president of the RFD (EIU 18 Aug. 2004b); he won 6.9 per cent of votes in the November 2003 presidential election (Europa 2004 2004, 2842; Africa Research Bulletin 26 Feb. 2004, 15609). According to Europa 2004, four former vice-presidents of the UFD-EN were also appointed to the party's executive committee (2004, 2841).

Recent information on the treatment of RFD members was limited among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. In its midday news reports on Africa, Radio France Internationale (RFI) said that the Mauritanian government had banned a demonstration planned by the RFD (18 Aug. 2004). However, RFI did not specify the reasons for the demonstration. On 5 November 2003, police used tear gas to disperse participants in a demonstration organized in part by the RFD president (Europa 2004 2004, 2842). The demonstration was held in protest of the police raid on the home of Ould Haidala, leader of another opposition party, who was accused of storing illicit weapons (ibid.).

Mohamed Jemil Ould Mansour, an influential RFD member, was arrested by the Mauritanian authorities in May or early June 2003 for "plotting against the constitutional order" (Europa 2004 2004, 2841; PANA 21 July 2003; ibid. 4 June 2003). Ould Mansour managed to escape from his prison cell in Nouakchott [the country's capital] (Africa Research Bulletin 27 May 2004, 15716; PANA 21 July 2003; ibid. 19 June 2003), only to be re-arrested upon his return from Belgium in January 2004; he was released a few days later (PANA 12 Jan. 2004; Africa Research Bulletin 27 May 2004, 15716).

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.

**References**


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Panafrican News Agency (PANA) [Dakar]. 12 January 2004. "Mauritanian Authorities Detain Opposition Figure." (Dialog)


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**Additional Sources Consulted**


**Internet sites, including:** Africatime, AllAfrica, Amnesty International, HRW, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), ReliefWeb.
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