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**UN Human Rights Council
Sixteenth session, 28 February – 25 March 2011**

**Item 6:
Consideration of UPR reports**

MAURITANIA

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes Mauritania's support of recommendations to end slavery – including by developing a national strategy for its eradication and strengthening efforts to implement the anti-slavery legislation already in place.¹

The prompt and full implementation of these recommendations is all the more important in light of a recent case in which three anti-slavery activists were sentenced, on 6 January this year, to a one-year prison term after exposing the case of two young girls, aged 9 and 14, allegedly forced to work as slave servants in the home of a female government official. The three men are members the organization, *Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement*, which despite its attempts to become officially registered has not been recognized by the authorities. Amnesty International considers the three men to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely on the basis of their actions in the struggle against slavery. We urge their immediate release.

Mr. President,

Amnesty International also welcomes Mauritania's support of recommendations to carry out effective and independent investigations into allegations of torture and ill-treatment and to bring those responsible to justice.² During four research missions to Mauritania since 2008, our organization has collected evidence that torture and other ill-treatment is regularly used by the security forces against individuals in their custody. In at least one case, a "confession" extracted under torture was admitted as evidence in court. We urge Mauritania in implementing these recommendations to ensure that all

¹ A/HRC/16/17, recommendations 90.14, 90.36-90.45 (USA, Spain, Nigeria, Pakistan, Nigeria, Germany, Syria, Slovakia, Norway, Holy See, Switzerland).

² Ibid, recommendations 90.33 and 90.35 (Sweden, Switzerland)

detainees are brought promptly before a judicial authority and are able to challenge the legality of their detention and to shorten the period of *garde a vue*, which is when torture and ill-treatment are most likely to happen.

Finally, we note that Mauritania is considering with interest the recommendations to ratify a number of human rights instruments.³ We encourage it to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture in particular.

Thank you, Mr President.

³ Ibid, recommendations 92.1, 92.3, 92.6, 92.9 (France, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey) and A/HRC/16/17/Add.1, paragraphs 5 and 6.