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Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families – 41st Session (December 2025): Informal Briefing on Mauritania.

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Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee about the treatment of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Mauritania, a country that has long been the focus of European efforts to export migration controls. Despite the EU's influential role in Mauritania, every year thousands of migrants and asylum seekers face arbitrary arrest, degrading detention conditions, forced expulsions, and racialised violence in the country.

Our submission highlights the following three areas of concern:

1. Over the past two decades, Mauritania has become a central transit point on the Atlantic migration route, increasingly shaped by European externalisation policies. As pressure from Spain and the EU intensifies, Mauritania has adopted sweeping enforcement operations that have transformed neighbourhoods, workplaces, and even homes into spaces of fear for migrants, particularly Black Africans from Mali, Senegal, Guinea, and Niger.
2. Between January and May 2025, nearly 20,000 migrants were reportedly arrested and deported. Raids are often conducted jointly with Spanish Guardia Civil officers, who participate directly in apprehensions inside Mauritania, a deeply troubling example of external influence on domestic enforcement operations. Migrants describe being rounded up at night, beaten, stripped of their belongings, and transported in trucks to unknown locations. Many are later abandoned at borders with Mali and Senegal, left without documents, food, or the means to survive.
3. Those who are detained endure conditions that are inhumane and degrading. Inside facilities such as Dar Naim, Arafat, Robinet 10, and Maison Blanche, detainees report severe overcrowding, lack of food and water, unhygienic conditions, confiscation of phones and documents, denial of contact with families, and physical abuse

We urge the Committee to pressure Mauritania:

1. End arbitrary arrests, raids, and collective expulsions, and ensure all removal decisions are based on individual assessments.
2. Prohibit the detention of vulnerable persons, including children, asylum seekers, and trafficking survivors.
3. Ensure meaningful judicial review of all immigration detention and removal measures. And guarantee access to lawyers, interpreters, medical care, and UNHCR for all detained migrants.
4. Amend the 2024 immigration law to remove criminal penalties for irregular entry or stay, in line with the Committee's General Comment No. 5.
5. Ensure that EU- and Spain-supported facilities comply with Mauritania's international obligations, rather than replicating harmful models of externalised control.
6. Establish transparency, including publishing all detention sites, the numbers detained, conditions, and the duration of stay.