

**DECLARATION**

**Support for the Rassemblement des Forces Démocratiques (RFD) in its fight against changes to the Constitution in Mauritania outside the national consensus**

Original: French

We, members of the Socialist International (SI), gathered at the XXV SI Congress in Cartagena, Colombia, on 2, 3 and 4 March 2017, follow with great concern the recent developments that characterize the increasingly tense political scene in Mauritania, due to the intention of the undemocratic regime that has led the country since the 2008 coup to deliberately change the constitution without any national consensus.

After failing to organize a referendum on introducing the changes, faced with the rejection of such a project by the political forces of the Mauritanian opposition, particularly the RFD, a member of the SI and at the forefront of the struggle for democracy in Mauritania, and with the rejection by civil society organizations, opinion leaders and Mauritanian citizens, the government in Mauritania is in the process, yet again, of tampering with the constitution in order to tailor it to its own ends, by bringing together the two illegitimate chambers of parliament, namely a Senate whose term of office has largely expired and a National Assembly elected in non-transparent conditions and boycotted by the majority of the opposition.

These constitutional changes currently being put in place further undermine what remains of the fragile national unity and further delays the implementation of the rule of law that the country so badly needs. There is no explanation for this forcing, other than the will of the country's leaders to maintain themselves in power by any means they can and to avoid any possibility of any eventual prosecution in the future for their misdeeds in the catastrophic political, economic and social governance they are subjecting the Mauritanian people to.

Faced with the obstinate persistence of the ruling regime in Mauritania to lead the country towards uncertain horizons, and considering the major risks posed to the country as a consequence, in particular the disturbances and instability observed in other countries that have gone through similar situations of unresolved political crises, the Socialist International reiterates its unwavering solidarity with the RFD and all the democrats in Mauritania in their struggle to prevent any constitutional amendment in form or content, at a time when the national political scene is experiencing unprecedented tension.

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