



Press Statement

Sean McCormack, Spokesman

Washington, DC

September 3, 2008

Coup in Mauritania

The United States strongly condemns the military coup in Mauritania. Furthermore, the United States does not recognize the legitimacy of the High State Council and "cabinet" and considers these actions both undemocratic and a step backwards for Mauritania. We are deeply disappointed with the lack of progress in the restoration of constitutional rule and call for an earnest search for a political solution to the current situation in Mauritania.

In response to the coup, most United States government aid to Mauritania has been terminated, including both development and security assistance. In addition to measures already announced, we are exploring targeted sanctions against military and civilian individuals who are impeding the return to democratic government.

We continue to urge the coup leaders to free President Abdallahi and Prime Minister Waghef and restore Mauritania's constitution. The international community, including the United Nations, European Union, Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the African Union has sent a resounding message that the removal of a democratically elected government by unconstitutional means cannot be tolerated.

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 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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