

THE NEWSPAPER THE KEY

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Monthly

A New Call for the Private Sector



MARCH 2022

■ The Price : 300 MRU

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EDITORIAL

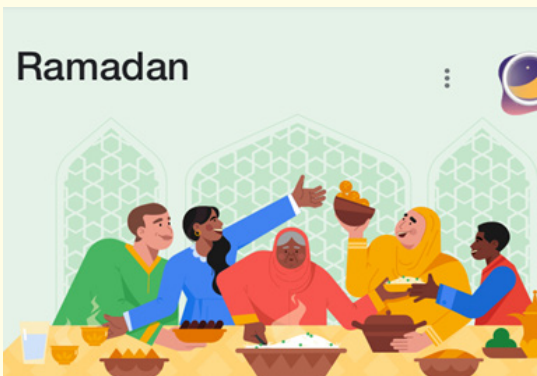
■ Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Sidi Ely

A New Era

On the occasion of releasing the tenth issue of The Key, and on behalf of the editorial board of The Key, I would like to thank three groups. First and foremost is our loyal readers, both locals and expatriates, whose patronage has allowed our newspaper to thrive and grow. Second, our work would not have been possible without the continuous support of the Embassies of the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Third, we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to the domestic and foreign institutions in Nouakchott who have offered us immense practical support over the last year. As we have mentioned in our previous editions, the ultimate goal of The Key is to be a credible, assertive, accurate, and reliable source of news. During the production of our last nine issues, The Key's staff spared no effort to enhance the content of this newspaper. This time, in order to fulfill the expectations of our audience, The Key has decided to improve upon the quality of our print edition. To do so, we have signed a new contract with a printing press here in Nouakchott, to print a large number of hard copies in color per month. This will bring with it an increase in cost, to 300 MRU per edition, but a commensurate increase in the quality and length of The Key. This increased rate will also go towards the development of a website to be launched this summer. Our move into an online space will expand The Key's reach internationally and will allow for contributions from a greater number of Anglophone columnists and journalists. If you or someone you know would like to contribute to The Key's English-language content, we invite you to reach out to our editorial board at the email provided. In two months, The Key will celebrate its first year and I am immensely proud of the progress that we have made. None of it would have been possible without our loyal supporters. I look forward to another year of great success.

RAMADAN:

Limited Number of Days



Ramadan is one of the Islamic months that occurs regularly after Sha'aban and is followed by Shawal. It's the ninth month according to the Islamic Calendar. It used to correspond to June and July since that's where the summer season would be. However, it proceeds almost every year by approximately a week or so. This time, it began on April 2nd. That means next year it shall fall in March. Ramadan stands for the month of the burning pebbles. It fell in the hot summer. Hence, it was named like that.

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From Zero to Hero!

Oumou Kane, as one of the most influential Mauritanian Women

RAMADAN: Limited Number of Days

Abdrrehim Lekh'Deyem
A writer and an English teacher

What's Ramadan?

Ramadan is one of the Islamic months that occurs regularly after Sha'aban and is followed by Shawal. It's the ninth month according to the Islamic Calendar. It used to correspond to June and July since that's where the summer season would be. However, it proceeds almost every year by approximately a week or so. This time, it began on April 2nd. That means next year it shall fall in March. Ramadan stands for the month of the burning pebbles. It fell in the hot summer. Hence, it was named like that.

Ramadan's History

Ramadan has many connotations. Nevertheless, it has been denoted as the month of Fasting. Fasting is something that we have in common with previous nations, and the goal is the same. It's been ordained for us likewise it was decreed for the previous nations. Thus, we are not the only nation that has been burdened this. The old fasting used to be less than 9 days whereas the fasting now is a month. Nevertheless, it's easier now. It's technically 29 days or 30 days but realistically it goes by like 9 days or less than that.

Why Ramadan?

Ramadan has been ordained for the Muslims to attain TAQWA(The fear of Allah, GOD). Although that's one of the reasons, there are some other reasons. Ramadan is also called the month of patience. During this month, we learn how to be patient since patience is the best tool to achieve any goal in this life. The training here will last for 29 days to 30. Ramadan was ordained to Fear God more, for the body also fasts. Every Muslim stays away from committing minor sins. For example, lowering the gaze. Moreover, Ramadan is meant to master the art of patience. For example, when someone refrains himself from eating and drinking for almost 15 hours, it becomes facile for him to restrain his anger and be patient with almost everything. As soon as Ramadan ends, we celebrate as if we made it because task has a turning point when celebration would come as a sign of victory.

Footnote: It's not necessary for all of the Muslims to start fasting and break it on the same day, for every single region has its own visual sighting.



The Blessings of Ramadan

Ramadan has many blessings. When Ramadan comes, all devils are chained until it ends. Ramadan forgives sins when it's fasted well spiritually. It brings about more provisions. When you eat something at night, even if it's only a morsel of food or a drop of water, it increases until you're allowed to eat and drink. Everything becomes so easy during Ramadan including working in the daytime. Ramadan is considered for the Muslims to be the most blessed timeframe especially the last ten days of it. There is no parallel to any other timeframe than the ten nights of Ramadan. Once the last ten days of Ramadan begin, the slaves of Allah (GOD) exert themselves as far as worship is concerned. In addition, there is also one night called the night of power. If someone happens to catch that night, he gets bonus as if he worshipped Allah (GOD) 83 solid years.

Some Physical Ramadan Benefits

Fasting is an effective way for the body to detox and revitalize itself.

This can only happen when you follow a healthy eating plan and do not overeat when you break your fasting.

Stage 1

During the first couple of days of Fasting both blood sugar level and blood pressure drop.

The body starts the cleansing process.

Stage 2

During the second stage, the body becomes accustomed to the fasting schedule and the digestive system is able to rest. The digestive system focuses its energy on cleansing the body, and healing the cells as the white blood and the body start to become more active. During this stage the organs start

the repair process as well.

Stage 3

By the third stage, energy levels will have increased. Your mind is able to concentrate better and the overall feeling of wellness overtakes you. During fasting the body's healing process becomes a lot more efficient. Thus, the body repairs any damaged cells during this stage. In this stage, the colon liver, kidney, lungs and skin are detoxing by eliminating toxins.

Stage 4

The body reaches its zenith.

During the final last 10 days of fasting, the body has become accustomed to the fasting process. Your body becomes more energetic and you experience improved memory and concentration.

At this stage, the organs are finishing up their healing process and once all toxins are removed, the body is able to function at its maximum capacity.

Note: Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.

Ramadan in Mauritania

Ramadan differs from one country to another when it comes to the lifestyle. Here are some key factors that distinguish Mauritania. When Ramadan comes, you would see how life would change. People become more forgiving and patient. Everybody would get to work as early as possible. The market closes at 5 pm every day until the final days begin. The market schedule changes, instead of closing at 5, it would close at a late time, for buyers would enter the market at that time to purchase clothes for their children, themselves and parents as a part of the customs to celebrate the end of Ramadan. The Rush Hour occurs at 6 o'clock in the evening. People from 5 to 6.30 would be engrossed in preparing all kinds of meals.

When it's 7pm, everybody is at home waiting to hear the Adhan of Al Makrib(the call to the prayer at 7pm) As soon as the muezzin calls to the prayer, everybody breaks their fasting on the spot. Moreover, when it's almost 10 pm, taraweeh is being prayed in all Masjids. Taraweeh is the extra prayer at night during Ramadan. Furthermore, everybody becomes a night owl with few early birds. The day is almost technically switched by night. All of this happens during Ramadan month, however; life totally changes when it ends.



BREAKING NEWS

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A New Call for the Private Sector



His Excellency Mohamed Cheikh Ghazouani met private businessmen and delivered the following address.

Here are some excerpts from the President's address to the country's economic actors

- I meet with you at this dire situation, characterized by international crises beginning with Covid-19 and followed by the Russia-Ukraine war, which led to an increase in fuel prices and adversely affected security in the Sahel Region.
- Crises have affected states with enormous potential and have encountered great difficulties in coping with their repercussions, so how can a country with limited means not be affected by them.
- This situation is naturally the result of the ineffectiveness of our policy, and this reality must be the primary catalyst for moving our country to the ranks of developed countries.
- We must be honest with ourselves in such circumstances, so I reiterate that our country is poor and its resources are very limited.
- Despite the impact of these successive crises, the government was able to intervene through a package of actions otherwise the situation would have been more difficult than what it is now.
- Our country has maintained fuel prices so far despite a staggering rise globally, especially after the Russia-Ukraine War.
- Fuel prices remain the same, it costs the country 73 billion old Ouguiya.
- I am optimistic and certain that the private sector will play the role entrusted to it. During this meeting, businessmen presented 30 proposals for investment projects in agriculture, industry and improving food self-sufficiency.

First British Embassy Building Found

British Ambassador, Colin Wells, signed a contract to secure the first-ever British Embassy building in Nouakchott, on 11 March. The act brought to an end a long search for the ideal long-term base for the Ambassador and his staff.

In 2016, the then Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson decided to open a full Embassy, with an Ambassador based in Nouakchott. Before this, the British Ambassadors were based in Rabat or Dakar. But, relations between Mauritania and the United Kingdom were strong and improving, necessitating the presence of an Ambassador in Nouakchott. The first resident British Ambassador arrived in 2018. But, until now, British Embassy staff have been working from the British Ambassador's Residence and their homes, particularly during COVID-19 waves. This was not ideal, hence the search for a permanent base. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs approved the choice, as required under the Vienna Convention.

After the signing ceremony the Ambassador said "I am delighted by this important milestone. The British Government is committed to building strong ties with Mauritania, its government, security agencies, institutes, businesses, civil society and, of course, Mauritians themselves. Having a British Embassy building sends a clear message to Mauritania and Mauritians that the UK is here, and happy to be here." The building now needs some refurbishment work on it. The British Ambassador hopes to do a formal opening later in 2022.

US Funds \$500,000 Project to Combat Trafficking in Persons



The U.S Ambassador to Mauritania Cynthia Kierscht participated in the launching ceremony of the IOM Project that took place in Mauritania on March 22nd, 2022. Many esteemed members of the Diplomatic Corps attended the event. Here is the U.S Ambassador's Speech.

Excellency the Minister of Justice
Mr. Commissioner for Human Rights, Hu-

manitarian Action and Relations with Civil Society

Mr. Representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Representatives of the Judicial Family,
Representatives of the Civil Society Organizations,

Esteemed members of the Diplomatic Corps
Dear Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in the launching ceremony of this IOM project, which has been financed by the United States Department of State. The United States is providing about US\$500,000 for this project, because of the importance and urgency of its goal to support the development of Mauritanian institutions to address trafficking in persons and improve access to justice for survivors. Through this project, IOM will provide technical support to Mauritanian authorities in setting up the institutional framework for an effective implementation of the law 2020-017. This law addresses "the prevention and repression of trafficking in persons and the protection of victims."

As we all know, the protection of fundamental human rights is a top priority for the United States, and we are committed to working with countries around the world, including Mauritania, to combat human trafficking.

Under President Ghazouani's administration, Mauritania has taken several concrete steps to strengthen the legislative framework on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants. Updating these laws was an important first step, but challenges remain in ensuring that the law is applied and that survivors in Mauritania are protected. Toward that end, the project we are launching today will provide standardized guidance, tools, and skills to facilitate case management and adjudication of trafficking cases.

On behalf of the United States, I express my gratitude for the opportunity to work with partners like you to make sure that everyone's fundamental human rights are protected. We congratulate Mauritania for its efforts in ending trafficking in persons. Just a few weeks ago, the government adopted the implementing decree of the National Authority to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. This initiative is another good illustration of Mauritania's willingness to tackle the issue.

To conclude, I'd like to thank IOM for its important work in Mauritania. This project will have a positive impact in Mauritania's fight against human trafficking in all its forms.



Ukraine - Why the International Response Matters Article by Colin Wells, UK Ambassador

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, which started on 24 February, was one of the most egregious, violent acts by one country against another and its people since the Second World War. I want to set out why it matters to us who live here in Mauritania.

But, first, I should say something about Russia and Russians. I had the pleasure to serve at the British Embassy in Moscow between 2018-20 as Consul-General. Russia is one of the most stunningly beautiful and diverse countries in the world. Moscow and St Petersburg, in particular, are special places to visit. The Russian people are friendly, fun and easy to get on with. They are good people. I respect the Russian Ambassador in Nouakchott and consider him to be a friend. The invasion and the subsequent horrors were ordered by President Putin, not the ordinary, good Russians.

Why does the invasion of Ukraine matter? Russia's assault was reprehensible; unprovoked, premeditated, and a barbaric attack on Ukraine – an independent nation no different than Mauritania or the United Kingdom. The very foundation of our societies and the rules by which we coexist – sovereignty, democracy and the UN Charter- were ignored by President Putin. Ukraine has suffered and continues to suffer horrific attacks and many innocent Ukrainian soldiers and civilians have lost their lives. So have thousands of Russian soldiers. The events since 24 February have demonstrated that the Kremlin was never serious about diplomacy – focussed only on deceit and furthering territorial ambitions.

The international response has been unprecedented

- In March, 141 countries voted in favour of a resolution at the UN General Assembly in New York, condemning the invasion, and 140 voted on a resolution relating to the humanitarian situation arising from the invasion.

- The largest package of sanctions in history, cutting off funding to President Putin's war machine. These sanctions are having an impact on Russia's economy. President



Putin himself has acknowledged the «problems and difficulties» caused by sanctions. Russian banks with global assets of £500 billion as well as the Central Bank in Moscow have been cut off, and key Russian banks removed from SWIFT.

- UK and international aid and military support is being provided for those who need it most, including delivering essential

living supplies and medical services, and defensive support.

It is clear President Putin showed misjudgement in ordering the invasion. It has been a failure, but at a huge cost particularly to those who have died on both sides, but also to the economies of both countries. This may seem a long way from Mauritania. But, we already know that Russia is already playing a dangerous role in Africa. The Wagner Group is Russia. If we allow Russia to get away with invading smaller countries like Ukraine, what next? It might seem far-fetched to think that Russia would want to go further than Ukraine, even into Africa. But, how many of us really thought Russia was going to launch such a dreadful invasion in February? I didn't. The world should be proud of its response to President Putin, and in its support for the Ukrainian people.

So, let me finish this by stating how much I want to see peace and prosperity to return to Ukraine. No-one should want war, or a big country to attack a small one. Russia will spread disinformation here on their invasion. Ignore it. I urge you to respond by supporting a peaceful end to the conflict and the withdrawal of all Russian troops from Ukraine. We may not feel that our voices matter, but they do.

Nouakchott Region Receives Medical Equipments

The President of the Nouakchott Region, Madame Fatimetou Mint Abdel Malick received on Thursday, March 31, 2022 a donation of medical equipment, offered by the Associations for Development and Charity Action and Taiba for culture in the form of medical beds, wheelchairs, crutches and oxygenation equipment. Madame President expressed her thanks for this charitable action and her gratitude for this donation, which shows the importance and effectiveness of this partnership between the Nouakchott Region and the two organizations.

And, the President of the Organization for Development and Charitable Action, Mr. Beddah El Kewar appreciate the great ef-



orts made by the Nouakchott Region in the social field in general and the help of the disabled and the sick in particular.

In addition, he expressed his joy for this partnership with the Region and his readiness to develop it at the service of the nation and the citizens.



Is tribalism present in American politics?

1- Is tribalism present in American politics?

Yes and no. Tribes – apart from Native American tribes – do not exist in the United States, and thus they have no influence on American politics. That said, there is a phenomenon in American politics – though it exists in every political system – known as “tribalism.” This tribalism refers to a group or individual’s steadfast adherence to an ideology, without the ability to accept compromise or view another group’s beliefs as legitimate. This is an important issue in American politics today, as more and more people hold political beliefs that they believe can-

more environmentally friendly diets, as detrimental to economic growth and ultimately worse for Americans than the supposed effects of climate change. Neither of these positions allows for significant compromise, and as a result, little progress is made in addressing the issue.

This sort of “tribalism,” in which Americans break themselves off into separate and rival groups, goes hand-in-hand with the issue of political polarization. Political tribalism and polarization are serious problems for American democracy, and right now there is no clear solution for resolving them. Nevertheless, the United States

to immerse yourself in a place where the language is spoken. This is, unfortunately, not possible for most people to do. What is possible, however, is to immerse yourself as much as you can where you already are. This includes changing the language on your phone, computer, and social media to English; getting as much of your news as possible in English (and reading The Key); listening to music in English; watching English television; and any other way that you can fit English into your daily life. I, for example – when away from other people – practice my language skills by talking to myself. By constantly exposing yourself and practicing your English, you will make tremendous progress in becoming a fluent speaker.

3- Is nepotism being practiced in America as far as employment goes?

This is a difficult question to answer, but I will do my best. On paper, nepotism is often either illegal or strongly frowned upon. In the federal government, for example, there are strong anti-nepotism laws that prevent family members from interfering or being otherwise involved in the hiring process for a potential employee. In private industry, there are fewer, if any, legal restrictions on the practice, but it is still generally frowned upon – especially if done openly. That said, however, a study by the U.S. Census Bureau found that 22% of men will work at the same company as their father by age 30.

Measuring nepotism, because of its murky nature, is difficult. The best study of nepotism that I could find in my – albeit light – research was a 2006 report from the World Economic Forum that ranked 125 countries on a scale from “least-influenced by nepotism” to “most-influenced by nepotism.” The United States ranked exactly in the middle, in 63rd. Mauritania ranked 104th. Nepotism certainly occurs in the United States but, because it is so difficult to conclusively prove in any one case, it is likely that it will continue well into the foreseeable future.



Ask an American

Hello! My name is Alex, and I am a college student and ESL teacher in the United States. Each month I will answer your questions about learning English and about life in the United States. Send your questions of less than 100 words to keynewspaper21@gmail.com to have your question printed and answered here in The Key.

not be reconciled with those of others. For example, Americans usually fall into one of two tribes when discussing climate change and how to respond to it. Many liberal Americans see climate change as an existential crisis that requires a whole-of-society response. Because these Americans see this issue as life-or-death, they perceive very little room for compromise. The same goes for Americans on the other side of the political spectrum. Many of them perceive concerns about climate change as overblown and view responses to the problem, such as eliminating fossil-fuel consumption and adapting to

has experienced and overcome moments of fractured politics in the past, such as during the Vietnam War. It is perhaps possible that, like in that era, political tribalism will melt away with time and effort.

2- What’s the fastest way to speak English?

The fastest way to speak English is to...speak English. There is no shortcut for speaking English, but practicing speaking, reading, writing, and listening as much as possible will speed up your time to proficiency. The best way to learn a language, of course, is



The Proxy War in the Sahel Region

Mauritania-Mali Relations

Economic relations between Mauritania and Mali were established in a number of areas and at various levels prior to the formation of either state. Geographically, the two countries' borders stretch for more than 2,270 kilometers, and cover six Mauritanian wilayas: Guidimakha, Assaba, Hodh el-Gharbi, Hodh el-Chargui, Adrar, and Tiris Zemmour. Economically, two thirds of Mauritanian livestock spend eight to nine months per year grazing on Malian land and Mali is home to the largest Mauritanian community in Africa. Mauritania is also Mali's second connection to the ocean, and there is therefore a large Malian community in the country that comprises a significant part of the Mauritanian labor market, performing manual labor and transporting seafood to Mali. Security relations between the two countries are equally complex and important for the expansion of their control over their respective territories, especially in the Sahara, which has served as a base for the presence of armed groups and extremists. These relations require a great deal of care and constant upkeep from the two countries and their peoples, as the two are closely tied in their geography, economies, history, and religion. The religious element is particularly important because of the presence of the Hamouia Sufi order's headquarters in Anouar, Mali.

Security Decoupling Serves Foreign Interests

Mauritania is attempting to discretely manage the killing of its citizens among intense rivalry among major actors to expand

their influence in the Sahel and the broader Sahara, and efforts to drive divergence from the military authorities in Bamako, as it seeks to secure its borders through bilateral agreements, a careful reading of the current conflict environment at multiple levels.

Nouakchott and Bamako are seeking to restore relations following a severe political crisis resulting from the killings and disappearances of increasing numbers of Mauritanian nationals in Mali. The governments of the two countries decided to establish an interim joint investigation tasked with shining light on recent events in the area of el-Attaye as quickly as possible and informing the Mauritanian side of the findings of the Malian government's investigation into the events of January 17th.

A high-level Mauritanian delegation comprising both the Ministers of Defense and the Interior, as well as all the commanders of the general staff, visited several villages on the Mali-Mauritania border, focusing on the area opposite the scene of the killing of Mauritanian citizens on Malian territory earlier this month.

Prior to that, recent talks between the Mauritanian and Malian delegations in Nouakchott culminated in the issuing of a joint statement stating that, «Following the tragic events leading to the disappearance of a group of Mauritanian citizens on March 5th and 6th in el-Attaye, a high-level delegation from Mali led by Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and on the order of Colonel Assimi Goïta, President of the Transitional Authority, the Head of State of Mali, on a working and friendly visit to the capital, Nouakchott, on March 11 and 12,



El Arby Sidi Mahmoud
Journalist Specializing in Sahel Affairs

and in order to preserve the common life, fraternity, and good-neighborliness of the two countries, reminded the parties of the need to work together in a way that would avoid the recurrence of such acts affecting the lives and property of Mauritanians in Mali and their property.”

France's Interests Favor a Conflict between Mauritania and Mali over the Wagner Group

Decisions adopted at meetings held by Nouakchott include the punishment of the perpetrators of these heinous crimes to the fullest extent of Malian law; the establishment of a framework for consultation, exchange, and information-sharing to effectively prevent the recurrence of such incidents; and the organization of joint patrols along the two countries' shared border.

The Malian delegation included the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Interior, the Chief of Staff, and the Director of the Intelligence Agency. Nouakchott sent a corresponding delegation consisting of Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Hanena Ould Sidi, Minister of the Interior Mohamed Salim Ould Marzouk, Assistant Chief of Staff General Habibullah, Head of Security Group Lieutenant General Masghar Ould Sidi, and Head of the Foreign Security Group Hanan Ould Hanoun Ould Sidi.





← This step is seen as a starting point for a combined effort to overcome tense social conditions in Mauritania, especially in border areas where there is demographic and social overlap. Groups on both sides of the Mauritania-Mali border are linked by historical and cultural relations and economic interests that form the basis of the existing ties between the two countries. Given the nature, however, of the contest for international influence in the broader region, this issue has taken on several additional dimensions with the withdrawal of France, the entrance of Russia, and competition between China and the United States.

Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop called for “caution towards the enemies of the friendly and fraternal relationship between Mali and Mauritania” and the “frustration of all their schemes.”

He explained that “the Malian people are not the enemy of the Mauritanian people, and the Mauritanian people are not the enemy of the Malian people. Our enemy is terrorism, insecurity, and crime,” stating that he hopes that «thousands of Mauritians living in harmony with Mali will continue their activities in peace and tranquility,” and urging that “citizens of both countries maintain friendship, good-neighborliness, and friendly relations.”

Diop considered recent events to have taken place “in a very disturbing geopolitical and regional security context, with Mali subjected to inhuman, unjust, and illegal sanctions imposed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (CEDEAO).” He followed up by saying that the recent attack on Mauritians in Mali was «a serious incident and a very disturbing development for Mali. That is why we sent the President to his Mauritanian counterpart in a fraternal spirit to understand what had happened and brought together diverse actors to assess the situation and consider what can and must be done to prevent this from happening again.” Diop reiterated his government’s denial of the involvement of the country’s military in the incident and pointed to the establishment of a joint fact-finding mission aimed at investigating recent events as evidence of this.

Mali

Diop highlighted that the Malian delegation had visited Nouakchott to express its regret and empathy to the President, the



Government, and the families of the individuals concerned, stressing “the full commitment of the Malian Government to cooperate transparently and in a fraternal spirit with our Mauritanian brothers to clarify this position.” He continued that they were waiting “patiently for the results of these actions in order to inform the families of the situation, and to be able to continue together as brothers united by history, geography, and numerous other ties.” He welcomed the “committee whose visit in the coming days we await in Bamako.”

Mauritania is currently considering increasing its economic relations with the Malian Republic, and in mid-February the governments of the two countries signed an agreement to facilitate bilateral trade. The agreement, signed by the President of Mauritanian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture Ahmed Bab Ould Ely and President of the Malian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Youssef Batiley, facilitates bilateral commercial exchanges and increases cooperation between economic actors.

Mauritanian Trade Minister Naha Bint Hamdi Ould Meknes said that the agreement would facilitate trade and allow economic actors to transfer goods “as quickly as required.” The Minister of Commerce and Financial Industry Mohammed Mahmoud stated that this agreement was intended to strengthen economic cooperation between the two countries as well as age-old cultural and social relations.

The signing of these agreement came in the shadow of sanctions imposed by ECOWAS on Mali, which include border closures by the group’s members, the freezing of financial assets, the prohibition of bank transfers, the withdrawal of all diplomats from

Bamako, and the halting of all cooperation and financial assistance, with the exception of food and medicine.

Mauritania currently represents Mali’s most important access into the sea through its ports on the Atlantic coast, frustrating some efforts by outside powers to isolate the military authorities in Bamako. Observers warned of actions to strain bilateral relations between Nouakchott and Bamako by pushing for greater isolation of Mali’s military regime, which is facing regional and international sanctions, especially since the killing of Mauritians linked to the Russian Wagner Group.

In this context, a report by the Human Rights Section of the United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) accused Malian forces and the Wagner Group of being responsible for the «massacre» that took place earlier this month in the Niono region in central Mali, which claimed 30 lives.

Divisions between the various ethno-social groups in Mali tend to reflect the French-Russian conflict in the country, which is facing isolation by ECOWAS and the Sahelian states after two coups d’état. The first occurred in August 2020 and overthrew President-elect Ibrahim Bou-bacar Keita. The second coup d’état overthrew interim President Bah N’Daw and Acting Prime Minister Moctar Ouane and led to the appointment of Vice-President Assimi Goita as interim President by the Constitutional Court of Mali. This was followed by France’s announcement of its immediate withdrawal from Malian territory, after its presence there became untenable due to the crises in its former African colonies and Moscow’s entry into the region.



It is no secret that France's agitated stance toward Russia in the Ukrainian Crisis does not lie solely in the merits of France's affiliation with NATO and the European Union. Rather, the French position in its campaign against Russia lies in the intense conflict that has emerged in recent years between France and Russia over influence in several African subregions. Russia seeks influence for itself in countries that have for decades been under the uncontested influence of France, including the Malian Republic.

As such, it may be in the French interest to create a crisis between Mauritania and Mali premised on the actions of the Wagner forces, as this would present Russia as a colonial power spreading instability in the world through its use of mercenaries and its official armed forces. This would also tarnish the image of the Malian government because of its relationship with undisciplined mercenaries, forcing Mauritania to take a position against Mali. The primary goal of this effort is to pressure the Governments of Mali and Mauritania to align with France's position in particular, and the Western position in general, condemning Russia's expansionist policies that threaten peace and security in the world and the interests of peoples on various continents.

It is clear that any such crisis or dispute between Mauritania and the Republic of Mali would be a detriment to Mauritania's national interest. Regardless of whether the balance of power favors the latter, the opportunity offered by present circumstances to exploit good relations with Mali is historic in every sense, and history rarely repeats in modern international relations.

Pragmatism and Other Calculations

Those who beat the drums of war with Mali – whatever their intentions – must realize that Mali, apart from our relationship of brotherhood, religion, and shared history, represents a strategic depth that provides stability, security, and unity. Turning this relationship into a source of temporary or permanent tension will have a negative impact on the already-high costs to secure our borders, stability, and social fabric that overlaps along over more than

2,000 kilometers of shared border. This border has witnessed more than fifty years of armed conflict and the horizon of compromise is still dark and unpromising.

A very important market for Mali and its capital with 15 million consumers, our country is one of its most important maritime outlets on the ocean, in a frenzied commercial rivalry with Senegal, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. This means that we have a rare opportunity to strengthen our partnership with Mali and to assert our commercial dominance over this market by virtue of geography, the moment, and our considerable capital expertise in African markets, as well as our livestock wealth in all the blacksmith areas from Krakoroin the west to Dhahr in the east, which represent the least expensive humanitarian intervention program in years of drought for these areas.

Because geography is so stubborn, the options for dealing with the situation in Mali require calm, prudence, and firmness. The President of the Republic has begun responding to the crisis quietly and out of the public eye, and we are waiting for the results with confidence in his diplomatic capabilities and his experience with Mauritania and the Sahel's security portfolios. The Transitional President of Mali, Colonel Assimi Goïta, had a long telephone call last Wednesday with President Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani, in which they discussed recent tensions along the border of the two countries and the signs of a diplomatic crisis. Bamako stated that it had subsequently decided to open an investigation into the circumstances of the disappearance of several Mauritians on Malian territory, although it did not provide any information on the number of Mauritians disappeared or their fate. Bamako instead sent a high-level government delegation to Nouakchott tasked with emphasizing fraternity and cooperation between the two countries, particularly in the area of the operation of the common border, defense, and security of people and goods. The Malian authorities were surprised that «this type of unfortunate incident took place at a time when we are supported by this brotherly and friendly country, especially with regard to the Malian people's access to their dietary needs, which is under the illegal and unjust sanctions of the ECOWAS Group.»

The issue takes on many different dimensions and contexts, given the nature of

conflicts over international influence in the region as a whole.

Prior to that, the Mauritanian authorities announced that they were following with great interest the disappearance of a group of citizens in Mali amid rumors of their deaths. In a statement issued by the Ministry of the Interior, they added that «the highest authorities of the country are following with great interest the information in circulation regarding the loss of contact with a group of our citizens on Mali territory,» noting that they have «taken all necessary and urgent steps to ascertain the fate of missing citizens and to ascertain precise details about their condition.»

They added that they «assure their families and the public that they are making the utmost effort and pursuing necessary contacts and procedures to ascertain the status of these citizens. The first information gathered will be disclosed to the public and to the families of the missing as soon as its credibility is ascertained.»

Newspapers in Nouakchott initially reported that a group of Mauritians had been killed within Malian territory, near the eastern regions of Mauritania. There are conflicting accounts of their numbers and the circumstances of their deaths. In response, protesters gathered in the border town of Bagrou demanded that the authorities divulge the truth about what had occurred.»

Areas of the Malian State close to the border with Mauritania continue to experience violent armed confrontations between the Malian army and armed groups, and several Mauritanian citizens have recently lost their lives there. Last Wednesday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mauritania summoned the Malian Ambassador in Nouakchott and presented him with a «very strong» protest against repeated incidents involving Mauritians in Mali and alleged that the Malian armed forces were behind the incidents.

Mauritanian Commission of Inquiry in Mali

The Malian Government has agreed to receive a Mauritanian commission of inquiry to investigate the murder of Mauritanian citizens on Malian territory as a gesture of goodwill. The Mauritanian team has already arrived in Bamako and started work amid celebration and cooperation with Mali.

From Zero to Hero!

Oumou Kane, as one of the most influential Mauritanian Women



The Key is celebrating Women’s Day. As a result, we interviewed one of the most influential Mauritanian women, Oumou Kane. The interview was conducted on Thursday, March 24th, 2022.

The Key: Oumou Kane, can you give us a snapshot about you?

The interviewee: I’m currently the Head of Women’s Football at FFRIM. I have served as the president of an NGO called Association Multiculturelle pour un Avenir Meilleur (a Multicultural Association for a brighter future, AMAM.) I was also awarded the Mandela Washington Fellowship in 2015. I hold a master’s degree in Business Administration.

The Key: What makes Oumou Kane different?

Oumou Kane : I’m not so sure whether I’m different from the other women or not, but to answer your question, I happen to be from a family that most of its members didn’t continue their studies to the end despite that I strived and believed that no one can decide my future except myself. Thus, I pursued my studies with

great motive that I’ll be a catalyst for the other members of my family. It wasn’t problematic for me to continue my studies in my country, however; what was troubling for me was going abroad for the sake of pursuing a master’s degree. When I came back from Senegal after meriting a master’s degree, I was so determined to contribute to the development of my country. Consequently, I started working on changing some classical mentalities. For example, women should be regarded as a weak gender; this is what I promised myself to tackle. Hence, I kept fighting until women got the chance to be where they are now regarding football! Here is what you may consider as a response to your question, I was selected to take part in the FIFA/UEFA women in Football Leadership Program in 2018.

The Key: How did Oumou Kane pull it off?

Oumou Kane : I was determined to be influential not only at an ethnic level but also at a national one. I first created an NGO called AMAM so that my people would believe in me when I succeed. The NGO focused on cultural and social promotion, gender equality, the fight against

poverty, and access to basic social services such as health and education. This wasn’t an easy task for me since gender equality is something that’s unpleasant for many Mauritians due to a fallacy. Therefore, I approached the people who believed in me the most. Hence, I made it. Then, I aimed to have a national influence. As a result, I knew that to fight gender equality could happen through Football since I’ve had an experience with it. I played as a goalkeeper, and many would mock me, for this was unacceptable in Mauritanian society. I could reach out to the president of FFRIM Ahmed Yahya. He was surprised to receive a motion like that. Then, after deep thinking he concurred and made me in charge of Women’s Football Department. Thereafter, I started working on my strategy to assume the responsibility that I was assigned with. Troubles began with me, for playing Football by Women wasn’t something familiar to the Mauritians. I even would receive some vulgar comments about my team. Despite all of that and after tireless work, I was instrumental in establishing the first-ever women’s national team in Mauritania in 2019.





The Key: What's Oumou Kane's Influence upon FFRIM?

Oumou Kane : I was assigned to be responsible for the Women's Football Department. I first incurred many obstacles, for this was my innovation. I knew that I would face that rejection. I was like a stranger in FFRIM since there weren't many women. Men would say «why would a lady be here?» «Football is meant for men not women.» Anyway, I continued fighting for the sake of some ladies who were so passionate about playing Football. I wanted to help them out since I had promised myself to do so. To answer your query regarding how I could accomplish what I've accomplished so far, I started with FIFA Program [Live Your Goals]. I wrote to them; they sent us

money and asked us to invite schools. For example, we needed to have 200 young ladies. FIFA explained to me how I should do my work. It took me 2 months to work on that. Furthermore, FIFA sent us all of the stuff including uniforms, shoes, gloves, knee pads, shoulder pads and so on. FIFA sent us an instructor then started training. We organized our first competition in 2017. The age was from 15 to 17. The team was only made of 7 players including the goalkeeper. This was monumental. Everybody was talking about it. After 3 years, we invited our first guest Djibouti on August 30th, 2019. People started to familiarize themselves with that. It was a problem of mentality. However, I could change that. In the end «I pulled it off.» I was invited to the FIFA Convention because my strategy was

one of the best female football strategies. Mauritania's strategy was the best one. FIFA appreciated that.

The Key: What were the obstacles that you faced and how you surpassed them?

Oumou Kane : I had many naysayers that would say «this woman is out of her mind» I even got insulted by some families. Hence, I knew that I'm about to be successful, for success starts like that. I had my own strategy to work on since the Federation didn't have one because it's something that I myself innovated. I had first to fight discrimination against women. I went after the fact that women need to be given the same consideration as men. I'm still working on the idea that women need to have their own stadium and Academe.

The Key: What about finance?

Oumou Kane : FIFA is helping as well as LA CAF and FFRIM. We also got some support from U.S. Embassy Nouakchott-Mauritania. They sent us a coach to train us. She gave some valuable tips.

The Interview Part II

Oumou Kane as a Mandela Washington Fellow



The Key: How did Mandela Washington Fellowship shape Oumou Kane?

The Interviewee: I applied in 2014 and went on my journey in 2015. I was replaced in civic engagement. That training helped me a lot to change some mentalities that I always aspired to. When I came back, many of my circles considered me to be a role model for them. They got inspired by me.

The Key: What do you want to say to The Key?

The Interviewee: I just want to thank the Key Staff for inviting me to this interview to shed light on what we do here. The Key happens to be like my story since it's the only Mauritania's English-language medium, right?

The Key: Indeed, we faced almost the same. Many said «You must be out of your minds» We are a Francophone country not an Anglophone one. However, many have responded now.

Thank you Oumou. We enjoyed talking to you!

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A Special Coverage!

The Association of Mauritanian Dentists(AMD)



The Association of Mauritanian Dentists organized their 12th regular convention on March 26th and 27, 2022. It was held in Mauricenter in Nouakchott. The Health Minister along with some other prominent participants attended the convention . Many scientific presentations were conducted about the importance of taking care of one’s mouth and teeth.

The event also included organizing the first special exhibition of medical products related to dental treatment and implant. At the end of the convention, the members of the Association elected New office as what follows:

The President

Dr. Houssam Aryan is the president of the Association. He is a dentist; he has his own clinic. Graduated from Aleppo University. He had some training in Dentistry(Dental Implant and Endo-



dontics)
Languages:
Arabic : Excellent
French: Excellent
Portuguese:: Very Good
English: Good

Vice President

Dr. Youcoub ould Boubou
He is in charge of Foreign Affairs
Graduated from Aleppo University.
Languages:
Arabic: Very Good
French: Good



Dr. Zeinebou Mohamed Saleh

Secretary General
Graduated from Mohammed V University in Rabat
Languages
Arabic : Very Good



French: Very Good
English: Good

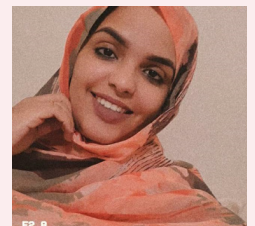
Dr. Yacoub Moussa Said

The Financial Manager
Graduated from the European school for Orthodontics as well as the university of Genoa



Dr.Houda Mohamed Said

She is in charge of the scientific, cultural and social activities
Graduated from Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar.
Languages:
Arabic: Very Good
French: Very Good





During the 2021 attacks on Gaza, and with the rise of hashtags such as: #saveSheikJarrah, #freePalestine, and #saveGaza, multiple Facebook and Instagram accounts posting pro Palestine posts were restricted and some even suspended whereas those whose views were pro-Israel were not. To be able to tell when a news outlet is biased and to protect ourselves from falling victim to fake news, we must educate ourselves about media.

Literacy is not only the ability to read and write, it is also competency. It has become used to refer to the basic skill set required for participation in any specific area. The term “news literacy” then implies owning the basic skills required to “read” (consume and evaluate news) and “write” (participate in news production). However, scholars argue that the term “literacy” implies only mechanical skills, while what is needed when it comes to media is “critical thinking”.

It is seen as an important educational purpose as it gives way to the possibility of raising news consumption, civic engagement, and democratic political participation. There is a shared belief amongst scholars that there is a connection between media literacy and civic and political engagement. Media literacy is key to an engaged citizenry in a participatory democracy, with an expectation of three outcomes from media literate citizens: critical thinkers, creators and communicators, and agents of social change.

At the time of the event mentioned at the beginning of this article, I was news and media illiterate. I accepted the altered videos that circulated Facebook as fact. They were not even from Mauritania, even though protests did take place in certain parts of the capital. I did not realize that they were a part of propaganda until the entire ordeal was over and I could finally reach my family and friends.

Media literacy is the ability to critically think about and evaluate messages in the world around us. To be media literate is not to be cynical about the news or politics and politicians, but rather to be skeptical. As Peyton Paxson writes in his book *Mass Communications and Media Studies: An Introduction*, “Skepticism requires carefully choosing and examining what one decides to believe in. If the media promote cynicism, media literacy promotes skepticism.”

Regions of the United States:

The West

Part 1



Alex DiCenso
Intern, U.S. Embassy Nouakchott

The United States is a massive, diverse country spanning the entirety of the North American continent and touching four different seas. Owing to this geographic breadth and the country’s rich history, the United States is made up of many unique geographic and cultural regions. For the next few months, I will be writing about the most well-known of these regions here in The Key. Each month, I will discuss the geography, history, and culture of one region. This month’s focus will be the Western United States, commonly known as “the West.”

Geography

The West is the largest region of the United States, covering an area almost five times that of Mauritania and is approximately equivalent in size to the entire Maghreb. The region is made up of thirteen states, stretching from the Rocky Mountain states of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. Also included in our definition of the West are Alaska and Hawaii. Alaska, the largest American state, is entirely separated from the rest of the “Lower 48” states, and the only land route there travels through Canada. Hawaii is a chain of Pacific Islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Both states are notable for the strong presence of native culture, resulting from their geographic isolation and relatively recent incorporation into the United States.

Owing to its significant size, the West is incredibly geographically diverse. For the sake of simplicity, however, the region can be split into five broad geographic zones: mountains, desert, woodlands, coast, and the geographic extremes.

The easternmost part of the West is marked by the impressive Rocky Mountains, a mountain chain stretching from Canada in the north to New Mexico in the South. They form a massive buffer between the fertile Midwest and the more barren Western interior. Many of the United States’ most famous national parks, such as Yosemite and Yellowstone, are located within the Rocky Mountains.

To the west of the Rocky Mountains lays a vast dry area formed by a number of deserts that stretches from Utah to California. The natural symbol of this area is the cactus, a desert plant that comes in a wide variety of shapes and sizes but is most notable for its ubiquitous thorns. The deserts of the West take a variety of forms, with some covered in low brush and subject to occasional rain and others being among the driest on earth. Some of these deserts even imitate the appearance of the Sahara.

Between these deserts and the Pacific Ocean sits the coastal zone, located in California. This subregion is marked by a Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and mild winters. To the north, in Northern California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, is a large, forested area with frequent rain and a cool climate year-round. This area also has a large number of tall mountains.

To be Continued....



Corrupt leadership, stranglehold on African development..!!!

In 1992, attending my first year of English courses, my teacher, Mrs. Mar-ni Gail Jones (former Peace Corps Member serving in Mauritania) taught me what “Leadership” is about by this:

“When Georges Washington was at the age of 10 he used to stay closely around his grandfather who had a cherry tree in the backyard of his house. No one could cut off anything from the tree. One day he (little Georges) took an ax and chopped off the beloved cherry tree and waited for his granddad. Seeing what happened, the grandfather was furious and uttered with ferocity: “Who dared doing this to my cherry tree?”. Bravely, Little Georges shouted at him by saying: “It’s no one else but me. Make sure you can’t do anything against me”.

The Grandfather wondered and contemplated to his grandson: “I am unable to take any action against you today. But you will be the first President of the United States of America; there is leadership in your DNA”. Everyone one knows what happened after this prophecy.

Georges Washington was not only the first President of the US but among the founding fathers the spirits of whom are still ruling in the First Superpower of the world. This means, to be a leader we must inspire others with our ideology of change, enhancement, surpass, governance, justice, equity and respect of laws. True leaders die for their ideas and actions; they get stoned, rejected, imprisoned, molested, exiled or murdered like the well-known figures as Dr. King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Thomas Sankara, Muammar Kaddafi, Patrice Lumumba...etc. Those figures are buried with honor and dignity forever; they died for the sake of others. A leader doesn’t give mere instructions but act in the same way as followers or disciples.

Today, Africa in general, Mauritania in particular is polluted with corrupt leadership; “the leading cause of poverty around the world was not a lack of resources but the corruption of leadership” stated PM Imran Khan. He even termed corruption as the biggest evil plaguing poor countries; corruption is something that destroys a country. The developing world is poor because the ruling elite siphoned off



the money and laundered it into offshore accounts, he slammed. A society is civilized only when it has the rule of law. Without the rule of law, there is no future. PM Imran Khan ended this interview brilliantly by “the rule of law and public welfare were the two guiding principles of the state of Madinah in accordance with the Islamic teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

Islam World leaders who follow the instructions of this same Prophet Muhammad since 1400 years now, by human right violation in your countries and kingdoms? Why rich are getting richer and richer; others are starving? Why discrimination is observed in every scale of social life? Why same families are ruling prosperously while the same families are decimated with hunger? Why being silent when ruling elite is totally corrupt? Why resources are not distributed with equity amongst the populations? Why fanatic scholars are disorienting social stability and youth from the path of achievement and success?

Everywhere in Africa or Asia, people are killing each other to do politics to be better-off in doing corruption in each government tenure.

Being a servant-leader leadership, requires considering oneself as selfless while putting the interests of others before their own. A servant leader is full with integrity, vi-

sion, direction, faith, culture of trust, leading with others in mind, helping others with life issues, acting with humility, or a true servant leader would say: “Let’s go do it” rather than “You go do it”. According to Skip Prichard “Servant leaders sacrifice some today to develop more for tomorrow”. They sell and persuade while others keep the control and commandment.

Nonetheless, with lack of leadership, rulers override laws and regulations; their job to distort others rights; they earn wealth via mafia, corruption, drug-dealing, tribalism, favoritism, money-laundering, stealing public resources or killing those who stand for equity or social justice. In Mauritania, there is no such embarrassment in stealing public property as this has become commonplace. Laws are voted daily but never respected by legislators. It has become a social prestige to steal as a minister or political leaders in the public service and parade everywhere with nicest houses and most luxurious cars.

In this same Mauritania, so far people can’t be nominated or appointed on the basis of the skills and competences but because of horizontal relations and recommendations irrespective whether the applicants fit the position or not. In this country of 2022, government cabinet is composed of ministers related to geographic, regional or social backgrounds.





Official trips cost so much money to the state in air-ticket and hotel bookings; their dentists, physiotherapists, cardiologists...etc. are all living overseas. The so-called leaders, make decisions as they wish irrespective if they are in the right tract or no. Each of them pretends to do as they feel like without fear of any sanction against them. Elsewhere in Africa, presidents shuttle between flights and destinations in First Classes with in most of cases close friends and relatives, not necessarily government officials. It is common that African leaders take long 'vacations' or otherwise disappear from their countries for long periods of time with checkouts of about \$40,000 per day without any official itinerary. When information ministers are asked, they pretend that presidents and ministers or kings are human beings who deserve to peaceful vacations to relax. Furthermore, leaders/ministers/princes disappear for "medical reasons." Because of the general lack of transparency, absence for medical reasons leads to speculation. A political Analyst alerted that: "poor political leadership informs the bad governance that is Africa's greatest barrier to social and economic development. The refusal of some African leaders "to be open and honest with the public further shows a disregard for the people who put them in power, and in turn erodes public trust in the leaders themselves." Supporting the logic of this Political Analyst the hope that as Africa's population becomes younger, better edu-

cated, and part of the information age, the leaders' behavior that is unquestionably politically unacceptable: "African presidents have to learn to talk to—and account—to their people."

We have to tell President Ghazouani that as he has in mind to change and shape a new Mauritania in terms of good governance, transparency, clean management of public resources, social equity, fair justice, community-based development, innovation perspectives, quality of academic training, employment for all, eradication of poverty, fight against illiteracy, empowerment, dislocation extremism, job creation... etc, our beloved President should open his eye his first circle, those around him. With humor, he must ask himself "is my cabinet full with mind-visionaries or pocket-visionaries?". The answer of this question will identify which right man should be at what right place. Unfortunately, "Camel can never see his hump". In reality, Dear President, the daily reports you archive don't reveal anything to you as they are well elaborated with fake data and facts if not, Mauritania has only about 5 million inhabitants but rich of raw materials and natural resources of all kinds. To conclude, No Mauritanian would buy why their country is still amongst the poorest countries of the globe...explor

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The Federal Associations of Agricultural Improvement and Development in the Wilaya of Assaba

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- ➔ Self-sufficiency for all of the inhabitants of Assaba.
- ➔ Focusing on Agriculture and its Development.
- ➔ Unemployment Eradication
- ➔ Focusing on the lower class as well as improving Women's Conditions.
- ➔ Starting some real projects that will secure good earnings for the first time in many provinces of Assaba.
- ➔ Bringing fruits that were not present in the area to plant them locally.
- ➔ Opening the doors to national and international organizations that are willing to collaborate in the development of the human and economic resources of Assaba.



Ahmed Mohamed Vadel El Houssein Mauritanian businessman

Ahmed Mohamed Vadel El Houssein owns many properties that contribute in busting up Mauritania's economy, in the field of livestock as well as possessing some real estate.



Ahmed Mohamed Vadel El Houssein's Career

- General Coordinator of several development projects in the Wilaya of Assaba.
- President of Tawviq Cooperative in Garva, Municipality of Waid Ajrid; Gueroue Moughataa.
- President of the Association of Osais Gonbol Participatory Management in Kamour. municipality
- Vice-President of the Agricultural and Development Associations federation in the Wilaya of Assaba.
- Coordinator and partner of Ajdad Cooperative in the municipality of Anwamelin
- Coordinator and investor of Al-Najah Cooperative Afraay Akik in the municipality of Belharath; Barkewol Moughataa.



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