

Humanitarian Country Team

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Statement attributable to the Humanitarian Country Team in Sudan on the *de facto* expulsion of UN senior official and OCHA Head of Office Mr. Ivo Freijisen

Khartoum, 22 May 2016. The Humanitarian Country Team in Sudan today expressed shock and disappointment at the *de facto* expulsion by the Government of Sudan of one of its senior UN officials, the Head of Office of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Ivo Freijisen.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has informed the United Nations in Sudan that Mr. Freijisen's annual stay permit will not be renewed when it expires on 6 June 2016. This is despite the request for a 12-month extension of his stay permit, as per routine process, which was submitted on 10 April 2016. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided no official explanation in writing for this decision.

This action by the Government of Sudan is inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the international civil service enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the organisation's foundational treaty, to which Sudan is a party.

The Humanitarian Country Team is concerned about the impact of this decision on the operating environment for all humanitarian organisations in Sudan, which provide emergency relief, and early recovery and transitional assistance to those in need. In 2015 the Humanitarian Country Team and partners coordinated and implemented the delivery of over US\$600 million worth of aid to hundreds of thousands of people across the country.

The OCHA Head of Office is the fourth senior UN official to be expelled from Sudan in the last two years. This comes in addition to the forced closure of international NGO Tearfund in December 2015 and the *de facto* expulsion of three international NGO country representatives in recent months.

The Humanitarian Country Team remains committed to supporting the Government and the people of Sudan in providing humanitarian assistance. The Humanitarian Country Team calls upon the Government of Sudan to ensure a fully conducive environment for delivering timely, principled and quality humanitarian assistance.

Mr. Freijisen is highly appreciated by the Humanitarian Country Team for his dedication to humanitarian action in Sudan, his in-depth expertise, and his strategic and effective leadership. Mr. Freijisen was appointed to his position by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, on behalf of the UN Secretary-General, in

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February 2014. He has worked for over a decade in Sudan during a career spanning 23 years and over 15 countries. During 12 years at OCHA he has led principled humanitarian coordination work, focusing on providing life-saving and emergency assistance to people in need. This is his sixth official appointment in Sudan.

The Humanitarian Country Team is the highest-level decision-making forum of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) structures in Sudan and is the primary mechanism for coordination among UN agencies and NGOs. The IASC was established globally by a resolution of the UN General Assembly. Members of the Humanitarian Country Team in Sudan include representatives from FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCHA, WFP, WHO, IOM, the international NGO Forum Steering Committee and IICO. MSF, an observer to the Humanitarian Country Team in Sudan, also aligns itself with this statement.

This press release has been produced by the Humanitarian Country Team in Sudan. For further information, please contact sudanhct@un.org.