



## Press Release on

### Troika Unfair Statement about Sudan

In his meeting with the UN Secretary General Mr Ban Ki Moon on the 9th of June 2016, Sudan's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Professor Ibrahim Ghandour, reiterated the commitment of the Government of Sudan to the Road Map Agreement, which it signed on the 21 March 2016 during the Strategic Meeting facilitated by the African Union High Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP). Professor Ghandour urged the international community to exert more pressure on the rebels and their allied opposition groups to sign the agreement stressing that political negotiations are the only route to peace in the country. Mr Ban Ki Moon from his side reaffirmed the support of the United Nations to the Road Map Agreement to achieve peace and stability in the two areas.

The Road Map Agreement which called on all parties to urgently start negotiations with the aim of reaching a permanent ceasefire in the two areas to facilitate delivery of humanitarian relief to the needy population, and eventually leading to peace in all Sudan including Darfur, was signed only by the Government of Sudan. The rebel movements and their allied opposition groups rejected the Road Map Agreement altogether, declaring, publicly, their intention to pursue the war and continue their campaign of terrorizing the innocent civilians in the conflict zones.

Contrary to what a fair observer would expect of seeing more pressure be exerted on those war advocates to sign the agreement and come to the negotiating table, some international actors, including the Troika countries (the US, UK, and Norway), issued a biased and inaccurate statement on the 26th of May 2016 condemning the Government of Sudan for alleged aerial bombardment of civilians in the conflict areas. The statement went on to express concern over what it called 'the de facto expulsion' of Mr. Ivo Freijsen, of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), linking it to what it called the 'critical humanitarian situation'. It is the refusal of the rebel movements to sign the Road Map Agreement, combined with the failure of the international community to hold them responsible for the continuation of the war, which is the reason for the continued suffering of the people in the conflict areas. Absolving the rebel movements of their responsibility in prolonging the war by rejecting the Road Map Agreement, will certainly send the wrong message to them, and will not help to improve the critical humanitarian situation the Troika members have referred to in their statement.

To set the records straight, it should be mentioned that Mr. Ivo Freijsen, was basically sent by the UN to work as an acting head of OCHA in Sudan on temporary basis, for a short period in 2014, and has been given many extensions of stay by the government of Sudan since then, despite the lack of cooperation shown by him. He was never nominated by the UN as the permanent head of OCHA in Sudan.

The Government of Sudan, while reaffirming its continuous commitment to work closely with the UN agencies in Sudan, would like to emphasize once again its full right to evaluate the cooperation of senior UN officials working in the country, and that the non-renewal of Mr Freijsen's stay, should not in any way be construed as rejection of OCHA's role and presence in Sudan.

20<sup>th</sup> June 2016