

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**Statement by Mr. John Holmes
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
1 August 2008**

I am deeply troubled about the continuing threats and attacks against humanitarian agencies working in Darfur. Following two attacks against their teams and premises in just one week, Médecins Sans Frontières has announced it has no choice but to evacuate its team from two locations in North Darfur. The departure of MSF team leaves some 65,000 people without essential medical assistance.

I call on all concerned to ensure full respect for humanitarian principles and to allow aid organizations to work in peace. The armed opposition groups in Darfur have a clear obligation to guarantee the personal and physical security of relief workers and access to vulnerable populations. The Sudanese Government has a responsibility to ensure security throughout their territory. This year, 180 humanitarian vehicles have been hijacked, 145 aid workers kidnapped and nine killed. Impunity for such attacks must end. Hundreds of thousands of people rely on the assistance these aid organizations deliver and we cannot afford to have them absent from Darfur.