

combatants in need of emergency relief throughout the Sudan.⁴⁹ Beyond this, it was recognized by all those who participated in the Khartoum meetings that the most urgent need was for a permanent, peaceful solution to the ongoing civil conflict in the south. Speakers stressed the importance of addressing the humanitarian concerns during the month of tranquillity. At the same time, the participants, including the Prime Minister of Sudan, invariably emphasized the need to use this time to negotiate a more permanent ceasefire leading to peace.⁵⁰

On 23 March 1989, the UN Secretary-General appointed James Grant as his personal representative charged with implementing the Sudanese relief effort. Grant and Reid had been working since 10 March to secure the agreement of the rebel Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) to the ceasefire. The first hurdle had been to elicit the consent of the government for the two UN representatives to make contact with the rebels. Initially reluctant, the Sudanese Prime Minister relented, under pressure exerted by international humanitarian agencies and the media, and allowed Grant and Reid to conduct direct negotiations with the SPLA.

In the spirit of the Khartoum meeting's desire for long-term peace, the UN urged the rebels to accept a prior government offer of a six-month ceasefire. Not only was this rejected by the rebels but the Plan of Action's call for a month of tranquillity was also turned down. The most the rebels would agree to was eight corridors of peace along which, for one month, relief supplies could be delivered unfettered to the needy population.⁵¹ This, UNICEF decided, met the requirements of the Plan of Action.

⁴⁹ UNICEF, "Crash Relief Programme for Sudan's Southern Provinces. 2.25 Million People in Need of Immediate Assistance," *Emergency Information Note*, EIN/06/89, 14 March 1989, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁰ United Nations, *Plan of Action. Sudan Emergency Relief Operations*, Khartoum, Sudan, March 1989.

⁵¹ "Sudan Rebels Pledge Relief Support," *Jordan Times*, 26 March 1989.