



Message from President Jacques Chirac on Darfur.

Paris, Maison de la Mutualité, March 20, 2007

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

It is France's honor and duty to get involved whenever universal values are threatened, whenever the intolerable occurs. You embody this vocation of vigilance and brotherhood. I hail the NGO leaders, citizens and intellectuals who have assembled here today on behalf of Darfur.

This evening, I'm with you with all my heart, because this is our battle. Already in 1995, I refused to let us resign ourselves to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. And France's energetic effort helped trigger a logic of peace.

On behalf of this idea of humanity, I am fighting to end the appalling tragedy of Darfur.

Jody Williams' report lays out the evidence before all those who would wish to deny it. Nearly 200,000 dead; millions of people driven from their homes, persecuted, displaced and made refugees. And how many villages have been pillaged, burned, devastated? The situation is worsening. France demands that all the consequences be drawn from this.

In 2004, France mobilized its military forces to ensure that the refugees would receive aid and protection. It mobilized the European Union. It took action to ensure that the Security Council would sanction those who violate human rights and would refer the matter to the International Criminal Court.

It is crucial for those guilty of atrocities to know that there will be no impunity, that the world will hold them responsible for the crimes perpetrated against their own brothers, a crime against humanity.

Africans have committed themselves to peace in Darfur. I hail their efforts and Africa's determination to fight for human dignity. We must give them our support.

The Security Council decided to deploy a force that would provide that backing, help protect refugees and the respect for human rights, and stabilize the region.

Once again, I call on the Government of Sudan and on all the belligerents to respect the peace agreements, to curb the militias that are sowing terror, and to protect civilian populations.



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

Today, as the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, I, like you, feel the need for an even more powerful international movement.

We cannot remain silent in the face of one of the great humanitarian tragedies of our time. We cannot forget the lessons of the genocides and crimes against humanity of the 20th century that haunt our consciences. We cannot accept that globalization means borders that are open to everything except for justice and morality.

We must come to the aid of the populations and assume the responsibility for protection that the UN enshrined into international law, at France's behest. The Sudanese must heed the voice of the international community.

France's diplomatic effort will remain unflagging, but it will not be satisfied with words alone. Let me say solemnly: If the atrocities continue, if the given word is not respected, the Security Council will have no choice but to adopt sanctions. We are already working on it. And everything must be done to ensure that the UN and the African Union force can be deployed in Darfur.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The fate of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children depends on this.

The stability of Africa, a continent that should be able to devote all its strength to development, depends on this!

The honor of the international community, which cannot remain inert when the essential is at stake, depends on this.

Through your efforts on the ground and, this evening, through your mobilization, you express that universal conscience that should focus on the most vulnerable in the name of the universal brotherhood whose heirs and defenders we are.

Thank you.

|