



American Jewish Committee
Los Angeles Chapter

Fredrick Levin, Darfur Taskforce Chair's Speech at the 61st Annual Meeting

Good Afternoon, my name is Fredrick Levin and I am speaking to you today as Chairman of our Darfur Task Force.

For the first time ever, the AJC has decided to solicit a contribution at its annual luncheon. The request is small but the need is great and I am honored to have a moment or two to explain why we have taken the extraordinary step of asking each of you to contribute \$25.00 or more at today's lunch

As most of you know, for several years, genocide has been occurring in the Darfur region of Sudan. To date, estimates are that up to 450,000 Darfurians have been killed as a result of the systematic slaughter prosecuted by a state-sponsored militia known as the Jan-ja-weed.

As a result, over 2 Million Darfurians have fled their homes to escape systematic slaughter and are now living in refugee camps in Western Darfur and in neighboring Chad.

But the Jan-ja-weed have followed them to the camps and now patrol the camp borders, waiting to kill any man who leaves the protection of the camp. The Jan-ja-weed don't ordinarily kill the women who leave the camps; instead, they torture and rape them.

Our request here today is directed at helping the people of the refugee camps avoid the rape, torture, and death that await them outside the camps.

Living in the camps presents a simple problem of survival. To live, mothers must cook for their children. To cook, they need fire wood. For fire wood, they must leave the camps and thereby expose themselves to the Jan-ja-weed.

The solution is the solar-power stove, which we are asking you to help us buy today. The solar-powered stove is exactly what it sounds like – a small stove that runs on solar power. With it, the people of the refugee camps can eat without foraging for firewood and thereby avoid the Jan-ja-weed.

We estimate that each family needs two stoves to live. Two stoves cost \$25.00. We ask each of you to help a Darfurian family eat in safety by contributing at least \$25.00. Of course, we encourage those of you who are so moved to contribute more.

There are 300 of us here today. If we each give \$25.00, we will help to feed _____ families in Darfur. It's that simple; there is nothing fancy about it. Just life or death in Darfur.

As we speak, across town, there is another lunch of this size going on. That one is sponsored by Jewish World Watch, a sister Jewish organization known to many of you. The Jewish World Watch lunch is expressly for the purpose of raising money to purchase solar powered stoves. A few weeks ago, Jewish World Watch, knowing of AJC deep commitment to helping to alleviate the Darfur problem, in LA and nationally, informed us of their lunch and asked AJC to partner with them. Given the scheduling conflict, we decided that the best way to honor their request for partnership was to make this solicitation here today.

And I hope you will help us to meet this partnership commitment today.

