

Merkel calls Zimbabwe 'disastrous'

by UPI

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa - German Chancellor Angela Merkel Friday urged rapid deployment of a joint peacekeeping force to war-ravaged Sudan. Merkel pledged her country's support while emphasizing "the central responsibility for peace, stability and security lies within Africa itself," Deutsche Welle reported. Merkel spoke at a news conference in South Africa during a five-day tour of African nations to reiterate Germany's commitment to human rights and to offer help to Ethiopia and Eritrea to resolve their border dispute. On other subjects, Merkel called the social and economic chaos in Zimbabwe a disaster but said Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe should be allowed to attend a Europe-Africa summit this December in Portugal, Independent on Line reported Friday. "The situation is a very difficult one. It's a disastrous one," Merkel said of Zimbabwe after meeting with South African President Thabo Mbeki. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has threatened to boycott the summit if Mugabe attends.

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