

Remarks Following a Tour of the Maison des Esclaves on Goree Island, Senegal *June 27, 2013*

Hey! Well, the—I want to thank the President of Senegal, but also the mayor of Goree and the museum curator here. Obviously, it's a very powerful moment whenever I can travel with my family, but especially for Michelle and Malia and my mother-in-law to be able to come here and to fully appreciate the magnitude of the slave trade, to get a sense, in a very intimate way, of the incredible inhumanity and hardship that people faced before they made the Middle Passage and that crossing.

And I think more than anything, what it reminds us of is that we have to remain vigilant when it comes to the defense of people's human rights, because I'm a firm believer that humanity is fundamentally good, but it's only good when good people stand up for what's right. And this is a testament to, when we're

not vigilant in defense of what's right, what can happen.

And so it's always powerful for me to visit countries outside of the United States generally, but obviously, for an African American—and an African American President—to be able to visit this site, I think, gives me even greater motivation in terms of the defense of human rights around the world. All right?

Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:33 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to President Macky Sall of Senegal; Mayor Augustin Senghor of Goree, Senegal; and Eloi Coly, museum curator, Maison des Esclaves de Goree. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Remarks at a Meeting With Civil Society Leaders on Goree Island *June 27, 2013*

Well, let me just say thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me. We've had a wonderful visit here in Senegal, and I had good opportunity to discuss a range of issues with President Sall this morning.

And obviously, it was very powerful to be visiting the Slave Museum here in Goree as a reminder of the potential for man's inhumanity to man, but also as a reminder that we all have to continually be vigilant on behalf of human rights.

The leaders—just for the press—the leaders who are gathered here today, these are all representatives of civil society, which is incredibly strong here in Senegal. And last year, when there were some significant questions as to whether Senegal's democracy would continue to represent the will of the people, it is leaders like these that were able to maintain the pressure and to maintain the focus on the peaceful transfer of power and the continuation of democratic traditions here in Senegal. And it's a re-

minder that democracy is not just about election day.

Democracy and good governance involves the need for transparency and accountability on the part of government, but also active citizens who are monitoring what the government is doing, that are speaking out. It involves a free press, freedom of assembly, rule of law. And it also involves organizations like this that aren't just working politically, but are also working to increase youth employment, helping to empower women, making sure that children and other vulnerable populations are protected. That's all part of the democratic process.

And I think that history shows that those countries that enjoy good governance, respect human rights, also end up having better economic growth, greater social stability and cohesion.

And so I just want to say, again, thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I'm