



## **Bernard Kouchner**

**Founder of Médecins Sans Frontières, world-renowned humanitarian, diplomat and doctor**

World renowned humanitarian, diplomat and doctor – founder of Médecins Sans Frontières.

## **Bernard's biography**

### **Bernard Kouchner's Background**

Bernard Kouchner is a widely admired humanitarian activist and former French government minister. He is passionate about human rights and has spent his life defending others and seeking to prevent humanitarian crises. He has been called both outspoken and hands-on and he brings with him an insider's knowledge of European and international politics today.

- Founder of Medecins sans Frontiers & Medecins du Monde
- Served in the French government as both health and foreign minister
- UN special representative to Kosovo 1999-2001
- Described as 'the Conscience of Europe'

Bernard Kouchner is an influential European politician who is not afraid to share his candid insights into the issues surrounding [health](#), [human rights](#), [globalisation](#) and [politics](#).

A doctor by training, Bernard Kouchner is the co-founder of the Nobel peace prize-winning Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders). He has organized humanitarian operations in Somalia, El Salvador and Lebanon and led field operations in Cambodia, Thailand, Uruguay, Peru, Guatemala, and Honduras. A deeply moral and outspoken man he was the first to challenge the Red Cross's stance of neutrality and silence in wars and massacres. He has often felt compelled to intervene and in 1979 he and a group of doctors took a cargo ship to the South China Sea to rescue the Vietnamese boat people trying to make it to Hong Kong. He then went on to set up another organisation in 1980 called Medecins

du Monde.

As a politician he served in various French administrations over 18 years, most notably as minister of Health and humanitarian action in 1992 under Francois Mitterrand and as Foreign Minister in the government of Nikolas Sarkozy. In 1994 he became a Member of the European Parliament holding the position of Chairman of Development and Co-operation.

From 1999-2001 he served as the UN special representative to Kosovo where colleagues praised him for his “can-do” approach.

Having seen for himself the suffering of the Kurdish population under Saddam Hussein he was one of the very few French politicians to come out in favour of the US-led military intervention in Iraq, saying that he was against war but also against Saddam Hussein’s regime.

He continues to be involved in International aid relief and has been associated with- Médecins Sans Frontières, Médecins du Monde, Globus and the Association pour l’Action.

Bernard Kouchner has received many honours for his humanitarian works including the ‘Dag Hammarskjöld’ prize for Human Rights in 1979, the ‘Athinai’ prize in 1981 from the Alexander Onassis Foundation for human rights activities and the ‘Prix Europa’ in 1984.

He is the author of numerous books, screenplays and articles and is co-founder of l’Evenement and Actuel.

## **Bernard's talks**

- **International Health Issues**
- **Humanitarian Intervention**
- **Leadership & Challenges**
- **Charity Business**
- **Third World Development and Globalisation**

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