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Self-presentation

# **Introducing Survie – On North-South relations and French policy in Africa**

Sunday 22 July 2007, by [Survie](#) (Date first published: 21 July 2007).

**Self-presentation of the French association “Survie” taken from its website July 21, 2007.**

## **WHO ARE WE ?**

Survie is a non-profit association which undertakes public-awareness campaigns and lobbies citizens and politicians for a reform of North-South relations and French policy in Africa.

It bases its activities on the right of every person to lobby their elected representative and to demand genuine control of political decisions in all domains.

The association has 1800 members and 21 local groups which lead its campaigns throughout France.

The association’s President is Odile Biyidi-Awala.

Survie’s commitment is based on one fact : Developmental problems and poverty in the countries of the Southern hemisphere are caused first and foremost by political decisions. It is therefore in the political domain that action must be taken.

## **SURVIE HAS 3 OBJECTIVES :**

### ***- The reform of France’s policy of cooperation***

Survie campaigns for the dismantlement of “Françafrique” (this term refers to the hidden face of French policy in Africa but can also be read as France-à-fric [[1](#)] ) and the establishment of fair, transparent and democratic Franco-African relations.

### ***- The fight against impunity and the trivialisation of genocide***

Survie campaigns in particular for the whole truth to be revealed about France’s involvement in the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda.

### ***- The promotion of global public goods***

Survie campaigns for universal access, in both the Northern and Southern hemispheres, to public goods (health, education, legal system, etc.).

## **SURVIE’S ACTIVITIES :**

***- Survie organises campaigns to lobby French citizens and politicians*** , such as the “France’s

dictator friends !?” campaign against France’s support for dictatorships in Africa or the Citizen Enquiry Commission (CEC) into France’s role in the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda.

- **Survie organises colloquiums and conferences in order to provoke debate.** For example, since 1994 Survie has organised counter-summits at the same time as the official Africa-France Summits. In 2005, Survie participated in the Alternative Citizen Summit held in Bamako.

- **Survie publishes books and reviews in order to disseminate information** , in particular through the monthly review *Billets d’Afrique et d’ailleurs*, the collection of *Dossiers noirs* on French policy in Africa and the reference works which summarise all the documentation and research, such as *La Françafrique* (Stock, 1999), *Noir silence* (les Arènes, 2001), *Nérophobie* (“Negrophobia”, les Arènes, 2005), *On peut changer le monde* (“We can change the world”, La Découverte, 2003), etc.

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ASSOCIATION**

Survie was created in 1984 following the call from 123 Nobel Prize winners for political action to be taken against world hunger and in favour of development. At the time, Survie’s aim was to get a law adopted for survival and development which would bring about a significant increase in public development aid for the world’s most destitute populations and which would regulate that aid in order to avoid its misappropriation. Survie gradually became aware of the extent to which this aid was being misappropriated by a system which served other objectives (with little regard for these populations’ right to use the aid themselves), namely the perpetuation of a system of colonial exploitation of the continent in the name of the defence of France’s diplomatic and economic interests in its former colonies.

Survie also became aware that a group of political, economic and military actors were taking part in this misappropriation of aid and in the pillage of the continent. This is what François-Xavier Verschave (co-founder of Survie and president of the association from 1995 to 2005) called “Françafrique”.

Aware that Africa’s developmental problems were first and foremost of a political nature, Survie realised the need to take action on this level as a matter of priority. The association’s generally consensual approach was progressively replaced by a political fight, which it deemed to be the essential prerequisite to achieving its objectives. During the 1990s Survie became a much more militant association.

In particular, its activists were mobilised in 1994 to denounce the French authorities’ collusion with the organisers of the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda, the height of Françafrique’s criminal excess.

In addition, because much development aid doesn’t reach the world’s most deprived populations, Survie has found it necessary to progressively redefine its main objective of international solidarity. Survie works to promote global public goods : the universal access to the means of satisfying elementary needs, which is essentially a recognition of the basic rights to food, shelter, work etc...

View online : <http://www.survie-france.org/rubriq...>

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## **Footnotes**

[1] “Fric” means “cash”.