

Self-presentation

1994: France and Rwanda — Introducing the Citizen Enquiry Commission (CEC)

Sunday 22 July 2007, by [Commission d'Enquête Citoyenne](#), [GEOUFFRE de la PRADELLE Géraud de](#) (Date first published: July 2007).

Self-présentation of the CEC taken form the website of the association Survie.

For Survie, the 1994 Tutsi genocide in Rwanda was a truly shocking event which had a decisive influence on the association's activities. The Rwandan affair gave a clear indication of Françafrique's criminal mechanisms.

In 1994 Survie called on France's citizens, media and politicians to demand an end to their country's support for an ethnic regime which was committing genocide. But nothing was done.

In 1998 Survie initiated the creation of a "Truth Committee for Rwanda" which helped bring about the opening of a Parliamentary Information Mission into France's role in Rwanda.

In 2004, unsatisfied with the superficial conclusions reached by the information mission, of which the ultimate aim was to absolve France's leaders of any responsibility whatsoever, Survie initiated a Citizen Enquiry Commission (CEC). The Commission was set up together with other citizens and associations, including Aircrige (International Association for Research into Crimes against Humanity and Genocides) and Obsarm (Observatory of Armaments Transfers), in order to continue research into the affair. Presided over by the lawyer Géraud de la Pradelle, the Commission took place in Paris from 22 to 26 March 2004.

For one week, approximately fifteen qualified people from various associations examined numerous documents (some of which had never been seen before) and heard testimonies and opinions from numerous experts (the journalists Colette Braeckman and Patrick de Saint-Exupéry, the historians Alison des Forges and Jean-Pierre Chrétien, the Belgian senator Pierre Galand, the political scientist Gabriel Périès, and many more).

The role that France played was examined from all angles (the political, military, financial, diplomatic and ideological), as was the media coverage given. Particular attention was paid to Operation Turquoise and the chain of command.

In the end, the considerable work of researching, cross-checking and synthesising resulted in a precise, global understanding of France's role in the rwandan tragedy. New facts were gathered. France's involvement was revealed to have gone beyond what had previously been thought. The CEC's report, entitled *L'horreur qui nous prend au visage* ("The horror staring us in the face") (Karthala, 2005), testifies to this.

In light of the facts established, the Citizen Enquiry Commission decided to become permanent and to continue its investigations until the truth is revealed and acknowledged.

Quote : *"A"Citizen Enquiry Commission"because we have no particular mandate. We are just citizens in a democracy, and we have realised that we haven't been told the whole truth. Not so much about the genocide, but about the behaviour of the authorities who govern us and represent us. There are strong suspicions of complicity - political, diplomatic and military - and we believe that as citizens we must put at the disposal of our co-citizens, who have the same democratic responsibilities as us, information which until now, at least in part, has been denied them."*

P.S.

* Géraud de Geouffre de la Pradelle is president of the CEC.