



# The Right Livelihood Award

*for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people*

## Survival International (UK)

(1989)



*...for working with tribal peoples to secure their rights, livelihood and self-determination.*

Photo: Wolfgang Schmidt

Survival International was founded in 1969 to help tribal peoples to exercise their rights to survival and self-determination; to ensure that the interests of tribal peoples are properly presented in all decisions affecting their future; to secure for tribal peoples the ownership and use of adequate land and other resources and to seek recognition of their rights over traditional land.

"Tribal peoples number some 200 million, just 4% of the world's population. Too often treated as obstacles to progress, objects of study, the exotic showpieces of tourism or potential converts to another religion, they are, in fact, members of complex and viable societies with a sense of purpose, fulfilment and community that many in our 'modern' societies might envy. Their apparently simple technology enables them to live well in supposedly inhospitable areas which defeat our own 'high' technology... Meanwhile, we make deserts of their homelands and call it 'development'." (Survival publication)

Survival has an international secretariat based in London, national offices in France, Spain, Germany and Italy and some 12,000 members in 75 countries. Its President is Robin Hanbury-Tenison and among its supporters are Richard Gere, Claude Levi-Strauss, Julie Christie, Colin Firth, Damien Hirst and Noah Chomsky. Its Director is Stephen Corry.

Survival works through projects and campaigns, education and publications.

It works with around 80 different tribes across the world and has helped countless tribal communities regain ownership of their lands and control over their own futures. For example, almost 10 million hectares of rainforest was secured for the Yanomami of Brazil, following a 20-year campaign led by

Survival.

More recently, Survival helped the Gana and Gwi Bushmen of Botswana win a landmark court ruling in 2006, allowing them to return to their ancestral lands from where they had been evicted by the Botswana government.

Survival disseminates information worldwide and educates the public about tribal peoples through a variety of means: Hosting tribal visitors; providing materials for schools and exhibitions; giving talks; holding seminars; running events; and through its websites, printed material and the media.

Survival also organizes many activities, including: Mass letter writing campaigns, vigils at embassies, putting cases to the United Nations, advising on the drafting of international law, informing tribes of their legal rights and organizing headline-grabbing stunts.

Characteristically, Survival chose to share the reception of its Right Livelihood Award with one of the native people with whom it is working closely; Davi Yanomami, a leader of the Yanomami Indians of Brazil.

Since Survival International received the RLA, the organisation has seen many more successes with the situation of tribal people improving in some places (e.g. parts of South America). This has enabled them to focus more on new cases in areas where there are grave threats (e.g. Botswana). Survival International's attention is increasingly on tribal people who have the least contact with outsiders, these who have the most to lose.

#### **Quotation**

*"Twenty years ago we heard many predictions that there would be no Indians left in Brazil by the end of the decade. These gloomy forecasts were wholly wrong. We are now optimists - hopeful that right thinking will prevail and the destruction of tribal peoples and their environments will stop. Tribal peoples will survive against extraordinary odds - but they do need the help of concerned people throughout the world."*

Stephen Corry

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