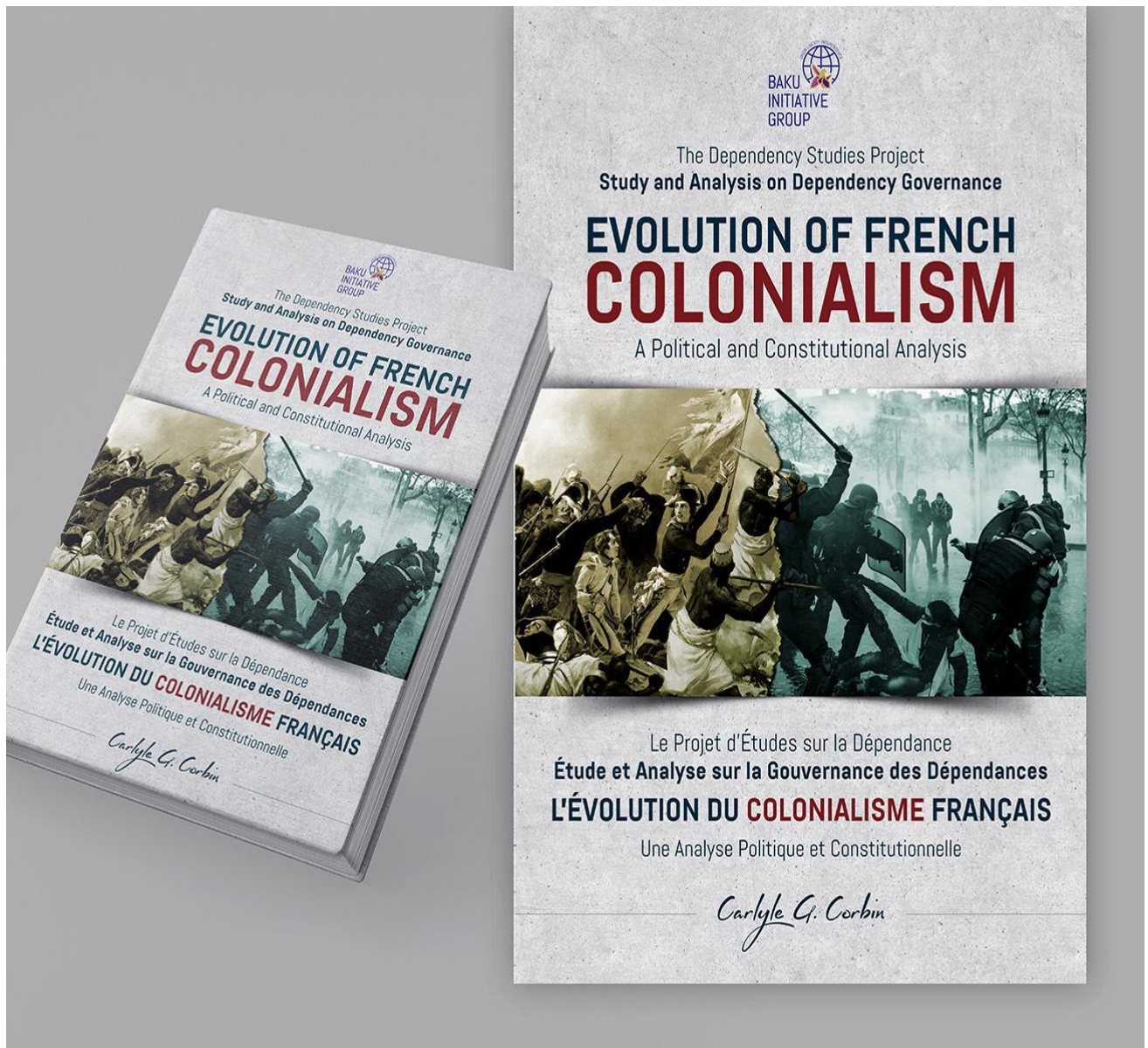


Azerbaijan's Information Warfare Against France Amongst Nations of Sub-Saharan Africa

By Sossi Tatikyan

Abstract :

Azerbaijan's information warfare against France has escalated into an explicit and systematic information warfare, at times escalating into hybrid war since 2023. It has various aspects - the France-Armenia partnership, the manipulation of anti-colonial narratives in the French Overseas Territories and Corsica, exploitation of anti-colonial narratives against France among Sub-Saharan African nations, legacy of the Algerian war, management of the Olympic games and domestic politics of France.



Introduction

Over the last two years, Azerbaijan has employed tactics of [harassment](#) against any international actor supporting Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians. Baku has targeted the EU, the U.S., international and non-governmental organizations, watchdogs, scholars, analysts and journalists. By bullying tactics, Azerbaijan is trying to ensure impunity for the ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, and for its military offensives and coercive tactics against the Republic of Armenia. Azerbaijan has thus become particularly hostile towards France due to its consistent support for Armenia and criticism of Azerbaijan.

Indeed, the deteriorating relationship between France and Azerbaijan stems from the growing partnership between France and Armenia. Azerbaijan has been attempting to discredit France to prevent its political support to Armenia and especially its support to Armenia's defense sector. France was the first EU and NATO member country that started [supporting](#) Armenia's defense sector. It [took](#) that decision after Azerbaijan occupied around 215 sq km-s of Armenia's border areas in 2021-2022, and finalized its campaign of [ethnic cleansing](#) of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians in September 2023. During those developments, France was voicing [criticism](#) in relation to Azerbaijan's actions in the UN Security Council. France was also a major [advocate](#) for the deployment of the EU civilian observation mission in Armenia (EUMA) under the Common Security and Defense Policy.

Yet, France and Azerbaijan have [economic relations](#), particularly in the energy sector. French, notably TotalEnergies, have been [active](#) in Azerbaijan's offshore gas projects, such as the "Absheron" field. Additionally, the French Development Agency (AFD) has invested €280 million in Azerbaijan's rail connectivity, supporting the East-West and North-South corridors, and is prepared to double its investments up to €600 million, focusing on infrastructure projects in transport, water, clean energy, and sustainable development.

Though, Azerbaijan's campaign of disinformation regarding [France's partnership with Armenia](#) gradually escalated into a broader campaign against France. Its substance and style mirrors Russia's similar campaign in Africa and the European neighborhood.

This article analyses Azerbaijani narratives concerning the Armenia-France cooperation amongst nations in Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting their similarities with Russian narratives, as well as the methods and platforms through which they are promoted.

The Channels and Agents of the Anti-French Rhetoric

Instrumentalising the Non-Aligned Movement

Azerbaijan held the [chair](#) of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) from 2019 and 2023. NAM was founded during the Cold War as a collective of states that sought to remain independent of the ideological and political alignments of the US-led West and the Soviet-led East. However, it also served as a forum for nations to address broader issues of global justice, particularly anti-colonialism and decolonization. NAM has [served as a platform](#) for African nations to advocate for the end of colonial rule and economic independence since its establishment. It has been pivotal in accelerating the decolonization process across the continent throughout 1961-1990.

The last year of Azerbaijan's NAM tenure coincided with the last stage of its [ethnic cleansing](#) campaign against Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians that had started with the war in September-November 2020. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council (SC), France had a lead role in convening [SC meetings](#) to address the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh between December 2022 and September 2023. Earlier, France initiated UN Security Council meeting in September 2022 when Azerbaijan launched a major military offensive against Armenia, violating its territorial integrity and occupying its border areas. [According](#) to the Azerbaijani AIR Center, a government-sponsored think tank headed by former Azerbaijani career ambassador Farid Shafiyev, famous for his anti-Armenian and [anti-French propaganda](#), "during the Karabakh war in October 2020 as well as in 2022, NAM members blocked an anti-Azerbaijan statement at the UN Security Council".

The 2023 NAM Ministerial Meeting was convened in Baku on 5-6 July when the blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians had become total. It was the month when Azerbaijan [banned](#) even International Committee of the Red Cross to deliver humanitarian supplies to Nagorno-Karabakh, which led to the [starvation](#) of Armenians locked up there. It was followed by the subsequent military offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh and the [forced displacement](#) of its Armenian population in September. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev delivered a welcome [speech](#) at the opening of the NAM Ministerial in which he used not only anti-Armenian but also more than 20 anti-French references. He notably accused Paris of "inflicting conflict" in the Caucasus and committing "most of the bloody crimes in the colonial history of humanity."

Air Center, the Baku Initiative Group and "Western Azerbaijan" NGO

On 6 July 2023, AIR Center organized a [roundtable](#) titled "Towards the Complete Elimination of Colonialism" in the margins of the NAM Ministerial. The roundtable adopted a statement establishing the [Baku Initiative Group](#) (BIG), "to support combatting colonialism and neocolonialism." BIG's slogan is "Union, Liberty and Independence", and its [declared objective](#) is "supporting the struggles for freedom and independence of those living under colonial and neocolonial rule, committing to solidarity and practical assistance." Despite its broad name, it became a tool to sustain and develop Azerbaijan's information warfare against France, manipulating anti-colonial resentments of the representatives from French Overseas Territories and francophone Africa, and providing them a platform to speak out against French policies and influence. At time, it also targets other Western states or the European institutions, critical of Azerbaijan and supportive for Armenia. Aliyev [expressed](#) public appreciation of BIG's work during the Media Forum held by Azerbaijan in Shushi on July 24, 2024, which proves the state-sponsored nature of this organization.

In the beginning of its information warfare against France, Azerbaijan was more focused on the French Overseas Territories, and BIG dedicated more than ten events to the manipulation of decolonization narratives in them. BIG started organizing [conferences on "decolonization"](#) at the UN headquarters in New York, UN Office in Geneva, Istanbul and [Baku](#) in 2023-2024. Official press releases about these events were circulated in the Azerbaijani media and social media with tags [#decolonization](#), [#politiquefrancaise](#), [#politiquecolonialefrancaise](#) and [#frenchcolonialism](#). It has been claiming to support the "decolonization" of the [French overseas territories](#) in the [South Pacific](#), [Corsica](#) and Mayotte, and "neocolonialism" of France in African countries that have been French colonies in the past.

On 3 October 2024, BIG organized the “[International Conference on the Neo-Colonialist Policy of France in Africa](#)” in Baku, which was the first event focused on Africa. According to BIG, political figures, diplomats, experts, journalists and civil society representatives from 11 African countries, as well as Mayotte, took part in the event. Despite the apparent attendance of no more than 20 participants, the Azerbaijani propaganda machine and international lobbyists have tried to [brand](#) it as a conference that “raises the bar for dialogue on French Neocolonialism in Africa.”

It is not clear whether the timing was coincidental or intentional, but an “anti-colonial” conference focused on Africa was held in Baku during the same week as the 19th Summit of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) on October 4-5. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie [adopted](#) a “Resolution on crisis situations in the Francophone space, overcoming them and strengthening of peace.” This resolution condemned Azerbaijan’s actions in Nagorno-Karabakh and expressed support for Armenia’s independence and sovereignty¹. Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry promptly [denounced](#) the resolution, and BIG [echoed](#) it. They questioned the credibility of the organization, suggesting it was a political tool used by France to pressure other nations, and recommended it “focus on the crimes committed by the French Government in the Overseas Territories under French domination.” This doesn’t exhaust the list of channels for Azerbaijan to voice anti-French rhetorics amongst African nations.

On 24 October 2024, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on the situation in Azerbaijan, violation of human rights and international law and relations with Armenia. The Resolution condemns Azerbaijan’s support for “irredentist groups and disinformation operations targeting France,” and “regrets the smear campaign aimed at damaging France’s reputation.” French members of the European Parliament from different political forces played an active [role](#) in its adoption. Azerbaijan’s parliament reacted to the resolution with a [statement](#) claiming that the resolution is “based on the false narratives of France, Armenia, and the Armenian lobby.” It has also accused the European Parliament of “chauvinistic, racist, and colonial thinking,” and claimed that “by labelling the peoples fighting against colonialism as irredentist groups, European parliamentarians justify France’s colonial policies, framing them as part of European politics.”

Since summer 2024, Baku [extended](#) its information warfare also to the “Dutch colonial rule”, after the Parliament of the Netherlands adopted two [resolutions](#) urging Azerbaijan to preserve Armenian cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh and release Armenian captives. In its [condemnation](#) of these resolutions, Azerbaijan cited the “colonial past of the Netherlands with numerous instances of subjugation and exploitation of various peoples across Asia, Africa and the Americas,” referencing “crimes committed against them,” “brutal tactics,” and “looting of the national wealth of the countries under colonial rule.”

The Dutch maintained colonies in contemporary [Ghana](#) from 1598-1872, in South Africa from 1652-1795 and 1803-1806, and briefly in other territories. The year 1872 marks the end of Dutch colonization in Africa, with both South Africa and Ghana subsequently taken over by the British in 1806 and 1872, respectively. Interestingly, Azerbaijan [has not criticized the UK](#)—with whom it has close partnership—for its colonial legacy. It doesn’t mention overseas territories of the [U.S.](#), [UK](#), Denmark or other territories and regions in Europe with aspirations of self-determination.

¹ Armenia has been an OIF member since 2004.

During the BIG's conference "on French Neocolonialism in Africa", Vasif Huseynov, a geopolitical expert from the government-sponsored AIR Center, [quoted](#) the founder of the modern Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: "Sovereignty is not given; it is taken," claiming that these words resonate deeply today, especially in Africa. Azerbaijan promotes Atatürk as a role model for African "non-interference" and "liberation"².

Besides the Baku Initiative Group, Azerbaijan employs also other state-sponsored NGOs to articulate broader anti-French narratives. The "Western Azerbaijan Community" organization, established to assert Azerbaijan's claim that Armenia is a pseudo-state and calls Armenia "Western Azerbaijan" with explicit expansionist claims — issued a strongly worded anti-French [statement](#) in January 2024, which is a conglomeration of multiple anti-French narratives. It was a reaction to the [resolution](#) adopted by the French Senate on 17 January urging Azerbaijan to respect the right of self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and condemning Azerbaijan for their ethnic cleansing finalized in September 2023. The statement labels French MPs as "modern crusaders" and asserts that "Azerbaijan doesn't require permission to conduct military operations on its sovereign territory." Amongst other narratives, it urged the French Senate answer questions about "what the French army is doing in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso". When Azerbaijan's President Aliyev [received](#) the ambassador of Burkina-Faso for the handover of his credentials on August 5, 2024, he dedicated a significant part of the meeting to voicing anti-French sentiments. Aliyev then mentioned France's biased position towards Azerbaijan, asserting that "France had shown its true colors and acted unfairly against Azerbaijan at the UN and the EU following Azerbaijan's liberation of its lands." He stated that Azerbaijan has "raised its voice against... colonial policies of France" and "called for independence and freedom for peoples subjected to colonial oppression by France," even if Burkina Faso itself has been independent since 1960.

Mayotte's Case

Mayotte, along with New Caledonia and Martinique, has become a prime target for Azerbaijan's anti-French propaganda. In September 2024, BIG held a separate [conference](#) on Mayotte's decolonization, with active participation of representatives from the Comoros. Mayotte is an island in the Indian Ocean, strategically located in the Mozambique Channel and part of the Comoros archipelago. In 1974, while the other three islands of the archipelago opted for independence from France through a [referendum](#) —leading to the Comoros' declaration of independence in 1975, Mayotte [chose](#) to remain a French Overseas Territory. In a 1976 referendum in Mayotte, 99.4% of its population reaffirmed their desire to remain a French territory rather than join the Comoros. In 2000, Mayotte's population voted in favor of greater integration with France, moving towards becoming a "[department](#)" of France. In the 2009 referendum, 95.2% of Mayotte's population voted to become a full-fledged department of France. The alternatives were to maintain the status of a French collectivity or potentially seek association with the Comoros. In 2011, Mayotte officially [became](#) France's 101st department, ensuring greater access to French social services and legal systems.

Mayotte's population estimated 300,000 in 2023, has been growing rapidly due to high birth rates and immigration, mainly from [the Comoros](#), attracted by better living conditions and

² Azerbaijan maintains a close relationship with Turkey based on the "One nation, two states" [notion](#). It has ensured its military victory in 2020 Karabakh war with Turkey's significant [support](#).

opportunities. This growth has led to social divides, challenges related to housing, healthcare, education, poverty, and civil unrest.

The Comoros has claimed sovereignty over Mayotte, considering that Mayotte should have joined the rest of the archipelago in forming the independent state of Comoros, based on the principle of territorial unity. The Comoros has raised the issue at the UN, which passed a [resolution](#) in 1975 calling for negotiations. In response, France has cited Mayotte's choice to remain a French territory, which has led to tensions between France and the Comoros. Recently, the Comoros has begun appealing to the African Union, NAM, and Organization of Islamic Conference for support in the Mayotte issue. Azerbaijan supports the Comoros' claim of sovereignty over Mayotte.

The flood, which occurred in Mayotte in December 2024 due to Cyclone Chido, left widespread [damage](#) across the island. Instead of expressing condolences for the devastating flood in Mayotte, Azerbaijan's propaganda machine [focused](#) on the incident where President Macron was [confronted](#) by frustrated locals. Azerbaijani propagandists speculated that France was responsible for the situation. The local frustration in Mayotte over the government's response to Cyclone Chido, despite substantial French assistance³, parallels the public outcry in Spain (October 2024) and the U.S. (August 2024), where the governments' efforts to manage the floods and wildfires were heavily criticized, yet Azerbaijani propagandists did not react to or exploit these situations in the same way.

Abusing the Presidency of COP29 for Anti-French Rhetoric

Finally, Azerbaijan used its capacity of the host of the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to voice strong-worded anti-French narratives with an obvious objective to turn the Global South against France. He declared Azerbaijan's support for small island states as the NAM Chair, President of COP29 and in the future. While in its [speech](#) at the opening ceremony of COP29 its President Aliyev used anti-European and anti-Western rhetoric in general, in his [speech](#) made at the Leaders' Summit of the Small Islands Developing States on Climate Change on the next day he accused France in the "colonial rule" of its Overseas Territories in the Pacific, Corsica and Mayotte⁴. He also referred to the "colonies" of the Netherlands in the Pacific. He accused France in committing crimes, that cause "serious environmental degradation" in those territories, "damage the ecosystem of the planet", as well as in "the recent human rights violations" by the "regime of President Macron". Aliyev also accused the European institutions in "not denouncing France" for its crimes out of "political hypocrisy" and "political corruption", and stated that "they share responsibility with the government of President Macron for the killings of innocent people."

This allegation was made in reference to the [riots](#) in New Caledonia in the first half of 2024 that according to the French [authorities](#) and [VIGINUM](#), a French service responsible for foreign digital interference and disinformation, have been [fueled](#) by the foreign interference by the Baku Initiative Group (BIG) between July 2023 and October 2024, attempting to challenge France's

³ Macron's visit, although criticized for his handling of local tensions, underscored France's commitment to restoring order, pledging millions of euros in aid and resources to rebuild the affected regions.

⁴ It is important to note that France plays a significant role in global climate change mitigation, notably having hosted the COP21 in 2015, which led to the adoption of the landmark Paris Agreement, setting the framework for global action to limit warming to 1.5–2°C above pre-industrial levels.

territorial integrity in its overseas territories by exploiting political and independence movements. However, a December 2024 [report](#) by Viginum about the BIG's anti-French digital disinformation campaign concluded that despite its efforts, the campaign failed to gain the intended visibility and influence within the targeted French-speaking populations.

Aliyev also reminded the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Joseph Borell's controversial [speech](#) from October 2022, in which he had called "Europe a garden and the rest of the world jungles". Aliyev stated that "if we are jungles, then stay away from us and don't interfere in our affairs." He repeated his remark about this speech in his [interview](#) to the Russian pro-Kremlin propagandist anchor Dmitry Kiselev, (sanctioned by the [EU](#) and the [United States](#)) on December 18, 2024 taking it further, suggesting that Borell would have been a fitting foreign minister for the dictator Franco.

Finally, he urged that "all political prisoners in France must be immediately liberated" in a statement, mimicking the calls of reputable international players, including the [European institutions](#) and [France](#) to Azerbaijan to release its hundreds of political prisoners.

Borell [criticized](#) President Aliyev's allegations on the EU, France and the Netherlands as undermining the conference's vital climate objectives and the credibility of Azerbaijan's COP29 presidency. While President Macron had not planned to go to the summit in Baku, the French Minister for the Ecological Transition, Energy, the Climate and Risk Prevention Agnes Pannier-Runacher canceled its trip to Baku, [calling](#) Aliyev's comments "unacceptable" and "unjustifiable". Azerbaijan's Ambassador to France Leyla Abdullayeva was [summoned](#) to the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France on 19 November due to the "hostile acts" by Azerbaijan. The representatives of the French companies [followed](#) the security advisory and did not go to the summit. Despite the diplomatic incident, France's negotiating team continued to participate in the conference, aiming to advance climate action agreements.

At COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, African nations sought substantial climate finance to address the continent's pressing climate challenges. While the conference [resulted](#) in a commitment from developed countries to mobilize \$300 billion annually by 2035, this figure falls short of the \$1.3 trillion annually by 2030 that African leaders deemed necessary.

Azerbaijan is a major producer of fossil fuel, therefore convening COP29 in Baku was highly controversial. Just to add to that controversy, Aliyev [called](#) oil and gas "a gift from God" in its welcome remarks for COP29, which was [criticized](#) as inappropriate "glorification" of fossil fuel. There were reports about [fossil fuel deals](#) made in the margins of the summit.

Further Escalation of Aliyev's Aggressive Rhetoric in His Latest Interviews

Aliyev intensified his anti-Western rhetoric, with a focus on France, the EU and the outgoing U.S. administration, whom he framed as part of a broader Western alignment against Azerbaijan, in his televised interview to the Russian state TV on 18 December 2024 and in the latest [interview](#) to the local Azerbaijani journalists on 7 January 2025.

He accused President Macron of adopting a "biased stance" in favor of Armenia and adopting a confrontational approach toward Azerbaijan during and after the 2020 Karabakh War. He

highlighted France's attempts to undermine Azerbaijan's sovereignty, including efforts to raise issues related to Azerbaijan's actions at the UN Security Council. Aliyev also alleged that France was "meddling" in Georgia's internal and regional affairs, suggesting that this interference served to destabilize the country and undermine its sovereignty. Furthermore, Aliyev claimed that France's actions in the region were part of a broader strategy to limit Azerbaijan's growing influence and diminish its international standing, including efforts to sabotage Azerbaijan's successful hosting of COP29.

Expanding his critique to Africa, Aliyev accused Macron and France of clinging to outdated neocolonial policies that had resulted in failures across the continent. He specifically pointed to Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, where French troops had been "expelled", as evidence of France's diminishing influence. He attributed these failures to France's refusal to acknowledge the independence and agency of African nations, contrasting it with the increasing presence of countries like Russia and China, which were filling the void left by France. Aliyev condemned France's colonial history, stating that events in these regions revealed the "disgusting face of French colonialism."

In those interviews, Aliyev also accused the EU of adopting a selective and biased approach to the South Caucasus, claiming it favored Armenia while disregarding Azerbaijan's legitimate interests and achievements. He also described the Biden administration as "Soros people", criticized them for their foreign policy and promotion of democracy and human rights, and accused them of using these principles as tools for interference in other countries' internal affairs. In his interview to the Russian TV he also claimed to share the incoming U.S. President Donald Trump's "traditional values".

Finally, Aliyev also reflected on the shifting global order, emphasizing its instability and asserting the increasing importance of military power in shaping the geopolitical landscape. He remarked that these changes required nations to strengthen their defense capabilities to secure their sovereignty in an uncertain world. While boasting about Azerbaijan's rising military capabilities, he demanded that France, the EU, and the United States cease their support for Armenia's security and defense sector. Furthermore, he insisted that Armenia return armaments it had received from France for its defense, issuing a stern warning about potential consequences if these demands were not met.

Commonality of Azerbaijani and Russian Anti-France Narratives

Azerbaijan supports a narrative that resonates with African sentiments regarding the lasting impact of France's colonial legacy in Africa. It implies that while former French colonies have gained formal independence, France continues to politically intervene in internal affairs or subject these nations to colonial economic exploitation. Azerbaijan claims to support anti-colonial movements in Africa that resist "external interference," which it associates with France's "neo-colonial practices". Baku encourages African nations to assertively claim their independence and sovereignty from France. Its propaganda tool BIG refers to Azerbaijan's notion of sovereignty and non-interference in its domestic affairs as a role model.

Azerbaijan's narratives on French influence in Africa resemble those employed by Russia, China and Turkey regarding [Western dominance](#) over developing countries. These narratives argue that the West—along with multilateral organizations like the EU and even the UN—imposes

human rights and democracy-related [preconditions](#) for providing security or economic assistance to Africa. Some circles in African countries [perceive](#) this as interference in their internal affairs and sovereignty, designed to maintain their dependence.

In contrast, Russia, [China, and Turkey](#) claim that they assist developing countries in Africa without such preconditions. This includes economic assistance by China and Turkey, and Russian [Wagner's purported security services](#) in Africa. Russia has [claimed](#) that France maintained its presence in Africa to exploit natural resources : the Russian disinformation [campaign](#) played a significant role in stirring up anti-French [public opinion](#) in the region, especially in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. In March 2024, the spokesperson of the Russian MFA Maria Zakharova [stated](#) that France is compensating in the South Caucasus for “its failures in Africa” and Aliyev echoed that narrative in his interview to the Russian TV in December 2024.

Conclusions :

Azerbaijan's information warfare against France in Africa and in general aligns with Azerbaijan's broader [coercive diplomatic strategy](#), with parallels with Russia's hybrid war tactics, and aims to achieve the following objectives:

Prevent support to Armenia by France and the EU:

- By fueling anti-French movements in the Pacific and Africa, Azerbaijan is aiming to [distract](#) France from the South Caucasus, blackmail it in order to stop its political and defense [support](#) for Armenia. Azerbaijan want to see a diplomatically isolated and unsupported Armenia, unable to defend its borders against military aggression, in order to continue to challenge Armenia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, or at least - impose its regional hegemony.
- Azerbaijan is retaliating France for its criticism of Azerbaijan and Russia in relation to their actions to Armenia, and aiming to ensure impunity for Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and to normalize the violation of Armenia's territorial integrity, both with Russia's complicity.
- Azerbaijan is employing accusations of neocolonialism against France and other EU nations, such as The Netherlands, as counter-narratives in response to European Parliament resolutions critical of Azerbaijan and supportive of Armenia.

Prevent the pro-Western shift in Armenia's foreign and security policies:

- Azerbaijan and Russia are also interested in keeping Armenia dependent on Russia that has failed its commitments to Armenia as a traditional ally and haven't provided neither political nor defense support to Armenia in face of Azerbaijani aggression but has instead aligned with Azerbaijani claims and narratives, including in the UN Security Council meetings, to keep Russian political influence and military presence in Armenia.
- By trying to neutralize the French, the EU and the U.S. support for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia are also trying to stop and reverse the transformation of Armenia's foreign and security policies, such as newly shaping [aspirations](#) for the EU membership, and the newly concluded strategic [partnership](#) with the U.S. Azerbaijan targets France more than the EU and the U.S. because France is the only Western actor providing armaments to Armenia. The EU and the U.S. are providing soft security support to Armenia.

Positioning itself as a medium power, a regional and global player

- Azerbaijan is challenging France, a NATO, EU and UN Security Council (SC) permanent member, to jeopardize its global influence by amplifying anti-colonial narratives in international forums.
- It is trying to increase its [influence](#) in Africa and secure votes and alliances with African nations that have significant representation in UN bodies. This strategy also aims to counterbalance Azerbaijan's non-participation in the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.
- Baku is leveraging its recent four-year chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement to build alliances in the Global South and extend its influence in Africa. Azerbaijan is positioning itself as a champion against “Western colonialism and neo-colonialism” and a “defender of historical justice, equality and respect for sovereignty.”
- Finally, Azerbaijan is becoming increasingly ambitious, aiming to position itself as a middle-power state and independent regional and global player by challenging major states and presenting itself as a supporter of developing states./.