"2020, a world turned upside down by covid-19!"

On 11 March 2020, the coronavirus epidemic (Covid-19) was declared a pandemic by the WHO. The massive and brutal shock produced by the disease, and the measures put in place to curb it, have upset all parts of society. Authoritarian regimes eroded the basic freedoms of citizens and put democracy on holiday for “health reasons”. The severe recession in the global economy has led to social crises in fragile countries. Social distancing has reinforced isolation, as places of sociability are no longer frequented. Indeed, 2020 has been very difficult for the associative world. For FIACAT and its network, there has not been any physical contact, advocacy missions or programme monitoring. However, FIACAT has not stopped functioning, and the International Secretariat has shown creativity and innovation in order to move forward.

As such, FIACAT’s International Council was held electronically from 8 to 29 June 2020. A strategic plan for 2020-2024 was designed and adopted, incorporating three major axes: to fight torture and ill-treatment and to contribute to the abolition of the death penalty; to build capacity within and strengthen cooperation between ACATs; and to ensure the sustainability of FIACAT’s activities. The International Board, elected for four years, now comprises eight members. Two new members have joined, and one has left, Massimo Corti, the longest serving member of the outgoing Board. I am grateful for his engagement and may he receive the solemn thanks of all the members of the network for his commitment and dedication.

Despite the health crisis, FIACAT continued to accompany ACATs before international and regional bodies. With regard to the death penalty, FIACAT was part of an important online event on 9 October 2020 ahead of the adoption of the resolution calling for a universal moratorium on the use of the death penalty by the United Nations General Assembly in 2020. It supported fifteen ACATs on the 18th World Day Against the Death Penalty. On 20 May 2020, Chad became the 22nd abolitionist country in Africa. FIACAT also continued to fight torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment through its programme on abusive pre-trial detention (APD). Thanks to the ACATs, through the programme 1,428 detainees obtained a court decision following the processing of their case. On the strength of their results, the APD programmes in the Congo, Côte d’Ivoire and Madagascar were renewed. To prevent the spread of the virus in prisons, FIACAT has been active in providing training, undertaking partnerships and in supporting the work of the ACATs. In 2020, FIACAT also followed the issue of torture-free trade and strengthened its advocacy for Germain Rukuki, who, it is hoped, will finally regain his FREEDOM.

The year 2020 was challenging, but FIACAT and its network remained committed to those forgotten by justice, particularly through the use of digital technology coordinated by the Secretariat, whose work should be commended. We must nevertheless remain vigilant about strengthening and reinforcing the place given to civil society and human rights in this digital world. Let’s get to work so that FIACAT can live on!

Paul ANGAMAN
FIACAT President
Abolition of the death penalty

Chad abolished the death penalty on 20 May 2020 and became the 22nd country to abolish capital punishment in Africa.

The Senate and the National Assembly adopted the bill that authorised the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (on 18 June and 12 August 2020), which aims to abolish the death penalty. The Act must now be promulgated by the President.

Congo

53 advocacy meetings were held by the ACAT members to promote abolition.

Niger

2,596 detainees were pardoned by government decision to reduce prison overcrowding during the pandemic.

Working towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Efforts to abolish the death penalty and prohibit torture coincide with many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which FIACAT promotes through its activities, in particular:

Ensure healthy lives for all

In overcrowded prisons, detention conditions do not comply with international standards and are conducive to the spread of contagious diseases. Efforts to limit pre-trial detention reduce overcrowding and thus improve prisoners’ health and hygiene. The death row syndrome has effects on the mental and physical health of those condemned to death which amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Abolition of capital punishment counters this phenomenon.

End all forms of discrimination against women

In all the countries where FIACAT is active, special attention is paid to fair gender representation among persons attending and speaking at workshops, in the composition of teams of volunteers carrying out its activities.

Reduce inequality

Social and economic inequalities impair access to justice for prisoners and especially those sentenced to death. FIACAT verifies that the regulations pertaining to pre-trial detention are strictly applied to everyone without discrimination. Abolition of the death penalty also counters the effect of such inequalities with regard to access to rights.

Build effective state institutions and provide access to justice for all

Cooperation between the judiciary, prison services and civil society is central to the programme to combat abusive pre-trial detention in order to prevent torture in custody and allow all parties to work more effectively. Traditional chiefs and religious leaders, the media, parliamentarians, representatives of government and civil society organisations play a key role in abolishing capital punishment and are actively engaged in FIACAT’s activities.
FIACAT ACTIVITY REPORT 2020

DETONATION PROJECT IS COMING TO AN END

The year also saw the end of the pre-trial detention project in Chad. It achieved its objectives of:
- strengthening the capacities of 120 persons belonging to the judiciary, prison services and civil society with regards to respect for the judicial safeguards for the accused;
- 1,495 judicial decisions were taken thanks to the identification and monitoring of cases of abusive pre-trial detention

These results were obtained through a cooperation between the national authorities, civil society and the EU Delegation in Chad.

ABUSIVE PRE-TRIAL DETENTION PROGRAMME RENEWED IN THE CONGO, CÔTE D’IVOIRE AND MADAGASCAR

2020 was a crucial year for FIACAT’s pre-trial detention programme, with the end of phase 1 of the projects in Côte d’Ivoire, the Congo and Madagascar. FIACAT was aware of the need to take stock of its action and sought an external evaluation of the programme. The assessment was carried out to ensure the programme meets the needs of the ACATs that it supports, and to adapt its approach and incorporate lessons learned towards improving prison conditions and combating cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment through respect for judicial safeguards and reducing prison overcrowding. While the evaluation highlighted the pertinence, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, it also allowed the project to evolve in the three countries. FIACAT thus decided to expand meetings between civil society and the judicial and prison services to strengthen synergies between stakeholders. In this new phase, FIACAT also decided to provide extra training for the ACATs to strengthen their autonomy.

THE ABUSIVE PRE-TRIAL DETENTION PROJECT IS COMING TO AN END

In recent years, Niger had received many recommendations from regional and international human rights mechanisms for the criminalisation of torture in its domestic law. On 11 May 2020, an Act was finally passed that defines and criminalises torture in accordance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. FIACAT and ACAT supported ACAT Congo and ACAT Madagascar in organising meetings on the subject of Covid-19 in prisons, which was attended by national authorities, members of judicial and prison services and civil society and provided healthcare equipment and medicines to certain prisons. FIACAT also worked with the Plateforme des droits humains (PDFH) on publishing a report “COVID-19 and Human Rights - Impacts and consequences of the pandemic”. Finally, as part of a joint training course with Synergies Coopération on “Prisons: Prévenir la torture et les mauvais traitements” (Prisons: preventing torture and ill-treatment), FIACAT worked to produce a free module dedicated to disseminating information on the situation in prisons within the context of the coronavirus and to raise awareness among the actors in the penal system.

Niger will now focus upon ensuring that this new provision is indeed put into practice, e.g. by training public officials.

A CORE CONCERN OF FIACAT: THE INVISIBLE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON PRISONS

Placed of deprivation of liberty have not escaped the Covid-19 health crisis. On the contrary, they are particularly at risk because of poor hygiene, overcrowding and the difficulty of accessing healthcare. Consequently, and in order to prevent the spread of the virus, they have been subject to many restrictions, which often infringe detainees’ rights.

FIACAT has repeatedly to bring this issue to the attention of the public and the authorities in the countries in which it operates. For example, it

TORTURE-FREE TRADE: A REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRIORITY

In 2020, FIACAT paid particular attention to the issue of torture-free trade. It took part in several consultations in connection with the adoption of the EU action plan on human rights and democracy 2020-2024. This new plan includes a specific reference to trade in goods used for torture in order to “Strive to eradicate torture globally through prevention, prohibition, accountability and redress for victims, including by promoting the Global Alliance for Torture-Free Trade”. FIACAT also took part in the expert consultation held by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on “Torture-free trade: examining the feasibility, scope and parameters for possible common international standards”. FIACAT also addressed this question at European level by submitting its observations on the revised draft of the Recommendation on measures against trade in goods used for torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the death penalty of the Steering Committee for Human Rights at the Council of Europe.

FIACAT ACTIVITY REPORT 2020
Working towards the Abolition of the Death Penalty

Since 2012, FIACAT has been working with the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty on a programme that aims to abolish the death penalty in 23 countries on Sub-Saharan Africa.

COVID-19: APPEAL FOR A WORLD MORATORIUM ON THE DEATH PENALTY DURING THE PANDEMIC

In 2020, while the whole world was striving to save lives in the midst of the health crisis, death sentences and executions continued. In Nigeria, death sentences were pronounced by video conference. At the same time, certain positive steps were taken to grant pardons and commutations to imprisonment, for example in Cameroon or the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in order to avert a potential disaster in overcrowded prisons where there is a high risk of Covid-19 transmission.

FIACAT, the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and its members therefore appealed to all States to observe a moratorium on death sentences and executions on the grounds that it is impossible to ensure due process and fair legal representation during the pandemic.

ACCESS TO COUNSEL: A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

On 10 October 2020, the World Day Against the Death Penalty was devoted to the right to legal representation for those at risk of a death sentence. As with every year, FIACAT’s network mobilised to mark this World Day. On the African continent, the ACATs adapted their activities to the health context and took part in many radio and television broadcasts. They remained focused on appealing to public opinion and spread the message to nearly 500 persons in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Congo, the DRC, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali and Niger.

To the following countries: Cameroon, the Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar and Niger. These publications serve to mobilise public opinion and to encourage these States to undertake greater obligations and commitments for abolition. The publication of 15 different advocacy tools is planned by the end of 2021.

ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN CHAD

On 20 May 2020, Chad became the 22nd country in Africa to abolish capital punishment. The death penalty applied only to terrorist crimes, with the last execution of Boko Haram jihadis by firing squad taking place in August 2015. Regrettably, 4 persons condemned to death in 2018 are still held in appalling conditions in a secret location, separate from the other prisoners.

In the words of Salomon Ndjitoloum, Chairman of ACAT Chad:

“Abolition of the death penalty for terrorist crimes is the culmination of the campaign by ACAT Chad and all abolitionists everywhere. By taking this brave decision, despite the recurrence of terrorist activity, Chad has joined the worldwide trend of abolition. Nevertheless, we continue to pursue our aim of ensuring respect for human rights.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Virtual panel discussion was held on 9 October 2020 focusing on “Worldwide tendencies: moving towards the abolition of the death penalty.” This gathering brought together over one hundred participants from State delegations, civil society and universities and aimed to report on the current situation with regards to the abolition in the world and to encourage countries to vote in favour of the resolution.

ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Alongside the other members of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, FIACAT has committed to a worldwide advocacy campaign in favour of the United Nations resolution calling for a moratorium. An advocacy campaign aimed at persuading the authorities to vote in favour of the resolution was launched with the ACATs in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, the Congo, the DRC, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger and Senegal. The Congo and Chad ultimately voted in favour. Unfortunately, countries such as Niger, Senegal and the DRC either abstained or were not present for the vote. FIACAT has also lobbied certain States to add a paragraph to the resolution that urges the African Union to adopt the draft additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ rights on the abolition of the death penalty in Africa as soon as possible.

ADVOCACY TOOLS

As part of the programme on the abolition of the death penalty in sub-Saharan Africa, FIACAT and the ACATs produced various advocacy tools specific to the following countries: Cameroon, the Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar and Niger. The publication of 15 different advocacy tools is planned by the end of 2021.

PICTURE OF CHAD

On 16 December 2020, the United Nations General Assembly adopted, by a large majority of 123 states, the 8th resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

ORGANISATION OF A PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE RESOLUTION

Organised by FIACAT and the European Union delegation to the United Nations in New York, a
The Covid-19 pandemic has had a marked impact on the work of non-governmental organisations in terms of funding, activities and access to their beneficiaries. FIACAT wished to draw attention to this problem and provided, along with other INGOs, a video testimony which was subsequently circulated within and by the Conference of international non-governmental organisations of the Council of Europe. The video highlighted steps taken to adapt to this unprecedented context along with points where vigilance is still required.

In its testimony, FIACAT communicated that although it, and the ACAT network, have been able to continue their activities, they - in particular those working in the field - have run into difficulties. FIACAT considered it vital that international and regional organisations continue to ensure that civil society is engaged in their activities, via digital technology, whilst taking into account the lack of access to these technologies that many organisations on the ground face, and emphasised the need to ensure that human rights defenders remain safe in all circumstances. The public authorities must also collaborate with civil society organisations by, for example, making emergency funds available to assist those working to support the most vulnerable.

FIACAT’s priorities for 2020-2024 will centre on three main topics: fighting torture and ill-treatment and working towards the abolition of the death penalty; building the capacity within and strengthening cooperation amongst ACATs; and ensuring the sustainability of FIACAT’s activities. In fact, banning torture and abolishing the death penalty are the main aims which underpin the activities of FIACAT and the ACATs, which have a unique expertise in this field. Despite the illegality of torture under international law, it is still frequently practised even now. FIACAT therefore hopes to continue to assist ACAT members and provide them with the necessary tools to protect their members who may be in danger because of their activities as human rights defenders.
FIACAT’s 2020 Finances

Expenditure 700 912 €

- Fighting Abusive Pre-trial Detention* 348 097 €
- Abolition of the death penalty in Africa* 248 305 €
- Advocacy before international organisations* 10 944 €
- FIACAT’s operating expenditure 87 313 €
- Financial and exceptional items 6 253 €

Total expenditure 700 912 €

Resources 712 255 €

- Grants for projects* 632 178 €
- ACAT membership fees 62 169 €
- Private donations 14 894 €
- Other resources 2 303 €
- Financial and exceptional items 712 €

Total Resources 712 255 €

*In order to reflect a real exploitation, this presentation does not include the accounting movements of carry-overs from one year to the next of the grants for projects that cannot be used in the year and that would have the effect of increasing the accounts without changing the result.

A word from the Treasurer

In 2020, FIACAT had a positive result of €11,343, which means that it has been able to maintain a healthy balance despite the sanitary circumstances of 2020. The activity of this year 2020 was globally a little lower (by about 12%) than that of 2019 because of the pandemic which limited the missions abroad and resulted in a partial unemployment of the employees (fortunately compensated by the State). FIACAT and the associated ACATs have used as much as possible, the subsidies from the funders, which have increased significantly compared to the previous year, which have increased significantly compared to the previous year. In particular, the activities of the major programmes against abusive pre-trial detention and for the abolition of the death penalty in Africa unfortunately had to be reduced by 12% and 25% respectively compared to 2019, while the public subsidies increased very significantly. Thus, the remaining funds available at the end of 2020 are much higher than those of the previous year.

This difficult context has not stopped private donations, in particular from certain European ACATs, to whom we express our warmest gratitude, in addition to membership fees which have remained stable. The members of FIACAT and the individuals who are generous enough to support it regularly thus contribute to its necessary activity of supporting the ACAT network.

Benoît THÉRY

SUPPORT FIACAT AND HELP US TO ACHIEVE A WORLD WITHOUT TORTURE OR THE DEATH PENALTY!

FIACAT extends sincere thanks to its private donors, who have supported its activities in 2020. FIACAT also wishes to thank its institutional partners who, throughout the years, have encouraged and supported its efforts to combat torture and abolish the death penalty:

- Agence française du développement (French Development Agency) (AFD)
- European Union delegation to Côte d’Ivoire
- Chad Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development in connection with the «Projet d’appui à la Justice - Phase 2» (Support for Justice in Chad Project, phase 2) (PRAJUST 2)
- Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
- Le Fonds de dotation du Barreau de Paris (Paris Bar Endowment Fund) (France)
- ACAT France Foundation
- Avola Valdese (Italy)
- CCFD-Terre Solidaire (Catholic committee against hunger and for development) (France)
- Fonds de dotation du Barreau de Lyon (Lyon Bar Endowment Fund) (France)
- Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World) (Germany)

Support FIACAT
How much? Why?

Price of a monthly prison visit by an ACAT volunteer to identify cases of inhuman treatment

Price of legal assistance for 8 detainees by a lawyer

Price of a monthly visit to 3 prisons by an ACAT volunteer to identify cases of inhuman treatment

Price of hygiene products for 500 detainees for 2 weeks

Price of food products for 500 detainees for a month

THANK YOU!

For French fiscal residents, in accordance with the 2003 Finance Act, a reduction in income tax of 66% of your donation, up to a maximum of 20% of your taxable income. A receipt will be sent to you at the start of the year.
FIACAT ACTIVITY REPORT 2020

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Michel KALEMBA (DRC) :
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INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

FIACAT wishes to thank its interns, Alexandre Dermis and Antoine Goutay, and its volunteers - in particular Pierre Liviope, FIACAT’s accountants, and Robert Zuber, Representative at the United Nations in New York – who have worked with FIACAT for many years and contributed to the success of its projects.

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FIACAT

International Federation of ACATs (Action by Christians for the abolition of torture), FIACAT, is an international non-governmental Christian organisation for the defence of human rights, created in 1987. It campaigns for the abolition of torture and the death penalty. The Federation covers some thirty national associations, ACATs, operating on four continents.

FIACAT REPRESENTS ITS MEMBERS IN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL BODIES

It enjoys United Nations (UN) consultative status, participatory status with the Council of Europe and observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR). It is also accredited with bodies of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF).

In passing on to international bodies the concerns of its members on the ground, FIACAT aims to persuade governments to adopt and implement relevant recommendations. FIACAT promotes the application of international agreements for the defence of human rights, the prevention of torture in places of detention and fights enforced disappearance and impunity. It also campaigns actively against the death penalty by lobbying States to abolish this provision in their legislation.

To make its voice heard even more widely, FIACAT is a founder member of several action groups, notably the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP), the International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED), the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) and the Human Rights Platform (HRP).

FIACAT REINFORCES THE CAPACITIES OF ITS THIRTY-STRONG ACAT NETWORK

FIACAT helps its member associations set up appropriate structures. It supports the process which makes the ACATs influential stakeholders in civil society who are able to increase public awareness and have an impact on the authorities in their respective countries.

It helps to strengthen the network by promoting exchanges, proposing regional or international training and joint intervention initiatives. It actively supports the ACATs’ actions and enhances their work both internationally and regionally.

FIACAT, AN INDEPENDENT NETWORK OF CHRISTIANS UNITED FOR THE ABOLITION OF TORTURE AND THE DEATH PENALTY

One of FIACAT’s missions is to raise awareness of torture and the problems arising from the death penalty among churches and Christian organisations and urge them to promote abolition.