



Fédération internationale des ACAT – Action des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la torture
International Federation of ACATs – Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture

Oral Statement of the International Federation of ACATs (FIACAT)

Item 3 – Interactive dialogue with the working group on arbitrary detention

51st session of the Human Rights Council

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Thank you Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention,

FIACAT thanks you for your report and particularly appreciates your work on thematic issues.

FIACAT would like to take advantage of this dialogue to draw your attention to the issue of abusive pre-trial detention on which it has been working for several years with members of its network in Africa.

Based on the findings that a majority of African prisons, like those on other continents, have conditions of detention that amount to ill-treatment or even torture due to a high level of prison overcrowding of up to 600%, FIACAT and the ACATs wanted to look into the causes of this overcrowding. They observed that a majority of prisoners were still awaiting trial.

While pre-trial detention applies to a person who is still presumed innocent and should therefore be used in an exceptional and strictly controlled manner, in reality, it is often applied systematically and in violation of national legal provisions and international and regional norms and standards, resulting in numerous cases of arbitrary detention.

The causes of abusive pre-trial detention are multiple and intrinsically linked to dysfunctions in the administration of justice and a lack of synergy between the actors in the penal chain.

In order to remedy this problem, FIACAT invites your working group to look into the matter and calls on all Member States to fight against these practices in close collaboration with civil society.

Thank you for your attention.