



FIACAT'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028



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I. Introduction

1. The principles underlying FIACAT'S action

The International Federation of ACAT (Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture), FIACAT, is a Christian-based international non-governmental human rights organisation founded in 1987, which fights for the effective prohibition of torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearance, extrajudicial executions and the abolition of the death penalty. The Federation brings together 26 affiliated ACATs and 4 accompanying groups on three continents.

FIACAT's mission is to:

- ⇒ support and strengthen the capacities of its members, and to encourage the ACAT members of its network to take effective concerted action in favour of the prohibition of torture and the universal abolition of the death penalty 
- ⇒ represent the ACATs at international and regional level for the respect of human dignity 
- ⇒ contribute to the creation and development of means of fighting to effectively prohibit torture and ill-treatment, and to abolish the death penalty within international and regional organisations 
- ⇒ raise awareness and convince churches and Christian organisations at international, regional and national level to take action against torture and the death penalty. 



FIACAT bases its work on a strong commitment to the defence of international law, particularly in the fight against torture and the death penalty. Adherence to the principles enshrined in binding international and regional legal instruments, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights (ECHR), the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and their protocols. Through these international standards, FIACAT tirelessly reaffirms the importance of a global legal order that protects the inherent dignity of human beings and guarantees fundamental rights for all.

When multilateralism is increasingly being called into question and attempts are being made to destabilise international principles, FIACAT remains firmly committed to the idea that only a coherent and respected global legal framework can truly eradicate practices of torture and cruel treatment. Against this backdrop of weakening multilateral mechanisms, FIACAT is stepping up its commitment to preserving and strengthening international human rights standards, while calling on states to respect their obligations and oppose any form of regression in the protection of fundamental rights.

2. The process for drawing up the 2025-2028 strategic plan



The development of FIACAT's strategic plan for 2025-2028 is the result of a long process which began in 2021 with all the members of the network. The aim was to identify, after 35 years of existence, how FIACAT could best meet the expectations of its members and how members could contribute to the life of the federation.

To achieve this, FIACAT launched a participatory process to define its priorities for 2025-2028. This work was based on internal consultations (ACAT members, International Bureau, International Secretariat) and the support of two external consultants. Several actions were carried out: a survey of ACATs, an extraordinary International Council in Abidjan in December 2021, internal discussions at the International Bureau and a workshop on funding. In 2025, a new questionnaire was used to evaluate the implementation of the 2020-2024 strategic plan and to gather proposals from members and partners for the next cycle.

This 2025-2028 strategic plan is the result of this collaborative approach.

II. FIACAT's strategic priorities for 2025-2028

1. To develop a network of strong and interconnected ACATs by strengthening their capacities and facilitating their communication and cooperation:

FIACAT's strategy to strengthen the capacities of the ACATs and cooperation between them is a major focus of its strategic plan. It is based on a multi-layered approach, aimed both at empowering the ACATs and developing a close-knit, collaborative network.

FIACAT adopts an **integral**, **structuring** and **permanent** vision of capacity building, going beyond simple one-off training courses.

● *Targeted and ongoing training :*

FIACAT undertakes to strengthen ACAT members on the prevention, punishment and redress for acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as on the abolition of the death penalty. This training is based on the relevant international, regional and national instruments. The training needs expressed by the ACATs include

- ⇒ international human rights law,
- ⇒ data collection,
- ⇒ investigation methodology,
- ⇒ project set-up and management,
- ⇒ communication strategy,
- ⇒ organisational strengthening.

The **Norbert Kenne training cycle** is a major part of this training strategy. FIACAT is determined to adapt the training courses it provides in line with the changing needs expressed by its members and developments in human rights violations observed during the period in question.

● *Support ACATs in monitoring the implementation of recommendations:*

FIACAT strengthens the ACATs' capacity to monitor and implement the recommendations of international and regional human rights bodies.

To end this:

- ⇒ it provides ACATs with **monitoring tools**
- ⇒ it **accompanies** them in their dealings with national authorities.

● *Support for the security of the ACATs and their members:*

FIACAT ensures **the safety** of ACAT members who may be threatened because of their commitment. **Protection** and **relocation** measures are envisaged in the event of danger.

● *Targeted financial support as a means of strengthening:*

FIACAT makes financial support available to its members as a lever for one-off capacity-building initiatives at national level, to enable them to access support from financial partners independently.

The projects implemented by FIACAT are designed to systematically integrate capacity-building activities for the benefit of ACATs.

● *Strategic network coordination:*

FIACAT recognises the need for a more structured and continuous network coordination function within its International Secretariat. A position is currently dedicated to strengthening ties and joint initiatives.

● *Pooling resources and expertise and supporting decentralised initiatives:*

FIACAT encourages the sharing of information, good practice and expertise between ACATs, including through peer-to-peer training. It identifies and makes available existing training resources.



FIACAT implements and encourages the use of communication and information-sharing tools; it develops common visual elements in order to strengthen the common identity and visibility of the ACATs. The "ACAT Cafés" and thematic meetings are important forums for exchange.

FIACAT encourages and supports direct initiatives for collaboration between ACATs on specific themes or campaigns, either geographically or thematically.

The International Secretariat monitors cooperation initiatives between ACATs in order to promote them and encourage new collaborations. FIACAT encourages regional synergies.

● *Federating events and initiatives:*

FIACAT identifies events and initiatives that foster a sense of belonging to the network and enable visible collective action, in particular strengthening the strategy around 26 June - International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

2. Support ACAT's advocacy at all levels:

The fact that they are members of the FIACAT network gives added value to ACAT's actions with their national authorities, enhancing their legitimacy and visibility. To support ACAT's advocacy, FIACAT implements a global strategy based on collaboration, capacity building and the better use of existing mechanisms.

● *At the international and regional levels:*

- ⇒ FIACAT **relays the concerns of the ACATs at international and regional level** and supports them in their advocacy work.
- ⇒ FIACAT **makes full use of international and regional instruments** to combat torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the death penalty.
- ⇒ FIACAT helps ACATs write **joint shadow reports** to submit to international and regional mechanisms.
- ⇒ FIACAT organises and supports **joint advocacy missions** before international or regional bodies.
- ⇒ FIACAT **drafts joint press releases with the ACATs concerned** to respond to situations of human rights violations in different countries.
- ⇒ FIACAT invites **Churches and Christian organisations** at international, regional and national level to take a stand and take action against torture and the death penalty.



● *At national level:*

- ⇒ FIACAT feeds into ACAT's national advocacy strategies and provides support to ACATs in their national advocacy activities.
- ⇒ FIACAT supports national and regional cooperation and consultation between ACATs, civil society organisations and national authorities.
- ⇒ FIACAT supports the ACATs in monitoring and implementing the recommendations of international and regional mechanisms at national level.


3. Prioritise action on FIACAT's central mandate, while adapting it to new challenges, and consolidate the existing geographical network:

FIACAT's strategy is to **maintain a strong focus on the main thematic mandate** in favour of victims of torture and the death penalty, while being **open** to examining new issues through the prism of this mandate.

FIACAT is aware of the intersectional dimension of certain issues within its core mandate. Adaptation is achieved through **targeted investigation of related themes**, through **collaboration with other actors and partners**, and by **strengthening members' capacity** to understand and act in the face of these new challenges, without undermining FIACAT's identity and fundamental mission.



FIACAT **reaffirms its main mandate**: the fight against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the abolition of the death penalty, and the defence of fair justice as the central axis of its action.

- ⇒ **Prioritisation of resources**: given the limited resources of the ACATs and FIACAT, FIACAT prioritises **actions in line with the mandate** to ensure maximum effectiveness.
- ⇒ **Collaboration and partnerships**: faced with new challenges linked to the **central mandate of the ACAT network**, FIACAT **identifies and collaborates with other NGOs** whose objectives correspond to these new themes. 
- ⇒ **Vigilance in the face of conceptual shifts**: in order to avoid a "*conceptual shift*" that might **overshadow violations linked to torture and the death penalty** in favour of other less specific notions, FIACAT is making sure that its commitment in the face of new challenges is not to the detriment of its historical mandate.
- ⇒ **Training and awareness-raising**: To adapt the mandate to new challenges such as policing and the repression of demonstrations, FIACAT trains **ACAT members** in these new issues and **raises public awareness** of them.

FIACAT gives priority to **consolidating its existing geographical network** by focusing on strengthening its current ACAT members and those in the process of becoming members, rather than on rapid geographical expansion, as FIACAT's legitimacy and credibility depend on the local roots of its ACATs.

- ⇒ FIACAT gives priority to **support ACATs that are already structured and active**, as well as groups whose structure is not yet established but which already benefit from its support.
- ⇒ **Encourage and support local initiatives:** The creation of new ACATs should not be an initiative led directly by FIACAT but should arise from local or national initiatives. The creation of new ACATs can be encouraged in neighbouring countries that already have relations with FIACAT members.
- ⇒ **Strengthening regional collaboration and networking:** in the event of serious human rights violations falling within FIACAT's mandate committed in a country where no ACAT is physically active, FIACAT encourages, as a matter of priority, the strengthening of communication, collaboration and networking between ACATs.

4. Diversifying FIACAT's funding resources:

In an international context of widespread cuts in funding for human rights and the questioning of public development aid, FIACAT remains firmly committed to the cause of human rights despite the disengagement of certain governments. It has adopted a strategy of diversifying its financial resources in order to ensure the continuity of its work and support for its network. The combination of these different approaches will enable FIACAT to strengthen its financial resilience and continue to effectively support the fight against torture and the death penalty through its international network.

● *Optimising the use of existing project funds:*

FIACAT strives to maximise the effectiveness of funds obtained from donors. This involves designing projects over the long term (possibly in successive phases), systematically incorporating authorised administrative costs, allocating budgets for communication (internal and external) and building the capacity of the ACATs. It is also crucial to allocate part of the projects' human resources to managing the network.

● *Encourage cross-financing between ACATs:*

FIACAT facilitates and stimulates direct financial support between ACATs. In the context of specific projects, FIACAT calls on certain ACATs to strengthen the impact of initiatives. The creation of an emergency and solidarity fund, financed by voluntary contributions from the ACATs, could meet specific and urgent needs within the network.

● *Set up financial support for ACATs:*

In all its programmes and projects, FIACAT integrates financial support for the ACATs to enable them to carry out national actions and to strengthen their management capacities, thereby contributing to their empowerment.

● *Strengthen ACATs' capacity to seek funding and manage projects:*

Building ACATs' capacity to seek funding and manage projects is an essential part of this diversification strategy.

● *Strengthen the mobilisation of international financing at national level:*

FIACAT, in collaboration with the ACATs concerned, intensifies its efforts to identify and obtain co-financing from donors present in the countries of intervention (embassies, cooperation

agencies, regional development banks). The availability of lead funding can facilitate the acquisition of additional funding at the local level.

● ***Consolidate partnerships with the Church and with companies that are sensitive to the human dimension:***

FIACAT strengthens its financial ties with the major Christian NGOs and foundations involved in international solidarity. Based on its guiding principles and code of ethics, FIACAT develops partnerships with companies that share its values.

● ***Consolidating FIACAT's reserves:***

FIACAT has set itself the target of maintaining a reserve fund equivalent to a quarter of its annual budget, so that it can *at least* maintain its activities in the event of a sudden cut in funding from public and private donors.

III. Conclusion

Within FIACAT, the commitment to bear practical and living witness to the rights of every human being remains intact, despite the signs to the contrary that can be seen around the world. More than ever, joint action by all ACATs is needed to better coordinate efforts to eradicate all torture and ill-treatment. While the forms that torture takes may vary, the motivation of the ACAT network remains unshakeable; this is why FIACAT, at the service of its members, seeks to perpetuate its most effective actions to achieve its goal, but also to develop new variations of its mandate to take into account new and pernicious forms of violation of fundamental rights. In order to carry out its projects, FIACAT maintains a variety of collaborations and partnerships, backed by the credit it enjoys and the professionalism of its staff.

In this respect, employee well-being is a priority with a view to strengthening FIACAT's organisational capacities.

The flame that burns in the heart of all ACATs will continue to work for a world without torture, a better world.



The International Federation of ACATs (FIACAT) is an international non-governmental Christian organisation for the defence of human rights, set up in 1987. Its aim is the abolition of torture and the death penalty. It comprises some 30 national associations, the ACATs, on three continents.

FIACAT's strength resides above all in its network, which links the ACATs both to one another and to other national NGOs. Its local roots are recognised as the bedrock of its legitimacy and the relevance of the action pursued by the federation and its network.

FIACAT represents its members in international and regional bodies

It enjoys consultative status at the United Nations (UN), participatory status at the Council of Europe and observer status at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). FIACAT is also accredited to the bodies which make up the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). By passing on to regional and international bodies the concerns of its members on the ground, FIACAT aims to have pertinent recommendations adopted and implemented by governments. It plays a part in the application of regional and international human rights conventions, in the prevention of acts of torture in prisons and detention centres, and in combating enforced disappearances and impunity. It also contributes to the fight against the death penalty, in particular by persuading countries to remove this inhuman punishment from their legislation and putting the case for abolition to opinion formers and religious and traditional leaders. FIACAT is a founding member of various collective action groups, more especially the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP), the United Against Torture Consortium (UATC), the French Human Rights Platform (PDH) and the International Coalition against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED). It is also a member of F3E and the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN). Along with other members of the PDH, it participates in the Marianne Initiative for human rights defenders.

FIACAT strengthens the capacities of its network of thirty ACATs.

FIACAT helps in the organisation of its member associations. It supports the process which makes the ACATs influential actors in civil society, able to raise public awareness and have an impact on the authorities in their countries.

It helps to dynamise the network by promoting exchanges, proposing regional or international training and joint intervention initiatives. Thus, it supports the ACATs' actions and acts as a link at international level.

FIACAT, an independent Christian-based network united in its work for the abolition of torture and the death penalty

One of FIACAT's missions is to make the Churches and Christian organisations more aware of torture and the death penalty, in order to persuade them to work towards abolition and eradication.



FIACAT
96 boulevard de la Libération
94300 Vincennes – France
Tel. : +33 (0)1 58 64 10 47
Courriel : fiacat@fiacat.org

FIACAT Representation to the European Institutions
Rue Brogniez, 44
B-1070 Bruxelles – Belgique
Tel. : +32 4 70 92 85 10
Courriel : fiacat.europe@fiacat.org

FIACAT Representation to the United Nations
c/o CICG
1 rue de Varembe
1202 Genève – Suisse
Tel. : +41 787 499 328
Courriel : fiacat.onu@fiacat.org