



## Statutes of the INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION of ACATs (FIACAT)

(Amended on 12 April 2018)

*In the light of their faith in Jesus Christ,  
considering that the dignity of all human beings implies respect for their physical and psychological integrity,  
having regard to the undertaking in Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that  
“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”,  
the undersigned, representing their respective organisations, hereby found a non-profit-making association.*

### Article 1 - Name

The association shall be called “International Federation of ACATs”, hereafter referred to by the acronym “**FIACAT**”. The ACATs shall comprise independent national associations, as defined in Article 4 below. ACAT is the acronym for “Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture”.

### Article 2 - Registered Office

FIACAT's registered office shall be located in Vincennes (France). It may be transferred by a simple decision of the International Bureau.

### Article 3 – Objectives

3.1 FIACAT shall, by its own means, campaign against:

- a. Torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment
- b. The death penalty
- c. Forced disappearances
- d. Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.

FIACAT shall unite and support the affiliated ACATs.

3.2 To achieve these goals, FIACAT shall:

1. Be responsible for representing the ACATs internationally
2. Coordinate and extend the actions of ACATs on an international scale
3. In particular, act alongside:
  - a) Christian churches and organisations
  - b) Intergovernmental organisations and other international institutions
4. Reinforce the capabilities of ACATs
5. Contribute, if need be, to the protection and defence of ACATs and their members who are threatened as a result of their work
6. Maintain links between the ACATs. It shall facilitate communication and co-operation between them
7. Work alongside other non-governmental organisations that share its aims, as it deems appropriate
8. Undertake or support all actions conforming to its aims and means.

## **Article 4 – The ACATs**

The ACATs are independent national organisations that aim to fight against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment, the death penalty, forced disappearances and extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, by all appropriate means, across the globe.

## **Article 5 – Affiliated ACATs**

### **5.1 Admission**

The admission of an ACAT as an affiliated member shall be decided by the International Council, following consideration of the application by the International Bureau. The International Council's decision shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of affiliated ACATs.

To be affiliated, an ACAT must demonstrate to the International Council its ability to act effectively, a satisfactory organisational structure and acceptance of the following requirements:

- a) The statutes of affiliated ACATs must conform to the objective and rules defined in the present Statutes
- b) Affiliated ACATs must accept and respect the present Statutes and other reference texts cited in these Statutes, which regulate FIACAT's functions and relations between FIACAT and the affiliated ACATs and amongst the ACATs themselves
- c) Affiliated ACATs shall pay a membership contribution, the amount and details of which shall be established by the International Council.

### **5.2 Termination of affiliation of an ACAT**

Affiliation may be terminated owing to:

- 1. **Voluntary resignation**, the dissolution or termination of functions of an affiliated ACAT determined by its Annual General Meeting and notified in writing by its Chairman or a duly appointed representative.
- 2. **Suspension** of an affiliated ACAT by the International Bureau whose decision shall be made known to the ACAT concerned in writing. Reasons shall be:
  - a) failure to pay membership contributions within the appointed time, except where a prior exemption has been granted by the International Bureau on the basis of an explanatory statement
  - b) dissolution or termination of the ACAT in question
  - c) gross non-compliance with the present Statutes and other reference texts cited in these Statutes.

The International Bureau determines its relations with the concerned ACAT in order to find a solution to the problems that led to its suspension. The suspension shall be notified to all ACATs and submitted for examination to the next International Council, which shall decide on action to be taken. The suspension shall take effect from the day the ACAT concerned is notified of the decision.

- 3. **Exclusion** of an affiliated ACAT by the International Council, which shall state its reasons and make known its decision in writing after giving the association's Chairman or duly appointed representative an opportunity to be heard.

Such a decision by the International Council shall be based on serious grounds, such as failure to comply with the conditions of affiliation, any act which has jeopardised or is jeopardising the existence or credibility of FIACAT or other affiliated ACATs, any other reason indicated in these Statutes or the other reference texts cited in these Statutes or by the International Council. The International Council's exclusion decision shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of affiliated ACATs.

An ACAT which loses its affiliated-member status, for whatever reason, shall have no claim to assets or paid membership contributions.

## **Article 6 – Non-affiliated ACATs**

FIACAT shall help non-affiliated ACATs to acquire an organisation and structure enabling them to operate in their respective countries, in order to meet the requirements for obtaining affiliation status.

As decided by the International Bureau, non-affiliated ACATs may be:

1. **ACATs in the process of affiliation:** these are ACATs already structured and operational that are developing their organisation in preparation for affiliation. ACATs in the process of affiliation are those which FIACAT recognises as such, even if their level of organisation is not yet up to the standard required for affiliation. These ACATs must commit to compliance with the present Statutes and other reference texts.  
The affiliation process shall take a maximum of three years.
2. **Associated “Groups”:** these are groups established at local level, the structure of which is not yet established but to which FIACAT offers its support and collaboration.

## **Article 7 – Reference texts**

The International Council may, upon a proposal by the International Bureau, adopt texts that regulate in greater detail FIACAT's operations, along with relations between FIACAT and the ACATs and amongst the ACATs themselves. These texts shall be binding.

Apart from the present **Statutes**, the reference texts shall be:

1. **the FIACAT Charter**, which states the ideals, principles, convictions and expectations that are the basis of FIACAT's existence
2. **the Charter of Good Governance**, which states the principles, regulations and spirit that should guide FIACAT and the affiliated ACATs, to enable them to reach their common goals more easily, and the commitments which the ACATs have made vis-à-vis FIACAT and amongst themselves
3. **the Rules of Procedure**, which complement the present Statutes, in particular regarding application and interpretation arrangements.

## **Article 8 - Amendment of the Statutes and other reference texts**

1. Amendments to the Statutes, the FIACAT Charter or the Charter of Good Governance shall be proposed by the International Bureau or at least one-tenth of affiliated ACATs. Once all the affiliated ACATs have been given prior notification of proposed amendments, the International Council shall meet. Its deliberations shall be valid only if a two-thirds quorum of the affiliated ACATs is obtained or exceeded. Otherwise, a second meeting of the Council shall

be convened, at which no quorum shall be required unless the proposed amendment concerns FIACAT's objective, in which case the required quorum shall be half of the affiliated ACATs. The International Council shall decide by a two-thirds majority of affiliated ACATs.

2. The Rules of Procedure may be amended by the International Bureau. Such amendments shall be immediately notified to the ACATs. Upon request by at least three affiliated ACATs, the amendment to the Rules of Procedure shall be submitted to the International Council for approval, in this case by a simple majority.

## **Article 9 – Relations between FIACAT and the affiliated ACATs, and collaboration amongst the ACATs**

The Charter of Good Governance defines how FIACAT and the affiliated ACATs are linked to one another and how the ACATs cooperate with one another. The Charter of Good Governance specifically refers to:

- how the ACATs are represented in international institutions
- how projects conducted jointly by FIACAT and the ACATs should be organised, including rules for how the international representation of such projects should be managed
- the procedure to be followed by ACATs involved in projects in a country where an ACAT exists.

## **Article 10 – Executive bodies**

FIACAT shall be run by three principal bodies:

- the International Council
- the International Bureau
- the International Secretariat.

## **Article 11 - The International Council**

1. The International Council shall be FIACAT's supreme body.

The International Council shall have sole responsibility for:

- a) election of the President of FIACAT and the other members of the International Bureau and their dismissal, should the case arise. Dismissal shall not be possible without the members concerned being given a hearing
  - b) affiliation and exclusion of an ACAT
  - c) adoption of the multi-annual strategic plan
  - d) approval of the activity report, accounts and budget
  - e) approval of the appointment of the Auditor
  - f) amendment of the Statutes, the FIACAT Charter and the Charter of Good Governance
  - g) fixing the amount of membership contributions and arrangements for them
  - h) the voluntary dissolution of FIACAT.
2. The International Council shall consist of one representative from each of the affiliated ACATs and the FIACAT President.

“Representative of an affiliated ACAT” shall mean the person appointed as such by that association’s governing body.

Only the representatives of an affiliated ACAT and the FIACAT President shall have the right to vote.

Each representative may be assisted by a deputy, who shall also be appointed by the governing body of the affiliated ACAT.

The deputy may, with the authority of the representative, act on his/her behalf and with the same powers as he/she has.

The representative of an affiliated ACAT may, at least two days before the opening of the International Council, authorise the representative of another affiliated ACAT to vote on his/her behalf and must inform FIACAT's International Secretariat.

However, the representative of an affiliated ACAT may hold no more than two proxy votes.

3. The following may be present at International Council meetings, but with no vote:

- a) the deputy of each representative
- b) another member of an affiliated ACAT, with a limit of three people per delegation
- c) a delegation from ACATs which are currently going through the affiliation process or which are applying for affiliation. "Applicant ACAT" shall mean an ACAT whose application for membership has been accepted by the International Bureau and is being submitted to the International Council for approval.
- d) members of the International Bureau
- e) members of the International Secretariat
- f) specialist assistants
- g) any other person specifically invited by the FIACAT President to the International Council meeting.

4. The International Council shall meet once a year, as convened by the President.

The International Council may be convened for an extraordinary meeting either on the initiative of the International Bureau or at the request of at least one-fifth of affiliated ACATs.

The International Council may hold an ordinary or extraordinary meeting in person, by correspondence, by electronic means or by any other means.

In addition to the provisions of the present Statutes, the rules of procedure shall regulate all procedures ensuring the proper conduct of International Council meetings and the validity of decisions and votes.

5. Apart from the extraordinary provisions of Articles 8.1 and 17 of the present Statutes, the International Council's proceedings shall be valid only if more than half of the affiliated ACATs are represented. If this is not the case, a second meeting shall be convened within three months, at which no quorum shall be required.

Discussions shall concern items which have been entered on the agenda drawn up by the International Bureau.

6. The International Council shall adopt resolutions by an absolute majority of votes except in cases where the present Statutes require a two-thirds majority of affiliated ACATs, namely for the purposes of admission or exclusion of ACATs, amendments to the Statutes, to the FIACAT Charter and the Charter of Good Governance and the voluntary dissolution of FIACAT.

In the event of a vote's being counted, all votes shall be equal. In the event of a tied vote, a second ballot shall be held; if this second ballot results in a tie, the President of FIACAT shall have the casting vote.

7.

## Article 12 - International Bureau

1. The International Bureau shall be FIACAT's board. It shall be responsible for:

- a) management and administration of FIACAT's rights and interests under civil law
- b) closing the accounts every year and submitting them to the International Council for approval
- c) drawing up a strategic plan and developing an annual action plan, to be implemented by the Executive Director
- d) proposing an annual forward budget and submitting it to the International Council for approval
- e) presenting an annual activity report and submitting it to the International Council for approval
- f) validating applications from ACATs and presenting them to the International Council
- g) appointing an Auditor
- h) implementing the decisions of the International Council and subsequently reporting to it thereon
- i) appointing a Vice-President from among its members and defining his/her remit and responsibilities; dismissing him/her
- j) appointing and dismissing an Executive Director
- k) delegating responsibility to and withdrawing responsibility from specialist assistants or experts.

2. The International Bureau shall consist of a number of members, set by the International Council, at the suggestion of the International Bureau and that cannot be less than six, including the President and the Treasurer.

In case of vacancy during the mandate, the International Bureau can replace the concerned member(s) until the next session of the International Council by co-optation among the members of affiliated ACATs. If the mandate of the International Bureau did not expire, the International Council shall organise an interim election according to the election procedures set out in the present Statutes to designate the new member(s) for the replacement. All official members of the International Bureau shall have the right to vote on its decisions.

3. The International Bureau shall be elected by the International Council for a period of four years.

If there is an interim election, the term of office of the new member shall run until the end of the four years laid down for the International Bureau in office at the time.

Only candidates proposed by an affiliated ACAT shall be eligible for the International Bureau. Such candidates must be chosen in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. If a person elected to the International Bureau is the representative of an affiliated ACAT, he or she shall be immediately replaced on the International Council by his/her deputy, who then becomes the official representative of the ACAT in question and shall carry out his/her mandate under the conditions specified in Articles 11 et seq. of the Statutes.

A serving member may be dismissed by the International Council on valid grounds after being granted a hearing. Prior to this the International Bureau may decide, by a two-thirds majority, to suspend that member from his/her duties and notify him/her of that decision in writing. The International Bureau shall then refer the matter to the International Council within six months.

4. The International Bureau shall meet at least once every six months in person, by correspondence, by electronic means or by any other means, as convened by the President.

The Executive Director shall, other than in exceptional cases, attend its meetings *ex officio*, with the right to speak but not to vote.

The International Bureau may be convened for an extraordinary meeting at the request of at least one quarter of its members, with a minimum of two members.

5. The International Bureau's proceedings shall be valid only if more than half of its members are present. If this is not the case, a second meeting shall be convened within a month, at which no quorum shall be required.
6. The International Bureau shall take decisions by consensus unless one of its members requests that there be a vote, in which case the decision shall be taken by a majority of its members present.  
Where a vote is counted, all votes shall be equal. In the event of a tied vote, a second ballot shall be held. If this second ballot results in a tie, the President of FIACAT shall have the casting vote.
7. International Bureau members shall serve on an unpaid basis.

## **Article 13 - FIACAT President**

The President of FIACAT shall be elected by the International Council for a four-year term. He/she shall be a member of the International Bureau and shall direct and co-ordinate its activities.

The President shall be responsible for:

- a) convening meetings of the International Council
- b) reporting to the International Council on FIACAT's activities and lines of action
- c) convening meetings of the International Bureau
- d) reporting to the representatives of affiliated ACATs on decisions taken by the International Bureau
- e) representing FIACAT, in agreement with the International Bureau, in all civil matters,
- f) committing expenditure in accordance with the budget adopted by the International Council.

The election of the FIACAT President by the International Council shall be held separately from that of the other members of the International Bureau.

Only candidates proposed for election by an affiliated ACAT are eligible for the Presidency. Such candidates must be chosen in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

If the person elected as President of FIACAT is the representative of an affiliated ACAT on the International Council, he/she shall immediately be replaced by his/her deputy who shall then become the official representative of the ACAT in question and carry out his/her duties under the terms of Articles 11 et seq. of the Statutes.

Should the presidency fall vacant, the International Bureau shall decide within six months to convene an extraordinary session of the International Council for an early election. In the interim, the International Bureau shall appoint from amongst its members an Acting President, who shall be responsible for taking those decisions deemed necessary to enable FIACAT to function.

## **Article 14 - International Secretariat and specialist assistants**

1. The International Secretariat shall be the management and administrative body of FIACAT.
2. The International Secretariat shall be run by an employee with the title of Executive Director, appointed by the International Bureau after a call for applications.
3. The Executive Director shall act under the authority of the President. He/She shall assist the International Bureau and the International Council at their meetings and run the permanent secretariat of the International Bureau. He/she shall propose to the International Bureau the

recruitment of the staff needed to carry out FIACAT's programme of activities. All staff of the International Secretariat shall come under his/her authority.

4. To enable FIACAT's tasks and programme of activities to be carried out, the International Bureau may call on specialist assistants. A specialist assistant shall, as far as possible, be a member of an ACAT affiliated to FIACAT. Specialist assistants shall be unpaid volunteers who shall be given a specific task for a limited period, which may be renewed. They shall report back to the person or body which has commissioned the task.

## **Article 15 - Funds**

1. The Federation's funds shall consist of:
  - a) the ACATs' membership contributions
  - b) supporting contributions
  - c) donations and bequests
  - d) subsidies
  - e) funding obtained for project proposals submitted to partners and donors
  - f) all other legal sources conforming to the present Statutes.
2. Acceptance of these funds must be agreed by the International Bureau.
3. FIACAT's assets alone shall be liable for commitments contracted by FIACAT or convictions against it.

## **Article 16 - Expenditure**

1. The President of FIACAT or a person delegated by him/her shall commit expenditure, at the suggestion of the Treasurer, in accordance with the budget adopted by the International Council and according to requirements.
2. The International Council may take appropriate measures to supervise the administrative and financial running of FIACAT.

## **Article 17 - Dissolution**

1. Any proposal to dissolve FIACAT must be submitted by the International Bureau or at least one-fifth of affiliated ACATs. An extraordinary meeting of the International Council must be convened within three months.
2. The International Council's decision shall be valid only if a two-thirds quorum of the affiliated ACATs is reached. Failing this quorum, a second meeting of the Council shall be convened within two months, at which no quorum shall be required.  
The International Council shall vote by a two-thirds majority.
3. Dissolution of FIACAT shall not lead to dissolution of its affiliated ACATs.
4. The transfer of property shall be assigned by the International Council to trustees appointed by it; assets shall be shared among affiliated ACATs.

## **Article 18 – Final provisions**

The current revised Statutes shall enter into force on 12 April 2018.