



## RULES OF PROCEDURE

*(Adopted by the FIACAT International Council in December 2004, entered into force in March 2005 and amended by the International Council on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026)*

### **PREAMBLE:**

The International Federation of ACATs (FIACAT), headquartered in the Île-de-France region (France), whose purpose is to fight, by its own means, against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, against the death penalty, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, federates and supports affiliated ACATs.

These Internal Rules specify the provisions of the FIACAT Statutes. They may neither modify nor contradict the Statutes, whose authority always takes precedence over these Rules. They take into account the other FIACAT reference texts provided for in Article 7 of the Statutes: the FIACAT Charter and the Good Governance Charter. They are applicable to both members (the ACATs) and the governing bodies (General Assembly, Bureau and International Secretariat) of FIACAT, on the same basis as the Statutes. They shall apply from the date of their communication to the ACATs, or from the date of their approval by the General Assembly if such approval is requested in accordance with Article 8.2 of the Statutes.

In an inclusive and gender-equal approach, the use of masculine forms for titles and functions in this document shall be interpreted as gender-neutral; it is intended solely to ensure greater readability. Whenever these titles and functions are held by a woman, they may be expressed in the feminine.

### **Article I — FIACAT Affiliations**

#### **a) Conditions for Affiliation**

To apply for affiliation to FIACAT, an ACAT must have previously been recognised as an 'ACAT in the process of affiliation' by decision of the Bureau. The three-year period for affiliation of an ACAT, as provided for in the Statutes, runs from that Bureau decision.

In addition to the admission conditions defined in Article 5.1 of the Statutes, the ACAT must:

- have legal existence in its country; however, an ACAT that is unable to obtain or that loses legal personality under the law of the State in which it is established may apply for and receive an exemption on this point by decision of the Bureau;
- hold a statutory General Assembly on a regular basis;
- carry out activities related to the social purpose of the ACAT;
- act impartially towards the victims it defends;
- not be affiliated with any partisan political ideology;
- uphold the rights inherent to every human person, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and regional conventions for the promotion and protection of human rights.

#### **b) Procedure**

An association applying for affiliation to FIACAT must send the following documents to the International Secretariat:

- a letter of application for affiliation;
- the statutes of the association;
- the list of members of the executive body (Bureau, Board of Directors, etc.), specifying their names, profession, gender, role within the association, and contact details;
- the minutes of the General Assemblies of the past two years;
- the number of members;
- a report on activities already undertaken and forthcoming projects;
- a report detailing funding sources and budgets.

The Bureau examines the affiliation application and issues an opinion. If the Bureau's opinion is favourable, the General Assembly votes on the affiliation in accordance with Article 5.1 of the Statutes.

## **Article II — Departures from FIACAT**

Loss of membership is defined in Article 5.2 of the Statutes: by voluntary resignation of the ACAT, by suspension by the Bureau, or by exclusion by the General Assembly.

### **a) Conditions for Exclusion or Suspension**

Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes set out the general grounds on which an ACAT may be suspended or excluded from FIACAT.

### **b) Procedure for Suspension or Exclusion**

The Bureau shall rule, to the extent possible, at its meeting following the ascertainment or notification of facts that may lead to suspension or exclusion, and shall issue a reasoned opinion. In the case of a serious ground, it may decide to suspend the ACAT. Suspension is linked to the ACAT's failure to comply with the conditions set out in the FIACAT reference texts and may either come to an end when the Bureau finds that those conditions are once again met, or serve as a measure leading to the ACAT's exclusion by the General Assembly. The President shall inform the ACAT and specify whether the Bureau is requesting compliance with conditions set out in the FIACAT reference texts, possibly setting a deadline for compliance, or whether it is immediately seeking the ACAT's exclusion by the General Assembly.

Before any decision of possible exclusion or suspension is taken, the ACAT concerned shall be invited, by written notice setting out the grounds, to be heard by the Bureau in order to provide a response. On this occasion, the duly authorised representative of the ACAT may be accompanied by a person of their choice.

In accordance with Article 5.2.b of the Statutes, the Bureau submits the suspension of an ACAT to the next ordinary session of the General Assembly, which shall decide on the course of action to follow. In the case where the Bureau requests the exclusion of the ACAT, the General Assembly shall receive the Bureau's opinion and the ACAT's response and shall vote in accordance with Article 5.2.c of the Statutes.

Within two months of notification of exclusion, the excluded ACAT may lodge an appeal against the decision; this appeal shall be sent to the FIACAT headquarters, examined by the Bureau, and submitted to the General Assembly.

## **Article III — The General Assembly**

### **a) Organisation**

The General Assembly meets annually or, additionally, in extraordinary session; it may meet in person, by correspondence, electronically or by any other means.

The General Assembly is convened at least three months in advance. It is organised and conducted by the Bureau. It is presided over by the President of FIACAT or, in the event of a temporary impediment, by a Bureau member designated by the President.

### **b) Quorum and Tellers**

At the opening of the General Assembly, the President of FIACAT ensures that the quorum has been reached.

Once the quorum has been verified, two tellers responsible for overseeing the conduct of the voting proceedings are elected, on the proposal of the Bureau, by the General Assembly from among the delegates of the affiliated ACATs with deliberative voting rights.

Should a teller be unable to fulfil their role during the voting period, a substitute shall be appointed by the Bureau until the impeded teller resumes their duties.

### **c) Deliberations**

The agenda, prepared in advance by the Bureau, is sent to the representatives of the ACATs one month before the opening of the General Assembly. It is submitted for approval by the representatives of the affiliated ACATs at the start of the General Assembly. Once the agenda has been adopted, any proposed amendment shall first be put to a vote of the General Assembly.

Any affiliated ACAT may submit a draft resolution to the General Assembly. To do so, it must secure the support of at least two other affiliated ACATs and submit its proposal to the Bureau at least one month before the General Assembly.

To submit a draft resolution to the General Assembly during the session, an affiliated ACAT requires the support of at least one fifth of the affiliated ACATs present or represented. The General Assembly shall then elect, on the proposal of the Bureau, a drafting committee responsible for finalising the text of the resolution, which shall be submitted to it before the end of the session.

### **d) Votes**

The majorities by which resolutions of the General Assembly are adopted are defined in Article 11.6 of the Statutes. Before the vote, the session President shall indicate the minimum percentage of votes required for adoption of the resolution. In the calculation of votes, only votes cast shall be taken into account. Blank or invalid votes shall not be counted.

## **Article IV — The Bureau**

### **a) Composition**

In addition to the requirements of Article 12.3 of the Statutes, the composition of the Bureau shall take into account the diversity of denominations and ecclesiastical traditions (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, other Christian denominations), geographical origins, the profiles of its members, and shall reflect the best possible gender balance.

### **b) Candidacies**

To ensure the proper functioning of the Bureau, candidates must meet certain criteria, including:

- skills, experience and knowledge enabling them to fulfil specific functions (administrative management abilities, coordination or facilitation skills, capacity to represent FIACAT before international or regional organisations and NGO coalitions, etc.);

- a working understanding of the two working languages — French and English — and the ability to express themselves in one of these two languages;
- the necessary availability.

To be eligible, a candidate must be put forward for election by an affiliated ACAT. That ACAT may present the same person as a candidate for the Bureau and for the Presidency of FIACAT. A candidate may be put forward by an ACAT other than the one of which they are a member.

At least three months before a General Assembly at which elections are to be held, the Bureau shall send each affiliated ACAT a call for candidacies setting out the conditions for submitting a candidacy.

At least two months before the General Assembly, any affiliated ACAT wishing to put forward a candidate shall notify the International Secretariat of this proposal. Upon receipt of this notification, the International Secretariat shall contact the candidate directly, who shall send their curriculum vitae and a cover letter to the International Secretariat in French or English.

At least one month before the General Assembly, the International Secretariat shall send all affiliated ACATs the list of candidates for the Bureau and/or for the Presidency of FIACAT, along with their curricula vitae and cover letters translated into the other FIACAT working language. In cases where the General Assembly responsible for the election is not held in person, the International Secretariat may organise a candidate presentation session by videoconference, ensuring equitable means of presentation.

### **c) Electoral Procedure**

Two separate elections shall take place: first the election of the President of FIACAT, then the election of the other members of the Bureau. Both elections shall be conducted by secret ballot.

For the election of Bureau members at an in-person General Assembly, the President shall invite candidates for the posts to introduce themselves. During the ballot, voting papers bearing, at the top, the number of members to be elected and the full list of candidates' names in alphabetical order shall be distributed. The name of a Bureau candidate who was also a candidate for the Presidency of FIACAT shall remain on the ballot if they were not elected President, as they remain a candidate for the Bureau. Voters shall indicate the names of their chosen candidates up to the maximum number of members to be elected.

To be elected, each candidate must secure an absolute majority of votes cast. In the event of a tie vote for the last available seat, a second vote shall be held; if the tie persists, the vote of the President of FIACAT shall be the casting vote.

Since the Bureau is renewed every two years, it shall be preferred, where circumstances and means allow, to hold an in-person General Assembly for this occasion.

### **d) Elected Members**

Once elected, Bureau members do not represent the affiliated ACATs that put forward their candidacies, nor any particular geographical area, nor any particular denomination. If a Bureau member is responsible for following a specific geographical area, they do not represent that region, but rather represent the Bureau to the ACATs and other organisations in the region.

In accordance with Article 12.1 of the Statutes, the Bureau may designate one or more Vice-Presidents from among its members, if it deems it necessary, for a maximum term of two years; it shall then define the mandate and responsibilities of the Vice-President(s). In particular, the Bureau shall define, in agreement with the President, the delegations of authority that the President may grant to them.

In accordance with Article 14 of the Statutes, a Treasurer is elected by the Bureau from among its members. If the post of Treasurer falls vacant when the Bureau's remaining mandate includes one or more annual General Assembly sessions, the Bureau shall choose a new Treasurer from among its members to prepare and present FIACAT's annual accounts and projected budgets.

## **Article V — The President**

### **a) Candidacy**

The submission of candidacies for the presidency shall follow the rules described in Article 4.b of these Internal Rules.

To be a candidate for the post of President, one must have previously served, fully or partially, as a Bureau member or, failing that, as an elected official of an ACAT, or must have collaborated in a significant and recognised capacity with the FIACAT Bureau.

If the same person is put forward by an ACAT as a candidate for both the presidency and the Bureau, and is not elected as President, they may remain a candidate for the Bureau.

The elected President takes office at the close of the General Assembly.

### **b) Election**

The President of FIACAT is elected separately from the other Bureau members and in accordance with the procedure described in Article 4.c of these Internal Rules.

For the election of the President of FIACAT, in the case of an in-person General Assembly, the outgoing President or their representative shall invite the candidate(s) to introduce themselves and express their motivations. During the ballot, voting papers bearing the candidates' names in alphabetical order shall be distributed or sent in the case of a remote General Assembly. Voters shall indicate the name of their preferred candidate. Only one name must be indicated for the ballot paper to be considered valid.

## **Article VI — Bureau Meetings and Working Groups**

### **a) Bureau Meetings**

The President of FIACAT convenes and chairs Bureau meetings; the President shall specify and communicate the agenda at least one week before the meeting. Bureau meetings shall be held in accordance with Articles 12.4 to 12.6 of the Statutes. In the event of a temporary impediment, the President shall be replaced by a Vice-President to chair all or part of a meeting or, in the absence of a designated Vice-President, the President may designate another Bureau member.

The Bureau may decide to allow participation with advisory capacity at its meetings — beyond that of the Executive Director — including regular or occasional participation of other members of the International Secretariat, specialist assistants provided for in Article 15.4 of the Statutes, or experts invited on a one-off basis.

## **Article VII — Membership Fees**

The method for calculating the annual membership fee of each affiliated ACAT shall be determined by the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Bureau.

Membership fees shall be paid each year before the quorum of the General Assembly is calculated. Failing payment, the ACAT shall not be entitled to vote at the General Assembly. In the event of an extraordinary General Assembly, the President must, when announcing the date of the extraordinary General Assembly, remind members of the corresponding deadline for payment of the membership fee.

The Bureau may, at the request of an ACAT and where exceptional circumstances are shown to exist, authorise that ACAT to pay a reduced fee or to pay it late for the current year. The Bureau shall inform the General Assembly of this exceptional decision. In such a case, the ACAT shall be considered a full affiliated ACAT, on the same basis as an ACAT that is up to date with its membership fee.

These Internal Rules shall apply from their date of adoption on **1<sup>st</sup> May 2026**