

FIACAT

# Activity Report

2025



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FIACAT prefers gender-inclusive language. To avoid awkwardness or in the interests of readability of the text, some styles may be solely masculine or feminine, but in a gender-neutral sense.

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## President's address

Internationally, the year 2025 was particularly hostile to the defence of human rights, in a context characterised by a reduction of the civic space, the rise of increasingly rigid and security-minded policies and a decrease in funding for international solidarity. These developments have a direct impact on civil society organisations and human rights defenders, who are having to act in generally worsening conditions.

Faced with these challenges, FIACAT has increasingly concentrated on networking and consortia, which have become essential for the continuance of its activities. We have thus continued our commitment as a member of the United Against Torture Consortium, work with the Defenders project and cooperation with the Human Rights Platform. This dynamic grouping of NGOs and actors took shape in May 2025 with the organisation in Dakar, in conjunction with ACAT Senegal, of a capitalisation seminar bringing abolition of the death penalty to the attention of local and religious leaders.

With the deteriorating human rights situation an ever-greater cause for concern, FIACAT has continued its efforts to anticipate and respond to crises, and, working closely with its members and partners, has concentrated on the situation in Burundi and the crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A further feature of 2025 was greater commitment to strengthening the ACATs' capacity for action and improving their working and safety conditions. The ninth "Norbert Kenne" training cycle was a major focus of this project, enabling the upcoming generation of defenders to consolidate their competences and strengthen their capacity for action to combat torture and ill-treatment.

In a worldwide environment that is more and more restrictive, FIACAT remains fully committed to the service of its network, committed to the protection of human rights defenders, committed to a total ban on torture and committed to abolition of the death penalty.

Christophe D'Aloisio  
President of FIACAT

# Representing the ACATs at international and regional bodies



FIACAT speaks on behalf of the ACATs in bodies that promote and protect human rights and with political decision-makers. It was present this year at the European Union, the African Union and the United Nations as well as at the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights and the Council of Europe, which will be dealt with in other chapters of this report. This representation takes the form of a dialogue with national authorities, to improve FIACAT's support for implementation of their international or regional commitments.

## European Union

### → Annual seminar on EU Delegation Focal Points for Human Rights, Democracy, Civil Society and Gender Equality

FIACAT was present in Brussels from 17 - 21 February at the seminar on focal points for the human rights work of the EU delegations throughout the world which are responsible for EU diplomacy with non-Member States. An opportunity to strengthen ties with EU representatives who provide support for the projects at local level alongside the ACATs and to give thought to local strategies, especially for Burundi, Madagascar, Benin, Togo, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Republic of Congo. With the United Against Torture Consortium (UATC), FIACAT was also able to discuss the consortium's achievements in 2024 with the over 120 representatives of the delegations.

### → NGO Human Rights Forum: Partnering for equality and non-discrimination

Present in Brussels on behalf of the UATC, FIACAT jointly led two workshops:

- **A strategic laboratory** on putting a stop to torture and discrimination whilst keeping order during demonstrations, during which participants and consortium partners worked out strategic priorities and political recommendations to act as a springboard for the EU's programming and advocacy work.
- **A workshop** on ways of promoting dialogue between the European institutions and local actors in sub-Saharan Africa, to discuss the EU's commitment to equality and non-discrimination.

## African Union

### → Worldwide developments in human rights: a challenge for the partnership between the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU)

Following consultations with representatives of local civil societies, both African and European, FIACAT, a member of the EU's Civil Society Steering Committee, took part in the formal dialogue between the two institutions on 7 October 2025, which was jointly chaired by the EU's special representative (EUSR) for human rights, Kajsa Ollongren, and the AU's Ambassador and Commissioner for political affairs, peace and security, Bankole Adeoye.

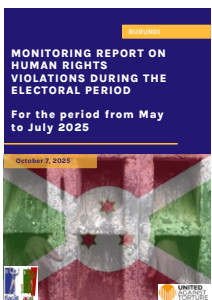
Considering the worldwide challenges with which the two continents are confronted: financial crisis, disinformation and misinformation about civil society and its work, the calling into question of norms and institutions, the lifting of moratoria on the death penalty and resumption of executions, the proliferation of authoritarian practices and crises, particularly in the DRC, the Sahel and Burundi, civil society reminded the two institutions and their Member States of the political measures and operational priorities to be adopted in response.



## United Nations

In 2025, FIACAT continued and indeed stepped up its work in the region of the Great Lakes, in particular in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

### → Burundi: Documenting violations and pleading the cause of human rights protection in an electoral period.



In view of the resurgence of human rights violations during the electoral period, ACAT Burundi and FIACAT worked closely with the United Nations special procedures in order to document these violations. A monitoring report covering the period from May to July 2025 identified the main trends in these violations and the *modi operandi* of the presumed perpetrators.

FIACAT also took part in an event organised in Brussels by the FOCODE on the phenomenon of forced disappearances in Burundi, symbols of the repression to which the opposition is subjected along with dissidents and human rights defenders. It vigorously argued for the mandate of the special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi to be renewed and, with the approach of the 2027 presidential election, for a calmer, pluralist political environment to be created via the organisation of and participation in parallel events and the drafting of oral statements at the 59th and 60th sessions of the Human Rights Council and the 85th ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).



### → DRC: Advocating against impunity for violations committed in the east of the DRC

Following the M23 offensive in the east of the DRC in January 2025 and confronted with the resulting massive human rights violations, FIACAT, along with the United Against Torture Consortium, became very much involved in supporting the creation of international mechanisms within the United Nations and African bodies to combat impunity. In this context, advocacy was conducted at the 37th extraordinary session of the Human Rights Council in favour of setting up an international mission to establish the facts of the violations committed in the eastern provinces since January 2025. The final report of this mission was presented in September 2025.

Through communications, oral statements and parallel events, FIACAT continued its work denouncing the massive violations of human rights linked to the conflict in the east of the DRC and raising the awareness of competent regional and international bodies. ■

# Supporting the ACATs in joint programmes

## Combating abusive pre-trial detention (APD)



In 2025, FIACAT's programme to combat abusive pre-trial detention recorded significant results in the Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon, in terms of both regularising the judicial system and improving detention conditions. In 2025, the programme was also launched in Benin, where the results are not yet measurable.

The actions of volunteers and lawyers have enabled numerous cases of abusive detention to be identified and judicial decisions to be obtained in all the target countries: **352 decisions in the Congo** (including 249 releases), **178 decisions in Côte d'Ivoire**, **50 in Madagascar** and **20 in Cameroon**.

In Côte d'Ivoire, improving the medical system has led to a **63.28 % fall in the morbidity rate** and **99.78 % in the mortality rate** in the establishments targeted, compared with the initial 2023 value.

In addition, major institutional progress has been recorded with the creation of the Congolese prison and torture observatory (OCLPLT) and the adoption of a bill setting up a national detention observatory (OND) in Côte d'Ivoire.

**306 members** of judicial and prison administrations as well as of civil society have been given training in the rights of detainees.

Finally, reinsertion and resocialisation projects have been implemented via professional training courses, assistance with insertion and sporting activities, which have benefited **217 minors**

in Côte d'Ivoire and **32 ex-detainee minors in Congo**, the aim being to help them to become independent and prevent reoffending.

A FIACAT follow-up mission was also conducted in Brazzaville to help set up the second training workshop organised by ACAT





Congo for actors in the penal system and civil society, dealing with the judicial rights and guarantees of those on remand. The aim was to reinforce the capacities of local actors and to hold discussions with institutional and technical partners.

## Contributing to abolition of the death penalty in Africa

In 2025, the regional context of the fight for abolition of the death penalty in Africa was seen to be ambivalent, progress versus backsliding. The ACAT network continued to be fully involved at different levels, particularly on the question of including the opinion-formers who are the key actors in this field.

### → Towards greater mobilisation of religious and traditional leaders in the fight for abolition of the death penalty

In May 2025, a capitalisation seminar was held to focus the attention of traditional and religious leaders on abolition of the death penalty. It was organised jointly with ACAT Senegal in Dakar. Some forty religious and traditional leaders and members of civil society took part, from nine African countries where workshops had been organised at national level in previous years. For two days, these actors discussed good practice as regards raising the religious and traditional leaders' awareness of abolition – concentrating on their role in the abolitionist movement and on arguments and techniques for mobilisation.



This seminar consolidated the FIACAT network's pro-abolition activities through interreligious dialogue, whilst again making the partners' experiences the focal point of the proceedings. Following the seminar, and based on the discussions held there, FIACAT has developed a tool for joint action with religious and traditional leaders in the context of the fight for abolition. It proposes lines of action, consideration and argument as a basis for activities by and with these key actors.



### → Supporting projects in Cameroon and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Throughout 2025 and with the financial support of the European Union, ACAT Cameroon and ACAT DRC carried out two projects concerned with the fight for abolition in their respective countries. In particular, they organised activities to raise awareness and influence opinion leaders (journalists, magistrates, religious and traditional leaders) and political decision-makers, strengthening capacities and visiting prisoners condemned to death.

## A united front against torture - UATC

### → Documenting, advocating and regulating equipment used to maintain order

As a member of the United Against Torture Consortium, FIACAT has contributed to the documentation on and warning of the excessive use of force in the repression of peaceful demonstrations. Targeted action has been taken in several countries, notably Madagascar in the context of the repression of demonstrations for water and electricity, alongside increased efforts to ensure better regulation of the trade in equipment which could be used for torture and ill-treatment.

These efforts, led by the Omega Research Foundation, have resulted in a noticeable strengthening of the European Union's regulatory framework to prevent the transfer of materials for the maintenance of order to actors who might use them for torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The major revision of the European "anti-torture regulation" led to a considerable extension of the list of banned goods, including hoods and blindfolds, leg-irons, gang chains, lathis, weighted gloves and batons, along with certain equipment to disperse chemical irritants, including that mounted on drones or intended for enclosed spaces.



As part of this extension, the UATC has drafted a policy paper analysing international norms relating to the use of force in demonstrations.

The document makes it clear that the deliberate use of certain "reduced lethality" weapons for the purposes of intimidation, punishment or discrimination may be a violation of the absolute ban on torture as enshrined in the United Nations Convention Against Torture. It also emphasises the need to combat the discriminatory practices lying behind numerous instances of police violence and to strengthen the protection of particularly vulnerable people such as women, LGBTQIA+ persons and racialised or marginalised groups.

### → Crisis response: Democratic Republic of the Congo

In view of the worsening conflict in the east of the DRC and the massive human rights violations committed in this context, the UATC has instigated a coordinated response aiming to support torture survivors, protect human rights defenders and intensify the fight against impunity by documenting and promoting mechanisms for investigation and holding perpetrators to account at regional and international levels.



### → A regional meeting of African partners

As part of the consortium's coordination activities, from 15 to 16 October 2025 the UATC organised a regional partners' meeting in Banjul, the Gambia, with 45 participants from 16 countries. This meeting was an opportunity to assess progress made, to discuss good practices and to improve the coordination of activities concerned with the prevention of torture, the documentation of violations and support for torture survivors. The discussions also centred on the involvement of survivors and intervention strategies in high-risk contexts.



commitment to working within the consortium on Phase 2 of the project, which will begin in 2026, continuing and expanding action to promote the protection of human rights defenders.

In 2025, FIACAT missions in Madagascar (in March) and Côte d'Ivoire (in June) made it possible to conduct upskilling sessions for the members of the network, to build on the project with the defenders and to meet partners, authorities and diplomatic missions in support of the Defenders project.

➔ **Strengthening the protection of defenders: participation in the NGO Forum and the 83rd session of the ACHPR**

## The Initiative for Human Rights Defenders Worldwide

➔ **Long-term strengthening of the protection of defenders: stocktaking and prospects for the Defenders project**

As a participant in the project Initiative for Human Rights Defenders Worldwide, known as the Defenders project, FIACAT takes a very sanguine view of Phase 1 of the project (2021-2025), run by Agir ensemble pour les droits humains (AEDH) in conjunction with the Francophone Association of National Human Rights Commissions (AFCNDH), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the French Human Rights Platform (PDH) and Tournons La Page (TLP). This first phase allowed long-term strengthening of the protective environment for human rights defenders in ten countries by means of joint training, advocacy and network structuring. As part of the project, FIACAT engaged in international advocacy at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the European Union and the United Nations, along with the project's target countries in which ACATs are present, in particular Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Togo, Burundi and the Republic of Congo. Projects were also run directly in Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Togo, combining upskilling, national advocacy for the adoption of more protective judicial frameworks, the strengthening of networks of human rights defenders and the production of a study of collective protection. FIACAT also reaffirms its full



In May 2025, for the first time in a number of years FIACAT took part in the NGO Forum accompanying the 83rd ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (at Banjul, the Gambia). The delegation, which consisted of 12 members of the international secretariat and the partner ACATs, ran a side event on the collective protection of human rights defenders, which was attended by over 70 participants, and a panel on the threat to the civic space for activists in Africa. These provided an opportunity to share the FIACAT network's experience, to present the collective protection study and to draw up recommendations which were included in the NGO Forum's address at the opening of the 83rd session, thus strengthening advocacy for a more protective environment for defenders. ■

# Running the ACAT network

## The Norbert Kenne Cycle: a model of upskilling to advance the prohibition of torture

The Norbert Kenne cycle is one of FIACAT's flagship activities for strengthening the impact of French-speaking civil society in the battle against torture. This biennial programme pursues two lines of approach: the RISC project (Strengthening the Impact of French-speaking Civil Society) with a view to greater influence in international and national bodies and the United Against Torture Consortium. The cycle has a four-stage learning structure: an on-line pre-session (40 participants) introducing the basics of international human rights law, a 12-day initial university and professional training course (20 participants from among



### Focus on the 9<sup>th</sup> Norbert Kenne Cycle (2025-2026): From Benin to action in the field.

The 9<sup>th</sup> cycle was an important milestone in that its initial course was for the first time held in Grand-Popo in Benin from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12 September 2025, with support from ACAT-Benin. A restricted call for projects was then issued to put the knowledge acquired into practice: out of the many projects submitted by the participants, a number were selected for funding and enhanced technical support, involving African civil society organisations, especially in the Sahel, where civic space is increasingly restricted.

- **In Benin (ACAT Benin):** "Making use of the national mechanism for prevention of torture in Benin".
- **In Togo (CACIT):** "Project on strengthening the protection of defenders, journalists and activists who suffer rights abuses, torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in Togo".
- **In Côte d'Ivoire (ACAT Côte d'Ivoire / Planète Paix):** "Reducing prison overcrowding by depenalising minor offences in Côte d'Ivoire".
- **In Burkina Faso (GRASH / CIFDHA):** "Promotion of international, regional and national standards for the prevention and countering of torture and other ill-treatment".

In addition to the chosen projects, FIACAT continues to support all the participants in seeking additional funding and conducting their local action projects, thus ensuring the long-term strengthening of civil society organisations in French-speaking Africa.



the 40 who took part in the on-line pre-session), which seeks to complement theoretical knowledge with practical instruction (advocacy, litigation, project management, safety, etc.), a phase of implementing local action projects in the participants' home countries and finally a four-day follow-up session, one year after the initial training course, to review and build on the local projects. By combining the academic expertise of the Lyon Human Rights Institute (UCLy/IDHL) and the UNESCO Chair of Memory, Cultures, and Interculturality (UCLy), with the expertise of the UATC members, the cycle provides human rights defenders with effective tools, such as the new module on strategic litigation.



## Enhancing the capabilities of the network members



In August 2025, FIACAT joined with the Université libre de Bruxelles, the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and the Université d'Artois in running the summer school on “*Monitoring places of detention: legal aspects and practical issues*”.

The aims of this course are to:

- provide theoretical knowledge of imprisonment;
- provide visitors and inspectors of penitentiary establishments with practical and methodological tools;
- provide information on means of recourse to the law in defence of detainees.

It allowed the coordinators of the ACATs of Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Benin, Madagascar and the Republic of Congo, and other partners in the abusive preventive detention programme such as staff of the Côte d'Ivoire prison service to develop their knowledge and skills in the monitoring of places of detention and mentoring of prisoners.

## Towards a new impetus for the European ACATs

On 5 and 6 December, the ACATs of Luxembourg, Switzerland, France, Germany and Belgium met in Luxembourg to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of ACAT Luxembourg.

The ACATs' meeting addressed the Christian inspiration behind the ACAT, possible synergies and assessment of the impact of action taken at various key dates in the year. Discussions will continue at the meetings of the European ACATs in 2026.



## FIACAT adopts a new strategic plan 2025-2028

In June 2025, the ACATs adopted FIACAT's new strategic plan for the period 2025-2028, reaffirming its basic mission: to be at the service of the ACATs in order to strengthen their impact and coordinate joint action to eradicate torture and bring about the universal abolition of the death penalty. This strategic plan has emerged from a consultative process involving the whole network; it makes support and strengthening of the network central to the federation's activity. FIACAT thus intends to provide structural support: ongoing training, in particular by means of the Norbert Kenne cycle, support for monitoring the recommendations of the international and regional human rights mechanisms, assistance for national advocacy strategies, provision of cascade funding, support for efforts to secure funding and improving the security of members under threat.

## Involvement of the religious actors in promoting justice

FIACAT attended the International Forum of Catholic-Inspired NGOs in Rome from 26 to 28 November 2025. As an active member of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, FIACAT was able to take part in various round tables with the Nuncios and Permanent Observers of the Holy See. These discussions reinforced cooperation between the missions of the Holy See to international and regional bodies, Catholic-inspired international organisations and the regional platforms engaged in international advocacy. ■

# Finances



## Treasurer's remarks

The year 2025 has ended, for the third consecutive year, on a positive financial note, with a profit of **€70,843** and a strong own-fund position of **€276,350**. This performance is the result of rigorous management and the efforts of the International Secretariat and the ACAT network, marking a significant recovery from the critical situation of 2022.

This development is due to the growing number of programmes run by FIACAT and its partners, funded by public and private donors. The volume of activity has increased significantly in recent years. Whilst the secretariat has been reinforced to support this development, expenditure in target countries has increased the most: **€483,975** (35% of the budget) is managed directly by ACATs in 2025. This demonstrates a concrete and lasting commitment to the fight against torture and the death penalty, as well as to the protection of victims and support for defenders.

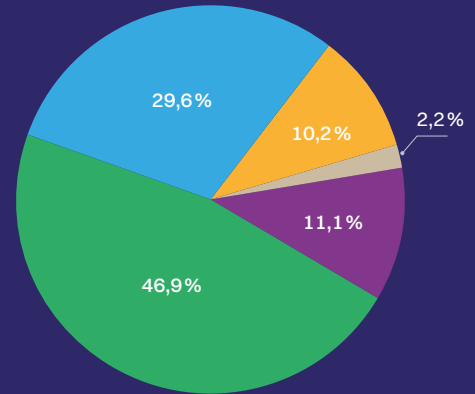
This ability to manage large-scale programmes, combined with its restored financial stability, strengthens FIACAT's credibility with its donors. However, a slowdown in results calls for vigilance in a less favourable climate. A significant proportion of the programmes will come to an end by the end of 2026, and their renewal appears uncertain due to the geopolitical context and the financial priorities of donors. A decline in public grants, the main source of funding, is therefore to be expected, with implications for the secretariat and local teams.

The decline in resources from affiliated ACATs and donations is also a point of concern. Nevertheless, the ability to generate benefits offers an opportunity to strengthen cross-cutting initiatives: network coordination, visibility and advocacy, in line with the 2025-2028 strategic plan.

**Thomas Petitguyot**, FIACAT Treasurer

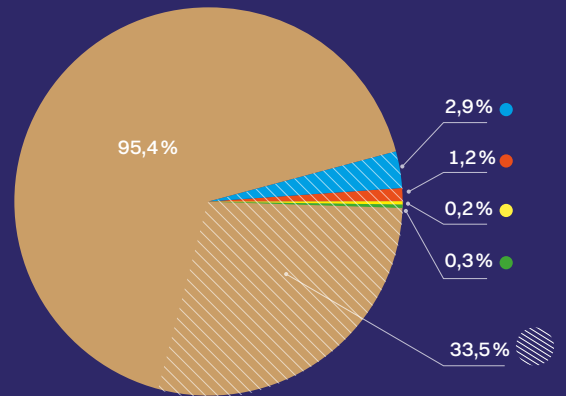
♥ FIACAT warmly thanks its private donors, who have regularly supported its work in 2025. FIACAT would like to express its sincere gratitude to the partners who, for many years, have encouraged and supported its efforts in the fight against torture:

- French Development Agency
- European Union
- Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)
- Missio
- CCFD Terre Solidaire
- Fondation ACAT
- Coordination SUD - FRIO
- Fondation de France



### EXPENSES

Mobilising civil society organisations against torture	644 453,00 €
Combating abusive pre-trial detention	406 322,00 €
Abolishing the death penalty in Africa	139 410,00 €
Protecting human rights defenders	30 133,00 €
FIACAT's operating costs	152 947,72 €
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>1 373 265,72 €</b>



### INCOME

Public and private grants and returns on dedicated funds	1 377 662,96 €
ACAT membership fees	41 552,15 €
Investment income	3034,30 €
Donations	4121,50 €
Other income	17 737,92 €
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1 444 108,83 €</b>
<b>Total income managed directly by ACATs</b>	<b>483 974,58 €</b>

# The FIACAT team

## International Bureau



**Wenceslas ASSOYOU WANGA**  
(Côte d'Ivoire)



**Christophe D'ALOISIO**  
(Belgium) : President



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**Anitha GATERETSE**  
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**Michel KALEMBA**  
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**Natacha KAZATCHKINE**  
(Belgium)



**Thomas PETITGUYOT**  
(France): Treasurer



**Gabriela SIERCK**  
(Germany)

### Interns and volunteers

FIACAT warmly thanks its interns **Julia DELALE** and **Emma WARLOP** and its volunteers - in particular **Pierre LEVÊQUE**, FIACAT's accountant, and **Rober ZUBER**, representative at the United Nations in New York - who have worked with FIACAT for many years and are crucial in the success of its missions.

## Secretariat



**Camille AUBINAIS** (Vincennes):  
Programme manager of the "Campaign against abusive preventive detention"



**Guillaume COLIN** (Vincennes):  
Executive director



**Julia DELALE** (Vincennes):  
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**Lionel GRASSY** (Bruxelles):  
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**Jeanne HIRSCHBERGER** (Vincennes):  
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**Francis KONÉ** (Abidjan):  
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**Noumho MENDY** (Vincennes):  
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**Xavière PRUGNARD** (Vincennes):  
Representative at the African Union  
(05/2018 - 09/2025)



**Emeline SWIDERSKI** (Geneva):  
Representative at the United Nations



**Lauren THIEBAUT** (Vincennes):  
Administrative and financial director



**Esteban TRUJILLO** (Vincennes):  
Administrative and financial task officer



**Marion VALERAY** (Vincennes):  
Programme manager of the Defenders programme, network manager

# Our network: meet the ACATs



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## Supported Groups

- ACAT Czech Republic
- ACAT Guinea
- ACAT Italy

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 lies in its network, which links the ACATs to one another. Its local roots are the bedrock of its legitimacy and the relevance of its action.

### International representation

FIACAT represents its members in international and regional bodies, enjoying:

- consultative status at the United Nations (UN),
- participatory status at the Council of Europe,
- observer status at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR),
- accreditation 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 human rights conventions, in the prevention of torture in prisons and detention centres, and in combating enforced disappearances and impunity. It also contributes to campaigning against the death penalty, in particular by putting the case for abolition to decision makers and religious and traditional leaders.

### Partnerships and coalitions

FIACAT is a founding or active member of various international collective action groups, such as:

- the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP),
- the United Against Torture Consortium (UATC),
- the French Human Rights Platform (PDH),
- the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN).

It also participates in the Initiative for Human Rights Defenders Worldwide.

### Strengthening of the network

FIACAT helps its member associations to organise and become influential actors in civil society, able to raise public awareness and have an impact on the authorities in their countries. It promotes exchanges within the network, offers regional or international training and supports the ACATs actions at international level.

### Involving the religious actors in the pursuit of justice

FIACAT seeks 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 worldwide.

### Contacts



FIACAT



FIACAT

[www.fiacat.org](http://www.fiacat.org)

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