

ACTION BY CHRISTIANS AGAINST TORTURE



ANNUAL REPORT 2026

Registered Charity No.1072628

President: *Revd Dr Paul Oestreicher,*

Patrons: *Professor Lord David Alton, Revd Dr David Cornick, Baroness Caroline Cox, Revd Dr David Deeks,
R Revd Guli Francis Dehqani, Rt Revd Declan Lang,
Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Rev Canon Professor David Thompson, Rt Revd Peter Wheatley*

ACTION BY CHRISTIANS AGAINST TORTURE: MISSION STATEMENT

ACAT-UK for reasons of Christian faith:

- works to educate and inform the general public, but particularly the churches, regarding the existence, extent and evil of torture, as set out in Article 5 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- campaigns for the worldwide abolition of torture and extrajudicial executions (government sponsored assassinations of opponents or "undesirables");
- provides help, comfort and support to victims of torture and the families of those who have been tortured, executed or face the threat of death;
- remembers in constant prayer the victims, their families and their communities;
- prays also for those who order, inflict or tolerate the torture of their fellow human beings;
- exercises vigilance to ensure that these same human rights are secured, without exception, for all people within the United Kingdom.

ACAT-UK uses all established methods to realise these aims and such new methods as may from time to time be appropriate to its goals. We are also part of an international Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (FIACAT) and a Body in Association with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Secretary: Dr Derek Lewis

25 Higher Woolbrook Park, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 9ED

Email: uk.acat@gmail.com

Registered Charity No. 1072628

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

Appeals or messages of support for some 60 individuals and several groups were featured in the newsletter during the period October 2025–November 2026. These include greetings and messages to prisoners provided by ACAT-France as part of their annual **International Day of Prayer Vigil** (Nuit des Veilleurs) programme. Many of the appeal cases were researched and provided by Ms Alice Rowan, who has completed a postgraduate programme in law focussing on human rights and is now believed to be working for a law firm.

The **newsletter** has reported on various aspects of torture and/or human rights, both in the UK and abroad, several of which remain issues of concern that are ongoing from last year. Examples are UK asylum policy including possible changes to the implementation of provisions in the EHCR, asylum accommodation, and the effects of the current Home Secretary's immigration policy and its implications for Indefinite Leave to Remain and changes to asylum support and work. Other issues include torture equipment, the UN Resolution on Torture (November 2025), and the situation in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank that continues its dreadful course. The newsletter has also aimed to provide more updates on prisoners who have featured in our appeals and campaigns. An effort has also been made to include monthly newsflashes on human rights concerns on the ACAT website.

FIACAT's **International Council meeting** in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) took place on 30 April – 1 May 2026. ACAT-UK did not attend but granted proxy votes to ACAT Germany. 23 ACATs participated. As part of its **Activity Report 2025** FIACAT officers reported on the implementation of a number of programmes: abolition of the death penalty in Africa, combating pre-trial abusive detention, and the protection of human rights defenders. The report included the coordination of the ACAT network, the training of young association leaders in French-speaking Africa, and the strengthening of exchanges among ACATs. Other matters comprised: the **admission of ACAT Guinea** as a member (bringing network voting membership to 25); participation in joint initiatives with the **Vatican**; and the intention to strengthen links with the **CPT** (European Committee for the Prevention of Torture). The IC also presented the **Action Plan 2026** (adopted by the International Bureau in December 2025) despite some critical observations

by national ACATs. It also approved the **Financial Report 2025**, where several ACATs noted a decline in membership fees linked to the reduction in the number of members and the need to rethink the contribution model.

ACAT-UK supported the following **initiatives by FIACAT** during the past year.

- Co-signing a letter to the EU: "Letter to the College of Commissioners regarding the need to ban EU trade with Israel, pursuant to Article 207 of the TFEU" – the TFEU is the core legal basis setting out rules governing how the EU conducts trade with the rest of the world. [June/July 2026]
- Co-signing a letter to the president of the European Parliament deploring the trend towards discriminatory, racist, sexist speech and offensive chanting by MEPs, most recently accompanying the adoption of the new "Return Regulation" on repatriating migrants who have no legal right to stay in the EU. [June 2026]

ACAT-UK had also considered providing assistance to **ACAT-Ghana**, which appeared to be in the process of development, and contacted its apparent coordinator to identify its needs. Following a decision by our committee first to establish the level of support FIACAT may offer to members, no meaningful response was received either from FIACAT or from ACAT-Ghana. The initiative has been shelved.

ACAT-UK participated in an online **meeting of European ACATs** (February 2026). Issues raised included: a proposal by ACAT-Luxemburg to form an ACAT-Russia for Russians in exile; the resumption of the Common Urgent Action programme; presentation of a resolution on Article 3 of the ECHR urging governments to solidify the absolute prohibition of torture in the light of moves by some states to amend jurisprudence in order to permit the return of refugees presenting a national security risk; and approval for "hybrid participation" by UN member states at UN meetings in order to address the organisation's current budget crisis.

SECRETARY'S REPORT (MEMBERSHIP)

Total individual membership in early September 2025 stood at 205, including 19 life members and 11 patrons (including the president). We have 11 registered groups across the UK (with the exception of Northern Ireland) and around 30 individuals are registered for the SOS programme. Around half of our members continue to receive the newsletter by email. Printed versions are distributed to groups and to individuals who request them and by default to those without internet access. Around 100 individuals or organisations (non-members) continue to register their interest in participating in the Christmas and Easter greetings campaigns; they often contribute generously to our expenses. The trend of a gentle decline in registered members continues (members leave ACAT almost always as a result of ill-health, age or death).

The above represents only a slight change in membership status since the previous year.

REPORT ON DEATH PENALTY APPEALS

Co-ordinator: Dr Audrey Wells

The ACAT Death Penalty (DP) Appeals Group wrote appeals for the following people condemned to death from October 2025-August 2026.

September 2025

Saudi Arabia

Abdullah al-Derazi was a young Saudi man from the Shia minority who was executed by Saudi authorities on 20 October 2025. He was put to death for anti-government protest activities alleged to have taken place when he was 17 years old, drawing widespread condemnation from human rights organisations.

November 2025

Algeria

Mohamed Tadjadit is a poet who, with 12 other activists, faced charges of 'inciting citizens against state authority' which carries the death penalty. However, he received a 5-year prison sentence on top of the existing one year in November. This could be changed.

December 2025

USA, Tennessee

Wayne Nichols was 64 years old and had been on death row in Tennessee, USA, for 35 years when he was executed on 11 December 2025. In 1990 he pleaded guilty to the rape and murder in 1988 of a woman in Chattanooga. Multiple jurors who sentenced him to death in 1990 and two former prosecutors from the case stated their support for clemency. Experts pointed to his acceptance of responsibility, model conduct in prison, and personal rehabilitation in support of clemency. However, Governor Bill Lee declined to intervene or commute the sentence prior to the execution.

January 2026

Iran

The Iranian authorities unleashed an unprecedented deadly crackdown to crush mostly peaceful protesters demanding the fall of the Islamic Republic system. Members of the DP group signed Amnesty International's petition calling on Iran to stop its massacre of the protesters

February 2026

USA, Florida

Billy Leon Kearse, intellectually disabled and black, was sentenced to death in Florida for killing a policeman when he was 18 years old. Since then several factors raised serious doubts about the legitimacy of the death sentence imposed: procedural irregularities, including the possible bias of a juror, may have compromised the fairness of the trial. Moreover, expert assessments revealed intellectual disabilities, possible brain damage, and severe emotional disorders that were not adequately considered during sentencing. These factors, combined with a childhood marked by neglect and abuse, called for a reassessment of his criminal responsibility and the proportionality of the sentence. In addition, after over 30 years of incarceration, Billy Kears had changed. He expressed remorse and had embarked on a process of rehabilitation, notably developing an artistic practice. His time in prison demonstrated a clear capacity for transformation. However, he was executed on 3 March 2026.

April 2026

Israel

DP group members signed a protest petition against Israel's new death penalty law. In March 2026 Israel passed a controversial "Death Penalty for Terrorists Law" allowing execution by hanging for intentional killings tied to terrorism. Because the civilian statute requires the intent of "negating the existence of the State of Israel" and since military courts apply only in the West Bank, legal experts and international bodies noted that the measure effectively targets Palestinians while excluding Jewish Israelis. A separate law was also unanimously passed, to hold televised public trials for individuals linked to the 7 October 2023 attacks.

May 2026

Iran

Matin Mohamadi is an 18-year-old Iranian youth who is currently on death row in Iran following his arrest during the January 2026 anti-government protests. Initially detained as a 17-year-old minor, his death sentence was finalized and upheld by the Supreme Court of Iran in April 2026, transferring his case to the enforcement office for imminent execution.

June 2026

USA, Tennessee

Tony Carruthers was convicted of the 1994 kidnappings and murders of three people in Memphis, Tennessee. His case gained significant national attention following a severely botched lethal injection attempt, which has resulted in a one-year reprieve granted by Tennessee Governor Bill Lee.

July 2026

Indonesia

Three Chinese men, **Chen Weibiao**, **Xiao Jin Zeng** and **Lo Tin Yau**, have remained on death row since they were sentenced in 2017 for drug crimes. We congratulated Indonesia for its enlightened new law of commuting death sentences according to the prisoners' good behaviour in prison and urged that the above three men should be included under this law and eventually freed. They have remained on death row since they were sentenced.

August 2026

Saudi Arabia

58 Ethiopians were sentenced to death for carrying non-lethal drugs. Fleeing poverty and conflict in their country, they were probably tricked into doing it. Many are Christians and received rough treatment as a result. Several Anglican bishops have protested on their behalf. ACAT's DP group did likewise.

THE ACAT PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

You experienced in person what it is like to have a death sentence hanging over you.

You were plotted against, betrayed by a friend, and arrested under cover of darkness by men who came with clubs and swords.

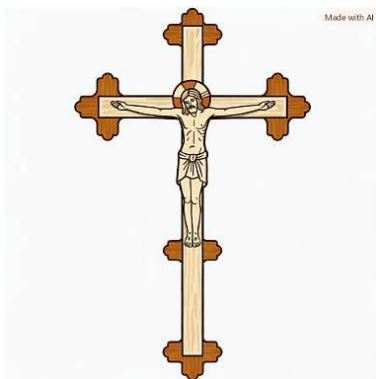
You were tortured, beaten and humiliated; sentenced to an agonising death, though you had done no wrong.

Be now with prisoners throughout the world. Be with them in the darkness of the dungeon, in the loneliness of separation from those they love.

Be with them in their fear of what may come to them, in the agony of their torture and in the face of execution and death.

Stretch out your hands in mercy to all who have need of you at this time.

Amen



The Jerusalem Cross has typically cross-shaped extensions at each arm, a Crusader-era emblem still used by Palestinian Christians to signify the spread of the Gospel to the four corners of the world.

ACTION BY CHRISTIANS AGAINST TORTURE

Registered Charity No. 1072628

Draft Accounts for 12 months from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

		<u>2025-2026</u>		<u>2024-2025</u>
		<u>£</u>		<u>£</u>
<u>INCOME</u>				
Membership: Individuals	1,503.95		1,770.00	
Groups	150.00	1,653.95	200.00	1,970.00
Donations		26,340.79		1,866.96
Gift Aid tax refund		478.84		426.44
Bank & Deposit account interest		1,017.71		1,096.65
Total income		29,491.29		5,360.05
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
Administration				
Committee travel	278.70		598.30	
Office expenses	511.31		664.97	
Postage	746.84		670.60	
Research	1,110.00		935.00	
Printing	1,678.50		1,743.00	
		4,325.35		4,611.87
AGM		255.00		150.00
Bank charges		86.95		85.70
FIACAT Subscription		527.61		600.00
Insurance		347.20		347.20
Total expenditure		5,542.11		5,794.77
Surplus (deficit) for period		23,949.18	-	434.72
Balance at start of period		49,696.52		50,131.24
Balance at end of period		73,645.70		49,696.52
Represented by				
CAFCash		384.56		922.61
CAFGold		<u>73,261.14</u>		<u>48,773.91</u>
Total funds available		<u>73,645.70</u>		<u>49,696.52</u>