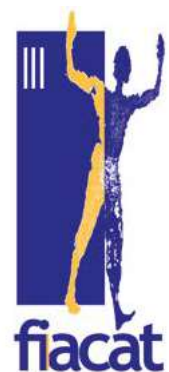




2023

ACTIVITY REPORT

FIACAT



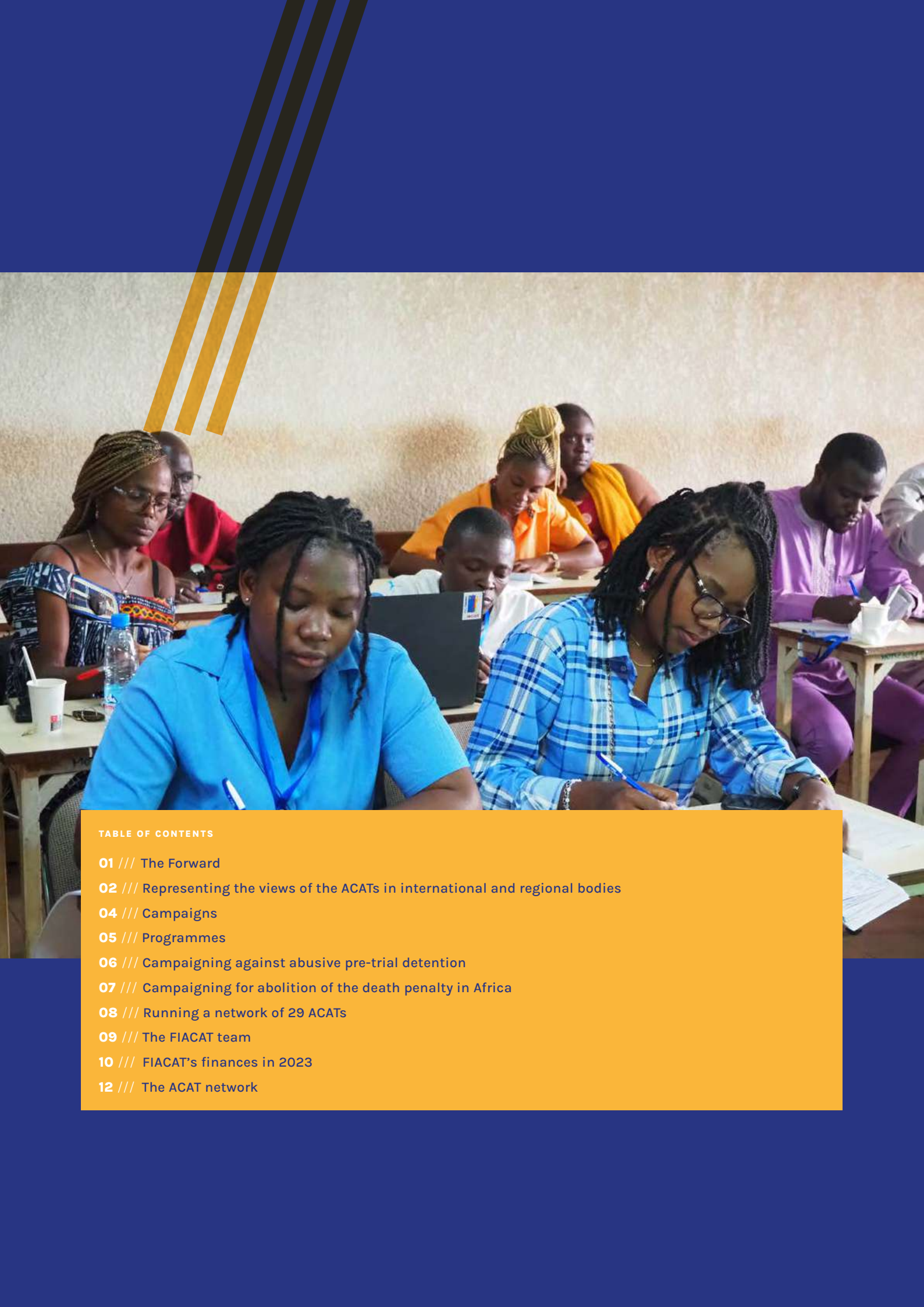


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FIACAT GROWS IN STRENGTH AND INFLUENCE ON INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL STAGES



*Paul
Angaman*

President
of the FIACAT

Submission of alternative reports, technical contributions and thematic reports, advocacy, chairing panels and side events at the UN, the EU and the ACHPR – by these means FIACAT has raised the profile of the ACATs in international and regional bodies. It has shared the concerns of its members, in particular regarding the crucial link between the death penalty and torture, which is in no case admissible, the problem of detention in accordance with the Nelson Mandela Rules, the need to prevent torture, especially in Africa, by disseminating the *Abidjan Rules* and ensuring compliance, the threat posed by obstacles to the freedom of association and peaceful assembly, along with the criminalisation of the status of human rights defender. How can one not be anxious about the shrinking of the civic space, which is occurring on all continents, enforced with varying degrees of brutality, thus motivating civil society to be more resilient and to resist the intimidation which is the aim of the authorities? Even more importantly, strategies must be reinvented for countering this tendency.

With these points in mind, FIACAT **presents a united front** with the consortium *United Against Torture*, **which brings together 200 civil society organisations aiming to fight against torture. Along with 50 partner organisations, it also remains committed** to the pan-African Campaign for the decriminalisation of minor offences, in effect the decriminalisation of poverty. Along with the World Coalition against the Death Penalty, during a conference organised by the European Union and the African Union, it took part in the launch on 10 October 2023 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) of the continent-wide campaign for adoption of the draft African Protocol against the death penalty. This strengthening of its international and regional position, which confers legitimacy and credibility, does not prevent it from carrying out its own programmes.

“That hope has already dawned with the elective International Council which is being held this year. Happily, a new day full of promise is dawning. Long live the ACATs, long live FIACAT!”

Thus in Africa FIACAT is successfully pursuing its programme to combat abusive pre-trial detention in Congo Brazzaville, Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire, where the expertise of the national ACATs in this field confers legitimacy. With regard to the programme to combat the death penalty, FIACAT was pleased to note that in 2023 Ghana was the 27th African state to enshrine abolition in law. The links between the network members continue to strengthen through the ACAT Cafés, with the involvement of the International Secretariat at various regional and international meetings concerned with human rights and training. 2023 saw the welcome return of the Norbert KENNE training programme, which aims to strengthen the capacity of members of the network and its civil society partners as regards human rights and the abolition of torture. These are all reasons to be optimistic about the future of the ACATs and FIACAT. All this striking vitality is the result of the commitment of each ACAT member and sympathiser, of men and women of goodwill and of the International Secretariat, the kingpin of this machine which is becoming ever more powerful. THANK YOU to all, in the name of Jesus Christ, the link which binds us together and our HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

REPRESENTING THE VIEWS OF THE ACATS AT INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL BODIES



UNITED NATIONS



During 2023, in cooperation with its partners, FIACAT and its members were able to share with the special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatments or punishments their experiences, concerns and recommendations as regards pre-trial detention, in particular the discriminatory impact on poor and marginalised populations and the situation of those on death row. The aim was to contribute to the report on “Current Issues and Good Practice in Prison Management”¹.

In addition, with a view to the 4th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo and Senegal, FIACAT and the ACATs of those four countries submitted alternative reports on the level of implementation of the recommendations of the 3rd UPR cycle and current concerns. The recommendations were developed during advocacy activities conducted in Geneva with some 20 diplomatic missions during UPR pre-sessions organised by UPR Info from 27 November to 1 December 2023.



AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

In 2023, the Commission undertook several major studies of the death penalty and the human rights situation in prisons in Africa. FIACAT and the African ACATs took part, to share their experiences and main concerns. Dissemination of the *Abidjan Rules* establishing a mechanism for raising the alert and reporting to the Commission on torture issues remained a priority for FIACAT as regards collaboration with the Commission.

ROUND TABLE ON BARRIERS TO FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND CRIMINALISATION OF THE STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER : THE CIVIC SPACE UNDER THREAT

FIACAT and Tournons la page (TLP) (“Let’s turn the page”) organised a round table on the occasion of the 77th ordinary session of the ACHPR on attacks on the freedom of association and peaceful assembly in Africa.

The participants discussed using the law in a way which would be more respectful of the activity of human rights protection. They highlighted the threat posed to civic spaces on the African continent by restrictions on freedom of association and of peaceful assembly, along with the criminalisation of the status of activist.

EUROPEAN UNION



FIACAT took part in the 25th EU-NGO Forum on human rights on 4 and 5 December 2023.

The Forum organised by the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) in partnership with the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) of the NGOs based in Brussels took as its topic « **Youth as actors of change for human rights** ». This forum enabled FIACAT to take part in the work of the Plateforme française des Droits Humains (PDH) (French Human Rights Platform), of which it is a member, and to discuss the work of over 200 young human rights defenders. In particular, the defenders referred to the threats and challenges with which they are confronted and discussed ways of making a significant commitment to shaping both their own future and that of human rights. It concluded with suggestions and recommendations geared to action, emphasising practical ways for the EU, the Member States, civil society and young people to adapt and improve policies and practices.



12

alternative reports

submitted with the ACATs to the United Nations (UN) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)

Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Central African Republic, Germany, Senegal, Spain, Switzerland



technical contributions

to thematic reports of the UN and the ACHPR on the death penalty, detention, torture and human rights defenders.

16

ACATs supported in their advocacy before the United Nations and the ACHPR

Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Germany, Madagascar, Spain, Senegal, Switzerland, Togo



panels or side events co-organised at the UN and the African Union



Photography : © Daphné Mathys

CAMPAIGNS

THE DEATH PENALTY, TORTURE WHICH DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME?



For the second year in succession, the World Day against the Death Penalty, celebrated on 10 October, was devoted to the link between application of the death penalty and violation of the ban on torture or on cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment.

In 2021, FIACAT had initiated an in-depth study of the way in which the death penalty was tolerated by international law and international standards, to the extent that it can only be applied for the most serious crimes and then in such a way as to cause the least possible suffering.

Abolition has evolved significantly over the past few years. Previously widely tolerated, application of the death penalty has gradually been restricted and more than two-thirds of countries have now abolished it in law and in practice. Acceptance of the death penalty under national, regional and international law has thus evolved alongside a gradual ban on corporal punishment, the recognition at national and regional levels of the violation of the ban on torture and the emergence of a new international customary norm forbidding recourse to capital punishment in any circumstances whatsoever.

FIACAT is a member of the Campaign for the decriminalisation of minor offences

The world-wide Campaign for the decriminalisation of poverty and of the status of activist is being conducted by a coalition of over 50 partner organisations throughout the world, including FIACAT, lobbying for the scrutiny and repeal of laws targeting people on the grounds of status (social, political or economic) or of their activism.

In July 2023, the Coordination Committee for the Global Campaign met in Nairobi to set out the Campaign's direction of strategy and plan of work for the period 2023-2025.

Given the diversity of contexts in the countries where the campaign is in progress, the regional groups have to adapt, adjust and structure their contributions in line with strategic priorities whilst remaining consistent with their specific circumstances and the ecosystem within which they have to work.

With these points in mind, the Campaign's francophone sub-group met on 11 and 12 December 2023 in Brussels for a brainstorming retreat on strategy. This workshop, involving 27 participants, pinpointed three objectives for the campaign:

- **Identifying the main objectives** of joint advocacy campaigns and lobbying for the sub-group, whilst specifying concrete opportunities for the future;
- **Structuring the running of the sub-group** and its **working methods** to optimise the efforts exerted in order to achieve its objectives;
- **Strengthening the ties between the member organisations** by sharing experiences and lessons learned and joining forces to achieve common objectives.



PROGRAMMES

A UNITED FRONT AGAINST TORTURE IN THE WORLD



Alongside five other international organisations fighting torture – the World Organisation against Torture, the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), the Omega research foundation and Redress, FIACAT is part of the Consortium United Against Torture (UAT) which is supported by the European Union (EU).

Through its members, the Consortium represents 200 civil society organisations, with a mission to raise awareness, prevent torture and support actions in the field which fight against it.



INITIATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Launched in 2022, the Initiative for Human Rights Defenders throughout the world aims to prevent the risks to human rights defenders through activities involving training, network consolidation and advocacy. One year after the project's launch, 69 personalities from the world of politics, parliaments, international human rights institutions and civil society organisations were briefed by FIACAT and the ACATs of Togo and Madagascar on the need for better protection for these

key actors in the promotion of human rights and for restrictions on the civic space to be resisted.

2023 is the year in which a study was published on the **collective protection of human rights defenders in Africa**, which aims to put the case for improved protection for individuals as well as for groups, organisations, communities or any collective to which they may belong.



CAMPAIGNING AGAINST ABUSIVE PRE-TRIAL DETENTION

The programme Campaigning against abusive pre-trial detention has been supporting the ACATs since 2014. It is part of our mission to combat torture. It provides training for judicial and prison staff, identifies cases of abusive pre-trial detention observed during prison visits and provides legal backup for the release of prisoners, thus making an active contribution to reducing prison overcrowding and improving prison conditions, while working towards preventing torture and maltreatment.

CONGO AND MADAGASCAR

ACAT Congo and ACAT Madagascar continue to combat abusive pre-trial detention by identifying and following up cases and arranging work meetings and advocacy for prisoners' rights with the authorities.

Building on its experience, ACAT Congo is now extending its activities beyond prisons. This is a new dimension of the project, addressing the difficulties encountered by civil society, lawyers and the police in a state where it is common practice to hold detainees in police stations. On 13 and 14 December, a FIACAT delegation was present for a strategy workshop arranged by ACAT Congo on judicial safeguards for police custody, attended by figures from the penal system and civil society organisations.



In Madagascar, where there are few organisations working on access to justice, the ACAT's expertise is now widely recognised by the authorities, public opinion and the media, which regard it as a key player in combating abusive pre-trial detention and do not hesitate to consult it on matters concerning the prohibition of torture and deprivation of liberty.

4
prison visits
by activists
from ACAT Madagascar

123 detainees
interviewed
by ACAT Madagascar

5
meetings by ACAT Congo
and ACAT Madagascar
on the treatment of persons
deprived of their freedom

141 participants
in meetings representing
the judicial administration,
the prison system and civil society
in Congo and Madagascar

50 advocacy events
by ACAT Congo and ACAT Madagascar.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

18 October saw the launch of the project *Renforcer Activement les Droits des détenus, Améliorer leur Réinsertion sociale et leur Santé* – RADARS (Active support for prisoners' rights and improvement of their social rehabilitation and health) carried out by FIACAT, ACAT Côte d'Ivoire, *La Balle aux Prisonniers* (LaBAP) and *Prisonniers sans frontières* (PrSF). In an effort to improve prisoners' day-to-day conditions, the RADARS project is innovative in that it fosters collaboration between Ivorian civil society organisations working to improve prison conditions, the better to address the consequences of the improper administration of justice for access to care and hygiene and the socioprofessional rehabilitation of women and minors.

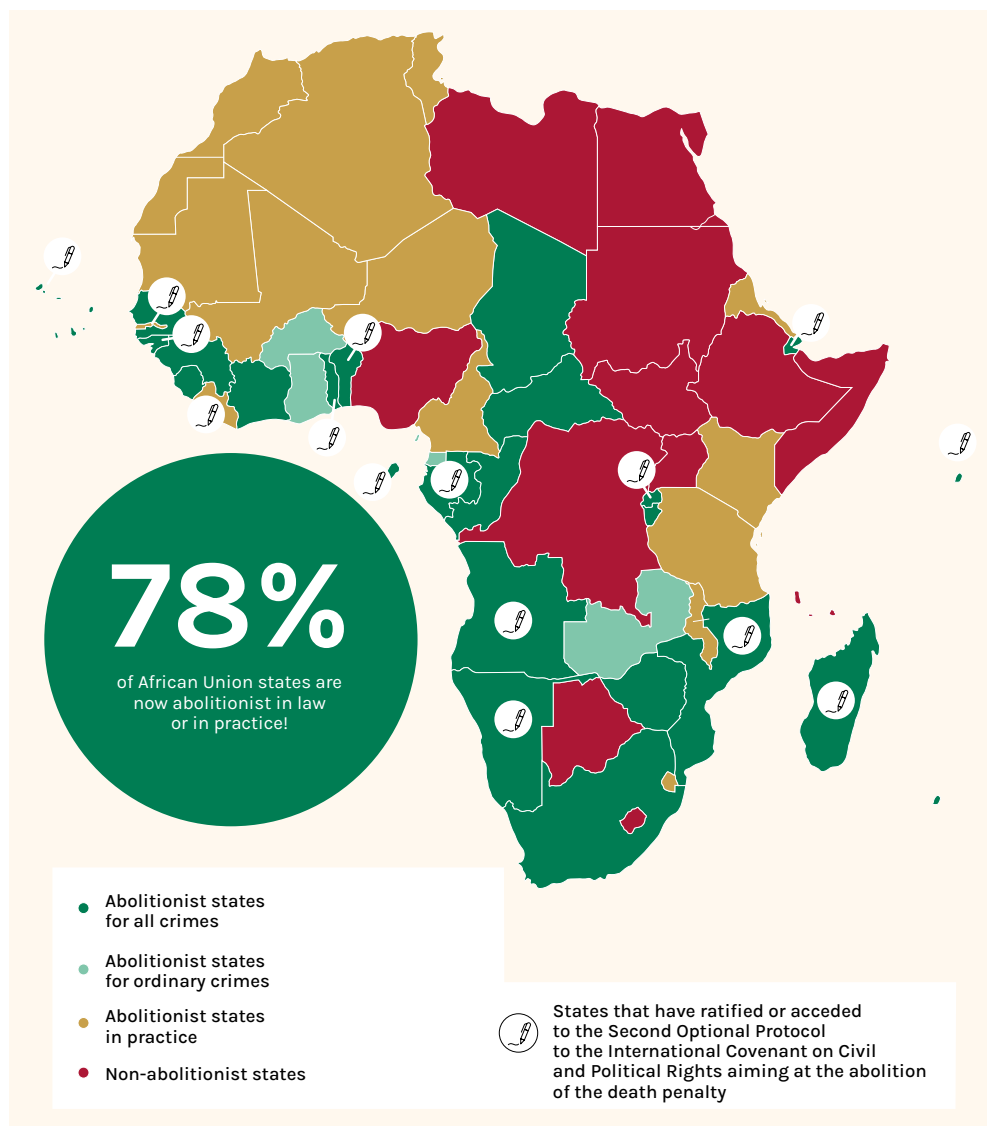


CAMPAIGNING FOR ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN AFRICA

Abolition of the death penalty in law in 1 African state: Ghana in August 2023

LAUNCH OF PROJECTS IN CAMEROON, NIGER AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Thanks to the support and advice of their federation, each of the ACATs of these three countries launched projects to secure abolition of the death penalty. From monitoring of the conditions under which persons condemned to death are held to awareness-raising among opinion leaders (religious and traditional leaders, parliamentarians, academics) and to advocacy aimed at local and national authorities, the ACATs of Cameroon, Niger and the DRC are working day by day towards abolition of capital punishment in their countries.



DRAFT ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS ON THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN AFRICA



FIACAT and the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty conducted joint advocacy at the ACHPR in favour of the draft Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Africa in October in Addis-Ababa (Ethiopia). On 10 October 2023, the continental campaign for adoption of the draft Protocol was launched with a conference on the death penalty organised by

the European Union and the African Union, which was attended by FIACAT's President, Paul Angaman.

On the fringes of this conference, at a meeting of the Group of French-speaking Ambassadors, a diplomatic initiative was launched in favour of adoption of the draft Protocol, with the support of the Organisation Internationale de La Francophonie and the Côte d'Ivoire embassy to the African Union.

RUNNING A NETWORK OF 29 ACATS

TRAINING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN AFRICA IS BACK

In 2023, FIACAT relaunched the **Norbert Kenne** training course in order to boost the capabilities of the members of its network, the ACATs, and its civil society partners in the field of human rights and the prohibition of torture. Carried out in collaboration with the Catholic University of Central Africa (UCAC) and the Human Rights Institute of Lyon (IDHL), the training enabled the participants to acquire theoretical knowledge and practical tools to campaign for the abolition of torture. The 20 participants, all aged between 25 and 35, were invited to put forward local action projects to put the lessons learned into practice. The course will end in July 2024, when the participants will present local projects carried out in the past year, exchange good practice and discuss strategies for placing the work on a permanent footing.



"The Norbert Kenne course was very enriching for me personally and was beneficial to my organisation. It allowed me to develop my skills, making me very important to my association (ACAF-Congo). The old Perole has been transformed since taking part in the Norbert Kenne course, I have acquired greater weight within my organisation, and this has strengthened our credibility in the eyes of other organisations and financial partners."



Perole OBAMBI NIANGA,
a lawyer and project manager with ACAF-CONGO,
who attended the Norbert Kenne course 2023-2024

BRINGING A NETWORK TO LIFE IN A CAFÉ SETTING



It is no easy task to bring together in a café setting the members of a network who are located on three continents and speak different languages, especially if they do not know each other. Yet this is what the ACAT Café has been offering its members since 2022. These monthly meetings allow the members of the network to discuss a theme or activities carried out in the field. These occasions for debate and exchange of good practice allow the ACATs to break out of their isolation and to feel themselves part of an international movement working for human rights and against torture.

Over 70 persons representing the entire network thus came together in eight Café sessions in 2023.



"One ACAT has set up a huge network of young people, another works entirely in exile and a third knows exactly how to convince the politicians. 'How are things done in your neck of the woods?' is the question around which the ACAT Cafés revolve. The answers help us find our way forward."

— ACAT Switzerland

THE FIACAT TEAM

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU



Paul ANGAMAN (Côte d'Ivoire)
President



Christophe D'ALOISIO (Belgium)



Claire DORAN (Canada)



Michel KALEMBA (DRC)



Jean-Bernard MARIE (France)



Anitha GATERETSE (Burundi)



Benoit THERY (France)
Treasurer



Jean-Daniel VIGNY (Switzerland)

Intern and volunteers

FIACAT wishes to thank its intern, **Margot Fénelon**, and its volunteers – in particular **Céleste Simoes-Benoist**, projects and advocacy assistant, **Pierre Lévêque**, FIACAT's accountant, and **Rober Zuber**, representative at the United Nations in New York – who have worked with FIACAT for many years and contributed to the success of its missions.

SECRETARIAT



Camille AUBINAIS (Vincennes)
Responsible for the
« Campaign Against Torture » project



Guillaume COLIN (Vincennes)
Executive director



Luisa FENU (Vincennes)
Coordinator for the running of the network
and communication since 11/23



Lionel GRASSY (Bruxelles)
Advocacy director



Francis KONÉ (Abidjan)
Administrative and financial officer



Corentin MANÇOIS (Vincennes)
Network facilitator (08/21 -11/23)



Xavière PRUGNARD (Vincennes)
Representative at the African Union



Marie SALPHATI (Geneva)
Representative at the United Nations
and the Council of Europe (08/16 - 11/23)



Emeline SWIDERSKI (Geneva)
Representative at the United Nations since 11/23



Lauren THIEBAUT (Vincennes)
Administrative and financial director



Esteban TRUJILLO (Vincennes)
Administrative and logistics officer

FIACAT'S FINANCES IN 2023

A word from the treasurer



In 2023 FIACAT registered a surplus of € 80,930 € with total income of € 1,157,069 and total expenditure of € 1,076,139 €, allowing an increase in FIACAT's own funds to **€ 94,308**.

This result reflects a very substantial effort by FIACAT in 2023, especially by its secretariat, which is to be congratulated. Above all, however, the deferred income of € 2,835,812 presages greatly increased activity by FIACAT in the coming years. This is already apparent in an expansion of the salaried staff of the International Secretariat from 7 to 9 permanent posts, divided between France, Geneva and Côte d'Ivoire.

Nonetheless, FIACAT's own funds remain inadequate for some of its functions, such as running the ACAT network and advocacy outside Africa and the United Nations: support from its network remains vital.

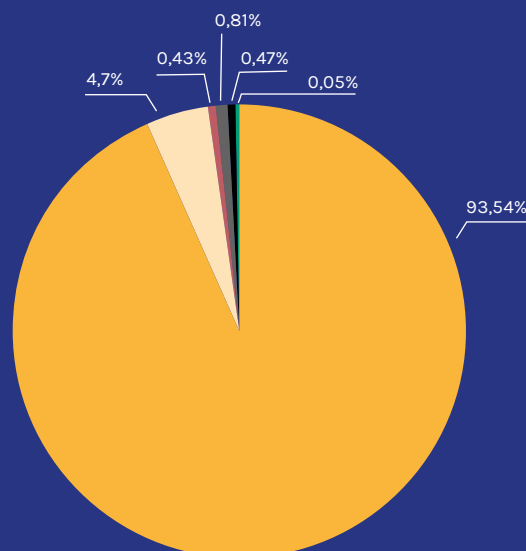
Benoît THÉRY, **Treasurer**

FIACAT warmly thanks its private donors who have regularly supported its action in 2023.

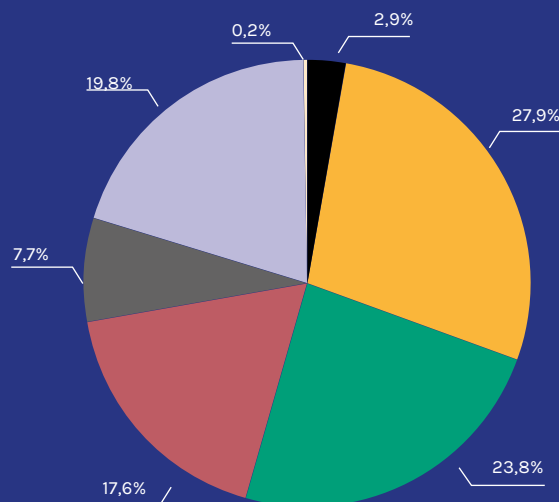
FIACAT is most grateful to its partners, who for many years have been encouraging and supporting its efforts to eradicate torture:

- Agence française de développement (France)
- Brot Für de Welt (Germany)
- CCFD-Terre Solidaire (France)
- Civil Rights Defenders (Sweden)
- Delegation of the European Union to Congo (Republic of the Congo)
- Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (Côte d'Ivoire)
- Fondation ACAT (France)
- Fondation de France (France)
- Luxembourg ministry of foreign affairs (Luxembourg)
- Open Society Foundation (United States)
- Protect Defenders (Belgium)
- Tavola Valdese (Italy)
- European Union (DG INTPA)

RESOURCES



EXPENSES



	2022	2023
● Program Subsidies mobilised	780 770 €	1 082 277 €
● Cotisations des ACAT	57 640 €	54 438 €
● ACAT Contributions	13 891 €	4 950 €
● Private Donations	5 111 €	9 390 €
● Other Resources	2 345 €	5 454 €
● Exceptional Items	651 €	560 €
Total Income	860 408 €	1 157 069 €

	2022	2023
● ACAT advocacy before the United Nations	13 096 €	31 573 €
● Network Coordination	33 203 €	300 296
● Program to Combat Abusive Pre-trial Detention	331 176 €	255 919 €
● Program for the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Africa	217 787 €	189 446 €
● Human Rights Defenders Program	26 177 €	82 960 €
● FIACAT's Operating Expenditure	294 309 €	213 595 €
● Financial and Exceptional Items	4 676 €	2 349 €
Total Expenditure	920 424 €	1 076 139 €

TO SUPPORT FIACAT IN 2024 : CONTRIBUTE TO A WORLD WITHOUT TORTURE!

By bank transfer:

Name of the bank: BRED - Vincennes

Account holder: FED INTERNATIONALE ACAT, 96 boulevard de la Libération, 94300, Vincennes

IBAN code: FR76 1010 7002 2800 9130 5896 718

By cheque:

Payee : FIACAT

Send to: FIACAT, 96 boulevard de la Libération, 94300, Vincennes

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