



Fédération internationale de l'Action des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la Torture
International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture
Federación Internacional de la Acción de los Cristianos para la Abolición de la Tortura

Appeal of the Month

December 2012

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Justice for Floribert Chebeya

Appeal proposed by ACAT Luxemburg

Please find attached :

- An introduction to the situation for your own information
- A letter for you to sign (Word version also available in a separate document)

FIACAT

The International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (FIACAT) is an international non-governmental organisation for the defence of human rights which fights for the abolition of torture and the death penalty.

STATUTES

FIACAT was set up by ten national associations – ACATs – on 8 February 1987 and groups thirty ACATs on four continents; four are in the process of affiliation. It is a non-profit-making organisation under French law, with a mandate to fight for the abolition of torture and of the death penalty.

The work of the international secretariat, consisting of two employees in Paris and a third in Geneva, is supervised by an International Bureau elected by the International Council, in which delegates from the network's member associations meet every four years to lay down broad organisational guidelines.

FUNCTIONS

Representing the network internationally

FIACAT represents the ACATs before the international and regional bodies. It has Consultative Status before the United Nations [UN], Participative Status before the Council of Europe and Observer Status before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights [ACHPR]). FIACAT is accredited to the International Organisation of La Francophonie [OIF]).

FIACAT also works in close collaboration with other human rights NGOs and with the churches and Christian communities.

In these various fora, it argues for the abolition of torture and the death penalty and seeks to ensure that international mechanisms in these areas are developed and put in place.

Managing the network

FIACAT helps the ACATs to organise themselves and become major actors in civil society, capable of influencing the changing attitudes and structures of their countries, starting with the Christian communities and the churches.

FIACAT contributes to the active life of the ACAT network by promoting exchanges, offering regional or international training courses and proposing joint activities or campaigns. It thus supports the ACATs' activities and gives them international resonance.

It also encourages the network to develop by creating new national ACATs and establishing regional structures, which are essential in extending the reach of the national associations.

FUNDING

FIACAT is able to function successfully thanks to financial support from the members of its network, individuals, NGOs and states.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Justice for Floribert Chebeya

Internationally respected and highly valued activist **Floribert Chebeya Bahizire** was the head of the National Network of Human Rights NGOs in the Democratic Republic of Congo and chairman of *La Voix des Sans Voix*, one of the DRC's leading human rights organizations. His murder, on 2 June 2010, dealt a terrible blow to Congolese civil society as a whole and sent shockwaves well beyond DRC's borders.

On the morning of the 1 June, Floribert Chebeya was summoned by telephone to meet General John Numbi, Police General Inspector, in his office, in Ligwala commune, Kinshasa. He left work at 5 pm to go to the appointment and stayed in touch with his family by phone until around 9 pm, without meeting the General. The following day, the activist's body was found in a suburb close to his home. His driver, **Fidèle Bazana Edadi**, was also murdered. Floribert Chebeya had previously been harassed and intimidated by the authorities on several occasions, and shortly before he died, had said that he felt under threat.

On 23 June, the Kinshasa–Gombe military court sentenced five police officers, three of

them in their absence, for murder, unlawful arrest and detention, and abduction. Although General Numbi was dismissed from his duties in 2010 in connection with the case, he has never been charged.

Belgian journalist Thierry Michel, the director of the documentary 'L'affaire Chebeya, un crime d'État?' (The Chebeya Affair: A State Crime?) about the judicial proceedings against members of the security forces suspected of the double murder, was expelled from the DRC in July 2012 after landing at Kinshasa N'djili airport to take part in the launch of his film.

Two-and-a-half years after the killing of Floribert Chebeya and Fidèle Bazana, threats and intimidation continue to be rife in the DRC against human rights defenders, members of the opposition and journalists. Meanwhile, widespread human rights violations – rape, summary killings, forced recruitment of civilians, including children, looting and illegal tax collection by different armed groups and the forced displacement of communities – continue unabated and with total impunity in the east of the country.

His Excellency Joseph Kabila
President of the Republic
Palais de la Nation
Avenue de Lemera
Kinshasa-Gombe
Democratic Republic of Congo

...; ... December 2012

Your Excellency,

I have been informed by the International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (FIACAT), an international non-governmental organisation with Consultative Status before the United Nations and Observer status before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, about the increasing threats and intimidation against human rights defenders, members of the opposition and journalists in the Democratic Republic of Congo, while perpetrators are not held to account.

Two-and-a-half years after the double murder of prominent human rights activist **FLORIBERT CHEBEYA BAHIZIRE** and his driver **FIDÈLE BAZANA EDADI** near Kinshasa, in June 2010, this heinous crime remains to be fully elucidated and justice is still pending on the case. As those who hold the main responsibility for the killing continue to enjoy impunity, there are reasons to fear for the life and safety of other human rights defenders and journalists, under threat because of their courageous activities.

In order to guarantee at all times the physical and psychological integrity of all those engaged in human rights work in your country, and to guarantee that they enjoy freedom of action and movement, I urge you to take every necessary step to ensure that:

- the trial of those suspected of killing Floribert Chebeya and Fidèle Bazana takes place in full compliance with international standards of justice;
- those who ordered, planned or executed the killing, whatever their position in society, are sentenced according to the law;
- those who attack journalists or human rights defenders are prosecuted and held accountable for their acts.

I thank you for considering my appeal.

Yours sincerely and respectfully,

[Signature]

[Name]

[Address]