



Statement by FIACAT and ACAT CAR

Item 3 - Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

43rd session of the Human Rights Council

Thank you, Madam President,

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

As you say, defenders are often and particularly targeted in conflict and post-conflict areas, whether by the state itself or by other non-state actors.

In my capacity as President of ACAT-CAR, I would like to share with you the difficulties that defenders encounter in the Central African Republic. The country has been facing an alarming security situation since the start of the conflicts with armed groups in 2013. In this context, defenders face many threats preventing them from carrying out their activities.

While the Peace Agreement of 6 February 2019 represented an important step forward, the work of defenders remains particularly difficult. Indeed, some areas remain inaccessible due to the control of armed groups. These include the provinces of Bria, Pahoua and Birao, where some humanitarian and health actors are present but where the access remains blocked to human rights defenders. This situation is particularly alarming as human rights violations and abuses continue to be committed but cannot be documented.

FIACAT and ACAT CAR therefore wish to call on the international community to strengthen their support so that State authority can be re-established in these provinces and defenders can have access to them.

I would like to conclude by recalling that other ACATs are also victims of repression. Therefore, I would like to reiterate all our support to Germain Rukuki, a former employee of ACAT Burundi, sentenced to 32 years' imprisonment because of his work as a defender, and call on all States to mobilise and demand his release.

Thank you very much.