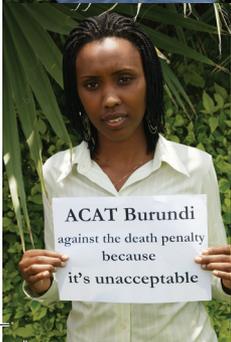
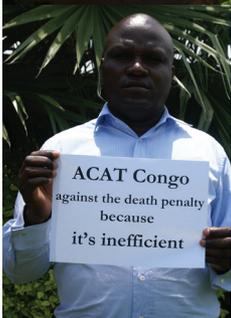
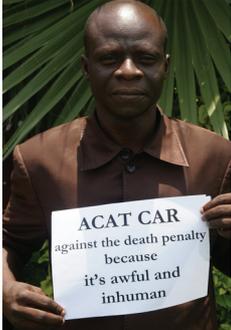


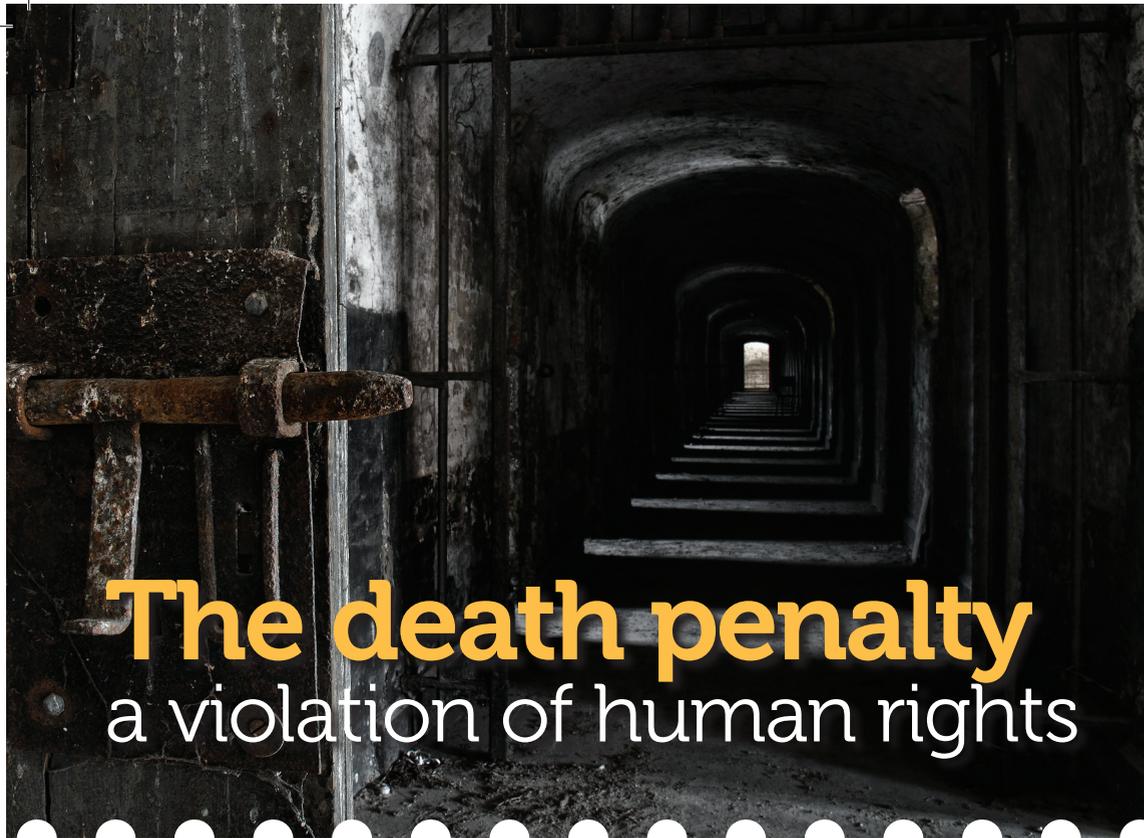
FIACAT and the ACATs

United against the death penalty

*« We must never be the bearers of death
because we do not know what it is »*

Jean Cocteau





The death penalty a violation of human rights

The death penalty is the absolute negation of the most basic human right, the right to life, as set out in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Years spent on death row, detention conditions and methods of execution may also be considered a form of torture.

This tenet echoes that of the believer for whom life is a gift from God. Human dignity is at the heart of our convictions. Made in God's image, all human beings are entitled to respect for their life and their physical and mental integrity.

In each human being created by God there is potential for a fresh start. The death of the criminal will not ease the pain of those whose loved ones have suddenly been taken from them. No one, whether an individual, a group, a State or a nation, has the right to destroy life.

The world-wide tendency nowadays is towards abolition of the death penalty. Some two-thirds of the countries in the world have abolished it in law or in practice.

Africa has followed the trend: out of 54 countries on that continent, 36 are no longer carrying out executions, 17 of them having abolished the death penalty altogether.

10 reasons for abolishing the death penalty

1. No State should have the right to take the life of one of its citizens.
2. The death penalty is irreversible: no judicial system is immune from errors of justice and there is no country where no innocent person has ever been condemned to death.
3. It is ineffective: it has never been proven that the dissuasive effect of the death penalty is greater than that of other punishments.
4. It is unjust: the death penalty is discriminatory and often applied on a large scale to the poor, the mentally ill or those who suffer discrimination because of their sexual orientation or because they belong to a racial, ethnic, national or religious minority.
5. It is inhuman, cruel and degrading: the terrible living conditions on death row inflict extreme psychological suffering and the execution itself is a form of mental and physical aggression.
6. Its application is a violation of international norms. It does not respect the principles of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that everyone has a right to life and that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. It also runs counter to the international tendency towards abolition recognised on four occasions at the United Nations General Assembly, which called for a universal moratorium on use of the death penalty.
7. It precludes any possibility of the criminal's making amends.
8. It does not grant justice to murder victims' families: the effects of one murder cannot be wiped out by another.
9. It creates more indirect suffering, with a snowball effect on those close to the condemned person.
10. It does not guarantee greater security for all.

United to get the death penalty abolished

Action by Christians for the abolition of torture and the death penalty, ACAT, is a member of a network of thirty national associations present on four continents. 16 ACATs are active in sub-Saharan Africa, where they lobby for the universal abolition of the death penalty.

The ACATs are federated within the International Federation of ACAT, FIACAT, an international non-governmental organisation for the defence of human rights which is fighting for the abolition of torture and of the death penalty.

FIACAT has consultative status with the United Nations (UN) and observer status with the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). It is also accredited with the International Organisation of La Francophonie. It acts as the ACATs' representative to these organisations, working to bring about the abolition of torture and the death penalty.

FIACAT is also a founder member of the **World coalition against the death penalty** and a member of its Steering Committee. It represents the ACATs within the Coalition.

FIACAT helps its member associations to organise. It lends its backing to the process which makes the ACATs important actors within civil society, able to influence public opinion and have an impact on the authorities in their countries. It helps to make the network more dynamic by promoting discussion, providing regional or international training and launching joint action initiatives.

Thus **it supports the ACATs activities and acts as an intermediary at international level.**



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