

ICCJ Statement

A STATEMENT ON THE GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

*When God created the first human beings, God led them around all the trees in the Garden of Eden and said: 'Look at My works! See how beautiful they are —how excellent! For your sake I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world: for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it.'*¹

The 72000 fires that are raging in the Amazon rainforest are more than a conflagration which needs immediate attention. There are more fires in Paraguay, Alaska, Greenland and even Siberia. July 2019 was the hottest month on record. We are likely living through an environmental catastrophe, the proportions of which are inestimable, which impacts on the whole world and its delicate ecological balance. This disaster is so huge that NASA captured images of the Amazon fire from space and wind has carried its smoke 1,700 miles (2,700 km). The rainforest is home to 33 million people, 40,000 plant species, 3,000 freshwater fish species and more than 370 types of reptiles.² This rainforest and those in the Congo basin and Indonesia could offer natural protection, even reversal, of the rise in global warming and the ecological crisis which confronts the whole of humanity and all creation.

The International Council of Christians and Jews deplores this situation. We recognize the beauty of creation as God-given and in need of human protection. In our 2009 document *A Time for Recommitment to Jewish-Christian Relations: The Twelve Points of Berlin*, Point 12, we call upon Jews, Christians, Muslims and all people of good will **“to network with all those whose work responds to the demands of environmental stewardship**

- **by fostering commitment to the belief that every human being is entrusted with the care of the Earth.**
- **by recognizing the shared Jewish and Christian biblical duty toward creation, and the responsibility to bring it to bear in public discourse and action.”**³

We urge immediate action by national and international agencies responsible for the Amazon to recognize the severe impact that this ecological disaster will have on all creatures living in the area and act to extinguish all fires within the region. We strongly urge our member organizations throughout the world to partner with the relevant groups in their local contexts. This is a matter of urgency and inter-religious groups can contribute from the wisdom of their own traditions and texts, reflecting theologically and spiritually on the present crisis.

SIGNED BY

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS (ICCJ)

MARTIN-BUBER-HOUSE HEPPENHEIM, AUGUST 30, 2019

¹ Kohelet Rabba 7:13.

² See <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/statement/statement-inger-andersen-ongoing-fires-amazon-rainforest> [accessed August 30, 2019].

³ See http://www.iccj.org/fileadmin/ICCJ/pdf-Dateien/A_Time_for_Recommitment_engl.pdf, p. 5 [accessed August 30, 2019].