

IUAES



August 30, 2019

To the International Criminal Court

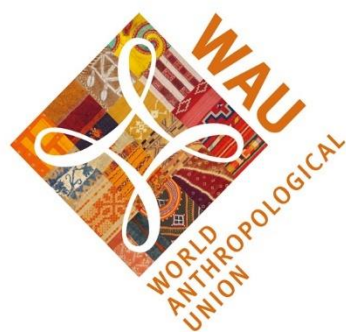
To UN Secretary-General

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UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

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**Denouncement of the Brazilian government for ecocide: crime against humanity and the planet by deliberate destruction of the rainforest ecosystem, causing loss of biodiversity and genocide of indigenous peoples and other traditional communities**

The *International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences* and the *World Council of Anthropological Associations* are extremely concerned by the fires destroying the Amazon rainforest area. At a crucial moment of struggling against climate change and loss of biodiversity, several wildfires are raging around the planet. It is outrageous that rainforests, that do not naturally burn, have been set on fire on purpose in Brazil. The rainforest burns in unprecedented scale, threatening the whole planet's oxygen production and global cycles of sweet water. We denounce the Brazilian government for the *ecocide* occurring in the Brazilian Amazonia.

Ecocide refers to the extensive damage to, destruction of or loss of ecosystem(s) of a given territory, whether by human agency or by other causes, to such extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been or will be severely damaged (Polly Higgins: *Eradicating Ecocide*, London 2010). The Bolsonaro government has been deliberately promoting the destruction of the Amazon rainforest biosphere, and thus also the local knowledge, cultural heritage and complete sphere of life of the peoples of the rainforest. In addition to 197 indigenous peoples (IBGE 2010), the rainforest is home to hundreds of other traditional communities such as afrodescendant quilombolas and traditional communities such as afrodescendant quilombolas and traditional extractivists, who in their territories protect the biodiversity crucial for sustaining life on earth.



Since Bolsonaro government took office in January 2019, monitoring environmental institutions and federal agencies of environmental protection have been neglected and their funds severely cut. Warnings on deforestation fires by INPE (National Institute of Space Research) have been systematically neglected. Indigenous territories have been attacked and illegal deforestation has been encouraged by systematical non-punishment. The government has failed to protect indigenous territories of illegal abuse of land. The unprecedented burning of the Amazon rainforest was promoted and initiated by landowners in an illegally planned series of attacks named "Day of Fire" (Dia do Fogo) on August 10, 2019. The Public Prosecutor (Ministério Público) warned the Environmental Ministry and IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of the Environment) days before, but no measures whatsoever were taken to protect the forest and its inhabitants.

Genocide of indigenous peoples is one feature of the occurring ecocide in Brazil. Once the forest is burned, it cannot grow back due to loss of the rain cycles. With the forest, the planet's richest reserve of biodiversity, local knowledge on sustainable techniques of living, and entire cultures, languages and ethnicities are offended, threatened and lost. What is needed is more sustainable research on the forest and not more destruction.

As scientists of accumulated knowledge on the human kind, we denounce and condemn the burning of the Amazonia rainforest as ecocide committed by the Brazilian government. We demand immediate measures of prevention of further fires and the restoration of the areas affected, with compensation to the peoples of the rainforest.

*Undersigned:*

World Anthropological Union (WAU)

International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES)

World Council of Anthropological Associations (WCAA)

Brazilian Association of Anthropology (ABA)

**A motion adopted at the WAU Constituency Meeting at IUAES 2019 Congress "World Solidarities" in Poznań, Poland, on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019**