
PRESS RELEASE

Heppenheim, Germany, June 13, 2025

ICCJ Calls for Deepening Interreligious Relationships

In response to rising religious violence and polarization around the globe, the world's leading interfaith dialogue organization [The International Council of Christians and Jews](#) is calling on people of good will from all faiths and none to endorse an extraordinary pledge to counter bigotry and hate by enhancing and rededicating themselves to interreligious dialogue.

"Our world is living through a time when relations among people of different faith traditions are under great stress", said ICCJ President Rabbi Dr. David Fox Sandmel, from the United States. "The ICCJ, being especially dedicated to dialogue between Jews and Christians, as well as trilateral dialogue with Muslims, believes that the violent and polarized world of today urgently needs such dialogues to continue and, indeed, to intensify in the months and years ahead".

In particular, drafting committee chair Philip Cunningham observed that the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas "has shaken interreligious amity to a degree not seen since World War II and will have long-term consequences".

"Among some Christians and Jews, old stereotypes and suspicions about each other have resurfaced", explained Dr. Pavol Bargár, a Protestant theologian from the Czech Republic. "Around the globe, antisemitic bigotries and even violence have surged, provoking fear. Although people view and are impacted by the current crises in diverse ways, all are haunted by the tragic death toll".

"But people of good will must not succumb to fear and prejudice", cautioned First Vice-President, Dr. Kasia Kowalska, NDS, from Poland. She pointed to newly elected Pope Leo XIV, who declared that "it is necessary to continue the momentum of this precious dialogue of ours".

"Interreligious dialogues and friendships are needed now more than ever", commented Chilean Rabbi Shmuel Sztainhendler. "We must prepare and work for the day when peace will dawn and both Palestinians and Israelis, Christians, Muslims, and Jews, will prosper in peace and security".

The organization noted that after two millennia of Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric and violence, and after the Holocaust — the industrialized slaughter of two-thirds of European Jewry from 1939 to 1945 — people from both communities were able to start building a new relationship 1947 at a conference in Seelisberg, Switzerland. This led to the founding of the ICCJ.

"After centuries of mutual ignorance and hateful rhetoric, it took time to build trust and to learn how to speak to one another", said Ophir Yarden from Israel. "Gradually, a unique era of dialogue, understanding, and mutual enrichment began".

But that progress is now being tested.

The signatories of the pledge resolve that interreligious dialogue cannot be a victim of these or any other attacks or conflicts and agree to take practical steps to maintain and build relationships.

Specifically, pledge endorsers commit themselves to:

- support members of other religious communities
- actively oppose prejudices such as antisemitism, Islamophobia, or anti-Christianity
- review their own teachings and practices about other spiritual traditions
- intensify the joint study of ways to speak and act together for the good of humanity and creation
- seek the divine Presence in each other's traditions, texts, and practices.

"Indeed, dialogue is more important than ever. We believe it to be God's will and our holy calling", said General Secretary Anette Adelman from Germany.

The International Council of Christians and Jews, which encompasses national member organizations in 35 countries, is headquartered in the former residence of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber in Heppenheim, Germany.

Anyone interested can read and support the pledge here:

<https://www.iccj.org/resources/iccj-statements/iccj-declaration-2025.html>

CONTACT:

INTERNATIONALER RAT DER CHRISTEN UND JUDEN E.V.

(INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS – ICCJ)

MARTIN-BUBER-HOUSE,

WERLESTR. 2

64646 HEPPENHEIM, GERMANY

E-MAIL: OFFICE@ICcj.ORG

WWW.ICCJ.ORG
