

Climate Justice Before Greek Tragedy

Info posted by

Aidee Saucedo | 6 August 2018

Over 90 people and hundreds of animals have lost their lives in the recent wildfire disaster in Greece, while many still remain missing. This is the largest fire in over a decade in Greece, and climate change is certainly in part to blame. This is not just happening in Greece, but across the world. For example, in the United States in California the number of escaped fires has increased over 50%. Even worse for climate change, a recent study finds that there is a "high risk of forest loss is shown for Eurasia, eastern China, Canada, Central America, and Amazonia, with forest extensions into the Arctic and semiarid savannas" in the future. As similar wildfires of this kind break out around the world, we must work towards improving global preparedness and management.

A week before the fire broke out in Greece, the Center for United Nations Constitutional Research (CUNCR) held our annual seminar "Climate Justice II – Global Governance of Climate: Fit for Purpose?" in Epirus Greece. This year's event featured a series of talks delivered by expert speakers that culminated in a group session to discuss outcomes. While we discussed emergency action plans and the risks associated with climate change, no one predicted that such a tragedy was just days away from Greece. It was not until our seminar was complete that the news broke out that a large forest fire was raging.

In the wake of this disaster, it is critical to take the time to mourn, but then look forward to how we as a global community can help prevent or at least reduce the impact of climate change related disasters. We recommend that we need improved global governance prevent these disasters and heal from them. Implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which is a 15-year agreement adopted by United Nations Member States to adopt strategies to reduce the loss of life and environment by 2020, is an important step toward improving global governance.

Though our conference culminated with a discussion about how we need improved global governance to deal with current and impending climate change related problems, recent events make our conclusions even more pressing. We resolve to work towards a future of climate justice in the wake of this tragedy.