# **Amazon and Cerrado record deforestation in February**

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**Body**

***Deforestation*** in the Brazilian ***Amazon*** and Cerrado reached record levels in February, according to official data released on Friday (10), which show President Lula's challenges to reverse environmental destruction.

Satellite images detected 322 km2 of destroyed forest cover in the Brazilian part of the largest tropical forest on the planet, an increase of 62% compared to February 2022, which had already been a record, according to the DETER surveillance system, of the National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

In the Cerrado, 558 km2 were destroyed, 99% more than in the same period last year and almost double the record of 283 km2 in February 2020.

The figures, however, are not surprising, since the highest level had already been recorded on February 17.

Nevertheless, the new index is unfavorable for President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is counting on the support of the international community to reverse the destruction recorded during the term of Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022).

Lula assured that "Brazil is back" to fighting climate change, after four years in which the average annual ***deforestation*** in the ***Amazon*** increased 75% compared to the previous decade.

So far, the president has mobilized environmental protection agencies, relaunched a forest protection program, and obtained international support to reactivate the ***Amazon*** Fund, which has more than US$ 580 million (about R$ 3 billion) to combat ***deforestation***.

Environmental groups have been showing patience with the new government, while waiting for data about the dry season, which begins in July, when ***deforestation*** tends to increase.

"It's difficult to reverse the damage of an anti-environmental policy in such a short time," said Frederico Machado, from the NGO WWF-Brazil.

"The reduction of ***deforestation*** will only occur when there is a consistent reversal of the weakening of the institutions responsible for enforcement," he added in a statement.

Greenpeace Brazil spokesman Rômulo Batista celebrated the government's efforts, but warned that Lula will have to implement new strategies.

"Much more work will be needed," he said.

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