# [***Amazon at risk: degradation equivalent to ten times the size of the United Kingdom***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67F5-Y681-DYY9-0415-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

A report by the scientific journal Science revealed that **forest fires, illegal logging and other human activities have degraded more than a third of the world's forests,** an extension equivalent to the surface of the United Kingdom multiplied by ten. A group of 35 scientists worked on the diagnosis, which focuses on the environmental policies to be implemented in this region, considered the "lungs of the planet".

Degradation differs from ***deforestation*** in that the use of the affected land does not change - that is, it continues to be forest - despite the disappearance of most of the trees and vegetation. **At least 2.5 million square kilometers of the forested area, 38 percent, was affected, temporarily or permanently, by this phenomenon in less than 20 years.**

The amount of pollutant emissions resulting from this process, the experts found, is equal to, or even greater than, that produced by ***deforestation***.

"Despite the uncertainty about the total effect of these alterations, it is clear that their cumulative effect may be just as important as ***deforestation*** in terms of carbon emissions and biodiversity loss," explained one of the authors, Jos Barlow, in a statement.

The researchers warned that **anthropogenic changes are occurring "much faster" than previously thought**, and much more so than natural environmental changes in the past.

"Most analyses of land-use change in the ***Amazon*** rainforest have focused on the **causes and effects of *deforestation***. However, **anthropogenic disturbances also cause degradation of the *Amazon* rainforest and threaten its future**," they said.

In this line, **they estimated that these four factors will continue to produce large amounts of polluting emissions, even if *deforestation* of the *Amazon* is totally eliminated, so they proposed to create specific monitoring systems that take into account these threats to the environment, in addition to suppressing lo**gging.

"While some disturbances can be addressed **by curbing *deforestation***, others, such as limiting the increase in extreme droughts, require **additional measures**, including global efforts to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions**," the researchers said.

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