# **Analysis: Deforestation has internationalized the Amazon**

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**Body**

The visit to Brazil by the special envoy of the Biden administration, John Kerry, to deal with the participation of the United States in the ***Amazon*** Fund, coincided with an increase in forest fires. According to data from the National Institute for Space Research (INPE), a record for the period had been registered by February 17. During the meeting with Vice-President Geraldo Alckmin and the Minister of the Environment, Marina Silva, at Itamaraty, Kerry promised to seek "huge" resources for the Fund. During President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's visit to the White House, President Joe Biden had announced this intention.

It is estimated that this participation may reach US$ 50 million. According to the US ambassador to Brazil, Elizabeth Bagley, the amount will be defined in a White House negotiation with the US Congress. The Fund was stopped between 2019 and 2022, under the Bolsonaro government. After Lula's inauguration, it was reactivated and its resources released by donors, mainly Norway and Germany. The European Union (EU) also intends to collaborate.

The ***deforestation*** of the ***Amazon*** during the previous government became a threat to the world, which reacts strongly to this. In practice, Bolsonaro has "internationalized" the ***Amazon***, whose impact on global warming is enormous, because of the burning and felling of trees. Zero ***deforestation*** is the most efficient and cheapest way to reduce global warming and gain time for the conversion to a green economy. For example: the president of France, Emmanuel Macron, announced last Saturday during the International Agricultural Fair in Paris that the agreement between Mercosur and the EU may go through the roof because of the environmental issue.

At COP27, in Egypt, Macron doubled down with Lula, then newly elected, with harsh criticism of still-President Bolsonaro. In fact, the warning is mainly directed at Venezuela, which is now also under pressure from its neighbors. Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay are interested in the agreement. France, because of French Guiana, considers itself "an Amazonian power". Macron alludes to the Kourou space center, which hosts the European Space Agency's (ESA) rocket and satellite launching base. The venture generates state-of-the-art technology and IT, as well as jobs.

Located on the northern coast of South America, like Suriname and the Republic of Guyana, French Guiana is more like a Caribbean territory than a South American one. It is isolated from the rest of the continent by the ***Amazon*** rainforest, as it is mainly populated on the Atlantic strip. The French language and the Creole dialect, also present in the Antilles, are not spoken in the South American countries. As it is a French province, it was also excluded from the treaties between the South American countries, but it represents France in the Association of Caribbean States, along with Martinique and the island of Guadeloupe. It is a European enclave in the subcontinent.

**Illegal mining**

With 200 thousand inhabitants, a small consumer market and a vulnerable border, French Guiana has remained isolated, but now suffers from illegal immigrants, mainly Brazilian and Peruvian gold miners, Colombian traffickers and Haitian refugees. Brazil has always given more strategic importance to the cooperation with Guyana than France itself, of which it is a department, because the 760km border between the two countries makes us also neighbors.

However, the bridge that would connect Guyana to Amapá, the only Brazilian state that has no land connection with the rest of the country, never got off the drawing board. The strategic connection between Manaus and Georgetown, dreamed of by the military in the 1970s, has not been built either. The connection with Suriname, after the construction of the road from Cayenne to Oiapoque, however, became an open door to Colombian traffickers and Brazilian gold miners - in other words, a problem.

The borders between Brazil, Guyana, Suriname, Venezuela and Colombia are practically virtual, which puts into question the effective sovereignty between these countries, even more so since the preservation of the ***Amazon*** has become a global problem. Several operations have been carried out by the French government to combat illegal mining in French Guiana. However, after each operation the miners returned.

On March 12, 2010, French soldiers and border police were attacked while returning from a successful operation during which they arrested 15 miners, confiscated three boats, and seized 617 grams of gold. However, the miners returned to retrieve their lost loot and colleagues. The soldiers fired warning shots and rubber bullets, but the miners managed to retake one of their boats and about 500 grams of gold.

Cooperation with France will be fundamental to curb illegal mining and drug trafficking in the ***Amazon***.

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