# **Brazil's Amazon deforestation again hits record high for February**

Newstex Blogs

Al Jazeera English

March 10, 2023 Friday 6:30 PM EST

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**Length:** 753 words

**Body**

Mar 10, 2023( Al Jazeera English: https://www.aljazeera.com/ Delivered by Newstex)

***Deforestation*** in Brazil's portion of the ***Amazon*** rainforest hit a new record high in February, new data has shown, as President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's administration works to end years of widespread devastation.

Satellite monitoring detected 322sq km (124sq miles) of forest cover destroyed in the Brazilian ***Amazon*** last month, an increase of 62 percent from the previous record in February 2022, according to data from the national space agency released on Friday.

In the Cerrado, a biodiverse tropical savanna to the south of the ***Amazon***, satellites identified 558sq km (215sq miles) of destruction.

That is up 99 percent from February 2022 and nearly double the previous record of 283sq km (109sq miles) from February 2020, the data showed.

The spike in destruction has underscored the difficulties that Brazil's new president - known as Lula - faces in addressing the rampant ***deforestation***[1] that flourished under his predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro.

The far-right former army captain, who lost a close election run-off to Lula in October of last year, cut environmental enforcement in the ***Amazon***, which environmental and Indigenous groups have blamed for an increase in illegal mining and violence[2].

Bolsonaro's four years in office saw average annual ***deforestation*** in the Brazilian ***Amazon*** surge[3] by 75 percent compared with the previous decade.

The issue has been of international concern, as the hundreds of billions of carbon-absorbing trees in the ***Amazon*** offer a critical buffer in the global fight against climate change.

In November, Lula made a high-profile appearance[4] at the United Nations COP27 climate summit in Egypt, pledging to reassert Brazil's place as an environmental protector and get ***Amazon*** ***deforestation*** down to zero. 'Brazil is back,' he said.

Lula has taken early action to address the environmental destruction, including rebuilding[5] Brazil's environmental protection agencies, relaunching a defunct national action plan to protect the rainforest and convincing international donors to revive the so-called '***Amazon*** Fund', which includes more than $580m for anti-***deforestation*** operations.

Following his election victory, Lula also appointed[6] noted environmentalist Marina Silva as the country's minister of environment.

Nevertheless, observers have said reversing the trends will be a slow process.

'It's difficult to reverse the damage of an anti-environmental policy in so little time,' Frederico Machado of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Brazil office said in a statement on Friday.

'Reducing ***deforestation*** will only happen when there is a consistent strengthening of the institutions responsible for policing it,' he said.

The latest figures came after heartening data[7] from January - Lula's first month in office - showed ***Amazon*** ***deforestation*** in Brazil had fallen by 61 percent compared with the previous year.

In a presentation last week, a scientist with the space research agency, Inpe, blamed the large month-to-month fluctuations on cloud cover that hid ***deforestation*** on satellite images in January, only for it to be revealed in February.

Meanwhile, environment minister Silva last month called the high rate of ***deforestation*** shown in early data from February 'a kind of revenge against the actions already being taken'.

She said the level of ***deforestation*** was unusual that early in the year, when heavy rains make it difficult for loggers to work in the forest.

'We will keep working towards our goal,' she told reporters.

[ 1]: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/16/at-cop27-brazils-lula-vows-halt-to-rampant-***deforestation*** [ 2]: https://www.aljazeera.com/program/the-stream/2022/6/22/why-has-defending-brazils-***amazon***-become-so-dangerous [ 3]: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/7/brazilian-***amazon***-***deforestation***-up-150-in-bolsonaros-last-month [ 4]: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/16/at-cop27-brazils-lula-vows-halt-to-rampant-***deforestation***#%3A~%3Atext%3DMeanwhile%2C%20the%20deforested%20area%20in%2Ctrack%20to%20surpass%20last%20year%27s.%26text%3DAl%20Jazeera%20is%20funded%20in%2Cpart%20by%20the%20Qatari%20government. [ 5]: https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2023/2/28/photos-brazil-cracks-down-on-illegal-gold-miners-in-***amazon*** [ 6]: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/29/brazils-lula-picks-***amazon***-defender-to-run-environment-ministry [ 7]: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/10/brazil-***amazon***-***deforestation***-drops-in-lulas-first-month-in-office

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**Load-Date:** April 11, 2023

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