# **Deforestation in Brazilian Amazon declines in first month of Lula's government**

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**Body**

SAO PAULO, Feb 10 (Reuters) - ***Deforestation*** in Brazil's ***Amazon*** rainforest fell in January from a year earlier, according to satellite data released on Friday, in what are the first monthly figures under President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's presidency.

Preliminary satellite data collected by government space research agency Inpe showed 167 square kilometers (64 square miles) logged in the region last month, down 61% from January 2022, the worst month in the eight-year series.

In mid-January, Brazilian environmental agents launched their first anti-logging raids under Lula, who has pledged to halt the increase in ***deforestation*** under the government of his predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro.

***Deforestation*** in January was also below the historical average of 196 square kilometers for the month since 2016, but the January data may have been influenced by dense clouds over the rainforest earlier in the year.

"It is positive to see such a relevant drop in January," said WWF-Brazil conservation specialist Daniel Silva. "However, it is still early to talk about a change in trend, as part of this decline may be related to higher cloud cover."

The new figures come after Reuters exclusively reported on Thursday that the United States was considering its first contribution to a multilateral fund aimed at fighting ***Amazon*** ***deforestation***, with a possible announcement during President Joe Biden's meeting with Lula at the White House on Friday.

The ***Amazon*** Fund, administered by Brazil and supported mainly by Norway and Germany, was reactivated by Environment Minister Marina Silva on the day she took office last month, after having been frozen since 2019 under Bolsonaro.

Even with the positive start to the year, experts and staff at environmental agency Ibama warn that it may be years before Lula meets conservation targets after Bolsonaro cut funding and staff at key agencies.

The Brazilian government is also battling illegal mining on Yanomami lands in the ***Amazon***, its largest indigenous reserve, amid a humanitarian crisis blamed on illegal gold miners.

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