# **Deforestation in the Amazon has increased for fifth year in a row**

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***Deforestation*** in the Brazilian ***Amazon*** has increased for the fifth year in a row and in 2022 was the largest in the last 15 years. Imazon (***Amazon*** Institute of People and the Environment) unveiled on Wednesday that satellite monitoring detected the devastation of 10,573 square kilometers last year, a record since the institution started monitoring the cutting of the forest, in 2008. The loss is equivalent to 3,000 football fields per day.

The institute calculates that 35,193 square kilometers of forest have been suppressed between 2019 and 2022. In the period, the increase is 150% in relation to the previous four-year period. From 2015 to 2018, 14,424 square kilometers of forest were cut down.

“We hope that this was the last ***deforestation*** record reported by our satellite monitoring system since the new administration has promised to give priority to protecting the ***Amazon***,” said Bianca Santos, a researcher at Imazon, in a note. “For this to happen, it is necessary that the government seeks maximum effectiveness in the measures to combat devastation, such as those already announced for the return of the demarcation of indigenous lands, the restructuring of inspection agencies, and incentives to generate income from standing forest.”

December was the month of the greatest loss of forest area, 287 square kilometers, 105% more than in December 2021. It was the worst December since Imazon’s records began.

“In the last month of the year, there was an unbridled race to deforest while the gate was open for cattle, for land speculation, for illegal mining, and for ***deforestation*** in indigenous lands and conservation units. This shows the size of the challenge of the new administration,” said Carlos Souza Jr., coordinator of Imazon’s ***Amazon*** monitoring program.

The phrase is a reference to former Environment Minister Ricardo Salles, who in a cabinet meeting, in April 2020, said the Covid-19 pandemic was an “opportunity” to ease environmental rules while society’s focus was on the disease.

According to Imazon, 80% of the forest cut down in 2022 was concentrated in federal areas, which means 8,443 square kilometers. In this case, ***deforestation*** increased by 2% year-over-year. The state areas deforested were equivalent to only 11% of the total, but showed an increase of 11% compared with the previous year, to 1,130 square kilometers. The remaining 9% occurred in areas without jurisdiction (1,000 square kilometers) and municipal areas (0.2 square kilometers).

Of the nine states of the Legal ***Amazon***, ***deforestation*** was most intense in Pará (3,874 square kilometers, 37% of the total deforested in the country), Amazonas (2,575 square kilometers, 24%), and Mato Grosso (1,604 square kilometers, 15%). The three states are at the top positions in the ranking of ***deforestation***, in that same order, since 2019, according to Imazon.

The only states with an increase in ***deforestation*** in 2022 compared to 2021 were Amazonas and Mato Grosso. In Amazonas, the increase was 24%. The state has been facing an increase in ***deforestation*** in the region bordering Acre and Rondônia, according to Imazon. This is the area of Apuí, the ***deforestation*** champion last year, with 586 square kilometers.

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