# **Deforestation in the Amazon has one of its worst first quarters**

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***Deforestation*** in the ***Amazon*** grew again in March, ending one of the worst first quarters ever recorded during the 100 days of the Lula government, according to official figures released on Friday (7).

Satellite images detected 356km² of destroyed forest cover in the Brazilian part of the largest tropical forest on the planet.

The data shows an increase of 14% compared to that recorded in March 2022, the last of Jair Bolsonaro's administration, according to the DETER surveillance system of the National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

Between January and March this year, the destruction of the Brazilian ***Amazon*** was the second highest in the historical series for this period, with 844km² deforested, second only to 2022, when 941km² were destroyed.

After four years of Bolsonaro's government, which experts say has weakened regulations and environmental protection agencies, improvement in ***deforestation*** rates may take time, Mariana Napolitano, conservation manager at NGO WWF Brazil, told AFP.

"The data show that all the dismantling that happened in the last four years, all the discourse in favor of illegality, greater flexibility in relation to command and control shows that it's a complex scenario that exists in this biome and that it takes time to change, even though the current government has demonstrated its intention to combat ***deforestation*** very seriously."

Since his election, Lula has promised to reverse the environmental policies of his predecessor and eradicate illegal ***deforestation***.

"It is necessary to recompose these (environmental) agencies and intensively resume command and control actions to see a real change in these tendencies," added Mariana.

On his first day in office, Lula signed a series of decrees to annul measures harmful to the environment, create a working group to combat ***deforestation***, and reactivate the ***Amazon*** Fund, an initiative financed with foreign donations that had been suspended since 2019.

Lula also tried to convince the richest countries on the planet to fund initiatives to protect the forest, adding to Norway and Germany's contributions to the Fund, something that has so far yielded little fruit.

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