# **Deforestation in the Amazon increased under Lula da Silva**

CE Noticias Financieras English

February 25, 2023 Saturday

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**Length:** 528 words

**Body**

***Deforestation*** in the Brazilian ***Amazon*** set a record for February, the second month of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's administration, according to official data published yesterday, which contemplates a little more than half of the period, still unfinished.

Satellite monitoring detected 209 square kilometers of forest destroyed in the Brazilian part of the world's largest rainforest, according to preliminary data from the DETER surveillance system of the National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

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The area, equivalent to more than 29 thousand soccer fields, only contemplates data up to February 17, but already represents an increase in relation to the previous record of 199 km2 destroyed in the entire month of February 2022, the last year of the government of the former ultra-right-wing president Jair Bolsonaro.

Last January, satellite monitoring had reported a drop of 61 percent in relation to the same period of 2022, although environmental organizations had warned that it was premature to speak of a "trend reversal", since part of the drop could be related to greater cloud cover that impaired the calculations.

"The increase in ***deforestation*** may be a reflection of the limitation in detection last month due to cloud cover, and what is being observed now perhaps contemplates both the area destroyed this month and also from January," said Daniel Silva, conservation specialist at the NGO WWF-Brazil.

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Under the Bolsonaro administration, an ally of agribusiness and climate change denier, average annual ***deforestation*** in the Brazilian ***Amazon*** increased 75.5 percent over the previous decade.

Experts assure that the destruction is mainly due to the advance of farms and land usurpers who clear the jungle for livestock and crops.

Lula, 77 years old, assumed the presidency of Brazil for the third time with the protection of the forest as one of his main banners to enable Brazil to stop being a "pariah" in climate issues.

The leftist president appointed Marina Silva, a renowned environmentalist who headed the Ministry of the Environment between 2003 and 2008, when Brazil managed to significantly reduce ***deforestation***.

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On January 24, Silva acknowledged in an interview that Brazil's environmental reality is "much worse" than expected.

"We know that there is an effort by the new government to control ***deforestation***, but concrete results will take time to be seen," added the WWF-Brazil expert.

Brazil is talking with some Western powers, such as France, to contribute resources and add their efforts to the ***Amazon*** Fund, whose main donors are Norway and Germany.

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In addition to the fight against ***deforestation***, Lula's government faces a fight against other crimes, such as illegal mining, with an operation that seeks to expel land invaders of the Yanomami ethnic group, in the country's largest indigenous reserve on the border with Venezuela.

The Brazilian Public Prosecutor's Office informed that it will share with the European Union Agency for Criminal Judicial Cooperation the tool launched at the end of 2022 to combat crimes in the ***Amazon***.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2023

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