# **Deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon set a record in Bolsonaro's last year**

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**Body**

**The area of forest in the Brazilian *Amazon* devastated last year was 24.9% higher than that destroyed in 2021** (8,219 square kilometers) and the largest since the National Institute of Spatial Studies (INPE) began measuring in 2015 the so-called ***deforestation*** alerts, the official agency reported Friday.

Until now, the year with the highest ***deforestation*** was 2019 (9,178 square kilometers), **precisely the first year in office of the far-right leader, whom environmentalists accuse of the current crisis in the *Amazon*** for his anti-environmentalist rhetoric, his defense of mining, and for dismantling oversight agencies.

The data released on Friday are measured by Deter, a mechanism that uses satellite images to provide monthly and real-time alerts on threatened areas in the ***Amazon***, but are less precise than those of Prodes, a tool used by INPE to calculate ***deforestation***, which is released annually.

According to the latest Prodes bulletin, released in November, **the *Amazon* lost 11,568 kilometers of vegetation between August 2021 and July 2022**, an area 11.3% smaller than the previous year (13,038 square kilometers), but the second highest in the last 14 years.

Environmental organizations had already warned that the destruction would grow at a record pace in the last months of 2022 in the expectation that Bolsonaro would be defeated in the October presidential elections, which ended up happening.

Brazil's new president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who took office on January 1, promised that **one of his government's priorities will be to return to minimizing *deforestation* in the *Amazon*,** as he did in his first administration (2003-2010), and to relentlessly combat illegal logging and mining.

His Minister of the Environment, the environmentalist Marina Silva, announced this week the creation of a secretariat within her portfolio dedicated exclusively to combating ***deforestation***.

According to INPE data, between August and December 2022 alone, 4,793 kilometers of rainforest were cleared in the ***Amazon***, a record amount for the period.

**In December** alone, ***deforestation* extended over 218.4 square kilometers, with a jump of 150% compared to the same month of 2021** (87 square kilometers) and the highest number for this month since the beginning of the previous Government.

"Destruction alerts were record in the last months of 2022, which left the Lula Government a rate that will negatively affect the numbers for 2023," since the annual measurement is between August of one year and July of the next, said the executive secretary of the Climate Observatory, Marcio Astrini.

For the leader of the main network of environmental groups in Brazil, "Bolsonaro's government is over, but his disastrous environmental legacy will still be felt for a long time".

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