# **Record deforestation in Brazil's Amazon for February: Agency**

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BUENOS AIRES

***Deforestation*** in Brazil's ***Amazon*** jungle hit a record in February, according to new data released Friday from the country's National Space Agency (INPE)

The data shows 322 square kilometers (79,568 acres) of the jungle was deforested in February, according to the DETER System by INPE.

The figure reveals a 62% increase compared to February 2022 when 199 square kilometers were deforested.

The states with the highest records of ***deforestation*** were Mato Grosso with 162 square kilometers, Para at 46 square kilometers, Amazonas at 46 square kilometers and Roraima with 31 square kilometers.

In the Cerrado, ***deforestation*** hit 558 square kilometers in February, an increase of 98% compared to February 2022, as 282 square kilometers were deforested.

Many environmentalists and defenders of Indigenous peoples and their territorial rights criticized former President Jair Bolsonaro's policies, insisting he rolled back environmental protections, causing ecological destruction as illegal loggers, miners and ranchers have cleared large swathes of land.

In November 2022, before assuming the presidency, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva pledged at the UN climate change conference, COP27, to protect the ***Amazon*** rainforest, telling officials in the first three years of the Bolsonaro administration, ***deforestation*** increased 73%, while last year, 13,000 square kilometers were deforested.

He pledged to strengthen inspection bodies and monitoring systems and clamp down on "environmental crimes."

Since returning to the presidency, Lula has sought to strengthen environmental bodies, created an Indigenous Ministry and relaunched the "***Amazon*** Fund" that seeks to safeguard the ***Amazon*** biomass.

In a written statement, Frederico Machado, a specialist in conservation and leader of the World Wildlife Fund-Brazil's Zero Conversion Strategy, described it as "difficult to reverse the damage of an anti-environmental policy in such a short time, as the numbers for the first two months of 2023 do not reveal a clear trend."

He believes that ***deforestation*** will decrease "when there is a consistent reversal of the weakening of the institutions in charge of inspection, and when the new government's speech gains more materiality."

"The important thing at this moment is the resumption of command and control actions, strengthening of the organs that have been scrapped in recent years, valuing the people of the forest and their knowledge and the implementation of a sustainable economy, an area in which Brazil has great potential and can take on a leading role," added Machado.

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