

## As fires rage in Amazon, Brazil pushes back against global scorn

**Notes & Cues:****Article:**

The Brazilian government is pushing back against mounting national and international pressure over its environmental policies as a record number of fires rip through the Amazon rain forest.

Germany and Norway have already suspended their contributions to a rain forest preservation fund, and polls indicate that even among President Jair Bolsonaro's own voters there is overwhelming support for stronger measures to combat illegal deforestation.

Data from the National Institute of Space Research showed an 84% year-on-year increase in forest fires in 2019, many caused by loggers incentivized by the government's disdain for environmental oversight.

While Bolsonaro relishes criticism of his attitude toward the Amazon — jokingly referring to himself as “Captain Chainsaw” — his supporters in the agricultural sector fear a backlash from consumers both in Brazil and abroad.

Senior figures in Brazil's agricultural sector have warned the president of the potential economic repercussions of his policies, though so far Bolsonaro himself has shown little sign of paying heed.

One of the key concerns is the possible impact on the recent trade deal agreed between the European Union and the South American customs union, Mercosur.

“The Mercosur-EU deal hasn't been ratified yet and there are requirements in it about sustainability and the protection of the indigenous, for example,” Renata Amaral, Director of International Trade at the Barral MJorge consultancy, said.

**Summary:**