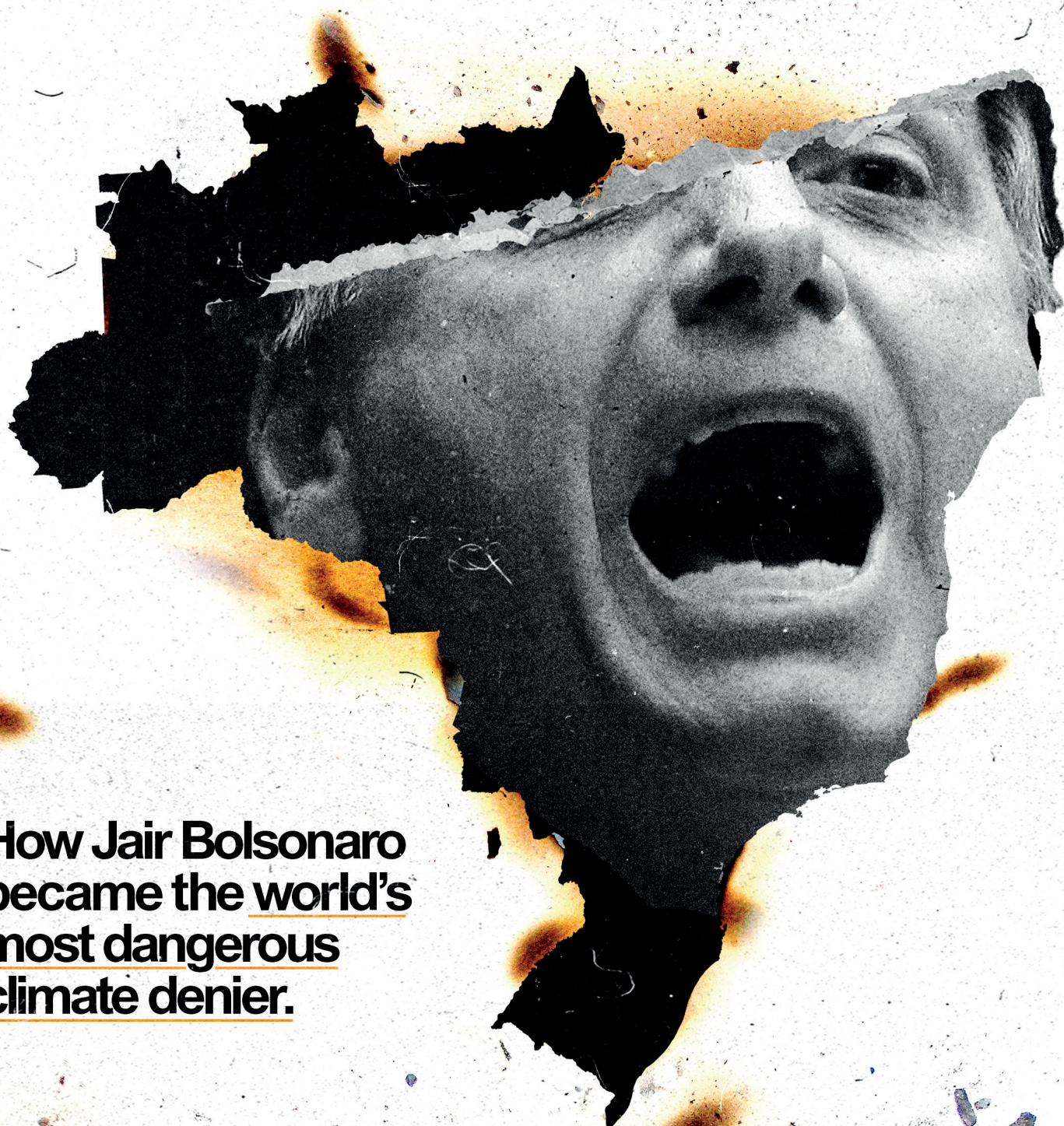


BRAZIL 1000 DAYS OF DESTRUCTION

How Jair Bolsonaro
became the world's
most dangerous
climate denier.



Brazil, 2021





00. Introduction

The government of Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro arrives at Glasgow for COP26 in full greenwash mode. His new Environment minister, Joaquim Leite, has promised to showcase "a real Brazil" in a 200 square-meter pavilion co-sponsored by the industry lobby. Unlike the grim picture painted by NGOs and their allies, who – according to the government – conspire against Brazilian development, that "real Brazil" is a country where environmental crime is met with the heavy hand of the law; where deforestation and its ensuing carbon emissions are falling; where Indigenous peoples are given a chance to thrive; whose NDC is among the most ambitious in the whole world, aiming at net zero in 2050 and at ending illegal deforestation well before 2030.

We all wish we could live in such a country. But – alas! – Bolsonaro’s Brazil is a rather different place.

No amount of sweet talk can ever erase the fact that since Bolsonaro took office an area of forest the size of Belgium was swept from existence in the Amazon alone. Or that Brazil was likely the only G20 country to increase its carbon emissions in the pandemic year of 2020. Or that Bolsonaro's racist policies towards Indigenous peoples have made him the only Brazilian President to be denounced to the International Criminal Court. Right now, as you read this booklet, some 25,000 wildcat miners are ravaging the Yanomami land in Northern Brazil in a gold rush. The government not only did nothing to expel them until the Supreme Court forced it to, but it is also actually pushing for a bill to legalize mining on Indigenous lands. In October, two Yanomami children were sucked into a mining barge and killed as they swam in the muddy waters near an illegal mining operation.

Brazil: 1000 days of destruction —
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00.

Introduction



No bright promises of good behavior can correct Brazil’s NDC, which backslides in ambition and right now is being questioned in the courts; or reverse three years of a systematic and efficient dismantling of environmental regulations and enforcement agencies. Most importantly, nothing the Brazilian regime may ever tell the international community in Glasgow can counter the fact that a string of government-supported bills are tabled for vote in Congress that could forever wreck traditional peoples and the Amazon forests without which the Paris Agreement as we know it can’t survive.

In the following pages you will find a non-exhaustive chronology of the disaster imposed on Brazilians – and the rest of humankind – by the world’s most dangerous climate denier.

Brazil: 1000 days of destruction —
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00.

Introduction



01.

Increasing deforestation & fires

“The Amazon is not being devastated or consumed by fire; this is a lie told by the media”

Jair Bolsonaro, September 24th, 2019

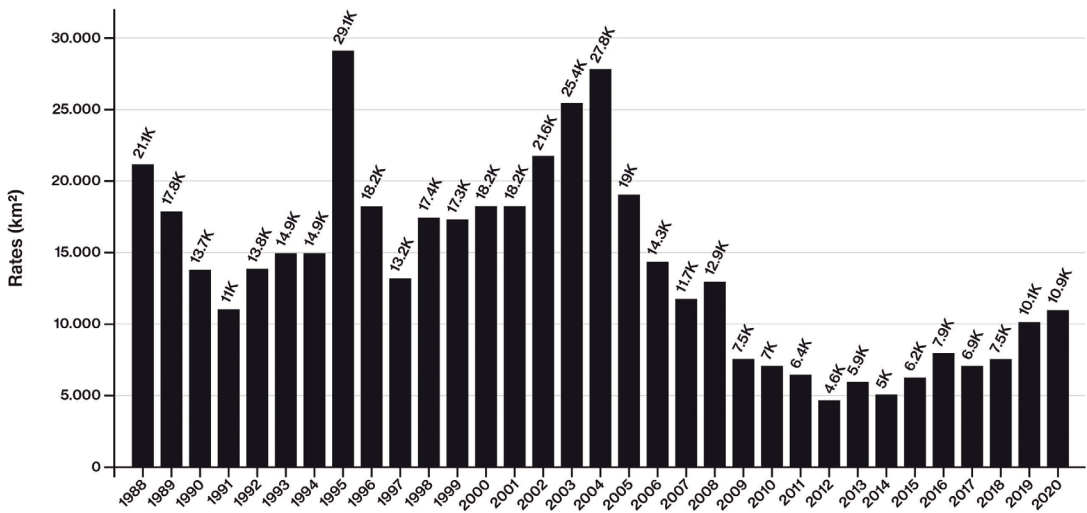
“The fires always happen in the same place: the Eastern border of the forest, where the Indian and the bushman burn their little plots of land in order to survive”

Jair Bolsonaro, September 22nd, 2020

In 2020, [Amazon deforestation](#) reached 10,851 km², the highest rate in 12 years. [Preliminary data](#) released by the National Institute for Space Research (Inpe) show that, in 2021, under Bolsonaro, deforestation may exceed 10,000 km² for the third time in a row. The destruction over these three years is equivalent to the felling of forests covering an area similar to that of Belgium.

The average deforestation rate in 2019 and 2020 was 10,490 km² per year. This figure is 62% higher than the annual average recorded in the previous decade (6,494 km²), according to official data.

Yearly deforestation in the Amazon (rate km²)



The government has abandoned the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (PPCDAM), launched in 2004, which was responsible for an 83% reduction in deforestation by 2012. And it has also kept frozen for almost three years the largest Redd+ initiative in the world, the Amazon Fund, preventing the investment of funds originating from European countries to reduce deforestation in Brazil. Right now, about US\$ 540 million are sitting at the fund, unused. Meanwhile, the government is trying to blackmail rich countries to obtain resources for environmental inspection.

In the [Cerrado](#), the second largest Brazilian biome, 7,340 km² were deforested in 2020, the highest rate in five years. There was an [increase](#) of 12.3% compared to the previous year. The destruction takes place in a soybean expansion area.

Increasing deforestation & fires

01.

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The international outcry over the 2019 Amazon fires prompted the dismissal of the physicist who headed the National Institute for Space Research (Inpe), Ricardo Galvão, responsible for monitoring the fires and the deforestation; however, nothing was done to prevent an even greater tragedy the following year, when the number of fire outbreaks in the biome reached 103,000, the highest since 2017. In 2020, fires also [ravaged](#) a quarter of the Pantanal, the largest floodplain in the world. The burned area is equivalent to the territory of Denmark. This year, until the beginning of October, flames had already swept away 10% of that biome.

Data published by [Global Forest Watch](#) show that Brazil was the country responsible for the destruction of the largest area of primary forests in the world in 2020.

The government celebrated a one-off reduction in deforestation alerts in July and August 2021, after months of record highs, but the numbers [soared once again in September](#), surpassing the same period of the previous year.

Specific deforestation alerts for mining in the Amazon are at an all-time high [since official records began](#): the area deforested by illegal mining in 2021 covers 13,000 soccer fields.

All of this happened under the command of a minister under [investigation](#) by the Federal Police and indicted before the Supreme Court for several crimes, including facilitating timber smuggling. He left office at the end of June to [avoid prison](#), but his policy was kept in place by his successor, Joaquim Leite, who had been one of his key advisers since 2019.

The biggest blow to the Amazon is projected to take place soon, since the government is expected to issue a license for the complete paving of BR-319, the road that links Manaus to Porto Velho. A [recent survey](#) estimates that the work should at least quadruple deforestation by 2050 in one of the last large continuous blocks of intact forest that still exists in that biome.

All this destruction is compounded by the fact that, [according to new research](#), parts of the Amazon are already losing their ability to absorb carbon due to the combined effects of deforestation and climate change.

Increasing deforestation & fires

01.

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02.

Rolling back enforcement

“I gave Ricardo Salles a mission: chop the heck off Ibama. I don’t want zealots occupying these positions. (...) Let’s end the fines industry”

Jair Bolsonaro, June 11th, 2019

“Unfortunately the Bolsonaro regime has rolled back some of the environmental enforcement”

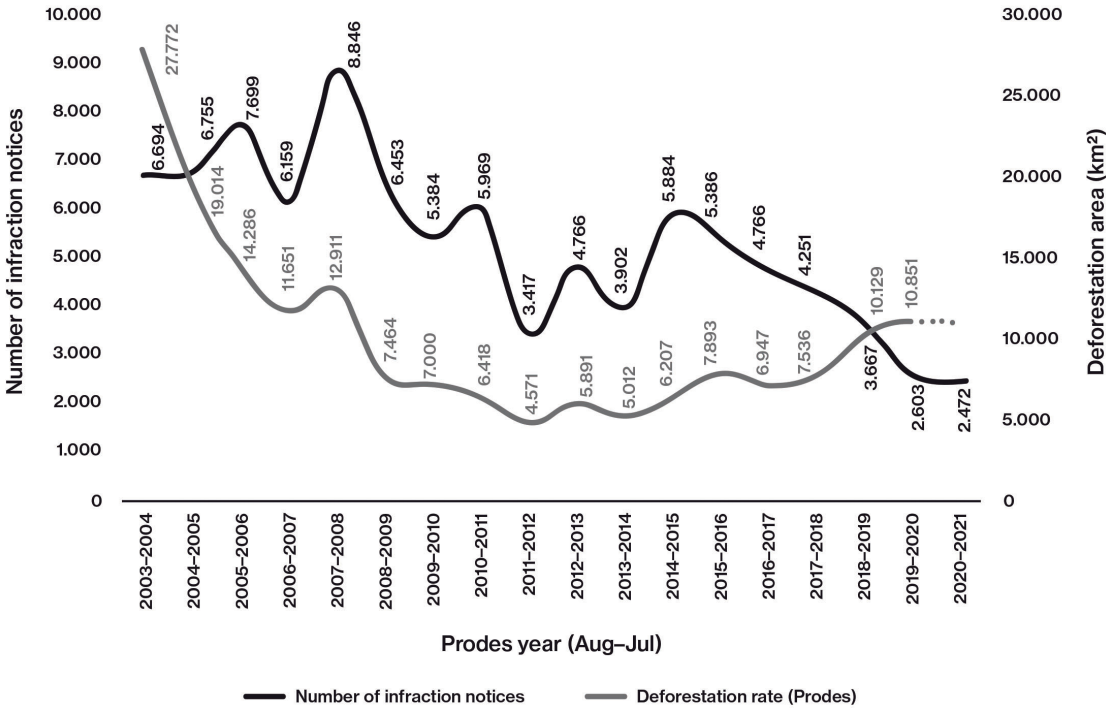
John Kerry, May 12th, 2021

The dismantling of deforestation control agencies resulted in the lowest level of environmental fines imposed in the last two decades in the Amazon. In 2019 and 2020 there was an annual average of 2,610 infraction notices drawn up due to violations against the flora in the region, a 46% [drop](#) when compared to the average of the previous decade (4,868 infraction notices per year), despite the increase in deforestation rates over the last two years.

The government's discourse that inspection was reinforced in 2021 is also untenable, according to [official data](#): there was a 44% drop in infraction notices for crimes against the flora in the Amazon compared to the first nine months of 2021 (1,795 fines) with the same period of 2018 (3,190 fines), the last year before the current government.

02. Rolling back enforcement

Amazon deforestation and infraction notices drawn up by Ibama



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On the other hand, the embargo of deforested areas, one of the actions deemed to be most effective to contain the advance of devastation, [dropped](#) 85% in 2020 when compared to 2018. Only 385 embargoed areas were registered in 2020, against 2,589 in 2018. When an area is embargoed, the rural owner is prohibited from selling products originating from the place where the environmental damage occurred — the measure was decisive for the sharp drop in deforestation between 2007 and 2012. In 2020, for the first time, the number of embargo waivers surpassed the number of embargoes carried out by Ibama, the environmental inspection agency, in the Amazon.

The record-breaking drop in fines and embargoes occurred despite the “back up” of more than 3,000 soldiers deployed in the region as of May 2020, during Operation Verde Brasil 2. The military operation was [aborted](#) in October, with a history of [failures and high costs](#).

In addition to reducing the presence of inspectors in the field, the Bolsonaro administration reversed a strategy that had been intensified by other governments to combat irregularities in the production chain. Strategic operations that resulted in penalties against companies such as [Santander](#), [Bunge](#), [Cargill](#) and [JBS](#), among others, were abandoned. Ibama also aborted the remote control of deforestation, a strategy that started in 2016 and which had increased inspection capacity by crossing georeferenced data and sending fines through the mail, reducing operating costs.

With an absent State and projects to legalize land grabbing and illegal mining encouraged, conflicts and invasions of public lands, mainly Indigenous lands, increased. A Global Witness [report](#) shows that Brazil was the country with the fourth largest number of attacks against environmental and land rights defenders in the world. There were 20 murders, most of them in the Amazon.

02. Rolling back enforcement

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Timeline

2018

Bolsonaro is elected with a speech attacking environmental enforcement. In December, right after the election, he [says](#) he will end what he calls the “environmental fine industry”: “Ibama fines rural people at an industrial scale. We cannot have people in the government mistreating productive farmers. These shenanigans are about to end.”

January/2019

On the second day of government, a decree by the president changes the entire structure of environmental governance, shuts down the Secretariat for Climate Change and Forests and implements several other changes. The Minister of the Environment, Ricardo Salles, [justifies](#) the shutdown by saying “people were doing international tourism at the expense of the government”, referring to climate conferences.

February/2019

Salles [sacks](#) 21 of the 27 regional Ibama regional office chiefs, in an unprecedented mass dismissal. Most of the positions were vacant for months, then mostly inexperienced military personnel were appointed to fill them.

March/2019

The government [imposes a gag](#) on environmental agencies and [exonerates](#) from the position of head of Air Operations the inspector who had fined Bolsonaro for illegal fishing, back in 2012, when he was a Congressman.

April/2019

A hundred days into his government, the president creates, by [decree](#), a fine conciliation program that, in practice, paralyzes the collection of fines and leaves environmental crimes unpunished. Under the decree, a fine can only be levied after a “conciliation hearing” is held with the offender. Only five “conciliation” hearings [were held](#) in 10 months, out of more than 7,000 that had been scheduled.

Bolsonaro [condemns](#) the Ibama operation that had resulted in the destruction of equipment used by loggers in Rondônia.

May/2019

The government [gives advance](#) notice of where deforestation activities will be “inspected”. In an official note, Ibama announced that it would be working at the Jamanxim National Forest in the following days, allowing loggers and miners to hide their equipment.

July/2019

Ibama [halts](#) an operation in Rondônia after loggers attack inspectors. Two weeks after the ambush, Minister Salles goes to the region and [speaks](#) to loggers, calling them “upstanding citizens”.

Dissatisfied with the international repercussions of the increase in deforestation, Bolsonaro [fires](#) renowned physicist Ricardo Galvão from the agency responsible for monitoring deforestation. Earlier, Bolsonaro had said that the agency would be “at the service of some NGO.” Galvão reacted by [saying](#) that the president's attitude was “pusillanimous”.

Germany and Norway [suspend](#) grants to the Amazon Fund due to increased deforestation. “Brazil has breached the agreement with Norway and Germany by dismissing the fund's directors and technical committee,” said the Norwegian minister. “Brazil's attitude shows that they no longer want to stop deforestation.”

August/2019

Day [turns](#) into night, in the middle of the afternoon, in São Paulo, a phenomenon driven by climate change and the soot originating from fires in the Amazon.

After release of official data showing an explosion of fires, Bolsonaro [affirms](#) “there may be criminal action by the NGOs”. NASA images [show](#) that the increase in fires is mainly associated with deforestation.

The government rejects financial aid from G7 countries to combat fires. “Brazil will not accept any initiative that implies relativizing sovereignty over its territory, whatever the pretext and whatever the guise,” says Minister of Foreign Affairs Ernesto Araújo.

Timberland and other large companies [suspend](#) purchases of Brazilian leather, in protest against the destruction of the Amazon.

September/2019

On the same day that Austria's parliament

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In his element: Ricardo Salles poses for a picture with timber he's striving to take to the market.

[rejects](#) the European Union's agreement with Mercosur, 230 funds that invest USD 16 trillion [demand](#) effective measures from Bolsonaro to protect the Amazon.

Armed Forces [denies](#) support to actions involving the destruction of machinery in the Amazon.

November/2019

The government joins soy producers in an attempt to [overturn](#) the Soy Moratorium, a pact signed in 2006 banning the acquisition of soy products originating from deforested areas in the Amazon. Investors warn against the initiative.

Ibama [waters down](#) rules for fining sawmills that buy illegal timber.

Pará Police raid an NGO office and [arrest](#) firefighters on false charges of starting fires. Bolsonaro [asks](#) that no one donates money to NGOs and [accuses](#) Leonardo di Caprio of donating money to 'set the Amazon on fire'.

Deforestation in the Amazon [shoots up](#) 34%, the highest increase this century, and exceeds 10,000 km2 for the first time in 12 years.

March/2020

In the middle of Carnival holidays, Ibama changes a key regulation and [authorizes](#) exports of native timber without inspection. The change gave rise to the investigation that resulted in the ousting of the Minister of the Environment the following year.

April/2020

Salles [changes](#) regulation in order to grant amnesty to deforestation in the Atlantic Forest.

Ibama [exonerates](#) top enforcement officials after an operation against mining on indigenous lands in Pará that resulted in the destruction of dozens of pieces of equipment used by criminals.

Destruction of machines used in environmental crimes [falls](#) by half under Bolsonaro.

May/2020

An Ibama agent is [attacked](#) by loggers operating in the State of Pará. Military police officers from the National Force stand by and watch the aggression even though they were supposedly in charge of security.

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A Presidential decree [subjects](#) environmental enforcement to the control of the Armed Forces.

The government [announces](#) a “plan” to fight deforestation with no goals, actions or budget.

June/2020

The government [omits](#) data on areas under embargo due to environmental crimes, which goes against the applicable laws.

Global funds that manage US\$ 3,75 trillion [push](#) for a reduction in deforestation.

In a livestream event, Bolsonaro [accuses](#) Indigenous people of burning the Amazon and criticizes Europeans.

Amazon “Fire Day” [goes](#) one year without punishment.

July/2020

Enforcement agency [defends](#) punishing civil servants who criticize the government on social networks.

August/2020

Bolsonaro [affirms](#) that “these allegations that the Amazon is on fire are a lie” after a 34% increase in forest destruction.

While fire destroys a quarter of the area of Pantanal, the government [distorts](#) facts to associate the fires with the removal of cattle from the biome.

September/2020

Bolsonaro [regrets he can't](#) “[kill this cancer called NGOs](#)” that operate in the Amazon.

Ignoring that the data are public and updated every week on the Internet, the vice president [says](#) that infiltrated government opponents operate within the National Space Research Institute to leak deforestation data.

October/2020

With twice the funding of environmental and research agencies to combat deforestation, the Armed Forces [use](#) the money to renovate barracks.

November/2020

Deforestation has a second consecutive annual [record high](#) and reaches almost 11,000 km².



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February/2021

After record seizure of illegal wood in São Paulo, the government [lifted](#) fines and released the cargo to exporters.

April/2021

In reaction to yet another rule by the minister that changes the application of fines, more than 600 civil servants sign a letter holding the government [responsible](#) for suspension of enforcement.

May/2021

In 2 years, [only](#) 2% of all fines undergo the “conciliation” process created by Salles. The change in rules also overturned judgments imposing penalties against violators.

July/2021

Military personnel [avoid](#) inspecting mining activities on Indigenous lands. Operating according to orders given by Bolsonaro, they [harass](#) civil servants who work at environmental agencies.

The government celebrates Farmer's Day with a photo of an armed farmworker.



[Today we honor Brazilian farmers, who never stopped working during the Covid-19 crisis and have helped feed Brazilians and other people all around the world.]

August/2021

European Commission [indicates](#) that changes in environmental rules in Brazil will harm EU-Mercosur agreement.

September/2021

Illegal mining in the Amazon [reaches record high](#) amidst protests by Indigenous peoples.

Ministry of Finance presses for [loosening](#) protection rules to “facilitate business.”

October/2021

The National Development Bank provides [loan facilities](#) to slaughterhouses that buy from deforested farms and use slave labor.

Information about impending operation [‘leaks’](#) and miners hide machines in the forest to dodge inspectors.

In a Senate hearing, a representative of the TCU, a federal control agency, says that

the government acted to harm environmental enforcement. “We identified several messages in speeches by high-ranking government authorities disqualifying the actions of entities involved in the fight against deforestation. This has delegitimized inspection work and reduced its deterrent power in controlling deforestation”, [said](#) auditor Rafael Torres.

Brazil [defies](#) nature protection rules at the UN Biodiversity Conference.

Bolsonaro is the target of new accusations the International Criminal Court due to “systematic attacks” on the Amazon.

Government trumpets that it has doubled funds for environmental inspection, but an [analysis of the budget finds that it has used only 22% of the money](#) as of the end of September, when fire season begins to wane.

Brazilian newspaper *Folha de S.Paulo* finds that the three failed militay operations in the Amazon during the Bolsonaro administration [have cost US\\$ 100 million, six times the annual budget of environmental enforcement agency Ibama. The troops were unable to slow down deforestation](#), which reached a 12-year high in 2020.

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03.

Attacks on Indigenous rights

“(If I’m elected) not a centimeter of Indigenous or Quilombola land will be demarcated”

Jair Bolsonaro, *April 3rd, 2017*

“I was wrong. I meant not a millimeter”

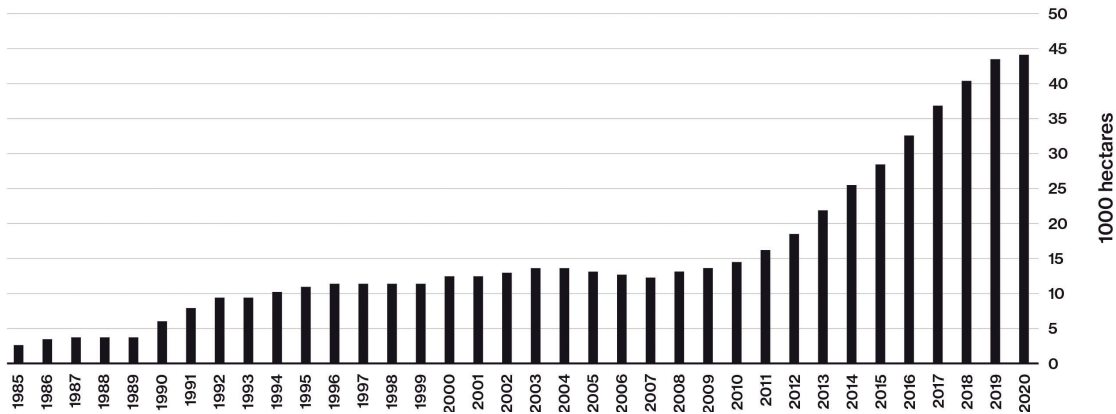
Jair Bolsonaro, *August 3rd, 2018*

Jair Bolsonaro is the first president since the country's re-democratization, in the 1980s, not to demarcate any indigenous land, in breach of a constitutional obligation. According to the [Indigenous Missionary Council \(Cimi\)](#), at least 829 indigenous territories some pending issue that prevent completion of the demarcation process.

In 2019, the last year for which data is available, [invasions of Indigenous lands increased by 135%](#). According to data from [MapBiomias Alerta](#), the number of deforestation alerts on indigenous lands grew 31% in 2020 compared to the previous year.

With the government's proposals to allow mining on indigenous lands, this criminal activity has shot up. According to [data from MapBiomias](#), in 2019 and 2020 the area of indigenous land with wildcat mining was the largest since the 1980s – the destruction of forests by illegal mining increased tenfold in the period.

Wildcat mining area on indigenous lands (1000 hectares)



Evolution of the area of indigenous land with wildcat mining

03. Attacks on Indigenous rights

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Timeline

January/2019

On his second day in office, Bolsonaro [issues a regulation](#) removing from Funai, the official body in charge of Indigenous affairs, the attribution to demarcate Indigenous territories. This attribution would be assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture, which is dominated by lobbies against Indigenous rights. Besides, Funai would no longer be an agency connected to the Ministry of Justice and, instead, it would be connected to the Ministry of Human Rights, headed by an evangelical minister. Congress rejected this proposal.

June/2019

The government [tries, once again](#), to hand over the demarcation of Indigenous lands to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Federal Supreme Court granted an injunction suspending the transfer of tasks and the Senate, once again, rejected the proposal.

July/2019

Bolsonaro [appoints as chairman of Funai](#) Federal Police Chief Marcelo Xavier, former advisor to congressmen linked to the agrarian lobby. He had previously worked at Funai but was fired in 2018 for acting against the interests of Indigenous peoples in his state, Mato Grosso do Sul.

November/2019

Bolsonaro is [accused](#) by two groups of Brazilian jurists before the International Criminal Court for inciting the genocide of indigenous peoples. In 2020, a second petition is submitted to the Court by indigenous individuals themselves.

December/2019

Two members of the Guajajara people who worked to protect their land against invasions by loggers [are murdered](#) in the state of Maranhão, in the Amazon.

February/2020

Bolsonaro decides to “celebrate” his 400 days in office [by submitting Bill 191](#) to Congress, which authorizes various economic activities on indigenous lands. With the exception of wildcat gold mining, none of these activities – which include the building of hydroelectric plants, agribusiness and logging – requires

the consent of indigenous people; they can be authorized upon a request to Congress supported by a “statement of purpose” by the President.

April/2020

Headed by Xavier, Funai publishes, together with the Ministry of Agriculture, a [normative instruction that allows recognition of private properties](#) on indigenous lands that have not yet been recognized as such by a signature of the President, the final step of the demarcation process – even if all previous demarcation stages have already been concluded. [Greenpeace shows](#) that in one of these areas, known as Ituna-Itatá, in the State of Pará, where there are records showing the presence of isolated peoples, 94% of the territory has been divided up by land grabbers and is awaiting regularization. In this territory, where there was no deforestation at all in 2016, [devastation grew by 650% in 2019](#).

July/2020

Congress approves a law guaranteeing special protection to Indigenous peoples during the pandemic. Bolsonaro sanctions the law, but vetoes 22 items – among them, the provision that ensured delivery of drinking water, hygiene products, hospital beds and respirators to Indigenous villages. In order to justify the vetoes, the vice-president, Hamilton Mourão (PRTB), went full Marie Antoinette and [declared](#) that “for drinking water, Indigenous people can use the rivers,” many of which are contaminated with mercury due to mining activities.

August/2020

The Ministry of Defense suspends a military operation against illegal mining in the territory of the Mundurucu people, in Pará, after the Minister of the Environment, Ricardo Salles, visited the region. After the visit, miners who were targeted by the operation [hitched a hike in an Air Force](#) plane to meet with the minister.

September/2020

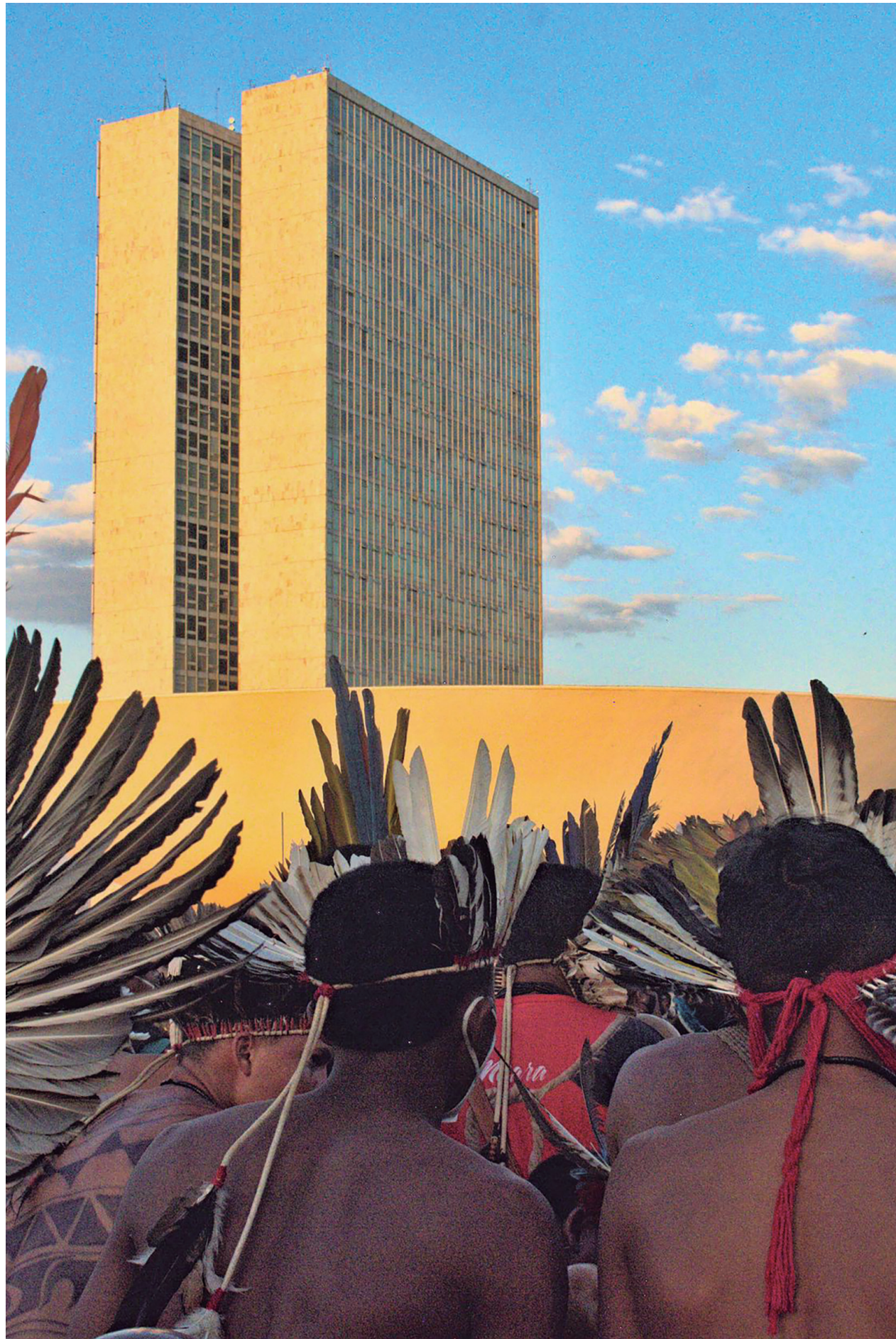
Chief military adviser to President Bolsonaro, General Augusto Heleno, head of the Institutional Security Cabinet, accuses indigenous leader Sônia Guajajara of a “crime against the homeland” over a video that supposedly defamed the image of Brazil abroad.

April/2021

At the request of Funai, the Federal Police opens an investigation against two of Brazil's

03. Attacks on Indigenous rights

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main Indigenous leaders, Sônia Guajajara and Almir Suruí, accused of "defaming" President Jair Bolsonaro. Both investigations are later shelved.

May/2021

Gold miners on speedboats [open fire against the Yanomami village of Palimu](#), in Roraima. It is estimated that there are currently [25,000 miners in that Indigenous village](#), the largest in the country. Three attacks take place over the course of one month, which leads the Supreme Court to issue a decision forcing the government to remove the invaders – which does not happen.

At the end of the month, the Army withdraws support from a Federal Police operation against mining in Munduruku territory. In retaliation, miners burn down the house of the indigenous leader, Maria Leusa Kabá.

July/2021

Military personnel working at Funai [authorize](#) construction works on Indigenous land to the benefit of illegal occupations.

An Army Lieutenant, working as a Funai coordinator, [talks about shooting down](#) isolated Indigenous individuals in the state of Amazonas.

September/2021

The government [authorizes](#) the installation of a power line in the Amazon without the consent of the Waimiri people. The work was authorized by the agency that was supposed to protect the tribe.

The main committee of the Chamber of Deputies, chaired and composed mostly by allies of President Jair Bolsonaro, approves [Bill 490, which changes the demarcation of indigenous lands](#). The bill establishes that only indigenous peoples who have been occupying their land since October 5, 1988 will have a right to such land, which would prevent, in an irreversible manner, the recognition of more than 700 territories. The bill also prohibits the expansion of Indigenous areas demarcated in the past.

October/2021

Two children drown after being [sucked into](#) a gold mining barge in the river next to their village in the Yanomami land.

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Pizzo: Ricardo Salles, former Environment minister, currently investigated for nine crimes, has demanded money in exchange for protecting the Amazon.

04.

Refusal to use existing international funds

Even while Brazil continues to demand money from developed countries to supposedly protect its biomes and meet its climate target, the country has kept frozen, since the beginning of the current administration, funds equivalent to more than half a billion dollars, which could be used in sustainable activities. The Amazon Fund, the largest Redd+ project on the planet, was paralyzed by Minister Ricardo Salles and at the time of writing was still inactive. The same happens with US\$ 96.5 million raised from the GCF (Green Climate Fund) in 2018.

Timeline

February/2019

The GCF (Green Climate Fund) allocates USD 96.5 million to Brazil, via UNDP (United Nations Development Program), for the Forest+ program, which would remunerate indigenous peoples and traditional communities that conserve vegetation, with the objective of discouraging deforestation. The civil servant who coordinated the negotiations was fired the following week.

April/2019

The government issues a decree dismantling Cofa (the Amazon Fund Guidance Committee) and CTFA (the Amazon Fund Technical Committee). The Minister of the Environment tries to recreate both without the participation of civil society, but donor countries reject the proposal. The fund remains unused.

May/2019

Ricardo Salles announces a press conference to show alleged evidence of irregularities committed by NGOs with money from the Amazon Fund and detected by an audit ordered by the ministry and endorsed by the Office of the Comptroller General of the Federal Government (CGU), which [denies this information on the same day](#), saying it has no involvement with the issue. During the press conference, Salles is unable to prove any irregularity.

December/2019

At COP26, in Madrid, Salles says that Germany, the second largest donor to the Amazon Fund, has agreed with the conditions imposed by the Bolsonaro administration for the resumption of the fund. [The German government issues an official notice denying such fact.](#)

June/2020

Political parties [sue the Federal Government in the Supreme Court](#) demanding the resumption of the Amazon Fund, to no avail.

Almost a year and a half after approval by the GCF, the government [launches the Floresta+](#)

[program](#), which provides for payment for environmental services. The program, however, remains at a standstill because Salles does not want to benefit Indigenous people and small farmers, as required by the program's rules.

February/2021

Data obtained under the Access to Information Law by Agência Rubrica show that, two years after approval by the GCF, the Floresta+ program [has yet to select beneficiaries](#). Until the publication of this report, the funding – the largest ever approved by GCF for a forestry project – was still unused. Almost three years later, the project is still [in the drawing board](#).

September/2021

On the eve of COP26, the government [announces](#) a plan to pay large landowners to comply with the law, which requires them to keep part of their farmland preserved.

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Refusal to use existing international funds



Brazil: 1000 days of destruction —

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04.

Refusal to use existing international funds



05.

Climate denial

“I went to Rome in May and there was a huge cold snap. This was never reported by the media”

Ernesto Araújo, Former Chancellor, *August 2nd, 2019*

“It is only useful as toilet paper, to wipe your ass”

Nabhan Garcia, National Land Issues Secretary, *about the Paris Agreement, October 2018*

Brazil arrives at the Glasgow conference as one of the only countries in the world to have, in 2020, a less ambitious NDC than the previous one. The new proposal will allow the country to arrive at 2030 emitting between 200 million and 400 million tons of CO2 above the original 2015 target, and still meet the target despite a high rate of deforestation in the Amazon. The Brazilian NDC update caused the Climate Action Tracker consortium to downgrade the country's target rating from "insufficient" to "highly insufficient". The plan is being challenged in courts by youth organizations.

Timeline

2018
[Documents by the government transition team](#) show that the future president's staff considers positions that deal with the climate change issue to be a "jobs for the boys" structure that threatens "national sovereignty" and suggests "restructuring" all governance in order to "thwart" the NGOs that the government deems "uncontrollable". Two months after the election, Bolsonaro [says](#) his country will no longer host the COP, which is transferred to Chile.

January/2019
On his first day of work, Minister Ricardo Salles publishes rules to restructure the Ministry of the Environment, extinguishing the Secretariat for Climate Change and Forests. The body that actually executed the federal climate policy ceased to exist. To the press, Salles declared that he would nominate a special advisor for the subject as part of the cabinet, which never happened.

The following week, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by climate denier Ernesto Araújo, shuts down the Ministry's Climate and Renewable Energy divisions. The area is now managed by diplomats at the lowest level of the ministry's hierarchy.

February/2019
In his first hearing in the Federal Senate, Salles [challenges human influence on global warming](#) and says the government "will not devote energy" to the issue. "We must know how to prioritize. Our priority in the ministry is not to send a group of 20, 30 people traveling all over the world, with the government paying business class fares, room and board only for them to discuss what the world will be like 500 years from now", he declared to a radio station sympathetic to the government.

April/2019
Sweeping executive order shuts down 700

multi-member government bodies, which had the participation of civil society. The list includes the Amazon Fund committees, the National Climate Change Fund committee and Conaredd+ (the National Redd+ Commission), in addition to the Inter-ministerial Committee on Climate Change, the main federal decision-making body on the subject. The measure freezes the Amazon Fund, the world's major Redd+ program, which remains frozen as of this date.

May/2019
Salles says he is "fed up" with the executive secretary of the Brazilian Forum on Climate Change, former congressman Alfredo Sirkis, and dismisses him over the phone, assigning a former advisor to his place. Without resources or support from the government, the forum becomes a mere ornament within the structure of Brazilian climate governance and is unable to counteract the denialist rage of the federal government.

Salles tries to shut down Climate Week Latin America, a preparatory event for COP25 in Chile that would take place in Salvador. To the press, [he said that he would not host an event "so people could go sightseeing"](#). He is forced to back down by the mayor of Salvador, an ally of Jair Bolsonaro.

November/2019
With the COP25 fast approaching, the government hastily enacts a set of decrees that recreate the Inter-ministerial Committee on Climate Change, Conaredd+ and the managing committee of the Climate Fund. However, civil society is excluded from the new composition of all these bodies.

A presidential decree ends the ban on sugarcane farming in the Pantanal and the Amazon, which had been in effect since 2009, opening up the two sensitive biomes to biofuel production.

December/2019
Salles spends two weeks at COP25 in Madrid, telling developed countries that Brazil would need USD10 billion a year to meet the deforestation reduction targets established by its NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution). He is reminded by a diplomat that [the Brazilian target is unconditional](#) and leaves Madrid without a penny. Under Salles, Brazil joins the US, Australia and Saudi Arabia in blocking advancements in the conference.

Climate denial
05.

Brazil: 1000 days of destruction —
How JAIR BOLSONARO became the world's most dangerous climate denier.



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During COP25, while his Minister of the Environment demands money from rich countries to fight deforestation, the President [signs](#) a provisional measure that grants amnesty to public land grabbers, the main driver of deforestation, which in turn accounts for 45% of Brazilian emissions. The provisional measure is authored by Nabhan Garcia, an assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Tereza Cristina, and former president of the most radical rural lobby organization in Brazil. [He stated that the Paris Agreement would only be useful as "toilet paper".](#)

Abin, the Brazilian government's intelligence agency, [sends four agents to Madrid to spy on](#) Brazilian diplomats and members of civil society at COP25.

November/2020

In 2019 alone, the first year of the Bolsonaro administration, the government granted almost US\$ 20 billion in subsidies for fossil fuels, a 16% increase from the previous year, according to [a survey](#). This figure is greater than the entire budget of the Ministry of Education for the same period. In 2021, to please truck drivers, the government also [subsidized](#) diesel, an additional expenditure of US\$ 800 million annually.

December/2020

Brazil submits to the UNFCCC a "new first NDC," ratifying the 2015 indicative target of reducing emissions by 43% in 2030 compared to 2005. However, the calculation basis changes, which means that, in practice, the country [gave itself authorization to emit an additional 400 million tons of CO2 equivalent in 2030](#) when compared to the former target. In addition, public policy proposals adopted in 2015, such as ending illegal deforestation in the Amazon by 2030, are deleted from the new NDC. This maneuver excludes Jair Bolsonaro from the Climate Ambition Summit organized by the United Kingdom in December. Then six young activists [sue the government](#) because of the reduced ambition, which violates the progression clause of the Paris Agreement

With 10,851 km² of deforestation, Brazil exceeds by 180% the National Policy on Climate Change's goal of limiting devastation of the Amazon to 3,925 km² in 2020.

January/2021

The deadline for the implementation of the Brazilian NDC starts to run, but the country lacks even a basic plan on how to achieve its targets.

April/2021

Bolsonaro [demands money from the US to keep the forest standing](#). Fifteen US senators [send a letter to Joe Biden](#) warning that any agreement with Brazil must be conditional on results before funding, and negotiations are suspended.

In a speech at the Joe Biden Leaders Summit, Jair Bolsonaro promises to eliminate illegal deforestation by 2030, a commitment he himself had removed from the Brazilian NDC, and to double the budget for environmental enforcement. [The next day, he cuts the budget by 24%.](#)

July/2021

The government enacts a law authorizing privatization of state-owned energy company Eletrobras. The law includes inserting 8 gigawatts of natural gas-fired thermoelectric plants into the Brazilian electricity matrix, which [will raise the emissions of the electricity sector by a third.](#)

August/2021

On the day that IPCC released its 6th Assessment Report, stating that human action unequivocally affects global warming, the Bolsonaro administration announced a program to encourage coal energy production. The [plan](#) encourages the expansion of the system and the use of coal-fired power plants by 2050, despite the country's promise to bring emissions in the same period to zero. "The program focuses on the continuity of coal mining activity in the southern region of Brazil, fomenting the region's development and the country's energy security", [said](#) the government.

October/2021

Data from Observatório do Clima's SEEG (Greenhouse Gas Emission Estimation System) show that Brazil's emissions in 2020 rose by 9.5%, meaning that the country is the only G20 member with increased emissions in the pandemic year.



06.

Environmental free-for-all

Never in the history of this country has a government authorized the use of so many pesticides. In a thousand days of the administration, 1,411 [products were approved](#). This figure represents 40% of all pesticides on the Brazilian market. About a third of pesticides released under Bolsonaro [are banned](#) in the European Union because of health and environmental concerns. The increase in poverty, deforestation and the lack of sustainable agribusiness, among other factors, have made Brazil one of the three countries with the highest decline in [Global Sustainability Index \(SDG Index\)](#), published by the University of Cambridge. Brazil fell from the 57th position (in 2019) to the 61st position (in 2021) of the global index.

In the case of oil exploration, two examples are emblematic of the Bolsonaro administration's objectives. In 2019, the government [tried to auction](#) exploration blocks near the Abrolhos Marine Park, an ecological sanctuary.



After great social pressure, the initiative failed due to a lack of interested parties. In a new auction round in early October, the government offered to oil companies areas that cover the submerged mountain range of the Fernando de Noronha sanctuary and the Atol das Rocas biological reserve, among other sensitive areas. Once again, [there were no bids](#), after [pressure](#) from environmental groups.

The most damaging example for the future of the Amazon is the license that the government promises to grant to authorize the complete paving of BR-319, the road that links Manaus to Porto Velho, opening up the way for loggers and land grabbers into the most preserved region of the biome.

Timeline

April/2019

The Ministry of the Environment sends [an official letter](#) demanding that Ibama authorize an oil auction next to the Abrolhos National Park, contrary to the technical opinion of the environmental agents.

June/2020

The government [publishes](#) bidding rules for contracting the paving of the first stretch of BR-319, a dirt highway that cuts across the best-preserved area of the biome.

September/2021

The number of pesticides [approved](#) in less than three years of government reaches 1,411, an all-time high.

A US-born Brazilian top scientist [is the target](#) of a xenophobic attack during hearing about the paving of BR-319 in Amazonas.

Petrobras [slices](#) the environmental licensing process of oil blocs near the mouth of the Amazon River to try to circumvent requirements made by Ibama, expanding investment in fossil fuels and threatening biodiversity.

October/2021

The Federal Public Prosecutors' Office and NGOs [go to court](#) against oil auction near Fernando de Noronha and Atol das Rocas.

Bolsonaro amends legislation through a decree to [authorize the use](#) of pesticides that cause diseases such as cancer if there is a "safe limit of exposure". The measure also creates "priority processing" system for the approval of new products.

After negatives to Total in 2018, Petrobras [makes a new order](#) for oil exploration in the Amazon Reef.





Meet the new boss, same as the old boss: Joaquim Leite, Brazil's new Environment minister, was picked by Ricardo Salles, his bestie.

07.

Shutdown of environmental policymaking

When he was elected, Jair Bolsonaro toyed with the idea of shutting down Brazil's Ministry of the Environment, which was to be merged with Agriculture. He was eventually talked into giving up on the idea but stayed with the second-best option: keep the ministry as an empty shell by naming a minister who not only was totally aligned with agribusiness but also would excel at dismantling the structure, harassing civil servants and stopping policymaking altogether.

That man, Ricardo Salles, ruined 40 years of environmental governance in 18 months in the job and was eventually forced to quit after being investigated in the Supreme Court for nine crimes, including facilitating timber smuggling to the United States.

Salles is gone, but his friend and aide Joaquim Leite was named minister to keep "pushing the whole lot through". Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.

The environmental budget approved for 2021 was the [lowest](#) in two decades. Under international pressure, Bolsonaro announced in April an increase in funding for inspection, but by mid-October Ibama had committed 44% of the annual funds and spent only 19% of the US\$ 41 million budget.

In the Ministry of the Environment itself, without considering the values related to its three related agencies (Ibama, ICMBio and Botanical Garden in Rio de Janeiro), 94% of the expenses until October, excluding civil servants' payments and pensions, were concentrated in the unit's administration, which includes rents, security and other non-end-activities.



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07.

Timeline

2018

President-elect Jair Bolsonaro [decides to shut down the Ministry of the Environment](#), which is to be merged with the Ministry of Agriculture, claiming that "we cannot have two antagonistic ministries". He then backs off, at the suggestion of representatives of the agricultural sector itself, who fear damage to Brazil's image.

During COP24, in Katowice, Poland, Bolsonaro appoints Ricardo Salles, a rural lobby lawyer, as Environment Minister. The new minister [is convicted of environmental fraud](#) ten days before taking office.

January/2019

The Ministry of the Environment is dismembered and undermined on the new minister's first day of work. A Provisional Measure removes the National Water Agency from the structure of the Ministry of the Environment and transfers it to the structure of the Ministry of Development. The Brazilian Forest Service, which is the agency responsible for the environmental registration of rural properties is handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture, to be chaired by a former congressman from the rural bench. The Department of Forests and Climate is shut down.

March/2019

Twenty-one Ibama state superintendents are dismissed. Some are replaced by military police officers and seven positions are left vacant until the following year.

Minister Ricardo Salles imposes a gag rule on communications from Ibama, ICMBio and the Ministry of the Environment. Environmental agencies lose autonomy to communicate with the press. [Eight out of ten journalists who tried to communicate with the ministry in 2019 were left without an answer.](#)

April/2019

The entire board of Instituto Chico Mendes (ICMBio), the agency responsible for more than 330 federal conservation units that cover almost 10% of the Brazilian territory, is dismissed and replaced by military police officers from the State of São Paulo, with no experience in managing protected areas.

May/2019

The National Council for the Environment, the main Brazilian multi-member environmental body responsible for issuing rules that range from vegetation protection to atmospheric pollution standards, is reduced from 93 members to 23, and falls under the control of the federal government. Civil society participation is reduced from 22 seats to 4, chosen by drawing lots.

Bolsonaro discloses a [plan](#) to reduce 67 Conservation Units for the opening of roads and other projects, and Salles [announces](#) a review of all 334 federal environmental protection areas in the country, which, according to him, were created "in a random manner".

In an [unprecedented meeting](#), seven former ministers of the Environment denounce the "dismantling of socio-environmental governance" promoted by Bolsonaro.

September/2019

The government takes 41 days to activate a contingency plan against the oil spill off the Northeastern coast, the most extensive disaster of its kind ever recorded in the country. In April, the decree that shut down multi-member bodies had dismantled two committees responsible for the plan. In October, Ibama agents claimed that the ministry's communications gag hampered the response to the disaster. More than 2,000 km of the Brazilian coast were affected.

October/2019

In a tweet, Ricardo Salles blames Greenpeace for the oil spill and is sued by the organization.

December/2019

The chairman of ICMBio, Military Police Colonel Homero Cerqueira hands down his main administrative act: no one can wear miniskirts in the institute.

April/2020

During a ministerial meeting, Minister Ricardo Salles defends taking advantage of the pandemic, "while we are at this moment of tranquility in terms of press coverage, as everyone is talking about Covid (let's) [push the whole lot through](#)¹ and change the entire regulation".

Ibama [expands](#) gag rule to civil servant's social networks.

July/2020

The Public Prosecutors' Office [requests the dismissal of Ricardo Salles](#) due to his

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Shutdown of environmental policymaking

07.

“intentional disruption of environmental protection structures in Brazil.”

August/2020
The Office of the Comptroller General of the Federal Government, which is the entity in charge of inspecting the actions of public administration, publishes a [devastating report](#) showing that, in the first year of government, the Ministry of the Environment only spent 14% of its budget.

September/2020
An analysis by Observatório do Clima of the expenditures of the Ministry of the Environment itself, without considering the values related to its three related agencies, shows that, from January to August, the cost of the programs under the Ministry’s responsibility [corresponded to US\\$ 20,000](#), which indicates in practice that there was no environmental policy being implemented by the federal government. The ministry spends [less than 1%](#) of its budget with preservation programs.

To benefit resort owners, Salles [lifts](#) measures that protected mangroves and salt marshes.

Stacked with political appointees, the National Environmental Council approves regulations of interest to the real estate sector that reduce protection of mangroves and salt marshes and allow burning of toxic waste in cement manufacturing ovens, which serves the industry’s lobby. The Supreme Court invalidates the decisions months later.

The Military Police Colonel who headed Instituto Chico Mendes, Brazil’s national park service, is fired. Another Military Police Colonel is appointed to occupy the position.

October/2020
Salles creates a commission made up of military police officers, with no technical members, to discuss, behind closed doors, the merger between Ibama and ICMBio, shutting down the agency in charge of protected areas. The commission should deliver its opinion within four months, but the deadline is extended until September, when the proposal is finally discarded.

The Federal Attorney General Office (AGU), acting on orders from the Minister of the Environment, attempts to intimidate the



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environmentalist who criticized Salles for the phrase “push the whole lot through.” An investigation by the Uol news portal shows that the AGU was also called upon to intimidate a scientist and two journalists.

November/2020
Amazon militarization plan calls for control of “100% of the NGOs” working in the Amazon.

December/2020
The Armed Forces [executed](#) a confidential agreement to buy, for R\$ 175 million, a satellite that is considered ineffective, duplicating the official control system.

January/2021
An analysis of the Budget Law Proposal submitted by the government to Congress for the year 2021 shows the [lowest budget in 21 years](#) for environmental initiatives: R\$ 1.72 billion, or US\$ 310 million.

March/2021
Instituto Chico Mendes [establishes prior censorship applicable to all scientific research projects](#) developed by civil servants working at the institute. All publications must first undergo scrutiny by the institute’s Director of Research and Monitoring, a Military Police Colonel.

April/2021
The Superintendent of the Federal Police in Amazonas files a criminal complaint against Ricardo Salles for intervening [on behalf of businessmen to release wood](#) seized in the largest operation of its type ever carried out by the Federal Police in the Amazon.

May/2021
The Federal Police carries out a search and seizure operation at the home and office of the Minister of the Environment. He is suspected of nine crimes, including collusion with loggers to export timber to the US without inspection, corruption, malfeasance and administrative advocacy (using a public office to defend private interests). The chairman of Ibama, Eduardo Bim, and nine other employees of the institute are removed from office for 90 days as a result of the same investigation.

June/2021
The two Federal Police officers investigating Salles are punished: one loses his position as head officer in Amazonas and is sent to a small town in Rio de Janeiro’s countryside,

and the other is exonerated from his office and demoted.

On the 23rd, Salles finally resigns, but leaves in his place his advisor Joaquim Leite, who comes from a farming family and was also a former employee of an agricultural lobby organization, Sociedade Rural Brasileira.

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The “cattle drivers”: Rodrigo Pacheco, president of the Senate (L), and Arthur Lira, Speaker (R).

08.

Threats in Congress

In 2021, threats to the environment in Brazil changed gear. With the election of Arthur Lira, a Bolsonaro supporter, as chairman of the House of Representatives, the legislative dismantling phase begins.

While in 2019 and 2020 actions against environmental regulations and social rights were carried out through decrees, normative instructions and executive orders, now attacks are perpetrated through legal amendments, which are virtually irreversible in this country, given the correlation of forces in Congress.



The Chamber has already approved the weakening of environmental licensing rules and land-grabbing amnesty, and can still vote, at any time, the end of the demarcation of indigenous lands and the authorization to open up these areas to highly impactful economic activities.

The approval of these projects, which are a priority for the government, virtually guarantees that Brazil will not be able to reduce deforestation in the Amazon.

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08. Threats in Congress

Timeline

February/2021

A broad coalition of center and right-wing parties, with votes also coming from certain left-wing congressmen, elected the conservative Arthur Lira as Chairman of the House of Representatives. Lira was the candidate supported by Jair Bolsonaro and is linked to agribusiness lobbyists. Lira celebrates his victory with a party for 300 people in Brasília at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, when Brazil was mourning 1,200 deaths a day.

Bolsonaro delivers to Lira the list of 35 bills that the government considers a priority. Among them there are four bills that deal with environmental issues: authorization for mining and other activities such as construction of hydroelectric plants and industrial agribusiness on indigenous lands, even without the consent of Indigenous people (PL 191); flexibility of environmental licensing (PL 3,729); the amnesty for land grabbing (PL 2,633 at the Chamber and PL 510 at the Senate), in addition to a review of forest concessions.

March/2021

Überbolsonarist Congresswoman Carla Zambelli is elected chair of the House Environment Commission, and says that her priority is to approve the government's agenda and "[challenge the NGOs](#)".

In her first month as chair of the House Environment Commission, Zambelli advanced a bill of law that had been submitted by the then Congressman Jair Bolsonaro [authorizing the Military Police to carry out environmental inspection activities](#), potentially sidelining environmental enforcement agencies such as Ibama.

May/2021

The House of Representatives [approves](#) Bill 3,729, which, in practice, ends environmental licensing. The new legislation creates an exemption that waives environmental impact studies for a series of activities, including the paving of roads in the Amazon and generalizes the "self-licensing" of projects over the internet.

The bill is in the Senate, where it will be reported by senator Kátia Abreu, a heavyweight of the rural lobby.

August /2021

On the same day that British Minister Alok Sharma, who chairs COP26, arrived in Brazil to demand more ambitious environmental targets from the country, the House of Representatives [approves Bill 2,633, which facilitates the privatization of plots of illegally-occupied public land](#) of up to 600 hectares and opens up the possibility of permanent amnesty to land grabbing. This bill will go on to be examined by the Senate, where it will be merged with an even more damaging proposition, Bill 510, authored by Irajá Abreu, the son of Kátia Abreu, known as [the greatest deforester in Congress](#).

October/2021

Ten days before COP26, Brazilian Senate passes a [bill that further weakens its NDC](#) by replacing absolute emission cuts with "projected emissions".

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For more information on how the Bolsonaro administration is wrecking Brazil...

ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

Observatório do Clima:

[The Worst is Yet to Come: the first year of environmental havoc under Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro](#)

[Pushing the Whole Lot Through: the second year of environmental havoc under Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro](#)

Greenpeace, ClimaInfo, Observatório do Clima:

[A government against the environment](#)

Smoke Signal:

[Backwards with Bolsonaro: 30 years in 3 \(2019-2021\): A timeline of socio-environmental setbacks and key facts related to land use – and the explosion of deforestation in Brazil – in the 3 years of Bolsonaro's administration](#)

ON THE PANDEMIC:

Conectas/Cepedisa-USP:

[Rights in the Pandemic #10](#)

More Information

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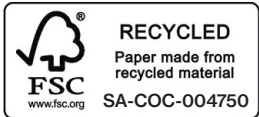
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