

Brazil sets up special security force to protect Amazon

October 10 2012



Brazil said it was setting up a special environmental security force to combat soaring illegal deforestation in the Amazon region.

Brazil said Wednesday it was setting up a special environmental security force to combat soaring illegal deforestation in the Amazon region.

Environment Minister Izabella Teixeira said the new unit will conduct "permanent" surveillance of the Amazon, where illicit deforestation

grew 220 percent in August compared with the same month in 2011.

The force will be backed by the army, the federal police and the Brazilian Environment Institution (IBAMA), which has its own police unit.

Currently authorities are focusing their operations during the dry season when illicit logging increases.

"[Environmental crime](#) is becoming more sophisticated. To combat it, we must modernize our surveillance system," Teixeira said.

In August, logging affected an area of 522 square kilometers (210.5 square miles), up 220 percent from August last year, according to official figures.

That dropped to 282 square kilometers in September.

The ministry cited drought, the pressure of international commodity (mainly soybean) prices and land grabs by settlers along the Trans-Amazonian highway currently being asphalted as key factors behind the devastation of the [Amazon rainforest](#).

Sixty percent of the Amazon, home to the world's largest [tropical rainforest](#), is located within Brazil's borders.

Large-scale deforestation has made this continent-sized country one of the world's top [greenhouse gas](#) emitters, but the government has vowed to curb it and has made significant strides in the past decade.

Brazilian authorities confirmed earlier this year that deforestation fell to a record low of 6,418 square kilometers (2,478 square miles) in 2011, down from a peak of 27,000 square kilometers (10,000 square miles) in

2004.

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: Brazil sets up special security force to protect Amazon (2012, October 10) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-10-brazil-special-amazon.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.