

Brazilian Amazon deforestation surges, embattled institute says

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Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, a climate change sceptic, has accused the country's National Institute of Space Research of publishing misleading data on the environment

Deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon increased 278 percent year-over-

year in July, according to official data released Tuesday by a government institute embroiled in a row with President Jair Bolsonaro over the scale of the problem.

The National Institute for Space Research, known by its initials INPE, said that [deforestation](#) had cleared 870 square miles (around 2,250 square kilometers) of rainforest over the month.

The Brazilian [president](#), a climate change sceptic, and his environment minister Ricardo Salles have previously accused the INPE of publishing misleading data, claiming the figures "don't correspond to the truth" and were damaging to the institute and the country.

Data from INPE, an institution of international repute, shows that deforestation has increased 40 percent in the last twelve months compared with the same period a year ago.

Amazon rainforest deforestation had increased 88 percent on-year in June alone.

Last week, INPE president Ricardo Galvao was sacked following disagreements with Bolsonaro over deforestation in the Amazon, fueling criticism of the president from [environmental groups](#).

The president suggested Galvao was "in the service of some NGOs" before dismissing him on Friday.

Bolsonaro was helped in his election last year by support from the powerful agriculture lobby.

He has previously floated the idea of opening up protected rainforest areas to agriculture, a highly controversial move given the existing level of deforestation.

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