

Amazon countries seal pact against destruction of rainforest

September 9 2019, by Sinikka Tarvainen



Uncontacted indigenous tribe in the Brazilian state of Acre. Credit: Gleilson Miranda / Governo do Acre / Wikipedia

Countries of South America's Amazon region on Friday announced measures for its preservation following devastating wildfires and

growing concern over the destruction of the world's biggest rainforest.

The seven countries that met in Colombia will increase cooperation against causes of deforestation, such as [illegal mining](#), illegal clearing of forest for agriculture and drug trafficking, Colombian President Ivan Duque said.

The pact approved by the summit also includes creating an information network to prevent disasters; increased monitoring of deforestation by satellite; promoting research and education; and increasing the participation of indigenous people to favor the sustainable use of the rainforest.

The Amazon countries want multilateral banks such as the Inter-American Development Bank to back them, Duque said.

The summit took place as Brazil was coming under international criticism over tens of thousands of wildfires that have ravaged its 60% share of the Amazon this year.

The fires followed moves by President Jair Bolsonaro to open more of the rainforest to mining and agriculture, with [satellite data](#) indicating that the pace of deforestation is increasing rapidly in one of the most biodiverse and carbon-rich areas in the world.

The summit brought together Duque, Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra, Ecuador's Lenin Moreno, Bolivia's Evo Morales, Suriname's Vice President Michael Adhin, Brazilian Foreign Minister Ernesto Araujo and Guyanese Natural Resources Minister Raphael Trotman.

Bolsonaro did not attend because of upcoming surgery, but participated over videoconference.

He criticized French President Emmanuel Macron, who had accused Brazil of not honoring its climate commitments.

Macron had "attacked" Brazil and put at risk its sovereignty, Bolsonaro said, adding that his country had done its duty in protecting the rainforest.

Morales, like Bolsonaro, has been criticized over his [environmental policies](#), such as allowing farmers to clear forest with fires.

But at the summit, he deplored the use of the environment "for business" and "the profit of a few which hurts a lot of people in the world."

Bolivia's [president](#) called on the other countries to allow crisis-hit Venezuela, which had not been invited, to join the pact that was approved.

The Amazon has half of the world's tropical forests and produces 20% of the fresh water on the planet, Duque said during a meeting with indigenous representatives.

The G7 group of seven major democratic economies recently pledged \$20 million in emergency aid to Brazil.

In addition to Brazil, fires have also affected other parts of the Amazon and other forest ecosystems in the region, including Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru.

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