

Amazon fires in Brazil fall to record low in October: official

November 4 2019



Handout picture released by Mato Grosso do Sul State Government showing a forest fire at the Pantanal ecoregion of Brazil on October 30, 2019

The number of fires in the Amazon rainforest in northern Brazil fell to a record low in October, even as blazes ripped across the Pantanal tropical

wetlands, official data show.

Satellite images from the INPE space institute recorded 7,855 fires in the Amazon last month, the lowest for any October since 1998 when the government agency started keeping records.

INPE did not provide a reason for the figure, which was down more than 60 percent from the previous month and the lowest since July—the start of the Amazon's dry season when cattle breeders and farmers usually begin burning felled trees.

But it came after President Jair Bolsonaro—under intense international pressure to protect the Amazon—in late August slapped a 60-day ban on fires in the rainforest.

The drop also coincided with the start of the Amazon [rainy season](#), which typically lasts until June.

Nearly 1,000 blazes have been recorded in the rainforest so far in November, the INPE data show.

It comes as fires continue to rage in the Pantanal, one of the most biodiverse areas in the world and a major tourist destination.

INPE data recorded 2,430 fires last month, the highest for any October since 2002. It was down from 2,887 fires in September.

Nearly 400 fires have been registered this month.

The affected area has more than doubled to 122,000 hectares (more than 300,000 acres) since last week, a spokesperson for the central-west state of Mato Grosso do Sul told AFP.

Three helicopters and three planes have been deployed to help combat the blazes.

Neither INPE or the environment ministry responded to AFP's request for comment.

Brazil has been plagued by environmental disasters this year.

In January, a mine dam collapse in the southeastern state of Minas Gerais spewed millions of tons of toxic waste over countryside, killing hundreds.

That was followed by the Amazon fires in recent months that ignited a global outcry and a diplomatic spat between Bolsonaro and European leaders.

More recently, Brazil has deployed thousands of military personnel to help clean up a massive oil spill off its northeast coast.

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