

Brazilian Amazon sees worst June in 13 years for forest fires

July 2 2020



The fires are expected to be at their worst in August, like last year, when this photo of a burnt area was taken in Altamira, Para state, Brazil, in the Amazon basin

Amazon forest fires in Brazil increased by 19.5 percent in June compared to the same month last year, making it the worst June in 13

years, authorities revealed on Wednesday.

June marks the start of the dry period and there were 2,248 recorded fires, leaving analysts expecting a worse year for the rainforest than the devastating 2019, which provoked anger throughout the world.

The National Institute for Space Research (INPE), which follows [fire](#) alerts in real time on its website, has not recorded as many fires in June since reporting more than 3,500 in 2007.

The worst is expected in August. Last year there were more than 30,000 fires that month, a threefold increase on the same month in 2018.

Most [forest fires](#) in the Amazon are caused by arson and are directly linked to deforestation, often caused by crop farmers for cultivation.

Deforestation in Brazil was very high this year before the dry season even began, with more than 2,000 square kilometers lost between January and May, a 34 percent increase on the same period in 2019, according to INPE.

The Amazon environmental research institute estimates that 9,000 square kilometers of jungle already cut down since last year could go up in flames before August begins.

Ecologists have accused far right President Jair Bolsonaro—a notorious climate change sceptic—of promoting deforestation by calling for the legalization of farming and mining activities in protected zones.

Specialists also believe an increase in [forest](#) fires could increase breathing difficulties in a population already badly hit by the novel coronavirus.

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