

Brazil presents disputed nature conservation scheme for Amazon region

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Following fierce criticism over its environmental and climate policies, the Brazilian government on Wednesday presented a controversial program for the preservation of nature reserves in the Amazon region.

The scheme dubbed "Adopt a Park" enables individuals or companies to sponsor a [national park](#) in the Amazon [region](#) for 50 reais (9 dollars) per

hectare per year, according to a government statement.

The size of the reserves varies between 2,574 and 3,865,172 hectares. However, it is only possible to "adopt" an entire park.

The French company Carrefour was the first to declare it would sponsor the 75,000-hectare nature reserve "Reserva Extrativista do Lago do Cunia" in the northern state of Rondonia.

Carrefour is currently trying to improve its image in Brazil after the violent death of a black man in one of its Rio de Janeiro supermarkets in November.

Greenpeace Brasil criticized the park initiative as an attempt to disguise reality, accusing the government of shifting its responsibility for financing part of the country's [environmental protection](#) to corporations.

Brazil Vice President Hamilton Mourao, chairman of the Amazon Council, had said at the World Economic Forum in Davos that the country would have no funds left for spending in the Amazon region after the pandemic.

Greenpeace, however, referred to the Amazon Fund, a private fund that aims to fight against deforestation and for the preservation of the Amazon rainforests, and which has been paralyzed since disagreements over its use.

Brazil has faced increasing criticism over its stewardship of the Amazon, especially under hard-line President Jair Bolsonaro.

Deforestation of rainforests in Brazil's Amazon region has reached a 12-year high, space agency Inpe, which is responsible for monitoring the rainforest, said as recently as December.

Between August 2019 and July 2020, 11,088 square kilometers of jungle were cut down in the region, according to Inpe, which represent the largest area removed since 2008.

This corresponds to about 4,340 football fields per day or three football fields per minute and compared to the same period last year, deforestation increased by 9.5%.

Bolsonaro sees the region primarily as untapped economic potential and wants to develop even more land for agriculture, mining and energy production. He has rejected international criticism of his environmental policy as interference in domestic affairs.

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