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## Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon Hits Record Level

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Satellite images suggest that deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon hit record levels in the first half of 2022.

The images were recorded between January and June. They show about 4,000 square kilometers of new destruction. That is more destruction than has been measured in any six-month period during the seven years Brazil has been keeping such records.

The information confirms that deforestation is continually happening during the rainy season. Deforestation is historically higher in the second half of the year – when it is drier and people can travel more easily in the Amazon.

Brazil also is set to hold presidential elections in October. The process usually causes reductions in law enforcement in the Amazon. President Jair Bolsonaro is seeking a second 4-year term. Current public opinion studies show his opponent, former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, ahead in the race.

Brazil's nonprofit Amazon Environmental Research Institute, or IPAM examined the images. It said they show that the area destroyed in the first half of 2022 was 80 percent larger than that destroyed in the first half of 2018.

Bolsonaro took office in 2019.

Around half of the activity happened on public lands, IPAM said. In Brazil, people often illegally seize public land with the expectation that the areas will become legal farmland in the future.

Other illegal property and **timber** deals – along with a lack of law enforcement – add to the increasing deforestation rates, said Ane Alencar, IPAM's science director.

“Those who control the Amazon don't want it **preserved**,” Alencar told The Associated Press. “The standing forest has no value in today's Amazon.”

Amazonas state lost the greatest number of trees to the recent cutting, the report said. Deforestation in Para and Mato Grosso states have historically registered more tree loss. Experts say that development is worrisome because Amazonas is deep in the rainforest and has remained mainly untouched compared to other Amazon areas.

I'm Bryan Lynn.

*The Associated Press reported this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the report for VOA Learning English.*

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## Words in This Story

**timber** – *n.* wood that is used for building

**preserve** – *v.* to keep something the same or prevent it from being damaged or destroyed

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