

## **FACT SHEET**

- The Amazon is the largest tropical forest in the world. Its limits cover almost 7.5 million km<sup>2</sup> - about 12 times the size of the state of Texas and 28 times the size of Italy - and extend across the territories of eight countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela, and a national territory, French Guiana.
- Around 5.5 million km<sup>2</sup> of its territory is covered by forests.
- Formed over 30 million years ago, the Amazon has been inhabited by indigenous peoples for more than 11,000 years.
- The Amazon is home to around 35 million people, including more than 400 indigenous and traditional communities, who speak more than 300 languages.
- More than 10% of the known plant and animal species coexist there.
- On just two forested acres there is a greater variety of trees than in all of North America. Just one of these trees can host as many ant species as there are in the entire United Kingdom.
- In the Amazon basin there are over 2,300 species of fish, more than can be found in the entire Atlantic Ocean. Close to one-sixth of the planet's fresh water flows through its rivers and streams.
- The Amazon forest is also a buffer against climate change; it regulates climate variability and stores around 130 billion metric tons of carbon, almost a decade of global emissions of carbon dioxide.
- Today, this ecosystem of over 7 million square kilometers is threatened by deforestation, fires, mining, oil and gas development, large dams for hydroelectric generation, and illegal invasions.

- In the first eight months of 2019 there were more than 45,000 fires in the Brazilian Amazon. A forested area the size of Luxemburg was lost in the month of July 2019 alone, due to fires.
- In 2019, more than 1.7 million hectares of Amazonian primary forest were lost in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, according to figures from [MAAP](#), which monitors a large area of the Amazon.
- During the first six months of 2020, deforestation in Brazil increased by 26% compared to 2019, according to data from the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research, [INPE](#).
- In the Brazilian Amazon, the number of fires during June 2020 is the highest in the last 13 years for that period and represents an increase of 18.5% compared to June 2019, according to [INPE](#).
- The Amazon is home to an incalculable number of microorganisms. As humans invade it, the natural reservoirs of viruses and pathogens are destroyed and the forest could become a potential source of future pandemics.
- Deforestation and forest degradation are not just an environmental problem. Statistical evidence shows that homicides increase with deforestation, due to the violent process of land grabbing and displacement of traditional communities. Deforestation also intensifies the spread of diseases.