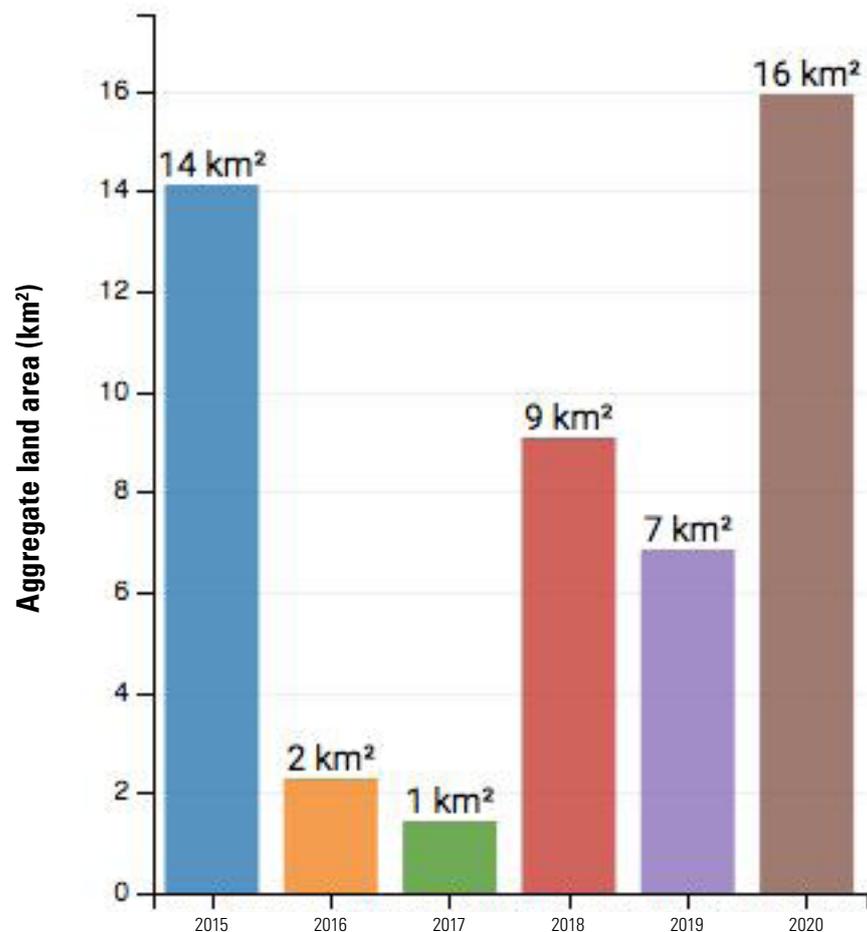


- According to deforestation alerts issued by the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE), mining activities were responsible for the deforestation of 16km<sup>2</sup> of forests in the Legal Amazon in August 2020 alone. This is already double last year's record for the same period. Since August 2015, the INPE's real time deforestation detection service (DETER) has revealed the destruction of 394.6km<sup>2</sup> of Amazonian rainforest due to mining practices.

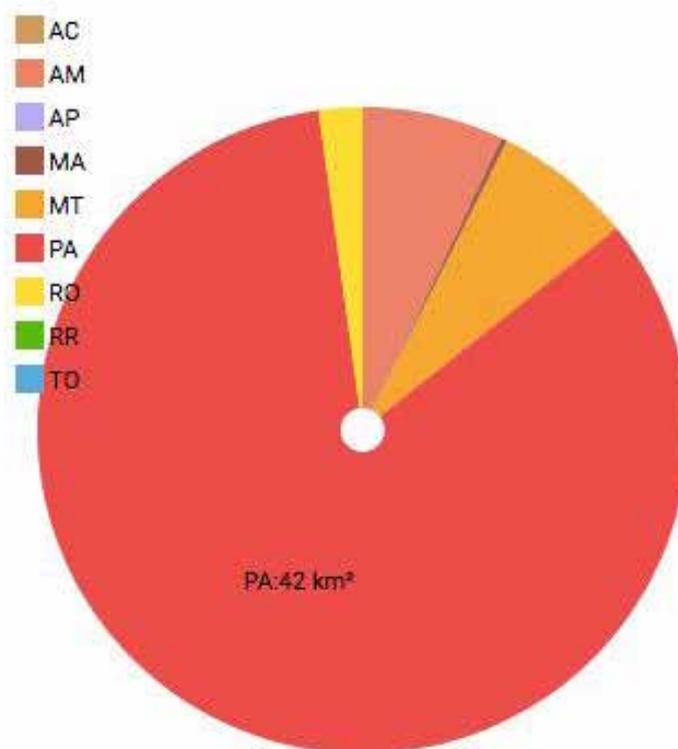
## AREA DEFORESTED BY MINING DURING THE MONTH OF AUGUST



Source: INPE, Terrabrasilis, data collected up until 28 August 2020.

- The majority of the INPE's deforestation alerts due to mining occurred in the state of Pará. In July, it was estimated that 73% of these alerts occurred in protected areas, both in conservation units and indigenous lands. The Tapajós river basin is one of the most affected regions, precisely at the epicenter of the Amazonian gold rush.

## DEFORESTATION BY MINING BY STATE IN THE LEGAL AMAZON



- In 2020, deforestation alerts in the Amazon have long surpassed last year's record by 35%, which was already the highest official deforestation rate of the decade. With this year's record result, Brazil will be unable to achieve the objectives set out in its National Policy on Climate Change, the country's proposed contribution to reducing global greenhouse emissions.

Kayapó Indigenous  
Land, Pará  
The Specialized  
Inspection Group  
(GEF) from the  
Brazilian Institute for  
the Environment and  
Renewable Natural  
Resources (IBAMA)  
carries out an operation  
to shut down illegal  
gold mining sites in  
the Kayapó Indigenous  
Territory, in the  
Brazilian State of Pará  
Photo: Felipe  
Werneck/IBAMA



- Illegal gold mining practices are credited with dumping 7 million tons of sediment into the waters of the Tapajós River over the course of the year, as per a report released by the Brazilian Federal Police. Over an 11-year period, this corresponds to the amount of sediment released into the Rio Doce basin when the Samarco Dam in Mariana ruptured in 2015, considered the country's biggest environmental disaster ever.
- The use of mercury in wildcat gold mining (or 'garimpo') in the Amazon is one of the main obstacles to Brazil's compliance with the Minamata Convention on Mercury, an international treaty to which the country is a signatory. The convention is designed to curb the use of the toxic metal, which contaminates fish and riverside communities. The national inventory of emissions calculates that between 11 and 161 tons of mercury were released into the environment by illegal gold mining in 2016. Indeed, cases of mercury contamination are underreported by the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS).

- Gold mining is credited with contaminating the Yanomami Indigenous people. Based on 239 hair samples collected from different indigenous land areas, the research was published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health in 2018. Research published in 2017 by the American Journal of Environmental Sciences also showed the presence of mercury in 81% of the fish collected, which included the species most consumed by the local population in the Tumucumaque National Park, located in the Brazilian state of Amapá.
- A Federal Prosecution Service (MPF) Task Force estimates that the illegal extraction of one kilo of gold in the Amazon generates R\$ 1.7 million in environmental damage.
- Wildcat gold miners (or 'garimpeiros') pressure the government not to destroy their machinery during illegal mining inspections. In 2019, IBAMA registered the destruction of only 72 pieces of equipment belonging to gold miners and lumbermen, much less than in previous years. The Annual Budget Bill (PLOA) for 2021 sent by the government to Congress at the end of August foresees a reduction of more than 20% in the environmental agency funds earmarked to combat deforestation.

“This illegally obtained gold is extracted from various parts of the Amazon and has entered our economy through mechanisms that we call “gold washing”. Operations conducted by the Federal Prosecution Service (MPF) show that gold washing occurs both with the metal positioned as a financial asset and as a commodity, injected into the jewelry market. We are all consumers prone to acquiring gold that is coming from the Yanomani and Munduruku indigenous lands”.

*Federal Prosecutor Ana Carolina Haliuc Bragança, Coordinator of the Amazon Task Force of the Federal Prosecution Service of Brazil*

“We have written statements from various peoples and communities saying no to illegal gold mining. The relationship that the indigenous peoples have with their territories must be properly considered, their connection to Mother Earth. The government must be open to dialogue with the infinite diversities of indigenous peoples. In the context of a pandemic, the invasions and illegal incursions into indigenous lands continue, such as in the lands of the Yanomami, which has more than ten thousand invaders (...) they themselves have chosen what kind of future they want, they have chosen their destiny”.

*Attorney Luiz Eloy Terena, legal advisor for the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB)*

Sources: National Institute of Space Research, [Escolhas Discussion Paper “The new gold rush in the Amazon”](#) and “Brazil exported 29 tons of gold in 2020, and part thereof extracted in illegal gold mining in Amazon, encouraged by the gold price in international market” in <http://www.escolhas.org/en/brasil-exportou-29-toneladas-de-ouro-em-2020-e-parte-dela-extraida-em-garimpos-ilegais-na-amazonia-estimulada-pelo-preco-do-ouro-no-mercado-internacional/>