

To Mrs. Jennifer May

Ambassador

Canada Embassy in Brazil

RE: Amazon protection in Brazil

Dear Ambassador,

Greenpeace has been working in the environmental defense in Brazil for almost three decades and it is with a heavy heart that we now witness the Amazon rainforest being deforested at the fastest pace since 2008. While the Brazilian federal government takes no responsibility nor presents concrete measures and proposals to tackle such expressive crisis, reality shows that meaningful action is deeply needed.

We understand the Brazilian government is organizing a field trip with Ambassadors to visit the region so we would like to make some recommendations. Throughout 2020, we have been following the deforestation and fire rate's hitting records in the Amazon and, based on that, we are suggesting another route, one that is more representative of the reality in the country and showcases the extent of the environmental destruction in Brazil, driven by Bolsonaro's government.

We also would like to highlight that a visit of such purpose, rather than visiting only preserved places, should also be a chance to witness and better understand the environmental destruction ravaging our country. The policies currently adopted for the Amazon are enabling an environment in which the biome is being pushed towards a tipping point¹ even faster. The Amazon protection is now at stake, despite the fact that the remaining forest cover corresponds to 75,7% of its original area as of 2018².

The lack of leadership from the Brazilian government in protecting the forest is now under a global spotlight. Investors, Law makers, Ambassadors, Corporate representatives and the civil society have all been vocal on the need for concrete measures but the federal response has been ineffective in reverting the destruction. Empty statements of dropping the rate by 50% in 2023 without a robust plan, the deployment of the army in costly and inefficient operations and an insufficient 120-day 'fires moratorium' are not leading to results on forest protection.

According to the National Policy on Climate Change, by 2020 deforestation rate should be reduced to 3.925km². However, in 2019 deforestation reached 10.129km² and according to deforestation alerts provided by DETER/INPE, the rate expected for 2020 could be three times higher than the target set for 2020. When we look at the fires in the region, the situation is also deeply concerning. On October 22, the number of fire hotspots in the Amazon overcame the entire year of 2019.

¹ <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/4/2/eaat2340>

² <https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-sala-de-imprensa/2013-agencia-de-noticias/releases/28943-ibge-retrata-cobertura-natural-dos-biomas-do-pais-de-2000-a-2018>



We believe not all is lost. The pathway to drastically reduce deforestation is well-known and forest protection is achievable. Between 2004 and 2012, deforestation was reduced by about 80% due to successful measures including governmental policies, private commitments and civil society participation³. However, what worked in the past to curb deforestation has been systematically ignored by the current administration. These efforts include: an Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Amazon, creation of protected areas, enforcement activities implemented by experienced agencies (e.g. Ibama).

I would like to thank you for your attention. Finally, we would like to express our availability for further dialogue on this briefing and route, on our work to defend the environment in Brazil and on the intelligence on forest protection we have been developing for the past decades.

Please find below the alternative route proposed by Greenpeace in order to make you aware of what is really happening in the Amazon.

Yours sincerely,



Asensio Rodriguez

Greenpeace Brazil Executive Director

This letter is being addressed to the Embassies in Brazil of Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom and to the General Secretary of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty.

³ <https://ipam.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A-Pathway-to-Zero-Deforestation-in-the-Brazilian-Amazon-full-report.pdf>



A route to the Amazon under destruction

Context

The following briefing and route proposal is suggested based on Greenpeace Brazil's close monitoring of the fire and deforestation dynamics in the Amazon in 2020. As important parameters to depict the current environmental crisis the region is facing, we developed the route to include areas with high rates of deforestation and areas in which the organization witnessed and registered a high concentration of fire hot spots on previous overflights. Based on these elements, the route comprises areas in the states of Pará and Amazonas.

Methodology

The methodology used a) alerts from Deter/Inpe⁴ (categories "corte raso" and "desmatamento com vegetação" excluding "mineração"⁵) b) fires hotspots published by INPE⁶ (from the reference satellite) c) Prodes data for comparison e) Greenpeace overflight coordinates. All of this was applied to the Amazon biome within the Brazilian territory, with a focus in the states of Pará and Amazonas.

1. Deforestation in the Amazon

As the 2020 PRODES has not yet been published, deforestation alerts from the DETER from August 2019 to July 2020 were used as a reference for deforestation. The total deforestation for this period was 912,135 hectares, distributed in the following states:

State	Area (ha)
PA	383,696
MT	187,675
RO	127,388
AM	126,792
AC	47,399
RR	23,989
MA	13,252
AP	1,237
TO	707
Total	912,135

Table 1: Area showing deforestation alerts from August 2019 to July 2020 per state

⁴ <http://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/>

⁵ <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/7128317> According to Deter methodology, clear cut includes "Clearcut Deforestation" and "Deforestation with Vegetation"

⁶ <http://queimadas.dgi.inpe.br/queimadas/portal>



1.1. PRODES and DETER

There is an expectation that the official yearly deforestation rate, provided by Prodes, will be higher than what has been pointed out by Deter in past months. This trend of higher rates on PRODES can be seen in the graph (Image 1).

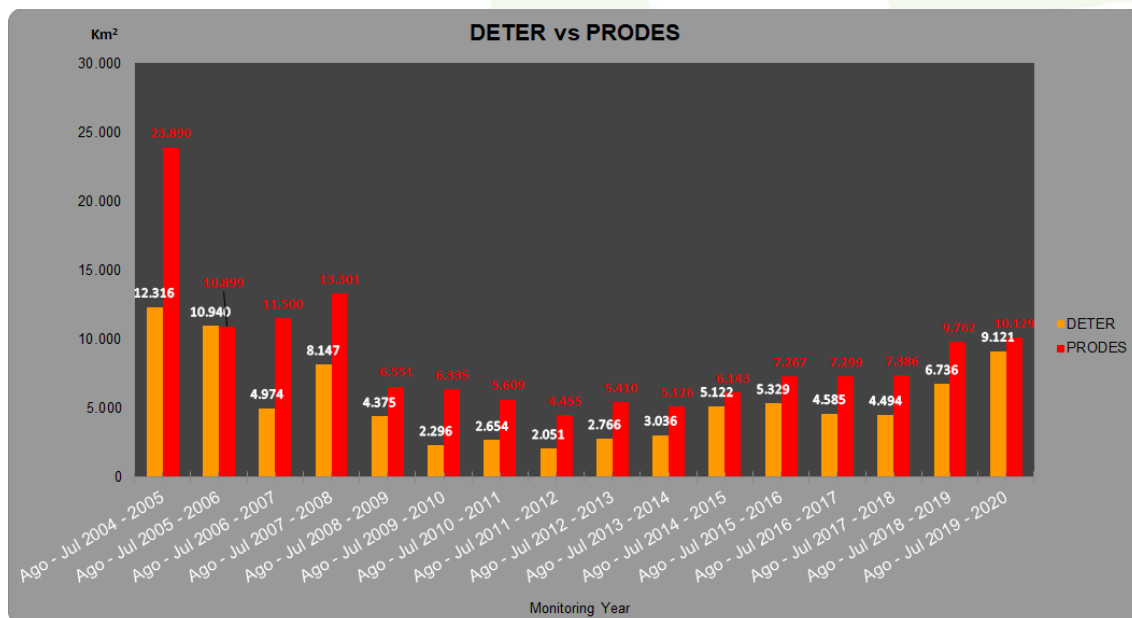


Image. 1 Comparison of deforestation rates shown by PRODES and DETER systems. Source: The Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

1.2. Deforestation in Protected Areas (Conservation Units)

These areas lost 118,931 hectares of native forest in the period analysed (August 2019 to July 2020). Deforestation in Conservation Units concentrated in the state of Pará, especially in:

Protected Areas in Pará State	Area (ha)
APA Triunfo de Xingú	40,091
APA do Jamanxim	11,243
FLONA Altamira	5,520
FLONA do Jamanxim	4,045
APA do Tapajós	2,712
REBIO Serra do Cachimbo	2,453
Estação Ecológica Terra do Meio	1,802
Floresta Estadual do Iri	1,610
Floresta Estadual do Paru	1,426
APA do Lago de Tucuruí	1,412
FLONA de Itaituba II	1,349
PARNA do Jamanxim	831

Table 2: Area showing deforestation alerts across protected in areas in Pará State

1.3. Deforestation in Indigenous lands

In these areas, 30,352 hectares of land were deforested, concentrated mostly in the state of Pará. The distribution of the most affected Indigenous Lands follows.

Indigenous Lands / State	Area (ha)
Cachoeira Seca/PA	6,287
Ituna Itatá/PA	5,911
Apyterewa/PA	5,909
Trincheira Bacajá/PA	2,821
Parque do Xingu/MT,PA	1,462
Manoki/MT	869
Karipuna/RO	704

Table 3: Area showing deforestation alerts across most affected Indigenous Lands in the Amazon

2. Fires in the Amazon

From January to October 2020, 92,541 hotspots were detected in the Brazilian Amazon. During this period, the hotspots were concentrated between the states of Pará, Mato Grosso and Amazonas.

Fire Hotspots	
Pará	32,799
Mato Grosso	19,326
Amazonas	16,172
Rondônia	10,475
Acre	9,053
Roraima	1,851
Maranhão	1,792
Amapá	570
Tocantins	503
Total	92.541

Table 4: Fires Hotspots in the Amazon from January 1st to October 29th, per state

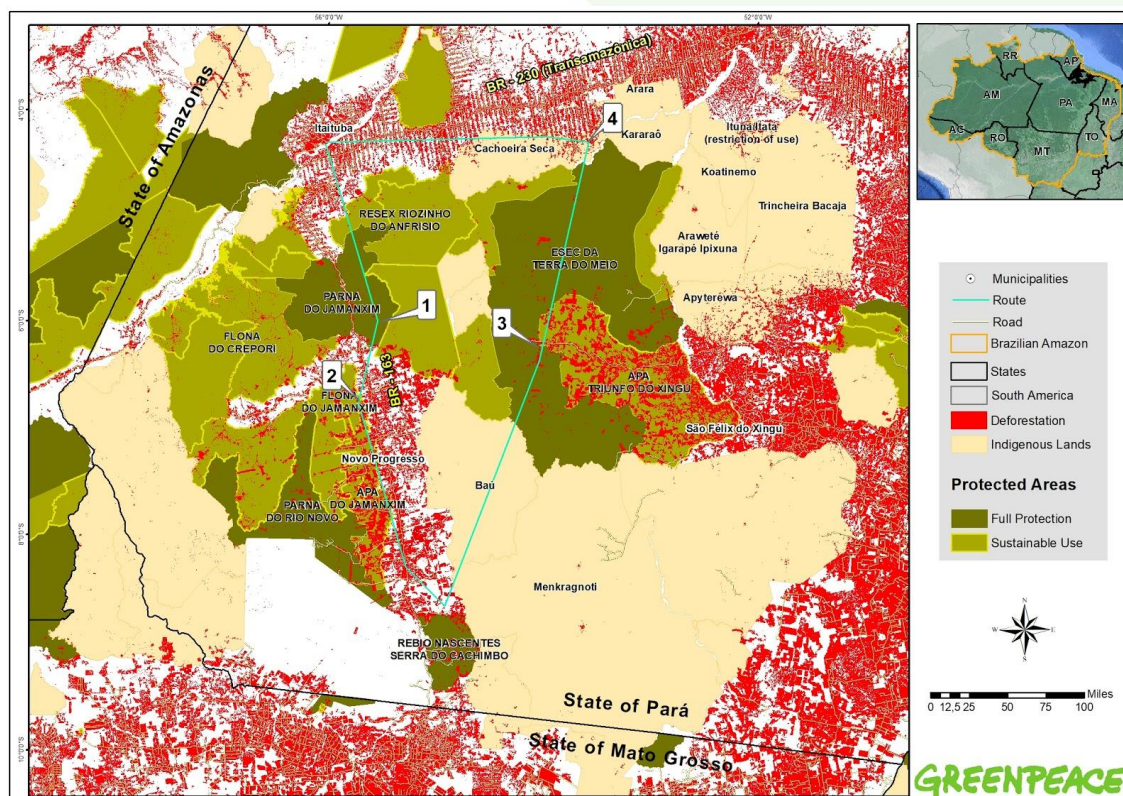
3. Greenpeace suggested route

For the elaboration of the following route, we have listed areas severely affected by deforestation and fires, areas currently under pressure from the advance of the arc of

deforestation⁷ and sites Greenpeace visited and/or flew over in the past couple of years and witnessed serious and critical situations⁸.

3.1. Route in Pará

Pará state comprises areas with a clear depiction of the current challenges for forest protection in the Amazon. From invasion of protected areas to illegal land grabbing and conflicts over the land, it has been the state with the larger deforested area every year⁹, since 2006. In 2020, 35% of the fires hotspots registered in the Amazon occurred in the state.



Map 1: suggested route in Pará state

⁷ Area where deforestation is concentrated, areas including the southern and eastern edges of the biome, advancing towards north and west. See explanations in:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0378112708001552> or <https://rmets.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/joc.2048>

⁸ Link for the suggested route in KMZ:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xM186pwjy9ro9egDjUM7XfKU3Y9bTBv/view?usp=sharing>

⁹ <http://www.obt.inpe.br/OBT/assuntos/programas/amazonia/prodes>

What's to be seen in Pará?

- Deforestation dynamics associated in conversion of the forest into pastures.
- Deforestation within protected areas.
- Key municipalities and regions: Novo Progresso, Altamira, São Félix do Xingu and BR-163 region.
- Places to visit:
 - **National Park (PARNA) of Jamanxim [1]** - it is a conservation unit with full protection, located in the municipalities of Itaituba and Trairão. Under the full protection category, economic activities, such as cat mining noticed in 2020, should not be taking place in the area.
 - **National Forest (FLONA) of Jamanxim and Environmental Protection Area (APA) of Jamanxim [2]** - both are located in the municipality of Novo Progresso, in the region of BR-163. Under the category of conservation units that allow sustainable use, some economic activities are allowed but only those without harmful potential to biodiversity and forest recovery. In may of 2020, some damaging activities were noticed, such as large-scale deforestation and burnt forests. Together, these two areas accounted for 20% of all deforestation within conservation units in the Brazilian Amazon between August 2019 to July 2020.
 - **BR - 163 [going south point 2]**- this is an important highway that crosses the western portion of Pará state and widely used for the transportation of soybeans and cattle. It is surrounded by Indigenous Lands and conservation units as a strategy to hold back the intensive deforestation in the region. Yet, there is a significant area of undesignated land in its surroundings that are possibly targeted by land grabbers. The vicinities of the BR 163 highway depicts one important phenomenon that has been a key factor in the Amazon - the destruction of the forest for industrial meat production and also land grabbing¹⁰. It was in this region that the forest was set on fire in 2019 as a demonstration that initiated the fire season last year in what became known as the “Day of Fire”¹¹. Along the highway, it is still common to notice high rates of deforestation, as is the case in Altamira municipality - which bears the larger deforested area in the Brazilian Amazon for the period from August 2019 to July 2020.
 - **Environmental Protection Area (APA) Triunfo do Xingu [going north point 3]** - also a conservation unit under the sustainable use category, which allows economic activities under regulation. This was the most deforested conservation unit in the Brazilian Amazon for the period between August 2019 to July 2020.
 - **Ecological Station (ESEC) Terra do Meio [3]** - this is another conservation unit under full protection in which all human/economic activities are not

¹⁰ <http://www.mpf.mp.br/pa/sala-de-imprensa/noticias-pa/mpf-pa-operacao-desmonta-maior-quadrilha-de-desmatadores-da-regiao-amazonica>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/26/brazil-amazon-fire-day-warning>



allowed. Unfortunately, this is the 7th most deforested conservation unit in Pará and the 11th in the Brazilian Amazon between August 2019 to July 2020. Greenpeace flew over the region in 2019 and was able to witness newly deforested areas, forest fires and cattle within the area.

- **Cachoeira Seca indigenous land [4]** - This was the most deforested Indigenous Lands in the Brazilian Amazon for the period between August 2019 to July 2020. This territory, home to the Arara Indigenous People, has been suffering from invasions and illegal logging. An agent from Ibama was assaulted during a surveillance activity and the municipality of Uruará tried to paralyse oversight activities earlier in the year¹². In its surroundings there are other Indigenous lands that have suffered with invasions and deforestation. Take as an example, Ituna Itatá Indigenous land, home to uncontacted Indigenous Peoples, in which 94% of its area is claimed as private land through the rural land registry (CAR)¹³.



Photos 1. Illegal mining in Jamaxim National Park [1] and deforestation in the Jamaxim National Forest [2]. Images from May 2020

¹² <http://www.mpf.mp.br/pa/sala-de-imprensa/noticias-pa/mpf-confirma-a-legalidade-da-fiscalizacao-do-ibama-na-terra-indigena-cachoeira-seca>

¹³ <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/news/indigenous-groups-at-risk-as-bolsonaro-encourages-amnesty-for-land-grabbers-in-midst-of-pandemic/>

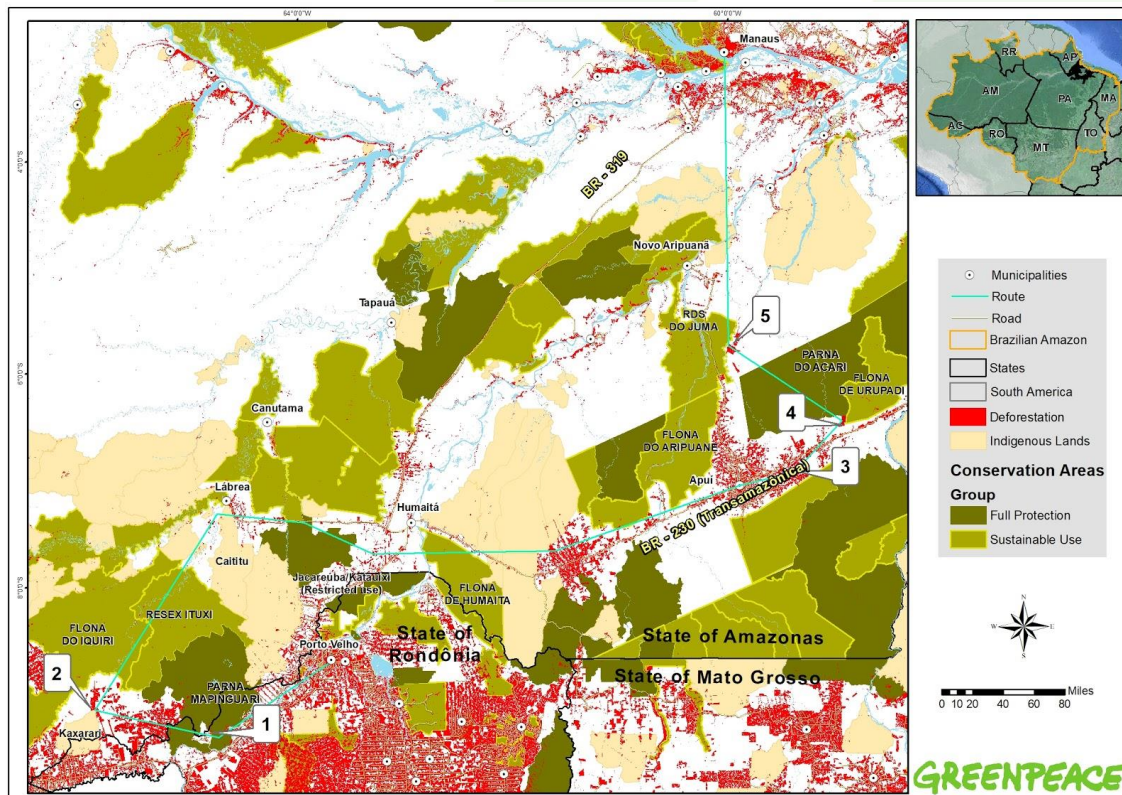
In the past couple of years, we were able to fly over some of these areas and witness how critical the situation of deforestation and fires in the forest are. The following images were taken during an overflight in the BR-163 axis and also protected areas in the region known as Terra do Meio in the municipalities of Novo Progresso and São Félix do Xingu.



Photos 2. Top right and left photos are from deforestation in ESEC Terra do Meio [3], photos in the bottom are from illegal fires in the Cachoeira Seca indigenous lands [4] in September of 2019. Note that the numbers prior coordinates in the photos above correspond to the points shown in the map.

3.2. Route in Amazonas state

Amazonas state bears a paradox - while it is the home of the largest portion of native forest preserved within the biome, its southern region is currently under increasing pressure from deforestation coming from Mato Grosso and Rondônia states. It is also the largest state in Brazil and home to great Amazonian biodiversity that is under threat from the expansion of agribusiness and infrastructure.



Map 2: suggested route in southern of Amazonas state

What's to be seen in Amazonas?

- Recent deforestation pressuring Indigenous lands and conservation units.
- Key municipalities: Apuí, Boca do Acre, Humaitá, Lábrea and Novo Aripuanã - these municipalities led deforestation alerts in the region and accounted for 75% of the total registered in the state between August 2019 and July 2020.
- Places to visit:
 - **National Park (PARNA) Mapinguari [1]** - this is a conservation unit with full protection, located in the municipalities of Porto Velho (Rondônia state) and Lábrea (Amazonas state). Although no economic activity is allowed, in August 2020 illegal mining was registered - within the Park.
 - **Border between Lábrea (AM) and Porto Velho (RO) municipalities [1]**. This region concentrated many areas with deforestation alerts and Porto Velho was the third municipality with the highest deforestation for the period.
 - **Indigenous Land Kaxarari [2]** - located in Lábrea municipality, in the southern part of the state, it is under deforestation and fire pressure.
 - **Lábrea municipality [2]** - this is not a specific location, as a Park, but it is important to highlight as it is currently the municipality with the highest rates of deforestation in the state between August 2019 and July 2020 (39.094 hectares), and with the second highest number of fires hotspots registered in 2020 (2.291 hotspots).

- **Apuí municipality** [3],[4] - Same as above, but it is important to highlight as it is currently the municipality with the highest number of fires in the state, with the highest record of hotspots in 2020 (2.763) and second highest rate of deforestation between August 2019 and July 2020 (23.753 hectares). It is located along the BR-230 highway, mostly known as Transamazônica highway, and cattle ranching is one of the main economic activities in the area. Apuí was the runner up municipality on the numbers of fires, only behind Lábrea.
- **Novo Aripuanã Municipality** [5] - third highest number of fires hotspots registered in 2020 and fourth highest deforestation rate - both for the state - the point selected for the route is close to a protected area (*RDS do Juma*), evincing the pressure approaching protected territories. Novo Aripuanã is amongst the 10 municipalities that registered more fire hotspots in the Amazon.



Photos 3. Aerial images (AUG 2020). Top left photo is from the borders of Porto Velho and Lábrea registering mining partially overlapped with PARNAP Mapinguari [1]. Top right photo was taken in the municipality of Lábrea, close to Indigenous Land Kaxarari [2]. Bottom left and right [3,4] are from Apuí.



Photo 5 corresponds to Novo Aripuanã municipality, close to RDS Juma. Note that the numbers prior coordinates in the photos above correspond to the points shown in the map.

Threats on the horizon: other portions in Amazonas state require public attention

While deforestation is now concentrated in the southern region of the state, new potential damage can already be mapped and need to be discussed. The plan to pave the BR-319 highway (connecting Manaus and Porto Velho municipalities) will impact more than just its surroundings, according to specialists¹⁴. The reestablishment of this road will open access to the most intact area of forest in the entire biome, linking it with the arc of deforestation and threatening key areas for biodiversity and environmental services provided by the Amazon. The region already suffers with land grabbing, invasion, timber logging and opening of illegal roads¹⁵ (e.g Tapauá municipality and BR-319¹⁶).

There are parallels to be made between the paving of BR-163 highway in Pará and the BR-319 reestablishment plans. Even though the former one included a mitigation plan which comprised the creation of a mosaic of Protected Areas and Indigenous Lands, it did not manage to overcome the impacts brought by such infrastructure improvement. As a result, the region has been suffering with invasions, deforestation and fires, as described previously. Even if the paving of BR-319 comes with a mitigation plan, Brazil currently faces a lack of environmental governance, as reflected in the numbers of deforestation, number of fires and effectiveness of surveillance activities, budget spent and so on. In other words, such a questionable project may bring unprecedented impacts to the entire Amazon system. A threat of such magnitude is a key discussion for the future of Brazil and the Amazon forest and must involve key stakeholders, affected communities and the civil society.

¹⁴ <https://periodicos.ufpa.br/index.php/ncn/article/view/241>
<https://idesam.org/siteantigo/en/estudo-mostra-impactos-da-br-319-em-municipios-do-amazonas/>

¹⁵ <https://amazoniareal.com.br/br-319-o-comeco-do-fim-para-a-floresta-amazonica-brasileira-06-10-2020/>

¹⁶ <https://amazoniareal.com.br/regiao-trans-purus-a-ultima-floresta-intacta-2-a-ameaca-do-ramal-de-tapaua/>