



PEAMUN XV

# Amazon Emergency

*Crisis Committee Background Guide*

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## Letter from the Chairs

It is a pleasure to welcome you all to the crisis committee at PEAMUN 2023. My name is Jacob Fernandez, and I am a senior at Phillips Exeter Academy and a proud member of the PEAMUN team. Outside of MUN, I keep myself busy with work on our Student Council and the Exeter Pinoy Society. I also enjoy playing on my school's Volleyball team.

This crisis is very pertinent, as we are currently seeing the devastating consequences of climate change- from record-high temperatures to devastating natural disasters worldwide. One such disaster that has caught the public eye is the fires plaguing the Amazon Rainforest for many years. Perhaps worst is the knowledge that these fires are largely purposefully man-made and are to make room for consumption purposes. Through discussion and deliberation, I hope many of you will gain a nuanced understanding of the climate crisis from the consumption perspective, appreciating what drives the world's people and finding solutions that recognize their issues.

This conference, a breakthrough from the last PEAMUN, will include two online committees. While this does create challenges, it also creates opportunities like a more extensive and diverse delegate pool. Our team has had experience dealing with online conferences as COVID-19 forced us to, so I am confident we can provide a complete MUN experience.

While much of MUN is speeches, POIs, and proposals, I want to remind you that working productively with others is the core of MUN. Understanding what drives them and what you are will sacrifice for their support. I hope this conference will be one to remember!

Sincerely,

Jacob Fernandez

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Welcome to PEAMUN 2023! My name is Akshara Sandilya and I will be one of your chairs for this committee. I am currently a sophomore from Palo Alto, California and last year, I was one of you as I participated in PEAMUN myself, so I hope you all find this opportunity as helpful as I did. Outside of MUN, I help lead our girls powerlifting club and enjoy reading, as well as being a member of our crew team.

Our committee is centered around the Amazon Rainforest and its endangered environment. As our globe is encountering rapid changes, it is crucial that we try and maintain the natural resources and communities that currently exist. But like any global issue, there are sides to this crisis, and I hope that with this committee, you come to understand the struggles of not just those you know, but those you don't.

From the delegates we have chosen, I hope to see some passionate speeches and hopefully, a working solution. Regardless, I am confident that this will be an intriguing committee from all sides, and I am very excited to meet all of you! My job is to be of help so we can work through this committee, so please feel free to reach out with any questions!

Sincerely,

Akshara Sandilya

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## **Introduction**

The Amazon Emergency Crisis Committee will focus on a forest fire which is devastating the Amazon Rainforest. The current forest fire is part of a decades-long trend of a decline of the Rainforest which saw a sharp increase in recent years. This sharp increase is attributed to the efforts of ex-President Bolsonaro who encouraged farmers to burn the rainforest for agriculture. Soy and beef exports make up ~15% and ~3% of the country's GDP respectively. President Lula, who previously served two terms as president starting in 2003, was re-elected again in 2023 and ran on cracking down on deforestation. Given the nature of the Amazon, many groups have an interest in its future including indigenous, economic and environmental groups.

## **Background/Overview**

The deforestation of the Amazon has been a near constant point of contention in Brazil. The rainforest is a major symbol of national identity for many Brazilians and indigenous tribes/peoples. Over ne third of the Amazon is recognised as indigenous territory, who rely on the rainforest for food, shelter, medicine and more.<sup>1</sup> During the 1960's the Rainforest faced a major tipping point as colonists began setting up farms which relied on slash-and-burn methods to eradicate native fauna and clear the way for crop cultivation. Since then, efforts to cut down the Amazon ramped up exponentially-with farmers eventually moving away from crop cultivation as their primary motivation, opting for Cattle ranching instead. Cattle ranching is

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<sup>1</sup> "Protected Areas and Indigenous Territories." 2012. Panda.org. 2012.  
[https://wwf.panda.org/discover/knowledge\\_hub/where\\_we\\_work/amazon/vision\\_amazon/living\\_amazon\\_initiative22/protected\\_areas\\_and\\_indigenous\\_territories/](https://wwf.panda.org/discover/knowledge_hub/where_we_work/amazon/vision_amazon/living_amazon_initiative22/protected_areas_and_indigenous_territories/).



reportedly responsible for 80% of Amazon's deforestation, which has encompassed 211,180 square miles of lost land since 1978.<sup>2</sup>

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a member of the Workers Party, won the 2003 presidential election as well as the subsequent presidential election in 2006. Between 2003-2010, 'Lula' sought to improve the economy, end government corruption and enact social reforms. According to Reuters, he left office with a record high approval rating of 87%.<sup>3</sup>

In 2018, Jair Bolsonaro won the Brazilian general election and served until 2022. His party, the Liberal Party (formerly the Party of the Republic) is known as a 'center-right' party. During his presidency, Bolsonaro rolled back protections of indigenous peoples and the Amazon rainforest, promoting deforestation in the name of agricultural and mining development. During his tenure deforestation of the Amazon rose to decade high rates, drawing extensive criticism from the international community, conservationist groups and indigenous peoples while drawing support from many farmers and economic-conservatives.

Bolsonaro lost the 2022 Brazilian General Election to Lula da Silva who ran on the preservation of the Amazon. Bolsonaro had questioned the legitimacy of voting systems leading up to the election, and pro-Bolsonaro supporters stormed Praça dos Três Poderes (The Main Governmental Complex) a week after President Lula was inaugurated. In 2023, The Superior Electoral Court banned Bolosnaro from running for eight years over 'appalling lies' about the electoral system. Since Lula da Silva's inauguration, deforestation has decreased by 34%.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> WWF. 2020. "Unsustainable Cattle Ranching." Panda.org. 2020. [https://www.panda.org/discover/knowledge\\_hub/where\\_we\\_work/amazon/amazon\\_threats/unsustainable\\_cattle\\_ranching/](https://www.panda.org/discover/knowledge_hub/where_we_work/amazon/amazon_threats/unsustainable_cattle_ranching/).

<sup>3</sup> Staff, Reuters. 2010. "Brazil's Lula to Leave with Record-High Popularity." Reuters, December 16, 2010. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-lula-poll-idUSTRE6BF4O620101216>.

<sup>4</sup> Le Monde.fr. 2023. "Brazil's Amazon Deforestation Dropped 34% in Lula's First Six Months," July 6, 2023. [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/07/06/in-lula-s-first-six-months-brazil-amazon-deforestation-dropped-34-reversing-trend-under-bolsonaro\\_6044888\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/07/06/in-lula-s-first-six-months-brazil-amazon-deforestation-dropped-34-reversing-trend-under-bolsonaro_6044888_4.html).



## History of Deforestation of Amazon Rainforest

Mass deforestation started to occur during the 1960s when the government desired to clear land for production, and by that point, had the technologies, such as chainsaws and bulldozers, to do so. However prior to the 20th century, most of the deforestation that took place was a result of subsistence farmers who looked to provide for their family and trade locally.<sup>5</sup> Now, most of these subsistence farmers have become commercial farmers who supply their product to food corporations such as JBS.

Coming into the 21st century, deforestation rates continued to grow. However, there were many anti-deforestation policies that were set in place. For example, Brazil's soy moratorium policy (SoyM) was implemented in 2006<sup>6</sup> to assert environmental governance and monitor soy supply chains. Along with other effective plans such as President Lula's PPCDAm, that will be explored later, deforestation rates dropped from 19000 km<sup>2</sup>/year to 4500 km<sup>2</sup>/year. In fact, between 2004-2012, there was "an 84 decrease in the rate of Brazilian Amazon deforestation."<sup>7</sup> The effective soy moratorium policy would end in 2016 after soy companies justified that the Rural Environmental Registry was enough regulation. Deforestation rates would steadily slow down.

President Bolsonaro would take office in 2019 and open the floodgates for unregulated deforestation practices. Land grabbers started deforesting the Amazon rainforest at alarming rates for primarily beef and soy. As more roads and infrastructure were built deeper into the rainforests, key areas in the Amazon that had historically been isolated from deforestation, had

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<sup>5</sup> "Deforestation in the Amazon." n.d. Council on Foreign Relations. <http://www.cfr.org/amazon-deforestation/>.

<sup>6</sup> Gibbs, H. K., L. Rausch, J. Munger, I. Schelly, D. C. Morton, P. Noojipady, B. Soares-Filho, P. Barreto, L. Micol, and N. F. Walker. 2015. "Brazil's Soy Moratorium." *Science* 347, no. 6220 (January): 377–78. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaa0181>.

<sup>7</sup> Silva Junior, C.H.L., Pessôa, A.C.M., Carvalho, N.S. *et al.* The Brazilian Amazon deforestation rate in 2020 is the greatest of the decade. *Nat Ecol Evol* 5, 144–145 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-01368-x>



now been exposed. Other than beef and soy, further infrastructure such as dams, houses, and roads were established that provided power and livelihood to locals.

Once President Lula took office in 2023, he made efforts to crack down on illegal deforestation. Some moves made were a push for net zero deforestation, where the amount that has been cut down is replaced with an equal amount of planting. Like this policy, much work was done to change the direction the Amazon was taking after prior events.

Unfortunately, Brazil is no longer at the stage where it can focus on preventative measures, meaning that they are focusing more on undoing past harm. With this, it is difficult to completely fix the Amazon, and now the rainforest is due to decline within the next few decades. This is partially due to global warming, with global temperature rises affecting the central, eastern and southern Amazon. The most preventable cause is man made fires and actions made in an attempt to clear land. In the past 50 years, close to 20% of the forest has been lost, with an estimated 80% of that due to providing land for cattle ranching.<sup>8</sup> Brazil's trade focused economy has caused this large demand for cattle. In the meat industry, Brazil is the largest exporter of beef in the world, making up 23% of global beef exports.<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that this a critical form of income for Brazilian citizens and corporations, as well as the government.

## **Brazil Economic Composition and Industries**

Looking at its history, Brazil was colonized by Portugal from 1500 to 1815. Through this period of time, slave labor made up most of the Brazilian economy, specifically in the fields of

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<sup>8</sup>“How Much of the Amazon Rainforest Is Left?” n.d. WorldAtlas. <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/how-much-of-the-amazon-rainforest-is-left.html>.

<sup>9</sup>“Beef.” n.d. Brazilian Farmers. <https://brazilianfarmers.com/category/discover/beef/>.





sugar cane production and mining. In this period of colonization, as Brazil was not considered a free country, their trading systems and freedom of market were severely restricted.<sup>10</sup>

After they gained independence, Brazil leaned on their agricultural might to bring in revenue and grow the economy. Given their fertile soil and large land mass, being the largest country in Southern America, farming and ranching gave them a stronger economy.<sup>11</sup>

In 2017, Brazil’s GDP reached \$2.05 billion, 63% of which came from the service sector, which consists of services pertaining to the supply chain as well as consumer services. Known for its agriculture and food production, Brazil has an estimated \$21.8 trillion worth of natural resource commodities which includes gold, iron, and timber.<sup>12</sup> However, retrieving them often happens at the expense of the environment.

Currently, Brazil is the largest beef exporter in the world, taking up about 25% of the world’s global beef exports.<sup>13</sup> Even with their massive produce quantities, demand is still very high for beef and competition between farmers is tough. Demand comes mainly from China, the country which purchases the most beef from Brazil and imports approximately 34% of the world’s beef.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, in the

<b>Major Players in the World Beef Market</b>					
2023 Forecasts of Production, Consumption, and Trade					
1,000 MT, Carcass Weight Equivalent					
Top Producers			Top Consumers		
Country	2023F	% World	Country	2023F	% World
United States	12,053	20%	United States	12,220	21%
Brazil	10,560	18%	China	10,855	19%
China	7,350	12%	Brazil	7,635	13%
European Union	6,700	11%	European Union	6,460	11%
India	4,425	7%	India	2,950	5%
Total	41,088	69%	Total	40,120	70%
Top Importers			Top Exporters		
Country	2023F	% World	Country	2023F	% World
China	3,525	34%	Brazil	3,000	25%
United States	1,542	15%	Australia	1,525	13%
Japan	805	8%	India	1,475	12%
Korea, South	610	6%	United States	1,402	11%
European Union	410	4%	Argentina	760	6%
Total	6,892	67%	Total	8,162	67%

Source: USDA-FAS

<sup>10</sup>Jobson, José. 2019. “The Brazilian Economy during the Colonial Period,” April (April). <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.693>.

<sup>11</sup>Valdes, Constanza. 2022. “USDA ERS - Brazil’s Momentum as a Global Agricultural Supplier Faces Headwinds.” [www.ers.usda.gov](https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2022/september/brazil-s-momentum-as-a-global-agricultural-supplier-faces-headwinds/). September 27, 2022.

<sup>12</sup>O’Neill, Aaron. 2022. “Brazil - Share of Economic Sectors in the Gross Domestic Product 2009-2019.” Statista. 2022. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/254407/share-of-economic-sectors-in-the-gdp-in-brazil/>.

<sup>13</sup>“World Beef Trade.” 2023. [iowafarmbureau.com](https://www.iowafarmbureau.com). April 17, 2023.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid



United States, the largest source of beef is also from Brazil.

And, like any field of business, competition is tough between different groups and ranches. This need to produce more and more cattle has been one of the main contributors to deforestation of the Amazon, with the cleared space being used to farm more cattle. And given Brazil's stance in the global economy as the largest beef exporter, their actions concerning these cattle ranches do affect the rest of the world.

Another one of Brazil's main exports are soybeans, estimated to take up \$39 billion of the total \$288 billion the country exported in 2021.<sup>15</sup> However, soya farming has also continued to expand in the Amazon on land that was previously cleared for cattle but then repurposed for soy and other cash crops. According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, several environmental associations found that much of this soya was found to be traded by a handful of agri-traders, including Bunge and Cargill, to Europe.<sup>16</sup> The article stated, "In 2021, Spain imported 878,000 tonnes of soya from municipalities with at least 7 sq km of hidden deforestation on soya farms."<sup>17</sup> As ranchers sell to farmers at a profit, this can prompt farmers to move deeper into the forest, where land is cheaper. More will be explained later in this background guide about soybean production.

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<sup>15</sup>OEC. 2017. "OEC - Brazil (BRA) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners." Oec.world. 2017. <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/bra>.

<sup>16</sup>"'Deforestation-Free' Soya Farms Still Tearing down the Amazon." n.d. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (En-GB). <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2022-02-10/farms-touting-deforestation-free-soya-still-tearing-down-the-amazon>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid



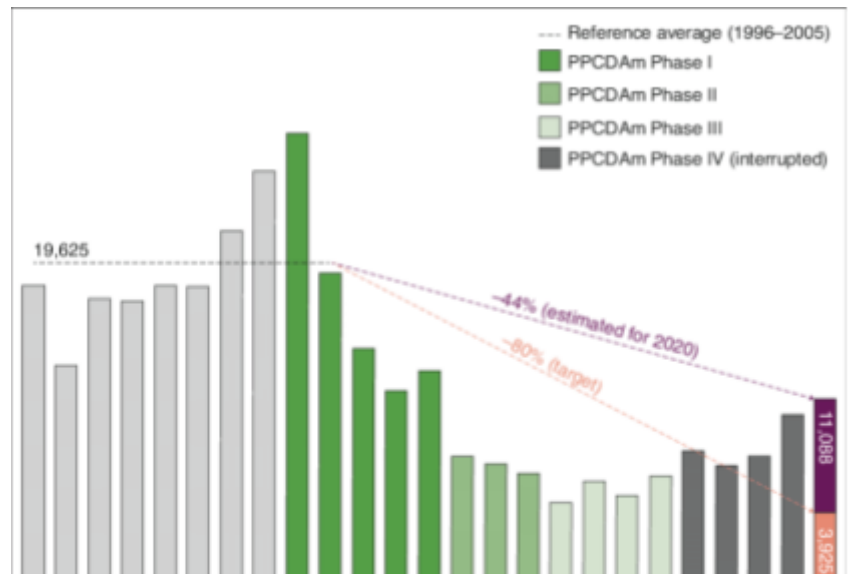
## Current Deforestation Mitigation Tactics

### The PPCDAm

In 2004, when 28,000 square kilometers of the Amazon had been cut down, the newly elected President Lula set up the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (PPCDAm). This project was formulated with the aim of continuously reducing deforestation rates and bringing about the conditions for a transition toward a

sustainable development model in the region. Initial iterations of the PPCDAm were problematic as the plans isolated environmental agencies as their primary vehicles for change. Soon later, the project shifted to a coordinated approach involving several entities and actors within the federal government and the private sector. The PPCDAm has relied on “three thematic axes” to

guide government action. These are i) Land Tenure and Territorial Planning, ii) Environmental Monitoring and Control, and iii) Fostering Sustainable Production. The plan laid out four phases of implementation across 15 years. Over Lula’s Presidency, the program accomplished much of what it intended to do, reaching its targeted reductions of deforestation. This was accomplished through a largely data driven approach which used satellite data from Brazil’s National Institute of Space Research (INSE) to detect areas experiencing deforestation-the program used to do this



The Brazilian Amazon deforestation rate in 2020 is the greatest of the decade - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Deforestation-on-the-rise-Official-deforestation-rates-for-the-Brazilian-Amazon-taken\\_fig1\\_349605410](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Deforestation-on-the-rise-Official-deforestation-rates-for-the-Brazilian-Amazon-taken_fig1_349605410) [accessed 9 Aug, 2023]



was called DETER INTESO. Satellite imaging has also been crucial in demonstrating the impact of Bolosnoaro's Presidency which, without explanation, cut funding to the PPCDAm in 2019.

Funding of the PPCDAm has largely come from the Norwegian Government. Since 2009, the Norwegian government has donated 1.2 Billion USD distributed between 5 donations. The Federal Republic of German and Petrobras have also made substantial donations totaling 68 million USD and 7.7 million USD respectively. The Amazon support fund is currently worth 674 million USD and has boasted distributing 599 million USD to its projects.

The PPCDAm maintains its coordinated approach to completing its directive largely through the BIDAS, which evaluates proposed projects from governmental and private entities then designates funds accordingly. Highlighted projects include Productive Socio-Biodiversity, which entails the production of economically viable native fauna with native populations and small scale farmers. Additionally the creation of Sustainable Settlements in the Amazon which has created the infrastructure for sustained sustainable economic development for small Amazon based communities.

## **Bolsonaro's Legacy**

Jair Bolsonaro took office as the president of Brazil in 2019, and left in 2022. While he no longer serves the Brazilian government, his legacy lingers throughout the country.

Prior to his presidency, Bolsonaro held governmental positions starting in military high school and ranging to being a congressman for 27 years.<sup>18</sup> However, in his rise to power, he created an image appealing to conservative citizens, acting as an outsider. His campaign persona

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<sup>18</sup> Wallenfeldt, Jeff. 2022. "Jair Bolsonaro | Biography & Facts." Encyclopedia Britannica. March 17, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jair-Bolsonaro>.



often earned him comparisons to the American president, Donald Trump. Both ran on conservative agendas with a history of some scandals but also government involvement.

Bolsonaro won the presidential election using the opinions of conservative Brazil, some of whom still support him today. However, throughout his campaigning and well into the presidency, Bolsonaro received equal if not more backlash for his views. His comments about sexual assault, minority groups, sexuality, and military sparked a social media movement under the hashtag #EleNãO (#NotHim). Reviews from international press comparing him to Trump did not help either, with many calling for both of their impeachments.

But specifically, during his presidency, his actions and policies towards the Amazon lost him a lot of support. During a notable speech given to foreign press, Bolsonaro claimed that “the Amazon is Brazil’s, not yours.”<sup>19</sup> He also supported deforestation in attempts to mine the land and make room for other purposes. Not only did he not try to protect the Amazon from ongoing struggles, but he supported many of them and encouraged their continuance. This is reflected in many laws, such as his leniency on punishment for deforestation, a halt in recognizing and granting indigenous tribes their land in the Amazon, as well as just a general lack of resources to aiding the issue.

While Bolosnaro does not hold power anymore, the long term effect his policies and presidency have had could be considered irreparable damage. Within his first three years, the Amazon lost 8.4 million acres, largely from man made fires, and that land is difficult to regain.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Phillips, Dom. 2019. “Bolsonaro Declares ‘the Amazon Is Ours’ and Calls Deforestation Data ‘Lies.’” The Guardian. The Guardian. July 22, 2019.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/19/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-amazon-rainforest-deforestation>.

<sup>20</sup>Jones, Benji. 2022. “Earth’s Future Depends on the Amazon. This Month, It’s up for a Vote.” Vox. September 29, 2022.

<https://www.vox.com/down-to-earth/2022/9/29/23373427/amazon-rainforest-brazil-jair-bolsonaro-lula-deforestation>



## Lula's Restoration Campaign

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva took office in 2023 as the president of Brazil. During his campaign, his restoration policies were crucial to gaining support and winning the election. His restoration campaign was a direct effect of decisions made during Bolsonaro's reign. Within the first six months of being in office, Lula took considerable steps to eliminating deforestation, with deforestation rates dropping 34%.<sup>21</sup> Inside legislation, he reversed policies allowing man made deforestation and burning of the forest, as well as creating new policies. His most notable long term plan was the net zero deforestation plan, in which the amount of forest lost would be matched and re-planted in an effort to preserve ecological systems.

Additionally, with indigenous lands being 98% within the Amazon, Lula responded to plead for tribes to be recognized and heard.<sup>22</sup> He established the Ministry on Indigenous Peoples and resumed land demarcations.

Supporters of Bolsonaro have been vocal in their dislike for Lula's sharp turn away from previous policies. Those are not his only critics, even indigenous leaders are not satisfied with his tenure so far. He promised many things to the native peoples and has not yet delivered on all fronts, with thousands of tribes living in poverty or waiting to be let back into their homes.

Overall though, Lula's efforts have made a needed intervention in the state of the Amazon, but there is still more to be done. Lula recently unveiled a plan to completely halt deforestation within the Amazon by 2030: an ambitious goal. His plan relies not only on the laws he has made so far of restricting human actions within the forest, but also by upholding international standards in environmentalism. Part of this includes increasing conservation land.

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<sup>21</sup>"In Lula's First Six Months, Brazil Amazon Deforestation Dropped 34%, Reversing Trend under Bolsonaro." 2023. AP News. July 6, 2023.

<https://apnews.com/article/brazil-amazon-deforestation-lula-climate-change-2fe225f71a8f484e8d365ea641acd65e>.

<sup>22</sup> Survival International. 2019. "Brazilian Indians." Survivalinternational.org. 2019.

<https://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/brazilian>.



Lula increased conservation in the unit by roughly 4,000 acres, which upset some. His campaign highlighted the installation of 140 million acres of public lands, yet his plan moves towards more conservation units. However, he has remained firmly against deforestation, vetoing a Congress bill that allowed the completion of a deforestation project. It is also important to note that Lula's term ends in 2027, so this plan requires the cooperation of the government as a whole.<sup>23</sup> With the Amazon approaching decline within the next few decades, continuing on Lula's policies may be the step Brazil needs to take.

### **Case Study: Soybean Production**

In a 2022 Guardian article authored by Lucy Jordan, Andrew Wasley et al., more than 400 square miles of rainforest has been felled to expand farms growing soya in Mato Grosso, a Brazilian state, over 10 years.<sup>24</sup> Despite legal protections that protected the rainforest from soya production, the Guardian investigation has found that there was a loophole which allowed for deforestation on soya farms.

In 2019, Tesco and other retailers and major companies wrote to Bolsonaro to urge his government to stop further deforestation of the Amazon for soy production. On the other hand, Aprosoja, the Brazilian soy farmers' association, mounted a campaign to end a voluntary ban on trading crops harvested from newly cleared land.<sup>25</sup> All of this happened during a period where Bolsonaro has come under heavy criticism for prioritizing increased economic development of

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<sup>23</sup> Press, Associated. 2023. "Brazil's Lula Lays out Plan to Halt Amazon Deforestation." POLITICO. June 6, 2023. <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/06/06/brazils-lula-lays-out-plan-to-halt-amazon-deforestation-00100342>.

<sup>24</sup> "Loophole' Allowing for Deforestation on Soya Farms in Brazil's Amazon." 2022. The Guardian. February 10, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/feb/10/loophole-allowing-for-deforestation-on-soya-farms-in-brazil-s-amazon>.

<sup>25</sup> Jolly, Jasper, and Jillian Ambrose. 2019. "UK Firms Urge Brazil to Stop Amazon Deforestation for Soy Production." The Guardian. The Guardian. December 3, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/03/uk-firms-urge-brazil-to-stop-amazon-deforestation-for-soy-production>.



the Amazon during a period of deliberate forest fires from cattle farmers. At the center of this debate has been a piece of legislation that has proven to be successful in eliminating deforestation from Amazon soybean supply chains: the 2006 Amazon Soy Moratorium.

The moratorium is an agreement under which, according to WWF, commodities traders agreed to “avoid the purchase of soybeans from areas that were deforested after 2008.”<sup>26</sup> First implemented in 2006 after a Greenpeace campaign that brought attention to soybean farming in the Amazon, the moratorium was renewed every 2 years until 2016, when it was indefinitely implemented. According to Lisa Rauch, researcher at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, “less than 2% of the total soy area in the 2018/2019 crop year was non-compliant with the ASM” and that “ASM (Amazon Soy Moratorium) contributed to the reduction of overall Amazon deforestation rates.”<sup>27</sup>

This case study reveals something interesting about the predicament of the soybean industry in the Amazon. The moratorium put in place is, in fact, a voluntary traders’ agreement that was successful in preventing further deforestation from the Amazon. However, from the perspective of local farmers and corporations, given that soybean is among one of Brazil’s main exports, this agreement hurts them and their ability to make a living. However, according to Abiove, a group that represents global grain traders in Brazil, such a move could hurt farmers, as it would “create backlash against Brazilian goods in European markets, where consumer demand more environmentally sustainable farming.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, as the moratorium stipulates that traders could not buy products grown on areas of the Amazon cleared after 2008, this agreement had not

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<sup>26</sup>———. 2021. “Brazil’s Amazon Soy Moratorium.” WWF Forest Solutions. February 4, 2021. <https://forestsolutions.panda.org/case-studies/brazils-amazon-soy-moratorium>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Reuters. 2019. “Brazil Farmers Push Traders to End Amazon Soy Moratorium,” November 5, 2019, sec. Commodities News. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-soybeans-moratorium/brazil-farmers-push-traders-to-end-amazon-soy-moratorium-idUSKBN1XF2J6>.





stopped the growth of farming in the Amazon as farmers continue to expand soy planting in the parts of the Amazon cleared before 2008. Another issue that needs to be addressed here is the balance between environmental sustainability versus the lives of those who steward the land: where should we draw the line?

### **Case Study: Ituna-Itatá and Indigenous Tensions**

The New York Times Magazine has recently featured a groundbreaking article titled, “The War for the Rainforest,” discussing how Ituna-Itatá, a Brazilian preserved originally set aside for an indigenous group, has now been heavily deforested. According to William Langewiesche, the article’s author, the creation of indigenous reserves is meant to “slow deforestation through broad restrictions on extractive activities while simultaneously protecting Indigenous cultures.”<sup>29</sup> However, with Bolsonaro’s tenure and his starkly exploitative policies, cultural diversity and natural preservation seemingly is not part of their priorities.

Edward Luz, an environmental lawyer and anthropologist, was hired by a local association of settlers to justify the policing that is currently taking place there by IBAMA (Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente), which was formed not to protect Indigenous groups but to enforce environmental laws. When confronted by IBAMA forces, Luz was arrested while protecting his client’s rights. The issue of indigenous rights is in hot contention. There are four key parties: the indigenous groups themselves, IBAMA, the settlers and exploiters, and the government.

According to Langewiesche, there are “more than 200 distinct Indigenous groups, the largest of which number more than 20,000 people, and the smallest in the hundreds.”<sup>30</sup> What

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<sup>29</sup> William Langewiesche, “The War for the Rainforest,” The New York Times, March 16, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/16/magazine/amazon-rainforest-ituna-itata.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid



makes the case study of Ituna-Itatá interesting is that the people who live in this area is classed as extremely isolated or “uncontacted” bands that, under Brazilian law, are given special protections. Therefore, this region has exemplified the tensions between those who would preserve the Amazon and those who want to exploit it.

From the perspective of settlers and loggers, they claim that the reserve was “founded on the wishful thinking of agenda-driven bureaucrats.”<sup>31</sup> They say that no Indigenous people reside there now, and maybe never did. Given the special classification that the Brazilian government has placed on the people that live in this area, the exploiters use this to justify their operations in this area. IBAMA has been cracking down on

From the perspective of the locals, the rampant military and IMABA operations have forced them to isolate. Langwiesche describes, “Many residents are armed and all, it seems, are angry. Agents of FUNAI and IBAMA urged me to avoid the place lest I be mistaken for an environmentalist and assaulted.”<sup>32</sup> Many of the people living there claimed to be displaced by IBAMA’s helicopter raids and portrayed themselves as subsistence farmers raising their families.

From the perspective of IBAMA, the Indigenous groups are not exempt from environmental laws and that the settlements of indigenous groups are infringing on existing laws to keep preserves intact. Hence, they have not been afraid to burn down settlements. As Langwiesche recounts what happened to Luz, “When Luz predicted that someone would die — meaning anyone would or could — the agent understood it as a threat. Luz went to Brasília, where he met with Salles, then flew back to Altamira and got himself arrested in Ituna-Itatá.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Ibid



Interestingly, from the perspective of then-Bolsonaro's government, they were naming an evangelical missionary named Ricardo Lopes Dias to perhaps persuade indigenous groups to enter the mainstream of modern Brazilian life.

With these tensions in place, efforts to mitigate deforestation is all the more difficult as exploiters clash with indigenous groups, IBAMA while trying to stem the exploiters from accessing the region, is also clashing and displacing indigenous groups.

This section of the article could provide useful insight:

*As Luz puts it, the Amazon is a rich but impoverished place. The dilemma is simple and intractable. Despite its size, the forest cannot accommodate all the demands that are placed on it. It may endure in patches on some hard-fought reserves, but elsewhere it will disappear. In its place will come homesteads, followed by consolidated properties, followed by denuded scrublands with dirt roads that turn muddy among mines that scar the earth.*

*The struggle over Ituna-Itatá dates back to a time, more than a decade before Edward Luz roared into the clearing to confront the agents of IBAMA, when the forest had been cut down for miles around Anapu, a lawless settlement on the Trans-Amazonian, and territorial clashes were common. The most violent of them lay an hour to the south along the receding frontiers where subsistence farmers were invading forests on behalf of wealthy speculators filing fraudulent claims.<sup>34</sup>*

## **Current Predicament**

Currently, as one of the most delicate ecosystems in this world, the Amazon rainforest is at risk of extinction of species, limited land due to fires, and an unstable ecosystem and environment. Much of this is manmade, the key contributors being the farming industry, general fossil fuels and climate change, urban development, and mining. There is a continuing pressure from the international community that is pressing down on Brazil, the nation that contains most of the Amazon rainforest.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid



Recently, Ex-President Jair Bolsonaro openly encouraged cattle farmers to continue to burn and deforest the Amazon Rainforest, exclaiming that the ‘Amazon is Ours’, an eerily similar statement to the one he made in 2019. Since the consumption needs of Brazil for its cattle and soy exports continue to increase, the need for deforestation is becoming increasingly important. The farmers, who supply their beef and other commodities to processing and exporting companies like JBS and Minerva, have become desperate. The international community, along with many environmental activists, are concerned. President Lula da Silva has organized an emergency assembly of many key figures related to the deforestation problem. The media is closely watching.

How should the country and its people move forward against both a growing consumption and environmental issue? Not only do these fires concern the Amazon’s delicate ecosystem, but they also affect those who depend on regions of the Amazon for culture, resources, and residence. Brazil is currently home to 900,000 indigenous peoples with their reserved lands being upwards of 98% in the Amazon. While Lula made a promise to recognize and protect indigenous lands, his efforts have been criticized as not moving fast enough. Additionally, it is not completely agreed on whose land the Amazon is, given both the government’s ownership and the native peoples history with it.<sup>35</sup> Given this fact, how will the government solve the issue economically while also respecting the native tribes?

### **Note on Committee Direction**

After Bolsonaro’s advice and encouragement for farmers to continue deforestation and burning the rainforest, all parties involved must figure out the best course of action to take.

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<sup>35</sup>“Indigenous Groups, Catholic Leaders Growing Impatient with Lula in Brazil.” 2023. Crux. July 29, 2023. <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-americas/2023/07/indigenous-groups-catholic-leaders-growing-impatient-with-lula-in-brazil>.



While debating during this committee, remember that the Amazon deforestation isn't an environmental problem so much as a consumption one. As stated before, a large portion of Brazil's economy is built on beef and soy exports. Depending on your character, you must balance this consumption and environmental problem in tandem. Furthermore, you will explore the nuances between the government and its key figures, businesses, indigenous peoples, and consumers. You must also be careful of what you say as debate may be leaked to the media and your views on the issue may hurt your image, especially figures representing companies that have pledged for sustainable cattle farming and reducing deforestation. Therefore, you must also wade through schemes and corruption as the people around you pursue their goals, or be the one partaking in it as well.

### **Questions to Consider**

- Based on your character's background, what do they gain or lose from the deforestation of the Amazon?
- What are the benefits of deforestation in regards to Brazil's consumption needs?
- What are the main commodities being produced as a result of the Amazon's deforestation (other than beef or soy)?
- What environmental threat does deforestation pose to Brazil and the rest of the world?
- How can we balance consumption needs and the environmental dilemma?
- Who is being affected by the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest?
- Are your character's views on the problem controversial, if so how will you navigate through that without it getting leaked or putting a target on your back?
- Who ultimately has to sacrifice here, and what are they sacrificing?
- Who ultimately gets to succeed here, and what are they succeeding in?



## Position Papers

At PEAMUN XV, we believe that position papers are crucial in encouraging delegates to have a thorough understanding of their delegation and the topic. In addition, they will help you think of solutions and possible talking points. However, it is not required for our one-day conference. If you would wish to submit one, please email to [jgfernandez@exeter.edu](mailto:jgfernandez@exeter.edu) and [asandilya@exeter.edu](mailto:asandilya@exeter.edu) before the conference begins. Feedback from the dais will be available upon request, though the timing of feedback is at the chair's discretion due to the potential for the volume of requests to exceed the dais's capacity.

## Character Profiles

### Mauro Mendes

Mendes is the current governor of Mato Grosso (elected 2018), which is a significant producer of cattle, soy, cotton, and other agricultural products in Brazil.<sup>36</sup> He is a former mayor of Cuiaba (2012), where he established himself as a business man in the metallurgy sector.<sup>37</sup>

### Davi Kopenawa

Kopenawa is the leader and spokesperson for the Yanomami tribe of Brazil. The Yanomami are a large tribe located in the Amazon Rainforest on the border of Brazil and Venezuela. He is known

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<sup>36</sup>“Mato Grosso | State, Brazil.” n.d. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mato-Grosso>.

<sup>37</sup>“Mauro Mendes, Do DEM, é Eleito Governador de Mato Grosso No 1o Turno.” 2018. G1. October 7, 2018. <https://g1.globo.com/mt/mato-grosso/eleicoes/2018/noticia/2018/10/07/mauro-mendes-do-dem-e-eleito-governador-de-mato-grosso-no-1o-turno.ghtml>.



for being a powerful advocate against the destruction of the Amazon and the wellbeing of its residents.<sup>38</sup>

### Carlos Fávaro

Favaro is the current Brazilian Minister of Agriculture and Livestock (appointed by Lula da Silva). He started his political career after spending time in agribusiness.<sup>39</sup> A senator from Mato Grosso, he was president of the Soybean & Corn Producers Association of Mato Grosso (Aprosoja-MT) from 2012-2015.<sup>40</sup>

### Edward Luz

Luz is an anthropologist, environmental lawyer, and right-wing activist. Luz was raised in the Amazon by evangelical Brazilian missionaries, affiliates of a Florida-based group called the New Tribes Mission. He was a consultant for the camp promoting commercial interests in the region and arguing against the idea of exceptional Indigenous rights.

### Wang Wentao

Wentao is the Secretary of the CPC Leadership Group of the Ministry of Commerce and the current Chinese minister of Commerce, appointed in 2020.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>“Carlos Henrique Baqueta Fávaro — Ministério Da Agricultura E Pecuária.” n.d. Www.gov.br. <https://www.gov.br/agricultura/pt-br/composicao/carlos-henrique-baqueta-favaro>.

<sup>40</sup>“Carlos Favaro New Brazilian Minister of Agriculture.” n.d. Grainews. Accessed August 8, 2023. <https://news.agropages.com/News/NewsDetail---45145.htm>.

<sup>41</sup>“Who Is China’s ‘Tall and Loud’ Commerce Minister Who Once Sold Photocopiers?” 2021. South China Morning Post. September 5, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3147271/wang-wentao-who-chinas-tall-and-loud-commerce-minister-who>.



### Marina Silva

Silva is the current Brazilian Minister of Environment and Climate Change, appointed in 2023 by President Lula da Silva. She grew up near the Amazon, and is an acclaimed environmental activist.<sup>42</sup>

### Ricardo Salles

Salles was a former Brazilian Minister of Environment and Climate change under former President Bolsonaro. However, he resigned from the job following public pressure and backlash. Salles term as minister was polluted with high deforestation rates and various investigations and allegations,<sup>43</sup>

### Sonia Guajajara

Born in Boa Vista, Guajajara is the current Brazilian Minister of Native Peoples, appointed by current President Lula da Silva in May 2023. It is noteworthy that this ministry of Indigenous Peoples is relatively new.

### Geraldo Alckmin

Alckmin is the current Brazilian Minister of Development, Industry, Trade, and Services and the Vice President of Brazil, appointed by current president Lula da Silva. He previously served as the Governor of Sao Paulo from 2001 to 2006, and 2011 to 2018. During his tenure, he invested in large, state-run projects, health, and education programs funded through privatization programs that sold off public and state companies.

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<sup>42</sup>“Climate Hero: Marina Silva.” n.d. One Earth. <https://www.oneearth.org/climate-hero-marina-silva/>.

<sup>43</sup>International, Survival. n.d. “Davi Biography.” [Survivalinternational.org](https://survivalinternational.org).

<https://survivalinternational.org/davibiogr>Yeung, Rodrigo Pedroso, Jessie. 2021. “Brazilian Environment Minister





### Guo Lijun

Lijun is the CEO of Chinese multinational meat and food processing company based in Hong Kong, WH Group.<sup>44</sup> In January 2020, Brazil meatpacker JBS SA signed a memorandum of understanding with WH group to supply up to 3 billion reais (\$717.26 million) of fresh beef, poultry, and pork per year to the Chinese market.<sup>45</sup>

### Katherine Tai

Tai serves as the United States Trade Representative, appointed in 2021.<sup>46</sup> From 2011 until her departure, Tai became chief counsel for China trade enforcement. Afterwards, she became trade counsel for the House Ways and Means Committee. During her tenure, Tai helped negotiations with the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, advocating for stronger labor provisions.

### Gilberto Tomazoni

Tomazoni is the CEO and poultry division president of JBS SA, a large Brazilian meat and food processing company.<sup>47</sup> They signed a memorandum of understanding with WH Group to supply hundreds of millions of dollars worth of beef, poultry, and pork per year to the Chinese market.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>“WH Group | Company Overview & News.” n.d. Forbes. Accessed August 8, 2023.  
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<sup>45</sup>Reuters. 2020. “Brazil’s JBS to Supply China with up to \$717 Mln per Year in Deal with WH Group,” January 27, 2020, sec. Consumer Products & Retail News.  
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<sup>46</sup>“Katherine Tai.” n.d. United States Trade Representative.  
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<sup>47</sup>“JBS | Company Overview & News.” n.d. Forbes. Accessed August 8, 2023.  
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<sup>48</sup>Reuters. 2020b. “Brazil’s JBS to Supply China with up to \$717 Mln per Year in Deal with WH Group,” January 27, 2020, sec. Consumer Products & Retail News.  
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### Rui Mendonca Junior

Mendonca is the CEO of Marfrig South America, a large Brazilian food processing company, and one of the region's leading beef producers.<sup>49</sup> In 2016, they became the first Brazilian company to export raw beef to the United States.<sup>50</sup>

### Andre Nassar

Nassar is the President of Abiove, a global grain traders association. Abiove, which stands for the Brazilian Association of Vegetable Oil Industries, represents 19 companies producing meal, vegetable oils, cooperates with policymaking, and promotes research based on the expansion of its main commodities: soy, sunflower, castor beans, corn.

### Bartolomeu Braz Pereira

Pereira is the president of Aprosoja Brazil, a soy producer association. In a 2019 interview, Braz said, “we believe that the new government should reduce public spending, invest in infrastructure, expand Brazil's trade partners, invest in bilateral relations, make the business environment more transparent and give Brazil a greater role in the world.”<sup>51</sup>

### Carlota Aquino

She is the current Executive Director of IDEC (Brazilian Institute of Consumer Defense). She worked at the Consumer Protection Institute (IDEC) from 1997 to 2014. She was an advisor at

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<sup>49</sup>2023. Fitchratings.com. 2023.

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<sup>51</sup>“‘Loophole’ Allowing for Deforestation on Soya Farms in Brazil’s Amazon.” 2022. The Guardian. February 10, 2022.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/feb/10/loophole-allowing-for-deforestation-on-soya-farms-in-brazil-s-amazon>.



IEMA between 2015 and 2016. She worked as a project consultant for environmental and human rights organizations between 2016 and 2018. She was a member of the Fiscal Council of Brazilian Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (ABONG) between 2006 and 2014. She is currently a member of the Fiscal Council of IEMA and Greenpeace.



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