



THE  
**Ricardo Salles**  
**FAKEBOOK**



**A GUIDE TO THE FALSEHOODS AND  
RHETORICAL TRICKS OF BRAZIL'S  
ENVIRONMENT MINISTER**

**COP25 edition**

December 2019

**Top 3 Facts you did not know  
about Ricardo Salles:**

**1.**

**Told the Brazilian media he had a  
masters' from Yale University.  
He doesn't.**

**2.**

**Was convicted for  
environmental fraud two weeks  
before taking office.**

**3.**

**Under investigation for illicit  
enrichment. Justice has ordered  
disclosure of his bank and  
telephone records.**

**Our goal was to create a small,  
compact document  
that displayed a few of  
Ricardo Salles' inconsistencies.  
Turns out we needed 34 pages.  
Please bear with us.**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brazil is arriving at COP25 in Madrid with its environmental policy under global scrutiny. The 30% surge in Amazon deforestation rates in 2019 to nearly 10,000 square kilometers is the latest addition to an already grisly scene of murder of indigenous leaders and widespread fires.

Far from being intimidated by international criticism, the far-right government of Jair Bolsonaro is seeing the climate conference (which he refused to host in the first place) as a propaganda opportunity. It plans to blackmail rich countries into contributing funds to “sustainably develop” the Amazon region, in exchange for a softer stance on carbon markets, a topic of negotiation that Brazil has been blocking.

Brazil's head of delegation in Madrid, environment minister Ricardo Salles, has publicly stated that Brazil “never got its due” for past achievements in reducing deforestation. Joined by governors from Amazonian states, he will push for new international funds like the one he wants to create with the Inter-American Development Bank – even though Brazil is not using the international funds it already has in place for deforestation control. Salles said ahead of the conference that Brazil should receive US\$ 10 billion a year (10% of the whole US\$ 100 billion climate finance pledge by rich countries).

Some of the data used by the minister and other Brazilian officials to back up claims of sustainability are distorted, some are cherry-picked and some are simply lies.

In fact, the current Amazon destruction crisis is one of the government's own making. Mr. Salles has dismantled environmental governance that has been in place in Brazil

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

since 1992, by changing the Ministry's structure, shelving deforestation control plans, and leaving two federal law environment agencies grounded. Budget figures suggest there is no environmental policy being made in Brazil: the Ministry's budget appropriation this year as of November has been around US\$ 740,000 (compared to nearly US\$ 9 million last year).

Efforts are also underway to kill environmental and human rights regulations so as to legalize activities that are illegal today, such as wildcat mining and logging in indigenous lands. In November, the government overturned a ten year-old ban of sugarcane expansion into the Amazon.

On the other hand, government rhetoric has encouraged environmental criminals in the Amazon and elsewhere in Brazil – Salles has famously called illegal loggers "hard-working citizens". The official deforestation figures are the logical consequence of that management style.

The minister is a controversial figure. A lawyer with ties to the rural lobby, he was convicted for environmental fraud two weeks before taking office. He has been accused of changing the management plan of a protected area to benefit business. A few weeks before COP25, Justice ordered his bank and phone records to be disclosed in an illicit enrichment probe.

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# INTRODUCTION

On September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Brazilian Federal Public Prosecutor's Office issued an unprecedented recommendation: it told a Cabinet minister to stop lying and bullying his own team<sup>1</sup>.

The recipient of the message was Ricardo Salles, the controversial lawyer that Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro picked as his environment minister. The last member of the Cabinet to be appointed, Mr. Salles has nonetheless dazzled the President by delivering with unrivalled efficiency on one of Bolsonaro's key campaign trail promises: to dismantle the environmental protections that made Brazil a leader in sustainable development and in addressing climate change.

Salles' nomination had the support of the powerful rural lobby, which used to be frequently at odds with the environment ministry. Two weeks before becoming a minister, he was tried for and convicted of environmental fraud while he was state Secretary of the Environment in São Paulo State (prosecutors say he changed the management plan of a protected area to benefit big business). He is also being investigated for illicit enrichment. In November, Justice ordered his bank and telephone records to be disclosed. He denies any wrongdoing.

Under Salles' tenure, Brazil has seen the extinction of climate change governance, the scrapping of deforestation control plans, the freezing of the world's most successful REDD+ initiative, and the shrinking of civil society participation in environmental policy.

Under Salles, the federal agencies in charge of environmental law enforcement (Ibama) and managing protected areas (ICMBio) were both grounded and their staff perse-

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mpf.mp.br/pgr/documentos/Recomendaon42019aoM-MA.pdf>

## INTRODUCTION

cuted under false allegations. This led the Public Prosecutor's Office to urge the minister to "refrain from making public statements that, without proof, may put into question the work of Ibama and ICMBio agents".

The consequence of the minister's management was the return of runaway devastation in the Amazon: official 2019 figures released in November by Inpe, Brazil's National Space Research Institute, put deforestation at 9,762 km<sup>2</sup>, the worst in a decade – a 30% increase from the previous year.

This will push Brazil's emissions of carbon dioxide -- already at 1.939 billion tonnes<sup>2</sup>-- further up and make it harder for the world's 7<sup>th</sup> biggest climate polluter to fulfill its domestic and international climate commitments.

The data came as a surprise to no one. Since June, deforestation alerts given by Inpe's quick-surveillance system Deter had been signalling runaway deforestation – a 98% rise in June and staggering 278% in July. Instead of doing something about it, Salles and Bolsonaro chose to shoot the messenger: the President fired Inpe's director and the environment minister questioned the data, saying, without presenting any evidence, that Inpe's alerts system was flawed and insufficient for orienting environmental inspectors on the ground.

The rise in deforestation was followed by a spike in fires as soon as the dry season kicked in. Even though 2019 was not an abnormally dry year<sup>3</sup>, the number of fires escalated in August -- the highest in a decade-- and put the Amazon at the center of a global crisis. The Bolsonaro administration first denied the problem, then said NGOs were the arsonists, and finally deployed troops to fight the fires. It then launched a massive propaganda campaign to calm down investors and consumers by claiming it was on top of the problem. But this government is the problem.

<sup>2</sup> [http://plataforma.seeg.eco.br/total\\_emission](http://plataforma.seeg.eco.br/total_emission)

<sup>3</sup> <https://ipam.org.br/bibliotecas/technical-note-amazon-on-fire/>

## INTRODUCTION

In September, Ricardo Salles was assigned the task of greenwashing the Bolsonaro government during his North American/European tour. By then, massive oil blobs from a mystery mid-ocean spill were hitting Brazil's Northeastern coast. Salles spent two weeks overseas without commanding a single response measure to the spill. He only activated Brazil's oil contingency plan in October 11<sup>th</sup>, 41 days after the first blobs washed ashore<sup>4</sup>. The spill was the biggest marine disaster in the country's history. As of November, it was ongoing. Salles suggested Greenpeace was behind the crime. We kid you not.

A gifted communicator, the minister is capable of amazing rhetorical tricks. He often controls his media exposure so he is very rarely interviewed by journalists who cover the environmental beat. Under pressure, he can make up data without even blushing. He has a talent for misleading journalists, the public and other stakeholders. And he is a master at forward escapes: in response to the catastrophic deforestation data, he promised to squeeze conservation money from rich countries at COP25. The slogan of that spin counterstrike is "results-driven environmentalism". The "results" are plain for all to see: more deforestation, more greenhouse gases, more violence and less transparency.

In this booklet, we will debunk some of Salles' most frequent fallacies about five issues: land use in Brazil, Brazilian agriculture, climate change, the Amazon and governance. Our sources are referenced in the footnotes.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.istoedinheiro.com.br/salles-so-acionou-plano-de-contingencia-no-ne-41-dias-apos-desastre-diz-oficio/>



# WHY A FAKEBOOK?

It's more than a bad pun.

Fakebooks are an essential tool of jazz and bossa nova musicians. They contain dozens of standards and the basic information about each song (chords, melody, and sometimes lyrics), so that the musician can navigate any gig without getting lost in the tunes and even improvise on them.

We believe this this booklet will be useful to journalists, government officials and investors who may have the misfortune of being exposed to minister Ricardo Salles' rhetoric. By presenting his standard lies and the basic facts he distorts, we hope you may be able to navigate the Brazilian government's greenwash and understand why Brazil's Bolsonaro is a threat to the planet.

# FREQUENT FALLACIES

## Land Use

**CLAIM |** *“Brazil is an example of environmental conservation for the world.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** In absolute terms, Brazil is the country that cuts down more forests than any other in the world<sup>5</sup>: more than 1.4 million hectares were clear-cut in the Amazon and in the Cerrado only in 2018, according to data from the National Institute for Space Research (663,400 hectares in the Cerrado and 753,600 hectares in the Amazon)<sup>6</sup>.

According to new data from the MapBiomas project, between 1895 and 2018, Brazil lost 89 million hectares of native vegetation, while agriculture (crops and pasture) expanded by 86 million hectares. The lost area corresponds to 2.5 times the entire territory of Germany.

As for the country being a “role model of conservation”, Columbia and Yale Universities’ Environmental Performance Index shows that Brazil, ranks 96th in forest conservation and 69th in the overall assessment of 180 countries, putting Brazil somewhere in the middle rank – not awful yet, but far from the gold standard for environmental protection<sup>7</sup>.

**CLAIM |** *“Among the main agricultural countries, Brazil has the biggest extension of protected areas, which occupy 25% of its territory compared to 17.5% in Australia, 14% in China and 11.8% in the US. In addition, protected areas in these countries include deserts and uninhabitable glaciers, while Brazil provides agricultural land to conservation.”*

Brazil's Foreign Office

<sup>5</sup> The Climate Observatory, April 28th 2019- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM4SktDid2Q>

<sup>6</sup> [terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/app/dashboard/deforestation/biomes/legal\\_amazon/rates](https://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/app/dashboard/deforestation/biomes/legal_amazon/rates)

<sup>7</sup> <https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/lupa/2019/07/05/meio-ambiente-salles-globonews/>

FREQUENT  
FALLACIES

## Land Use

**FACT |** Brazil is the most biodiverse country in the world, so it is all but sensible for it to have a lot of protected areas. However, the percentage of protected lands in Brazil is 30% of its territory when considering protected areas that allow for private property and economic uses - not so far above the global average of 25%. In addition, Brazil's protected areas are unevenly distributed: 90% of them are in the Amazon, a region that counts for less than 10% of agricultural production. Excluding the Amazon, less than 5% of Brazil is under protection<sup>8</sup>.

Even with that many protected areas, Brazil has the world's third largest agricultural production area: 245 million hectares, second only to China and the United States and beating India (which incidentally produces more food than Brazil). This equals 1.4 times the agricultural area of all European countries combined. If we add the native grasslands of the Pantanal and Pampa biomes, which are used for grazing, that figure rises to 295 million hectares. The country also has the world's largest agricultural area per capita: 1.17 ha, compared to 1 ha in the U.S. and 0.34 ha in China.

**CLAIM |** *"Brazil is the country that preserves more forests in the world than any other and has nothing to learn from those who have already cleared everything."*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** Brazil is indeed a country with a lot of forests, which cover 63% of its territory. There are, however, at least 20 countries in the world that maintain a larger proportion of forests standing in their territory. Some examples, coming from World Bank data<sup>9</sup>:

Developing countries:

The Congo (65%)

Guyana (84%)

Suriname (98%)

Developed countries:

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM4SktDid2Q>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM4SktDid2Q>

Japan (68%)  
Sweden (69%)  
Finland (74%)

Besides, Europe has invested massively in reforestation. Today, nearly half of the European territory is covered by forests – 97% coming from reforestation and restoration. Between 2009 and 2015, Europe gained the equivalent of one Portugal in forests, while Brazil burned down five times that area<sup>10</sup>.

**CLAIM |** *“Currently, about 66% of Brazil's territory is dedicated to the protection and preservation of native vegetation.”*

Brazil's Foreign Office

**FACT |** About 66% of the Brazilian territory is covered with native vegetation. This is very, very different from being “dedicated to protection and preservation”. This figure includes family-farmed areas such as quilombola (maroon) land and agrarian reform settlements in which multiple uses (including agriculture and mining) are allowed, and lands on private farms and undesignated areas (public land without formal designation, concentrated in the Amazon) that are currently forested but can be deforested legally. Even if the conjecture was correct, data from the MapBiomias Project shows that effective protection is far less than claimed: if we compute what has been preserved for the past 30 years, we are looking at about 45%<sup>11</sup>.

**CLAIM |** *“84% of the Amazon is preserved the way it was 500 years ago when the Portuguese arrived.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** The Amazon forest has actually lost 20% of its original area – therefore, 80% of it is preserved, not 84%.

## FREQUENT FALLACIES

### Land Use

<sup>10</sup> <https://globoplay.globo.com/v/7855381/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.observatoriodoclima.eco.br/itamaraty-usa-dados-errados-para-defender-agro-brasileiro/>

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FALLACIESLand Use//  
Agriculture

The difference between the two figures is the equivalent of nearly the territory of England.

According to the National Institute for Space Research, Inpe, by 2019 the Amazon forest had lost an area of 798,115 km<sup>2</sup> out of its original 3.99 million km<sup>2</sup>.

What percentage of that remaining forest stays “the way the Portuguese found them” is a matter of debate, since degradation data is patchy. One study<sup>12</sup> estimates that disturbed forest in the Amazon, with several degrees of degradation, may have amounted to 1.2 million km<sup>2</sup> by 2013, a figure that would mean that more than 40% of the forest is under duress.

In addition, Amazon deforestation may be approaching a tipping point, in which the forest could lose its capability to recover and would turn into an impoverished savanna. Initial models showed the tipping point to be at about 40% deforestation, but a paper released in 2018 revealed a more urgent situation. The synergies between deforestation, climate change, and widespread use of fire indicate that the tipping point for the Amazon system to flip to non-forest ecosystems in eastern, southern and central Amazonia is at 20-25% deforestation<sup>13</sup>.

## Agriculture

**CLAIM |** *“No public institution, professional category or public authority does more to protect the Brazilian biomes than Brazilian producers.”*

Evaristo de Miranda

**FACT |** This claim is based on data by controversial scientist Evaristo de Miranda, who led Bolsonaro's transition team at the environment ministry. It is based on self-declared information provided by farmers and ranchers who are registered within the CAR (Rural Environmental Registry). A study published in 2018 in the

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.socioambiental.org/sites/blog.socioambiental.org/files/futuro-climatico-da-amazonia.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/4/2/eaat2340>

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## Agriculture

journal *Environmental Conservation* noted that, in the state of Mato Grosso, 85% of the farmers declared having more forest on their property than was actually measured<sup>14</sup>.

Data from Project MapBiomass, a multi-institutional collaboration, also showed that since 1985, 20% of forest on private lands have been clear-cut, and 0.5% in protected areas<sup>15</sup>.

**CLAIM |** *“Brazil is the only country in the world with legal requirements whereby farmers are responsible for the conservation of a large deal of the territory without receiving any compensation or tax exemption in return.”*

Brazil's Foreign Office

**FACT |** A 2011 study by Imazon and Proforest shows that at least 11 other countries have strict legal requirements for farmers to keep forests within their property<sup>16</sup>. This requirement is known in Brazil as the “legal reserve”. Other countries, like South Africa, require that wetland and river vegetation be preserved at owner's expense to protect watersheds. Even though it is true that there is no federal law requiring payment for environmental services (PES), Brazil's new Forest Code establishes a scheme for trading forest quotas among farmers with forest deficits and farmers with forest surpluses. The law has never been enforced for a number of reasons, including pressure from the rural caucus to eliminate the legal reserve altogether. A bill proposal to kill the legal reserve has been presented by Jair Bolsonaro's son, Senator Flávio Bolsonaro<sup>17</sup>. The government has been trying to change regulations so as to legalize activities that are illegal today. If they succeed, agribusiness and development will be able to devastate ecosystems – and remain within the law.

<sup>14</sup> <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a5b1/4263d2a4912971fbfdcb-056892f54c14b44f.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM4SktDid2Q>

<sup>16</sup> <https://imazon.org.br/um-re-sumo-do-status-das-florestas-em-paises-selecionados/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://time.com/5661162/why-the-amazon-is-on-fire/>

FREQUENT  
FALLACIES

## Agriculture

**CLAIM |** *“Over the past 40 years, production increased by 700% while land use increased only 30%. During the same period, grain production increased fivefold whereas the area taken up by crops remained practically stable. Therefore, the expansion of Brazilian agricultural production did not take place as a result of deforestation but because of increased productivity.”*

Foreign Office

**FACT |** This claim has several components that must be analyzed separately. First, it is true that productivity outpaced deforestation in Brazilian grain production - and the operative word here is “grain”. According to Embrapa, Brazil’s federal agricultural research service, grain production jumped from 38 Mt in 1975 to 236 Mt in 2017, while crop area “only” doubled – from 37 million to 61 million hectares (so much for “practically stable”)<sup>18</sup>.

As it happens, grain production is not the chief form of land use in Brazil: cattle ranching is. Of the 30% of the territory that is used by agriculture, two-thirds is pastureland. Beef production takes up 173 million hectares, or about 20% of Brazilian territory, according to MapBiomass. Cattle is still a highly inefficient industry: in the Amazon, 63% of all deforested area is planted with pastures<sup>19</sup> that on average support one head of cattle per hectare or less.

According to MapBiomass, since 1985 Brazil’s biomes lost 89 million hectares of native cover while agriculture, ranching included, gained 86 million hectares<sup>20</sup>. The Amazon has shrunk by 20%, while the Cerrado, the central Brazilian savanna where most agriculture takes place, saw 55% of its area transformed into agricultural soils in the past 50 years<sup>21</sup>.

**CLAIM |** *“Brazil uses far, far fewer agrochemicals per*

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.embrapa.br/visao/trajectoria-da-agricultura-brasileira>

<sup>19</sup> <https://ainfo.cnptia.embrapa.br/digital/bitstream/item/152807/1/TerraClass.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.observatoriodoclima.eco.br/brasil-perdeu-25-alemanhas-em-florestas-em-34-anos/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a5b1/4263d2a4912971fbfdcb-056892f54c14b44f.pdf>

*hectare than several countries in Europe. Some European countries are making a fuss over this topic of agrochemicals when, per hectare, they use a much greater quantity of pesticides than in Brazil. And nobody says anything!"*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** The Brazilian government has been parading old FAO statistics that put Brazil in 44th place in the world ranking of pesticide use. There are two problems with the data. First, they are old – the claim is based on a 1995-2016 average, which lowers use per hectare to less than 3 tons. According to the same FAO database, pesticide use in Brazil grew by 600% between 1990 and 2012<sup>22</sup>, more than in any other major food producing country. Second, the data are dubious: FAO takes into consideration a much larger agricultural area than IBGE, Brazil's official statistics bureau<sup>23</sup>. According to a 2013 report from IBGE (based on data collected by Ibama), Brazil uses about 6.8 kg of active pesticides per hectare. That figure is greater than that of all European Union countries except Cyprus and Malta (which use about 9 kg/ha each) for the same year.

In addition, it's worth recalling that the EU has banned some 600 pesticides over the past 25 years because of their potential harmfulness. Of the nearly 400 agricultural chemicals permitted in the EU today, 25% are organic.

In contrast, in Brazil, 410 new pesticides were registered only in 2019<sup>24</sup>. Nearly all the new pesticides registered are generic formulations of existing substances, laying to waste the claim that the government is speeding up approvals in order to get safer, more modern products on the market. In November, court ordered the Agriculture Ministry to revoke the license of 63 pesticides registered in September due to health and environmental risks<sup>25</sup>.

**CLAIM |** *"The Brazilian government is committed to*

## FREQUENT FALLACIES

### Agriculture

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.observatoriodo-clima.eco.br/agromitometro-verdades-e-mentiras-no-discurso-dos-ruralistas-sobre-pesticidas/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2019/08/14/ministerio-da-agricultura-engana-a-populacao-com-dados-falsos-sobre-agrotoxicos/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/brasil/blog/governo-bolsonaro-cel-ebra-dia-das-abelhas-liberando-ainda-mais-agrotoxicos/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.in.gov.br/web/dou/-/ato-n-81-de-21-de-novembro-de-2019-229381329>



*applying the law and the obligations it holds about sustainability of agriculture. Critics seek to associate Brazil to environmental destruction so as to lobby for higher targets in conventions such as UNFCCC and CBD.”*

Ministry of the Environment

**FACT |** That’s easy to say if one keeps redefining what “legal obligation” is. In November 6th, for instance, the Bolsonaro administration issued a decree overturning a successful agro-ecological zoning plan for sugarcane<sup>26</sup>, which prohibited the expansion of the biofuel crop into fragile Amazon and Pantanal biomes, where scientific research indicated it would result in deforestation and environmental degradation - with very little economic gain. The prohibition had been in place for ten years and it never held back Brazilian ethanol production – in fact, the sugarcane industry stood by it, eyeing environmentally conscious international markets. Likewise, the soybeans sector is pushing for the end of the 13 year-old soy moratorium<sup>27</sup>, by which industry commits itself to not buy from recently deforested areas. Bolsonaro has also cancelled the deadline for farmers to adhere to the Agricultural Environmental Registry (which facilitates monitoring of deforestation within farms), which means they can access public funds even without complying with the Forest Code.

## Climate change and the Paris agreement

**CLAIM |** *“The Bolsonaro administration does not deny the existence of climate change...”*

**FACT |** The Bolsonaro administration and its entourage are packed with flat-out deniers such as Foreign minister Ernesto Araújo<sup>28</sup>, Bolsonaro’s sons Eduardo and Carlos, and Bolsonaro’s ideologue , retired astrologer and self-proclaimed philosopher Olavo de Carvalho.

## FREQUENT FALLACIES

### Agriculture // Climate change and the Paris agreement

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/6e-6a849c-07a9-11ea-9afa-d9e2401fa-7ca>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-soybeans-moratorium/brazil-farmers-push-traders-to-end-amazon-soy-moratorium-idUSKBN1XF2J6>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-environment-araujo/brazil-foreign-minister-says-there-is-no-climate-change-catastrophe-idUSKC-N1VW2S2>

References to climate change have all but disappeared in Brazil's diplomatic communications. Araújo – who famously said climate change is a hoax because he went to Italy in spring and it was chilly<sup>29</sup> – made the unprecedented move of sending a high-ranking diplomat to a conference of the climate change-denying Heartland Institute<sup>30</sup>.

Salles' own views are more nuanced – but only a bit. The minister never denied that the Earth is warming, but has repeatedly questioned human influence in the process, and said climate change was “a secondary issue”, a matter “of academic debate”, and “debate for 500 years from now”. Under boos in August, at the Latin American and Caribbean Climate Week, Salles said climate change is “an evolving issue” in the government. A token of such “evolution” may be the fact that Salles scheduled a meeting with the denialist Competitive Enterprise Institute in New York on the eve of the global climate strike of September 20th<sup>31</sup>. The meeting after the agenda leaked to the press.

**CLAIM |** *“...More than that, the government stayed in the Paris Agreement and kept all its policies in place.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** All of the climate change governance at the federal level was dismantled in the Brazilian government over the last eleven months. In week one of the new administration, the climate change and sustainable development departments were scrapped from the Foreign Office structure<sup>32</sup>. The National Climate Change and Forests secretariat was likewise extinguished at the Environment Ministry (Salles told the press he would appoint a special advisor to the minister on climate<sup>33</sup>, which has never happened). The Inter-ministerial Climate Change Committee (CIM) and its Executive Group (GEx), the highest instances of federal climate change governance, were also extinguished, and so was the National Redd+

## FREQUENT FALLACIES

### Climate change and the Paris agreement

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.metropoles.com/brasil/politica-br/araujo-ao-negar-aquecimento-global-fui-a-roma-em-maio-e-havia-frio>

<sup>30</sup> <https://jamilchade.blogosfera.uol.com.br/2019/07/31/leia-o-telegrama-confidencial-do-itamaraty-sobre-mudancas-climaticas/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2019/09/ministro-do-meio-ambiente-vai-se-reunir-com-negacionistas-do-aquecimento-global-em-washington.shtml>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.observatoriodoclima.eco.br/extincao-da-area-de-clima-itamaraty-e-medida-ideologica-e-antipatriotica/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2019/01/ministerio-do-meio-ambiente-vai-encugar-area-de-mudancas-climaticas.shtml>

Committee. In November 29<sup>th</sup>, three days before the opening of COP25, Salles issued decrees recreating on paper the extinguished climate and REDD+ committees among others, in a last-minute attempt to deflect international criticism. Civil society was excluded from their structure.

The end of the National Climate Change Secretariat has frozen all the policies that were planned and implemented by that office. Chief among them are plans for deforestation prevention and control in the Amazon (PPCDAm) and Cerrado (PPCerrado) – both are centerpieces of Brazil's NDC, as deforestation makes up 44% of Brazil's greenhouse-gas emissions.

The decade-old National Climate Fund (Fundo Clima), which funded mitigation and adaptation projects, is also in limbo<sup>34</sup>: no plan for using the resources was presented in 2019<sup>35</sup>, nothing from this year's budget was appropriated, and not a single penny from previous contracts was spent since April<sup>36</sup>.

**CLAIM |** *“Europe will not comply with the Paris Agreement, they already said they will not comply and the whole world said nothing.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** Salles mistakes the Paris Agreement for pre-2020 targets, which Germany announced it would not meet.

The Paris Agreement goals (NDCs) will only begin to be implemented in 2020. Several European countries have signaled that they will increase the ambition of NDCs by 2030, in line with a resolution from this year's European Parliament<sup>37</sup> calling for more ambition already in 2020. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden and France already have laws in place to ensure zero net emissions between 2030 and 2050<sup>38</sup>.

## FREQUENT FALLACIES

### Climate change and the Paris agreement

<sup>34</sup> <https://g1.globo.com/natureza/noticia/2019/05/03/governo-de-scumpre-prazo-e-trava-86percent-do-orcamento-para-enfrentar-a-mudanca-climatica.ghtml>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.mma.gov.br/clima/fundo-nacional-sobre-mudanca-do-clima/plano-anual-de-aplicacao-de-recursos>

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.bndes.gov.br/wps/wcm/connect/site/b00fa4db-77fb-457d-b771-4e424c7cd94e/Fluxo+Financeiro+FNNC\\_04+2019.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=m19LJ4-](https://www.bndes.gov.br/wps/wcm/connect/site/b00fa4db-77fb-457d-b771-4e424c7cd94e/Fluxo+Financeiro+FNNC_04+2019.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=m19LJ4-)

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0217\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0217_EN.html)

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.climatechange-news.com/2019/06/14/countries-net-zero-climate-goal/>

**CLAIM** | *“Brazil is on track to meet its climate commitments.”*

Foreign Office

**FACT** | Brazil is off track with all of its climate change commitments<sup>39</sup>. But first one needs to understand what these commitments are. There are two of them: the 2020 target and the NDC.

In 2009, the pioneering National Climate Change Policy Law committed the country to decrease emissions between 36.1% and 38.9% by 2020, compared to a business-as-usual scenario. That target was announced as Brazil's voluntary commitment under the doomed Copenhagen Accord. A 2010 decree expressed the global target in emission levels: by 2020, Brazilian gross emissions should be between 2,068 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e and 1,977MtCO<sub>2</sub>e. The decree also included sectorial plans to cut emissions. The most important of those was PPCDAm, the Plan for Deforestation Prevention and Control in Amazonia, whose target was to slash deforestation rates by 80% by 2020 compared to the 1996-2005 average. The goal was to reach 3,935 km<sup>2</sup> of deforestation in 2020, compared to the past average of 19,000-plus km<sup>2</sup> a year.

In 2015, Brazil adopted an absolute, economy-wide pledge in the framework of the Paris Agreement. Its iNDC, later converted to NDC, committed the country to a 37% reduction in emissions by 2025 from 2005 levels and to the implementation of a National Adaptation Plan.

None of the targets are being met. **The 2020 deforestation reduction target has already been missed – even if all forest destruction stopped today.** By November, official figures put deforestation alerts at 4,047 km<sup>2</sup> in the first three months of the 2020 data series (therefore, a bit more than the pledged 3,925 km<sup>2</sup>). Due to lower resolution, the alerts system underestimates actual deforestation by as much as a factor of 1.54<sup>40</sup>.

The government will try to spin the failure in two ways.

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.observatorio-doclima.eco.br/explainer-brazil-way-meet-climate-targets/>

<sup>40</sup> <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/gcb.14872>

First, it will parade an October analysis by a federal institute, Ipea, which states that the aggregate 36,1% to 38,9% reduction will be more than exceeded. That calculation, however, takes into account net emissions (that is, total emissions less carbon removals from protected areas), a concept that didn't exist back when the target was calculated. Second, it will resort to an accounting trick: to factor in the carbon supposedly "captured" by private-owned forests in properties registered in the Rural Environmental Registry, CAR – which, as we have seen, are self-declared, thus useless for accounting without verification.

If the 2020 target looks out of reach, meeting the NDC is an even bigger challenge. Such effort would require new policy and a governance structure that currently doesn't exist in Brazil's federal government. It will also require that there are no further setbacks on environmental regulations, so that emissions from deforestation don't return to turn-of-the-century levels. As mentioned above, the first action of President Jair Bolsonaro on the environment was to change the structure of the environment ministry, shutting down the Climate Change and Forests Secretariat. That office was in charge of formulating and coordinating the implementation of Brazil's NDC. With its extinction, the plans for deforestation control and prevention in the Amazon (PPCDAm) and the Cerrado (PPCerrado) were shelved. **No strategy or plan for implementing the NDC has ever been presented.**

**CLAIM |** *"In 2015 Brazil had already cut its emissions by 35%, being close to the 37% reduction pledged in the NDC; the annex to the NDC, which lists policies and measures towards the target, has some provisions that Brazil is already meeting, such as:*

*» Forest restoration of reforestation of 12 million hectares (9.4 million hectares already restored).*

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### Climate change and the Paris agreement

*» 15 million hectares of degraded pastureland to recover (of which 10.44 Mha would have already been recovered between 2010 and 2017).*

*» 45% of renewables in the energy mix (in 2019 Brazil would have achieved 45.3%).*

*» Expansion of non-hydro renewables from 28% to 33% of the energy mix (Brazil would already be at 33%).*

*» 18% of the energy mix as sustainable bioenergy (Brazil would have achieved 17.4% in 2018).”*

Ministry of the Environment

**FACT |** Some NDC figures presented by Brazilian officials are misleading on a number of ways: when the government says, for instance, that Brazil had already cut 35% of its emissions by 2015 (compared to the 37% of the pledge), it chooses to ignore that emissions are on the rise, and 2015 numbers inform very little about their trajectory towards 2025; when it says 10.44 million hectares of pastures were restored between 2010 and 2017, it is both celebrating achievements of past governments and mixing up the 2020 and the NDC targets – the total target for 2010-2030 would be 30 Mha. Likewise, figures for renewable energy reflect current policies and not an effort towards meeting Paris Goals.

According to the latest UNEP Emissions Gap Report, Brazil is one of the seven G20 countries that are off track to meet their NDCs.

**CLAIM |** *“Brazil has 400 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> reductions measured under the Kyoto Protocol. Only 150 million tons were effectively monetized, so from 2005 onwards there are 250 million tons, or US\$ 2.5 billion, that Brazil had already priced, certified, recognized and they have not paid.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** Salles refers to potential CDM (Clean Develop-

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ment Mechanism) credits that would in any case not have been purchased, despite having achieved a reduction in emissions. However, the Kyoto Protocol does not impose any obligation on any country to purchase these emission reductions.

To meet its emission reduction target, the European Union has set up a system of emissions trading, the EU-ETS (European Union - Emissions Trading System). For about eight years, CDM credits could be traded there. The transactions were made exclusively between private entities: the project owners, the final credit buyers and a whole complex system of intermediation. The carbon credit sales contracts contained a long list of clauses justifying their termination. In 2012, reflecting the 2008-09 recession, the EU-ETS decided to no longer accept CDM credits from China, India and Brazil. This was one of the main reasons for the breach of purchase contracts. Therefore no company that purchases CDM credits has any debts or obligations to Brazilian companies.

## Amazon

**CLAIM |** *“The Amazon has 20 million people whose well-being must never be sacrificed for the sake of conservation. Environmentalists don’t see the needs of the people who are impoverished and starving. The forest needs capitalist solutions: land tenure regularization, ecological-economic zoning of the territory, private investment and the development of a bioeconomy. Command-and-control alone won’t manage to bring deforestation under check.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** The link between poverty and deforestation is exaggerated. According to an analysis of the 2019 deforestation data, 35% of all clear-cutting was in undesignated areas or areas with no tenure information. In other

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words, it is the result of land-grabbing, which is mostly done by well-funded organized crime. The other 9% happened in protected areas – again, indigenous lands and national parks invaded by criminal gangs. Mr. Salles and President Bolsonaro have on several occasions shown sympathy<sup>41</sup> or open support<sup>42</sup> for loggers, wildcat miners and other groups that often form the wheels of the criminal structure behind deforestation. In November, Ibmama's president Eduardo Bim issued an order softening rules against illegal timber<sup>43</sup> and, a few days later, floated the idea of authorizing the export of logs, currently forbidden precisely because it stimulates illegal logging which in turn provides seed money for deforestation and land-grabbing operations.

While poverty is a contributing driver of deforestation, the dominant force behind it is greed. Most of the poor Amazonian population lives in already deforested areas anyway, mostly in cities.

During the period in which deforestation declined, Brazil and the Amazon region saw their greatest GDP growth and their most significant reduction in poverty levels. Things were no different in livestock and agriculture: the value of Brazil's agricultural sector grew by 75%<sup>44</sup>. Meat and soy production in the Amazon also increased when deforestation dropped by 80% between 2004 and 2012<sup>45</sup>. Deforestation actually increases poverty, because it is illegal, often resorts to slave-like labor, and is prey to the “boom-bust” effect, where economic standards are raised at first and then, as the natural resource is exhausted, economic depression sets in<sup>46</sup>.

Of course these facts were not lost to previous Brazilian governments. That is why the plan for deforestation prevention and control (PPCDAm) had a component of land tenure regularization and another component of sustainable use of the forest<sup>47</sup> – precisely in order to develop the “capitalist solutions” Mr. Salles talks about.

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41 <https://g1.globo.com/ro/cacoal-e-zona-da-mata/noticia/2019/07/17/ministro-visita-ro-e-faz-reuniao-com-madeireiros-duas-semanas-apos-caminhao-do-ibama-ser-incendiado.ghtml>

42 <https://sustentabilidade.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,quem-e-o-cara-do-ibama-diz-bolsonaro-sobre-queima-de-maquinas,70003076513>

43 <https://amazonia.org.br/2019/11/fiscais-do-ibama-so-poderao-multar-compra-de-madeira-ilegal-se-houver-indicio-de-que-infrator-sabia-da-origem-indevida/>

44 <http://www.observatoriodoclima.eco.br/seis-graficos-mostram-porque-floresta-no-chao-e-sinonimo-de-retrocesso/>

45 <http://www.observatoriodoclima.eco.br/seis-graficos-mostram-porque-floresta-no-chao-e-sinonimo-de-retrocesso/>

46 [https://amazonia.org.br/PDFImazon/Portugues/estado\\_da\\_amazonia/o-avanco-da-fronteira-na-amazonia-do-boom-ao.pdf](https://amazonia.org.br/PDFImazon/Portugues/estado_da_amazonia/o-avanco-da-fronteira-na-amazonia-do-boom-ao.pdf)

47 <https://www.mma.gov.br/informma/item/616-pre-ven%C3%A7%C3%A3o-e-controle-do-desmatamento-na-amaz%C3%B4nia>



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PPCDAm currently lies in some drawer in the ministry.

Command-and-control will not alone solve the problem, but without it, deforestation increases and the situation deteriorates. And that is what is happening now.

**CLAIM |** *“This year’s fires are within the last 20 years’ average. October 2019 had the lowest number of fires in 21 years.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** Using the historical rate of the last 20 years, the government includes in the account years when there were peaks of fire outbreaks, such as 2004 (year of record deforestation, thus, extreme fires), and 2010 (year of the worst drought in 500 years in Amazonia, which caused the forest to catch fire). Importantly, between 2005 and 2012, with the implementation of effective policies to combat deforestation, there was an 80% reduction in deforestation rates in the Amazon. Even though this downward trend has slowed down and the deforestation rate has grown again in recent years, what we are seeing this year is an explosion of deforestation and forest burning driven by anti-environmental policies. From January to August, the number of fire outbreaks in the Amazon grew by 111%, compared to the same period last year. It is the highest index of the last nine years.

In October, thanks to the deployment of troops to fight criminal fires, both fire counts and deforestation alerts went down (deforestation in October was *only* the second highest in the data series). As soon as troops went home, however, destruction resumed: November was again the worst November on record for deforestation. As for fires, the start of the rainy season in the Amazon naturally reduced fire incidence from late October and November.

**CLAIM |** *“The action taken by the President sending the Army to the Amazon to fight the fires was unprecedented.”*

Ricardo Salles

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**FACT |** In fact, there was a massive deployment of troops in 2005 by then-President Lula in the wake of the murder of American nun Dorothy Stang. Operation Pacajá, as it was called, sent 2,000 Army men to the Amazon to fight land-related violence and environmental crime<sup>48</sup>. As a result, deforestation dropped in 2005 compared to 2004.

Therefore, the current situation is not unprecedented and neither is it a solution for deforestation. In fact, what we are seeing the government do, is promise to open indigenous lands and conservation units to ranching farmers and mining activities, as well as jeopardize the surveillance agencies.

**CLAIM |** *“This year was warmer and drier than the previous years, so we started from a higher baseline for the fires.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** The opposite is true. As shown by a technical memo published by the Amazon Environmental Research Institute (Ipam) this year, the number of consecutive days without rain was lower than last year. The decisive factor has instead been burning and deforestation<sup>49</sup>, which grew 50% in 2019 according to data from INPE. The growth trajectory of the fires is also consistent with that seen in fires that began in recently-deforested areas. A second memo from IPAM<sup>50</sup> demonstrated that the largest share of fire outbreaks (33%) are on private property, suggesting that farmers are actively burning to increase their productive area.

The increase of fires this year is indeed a result of an orchestrated movement motivated to a large extent by Bolsonaro's speeches and dismantling of environmental policies and agencies. This year's so-called “Fire Day” on 10 August, when farmers and land-grabbers in Pará coordinated a day of fires, is clear evidence<sup>51</sup>. Although the plans had been reported by the media, the Federal

<sup>48</sup> <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/brasil/fc2502200522.htm>

<sup>49</sup> <https://ipam.org.br/bibliotecas/nota-tecnica-amazonia-em-chamas/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://ipam.org.br/bibliotecas/amazonia-em-chamas-onde-esta-o-fogo/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/26/brazil-amazon-fire-day-warning>

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government did not take any preventive measure and the investigations promise to be a lengthy process.

**CLAIM |** *“Our proposal for the Amazon Fund had the agreement of finance ministers from both Norway and Germany. But the environment ministers opposed, thus the deadlock. The Amazon Fund has not been killed.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** The finance ministries of donor countries never agreed with Salles' proposal of removing civil society from the Amazon Fund and controlling its governing bodies. Also, the government does not give any assurances that the fund will be ring fenced to protect the forest.

**CLAIM |** *“The government has conducted a review of 43 of the 103 contracts that had been issued by the Amazon Fund and has found huge waste — funds were being used to cover administration and payroll costs, and not going to beneficiaries.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** Salles has been trying to crack down on NGO funding since his first weeks in office. In February, he wrote a memo to several ministry officials stipulating the suspension of each and every cooperation project with civil society organizations – only to find out that this action was illegal and he could apply this decision only to future new projects.

Also in February, he made a surprise visit to BNDES headquarters in Rio – without warning the bank's president Joaquim Levy – and demanded to see all information on NGO contracts with the Amazon Fund. In May, he called a press conference to present the results of the “investigation” he claimed to have conducted in collaboration with CGU, the state's controlling organ (who denied participation). No evidence of wrongdoing or “waste” in NGO contracts

(which are audited by the State and by BNDES) was ever presented.

**CLAIM |** *“When you say that society was there... what you mean is the NGOs were there. NGOs that are on COFA [the Amazon Fund Guidance Committee] that benefit from half the Amazon Fund’s resources, ergo, a conflict of interest.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** The COFA, which shut down on June 28th, did not approve projects but set guidelines for them (hence the “guidance” in the name). Approvals went through BNDES, the Brazilian Development Bank, meaning they passed through the federal government. If the presence of NGOs on this committee generated a conflict of interests, the same would apply to state governments, which had nine times as many representatives on the COFA than NGOs did.

It is simply false to assert that NGOs held considerable weight on the committee. Of its 24 members, eight were from the federal government and nine from state governments. Civil society had six representatives: one indigenous, one from the scientific community, two from industry, one from family farms and just one from environmental organizations. Finally, 60% of the resources of the Amazon Fund go to public projects at the federal, state and local levels, mainly to enforce the Forest Code and strengthen surveillance in the Amazon. Only 38% of support projects were implemented by civil society.

**CLAIM |** *“We want the resources they say they donate to Brazil to be effectively donated to Brazil and not under outside control in this way (...) If you make it so that the funds cannot be relocated, then it isn’t a donation, you’re offering a grant with certain conditions.”*

Ricardo Salles

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**FACT |** The minister is using sophistry to distort the meaning of the word “donation.” When someone donates money to an institution, there is always the expectation that the institution will do something in return, or work towards a common goal. The Amazon Fund, likewise, is not a blank check; it is a donation conditioned on the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation. Donors will consider any departure from this end to be a violation of the Fund’s purpose, as Norway’s Minister for the Environment, Ola Elvestuen, has made clear<sup>52</sup>. It is different from what Bolsonaro has already implied, saying that one of the conditions imposed by the Fund was the creation of Indigenous Lands, which is not true.

**CLAIM |** *“Protecting the Amazon for the whole world has a cost, which we estimate to be US\$ 50 billion a year. Deforestation rates have dropped by 72% from 2004 levels and rich countries never paid Brazil for it.”*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** Only they did. The Amazon Fund, which is frozen right now because Salles threw a tantrum over money going to NGOs, has a total stipend of R\$ 3.4 billion (US\$ 850 million at today’s exchange rate) to pay Brazil for achievements in reducing deforestation. Today it has R\$ 479 million “under analysis”<sup>53</sup> that could be liberated if the government so allowed. This was the world’s biggest REDD+ program. Brazil is also the recipient of a US\$ 96.4 million grant from the Green Climate Fund – the one Salles likes to bash for not having paid Brazil its due. The contract was signed in March, but the money is still unused because Salles never appointed a committee to manage it and because he extinguished the National Redd+ Committee<sup>54</sup>, which was in charge of setting guidelines for the grant.

**CLAIM |** *“Brazil's Indigenous population has 13% of the national territory and is 1% (sic) of the population.”*

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.observatoriodoclima.eco.br/enfraquecimento-fundo-amazonia-nao-e-uma-opcao-diz-ministro-noruegues/>

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.fundoamazonia.gov.br/export/sites/default/pt/.galleries/documentos/informe-de-carteira/2019\\_06\\_Informe-da-Carteira-Fundo-Amazonia.pdf](http://www.fundoamazonia.gov.br/export/sites/default/pt/.galleries/documentos/informe-de-carteira/2019_06_Informe-da-Carteira-Fundo-Amazonia.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.oeco.org.br/reportagens/stf-barra-parcialmente-decreto-de-bolsonaro-que-extingue-conselhos-no-pais/>

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## Amazon

*There's no prejudice at all, it's 1 to 13. On the contrary, the greatest amount of land per capita that any group can claim of our national territory is indigenous land."*

**FACT |** Indigenous lands are a constitutional right of these populations to maintain their culture and guarantee their existence. They are more necessary than ever as there is a war against the Indigenous in Brazil. Data from CIMI (the Council of Indigenous Missions) show that in 2017 alone, the last year for which there is systematic information, there were 110 murders of indigenous people, 128 suicides (mostly land-related), 792 cases of childhood death and 96 cases of invasion and embezzlement, an increase of 62% over the previous year<sup>55</sup>. Preliminary data from CIMI indicate that there were 14 invasions of indigenous land in 2019 until September.

The Indians do not *own* territory; indigenous lands belong to the state, with exclusive use granted to the Indians. Who "owns" that 13% of the national territory, is in fact the government.

The assertion that Indians would have "the greatest amount of land per capita" does not hold up either. Brazil's 900 thousand Indians occupy 117 million hectares (in fact, 14% of the country, not 13%). But *latifundios* (the largest type of rural properties), which make up only 6% of the country's rural properties, hold 182 million hectares, or 21% of the national territory, according to the Atlas of Brazilian Livestock and Agriculture, by Imaflora and Esalq-USP.

**CLAIM |** *"Our government has a zero tolerance policy towards illegal fires and deforestation"*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** "Yesterday, the Environment Minister, Ricardo Salles, came to talk to me about this issue [destruction of machines used in illegal deforestation operations inside a Federal protected area in Rondonia state]. He has already opened an administrative procedure to find out which public servant was responsible for it. Our orientation is to not

<sup>55</sup> <https://cimi.org.br/2018/09/relatorio-cimi-violencia-contra-os-povos-indigenas-no-brasil-tem-aumento-sistemico-e-continuo/>

destroy anything, machinery, tractor, whatever, this is not the procedure.” (President Bolsonaro, in a video distributed on the Internet in April.)

“What happens today in Brazil, unfortunately, is the result of years and years and years of a public policy of producing laws, rules, regulations that are not always related to the real world. What we are doing now is to adjust the law to the real world” (Ricardo Salles, in July, talking to a group of illegal loggers in Espigão D’Oeste, Rondônia, whose illegal operations inside indigenous lands had been frozen by Ibama)<sup>56</sup>.

## Governance

**CLAIM |** *“There has been no dismantling of any structure of this ministry - none. We received a situation that was rather dismantled. No staff, no budget, abandoned buildings, depleted fleets, 50% unfilled staff positions.”*

**FACT |** In May, eight out of nine living ex-ministers of the environment denounced the Bolsonaro administration for promoting the “dismantling” of the federal environmental governance that has been in place since 1992<sup>57</sup>. Mr. Salles denies the accusation, saying for instance that no legislation has been changed - which is true. But evidence abounds that a crippling of the system, fulfilling Bolsonaro’s campaign promises, is actually in place:

» Decree 9.672, published on January 2nd, extinguishes the Ministry’s Secretariat responsible for climate change and deforestation control policies. The decree also transfers the National Water Agency to the Regional Development Ministry and the Brazilian Forestry Service to the Agriculture Ministry.

» In March, a gag rule was imposed on Ibama (the national environment agency) and ICMBio (the national parks service). Neither agency is allowed to communicate directly

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<sup>56</sup> <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2019/07/salles-faz-visita-a-madeireiros-em-rondonia-apos-atos-contra-ibama.shtml>

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.observatoriodo-clima.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/comunicado-ex-ministros-final-revisado\\_en.pdf](http://www.observatoriodo-clima.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/comunicado-ex-ministros-final-revisado_en.pdf)



with the press anymore. The ministry itself has left 8 out of 10 press queries unanswered as of October.

» In April, a Presidential decree extinguished two dozen councils and committees where civil society could participate in policy-making, such as the Amazon Fund committees, the National Redd+ Committee and the Climate Change Fund committee. The inter-ministerial committee for climate change (CIM) and its Executive Group (GEx) were also extinguished. So were the executive committees of the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, which further delayed government's response to the oil disaster in the Northeast.

» The National Environmental Council, Conama, Brazil's most important advisory committee for environmental policy, which fixes standards on air pollution and environmental licensing, was shrunk from 100 to 23 members. The number of representatives from the federal government increased from 29% to 40% of its members. NGO members were picked in a bingo<sup>58</sup>. We're serious.

» The Amazon Fund, which had been running for ten years, was suspended by the minister, in a move to cut funding for NGOs and give money to landowners<sup>59</sup> and eventually land-grabbers<sup>60</sup>. Salles said NGOs were involved in wrongdoing, a claim never backed up by any evidence.

» Salles fired 21 out of 27 regional heads of Ibama and did not hire new officials. In the Amazonian states, to date, only one regional office (out of nine) has its chief appointed. Operations are paralysed.

» Ibama was gagged. The number of fines applied to crimes of deforestation has dropped by 29%<sup>61</sup>, the lowest in ten years. The number of operations in the Amazon fell by 22%<sup>62</sup> this year until way into the fire crisis. Ibama's special force wasn't mobilized to fight crime in the Amazon until late August, when the Amazon fires were already out of control.

» The budgetary performance of the ministry shows that environmental policymaking is stalled in Brazil. In 2019,

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58 <https://oglobo.globo.com/sociedade/governo-faz-sort-eio-com-bolinhas-globos-para-es-colher-novos-membros-do-conama-23813780>

59 <http://climainfo.org.br/2019/05/27/salles-quer-us-ar-fundo-amazonia-para-in-denizar-desapropriacoes/>

60 <http://www.observatoriodo-clima.eco.br/en/improbo-ricardo-salles-quer-tirar-fundo-amazonia-para-dar-grileiros/>

61 <https://g1.globo.com/natureza/noticia/2019/08/24/queima-das-disparam-mas-multas-do-ibama-despencam-sob-bolsonaro.ghtml>

62 <https://www.poder360.com.br/brasil/ibama-nao-realizou-22-das-acoes-de-fiscalizacao-planejadas-para-2019/>



as of November 24th, the whole ministry had a budget appropriation of a mere R\$ 2.9 million (US\$ 740,000). No money at all was given to protected areas, only US\$ 63,000 went to deforestation control, and even Mr. Salles' top priority, the urban environmental agenda, saw only a fraction of the authorized budget spent on programs such as waste management and marine pollution. For helping municipalities develop environmental control strategies, the budget appropriation has been *less than a hundred* US dollars.

» Ibama and ICMBio have also been subject to budget cuts. The budget for fighting fires was cut by 29%. ICMBio lost 29% of its money to manage protected areas and 21% of its budget for inspections. Both agencies will run out of money before the end of the year<sup>63</sup>.

**CLAIM |** *"I come from a family of attorneys. I'm not a farmer and I don't have ties to agribusiness."*

Ricardo Salles

**FACT |** Salles is a former director of the SRB (Brazilian Rural Society), a key organization of Brazil's rural lobby, and whose leaders wrote a letter to Bolsonaro supporting his name as their choice for the ministry before he was appointed. Bolsonaro himself told the rural caucus right after the G20 meeting, in July, that "Salles is married to you guys". A token of that marriage is the fact that Salles picked another former SRB director, Joaquim Pereira Leite, as his director of Forests.

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<sup>63</sup> [https://sustentabilidade.estadao.com.br/blogs/ambiente-se/principais-orgaos-ambientais-ibama-e-icmbio-podem-ficar-sem-verba-antes-do-fim-do-ano/?utm\\_source=estadao:whatsapp&utm\\_medium=link](https://sustentabilidade.estadao.com.br/blogs/ambiente-se/principais-orgaos-ambientais-ibama-e-icmbio-podem-ficar-sem-verba-antes-do-fim-do-ano/?utm_source=estadao:whatsapp&utm_medium=link)

