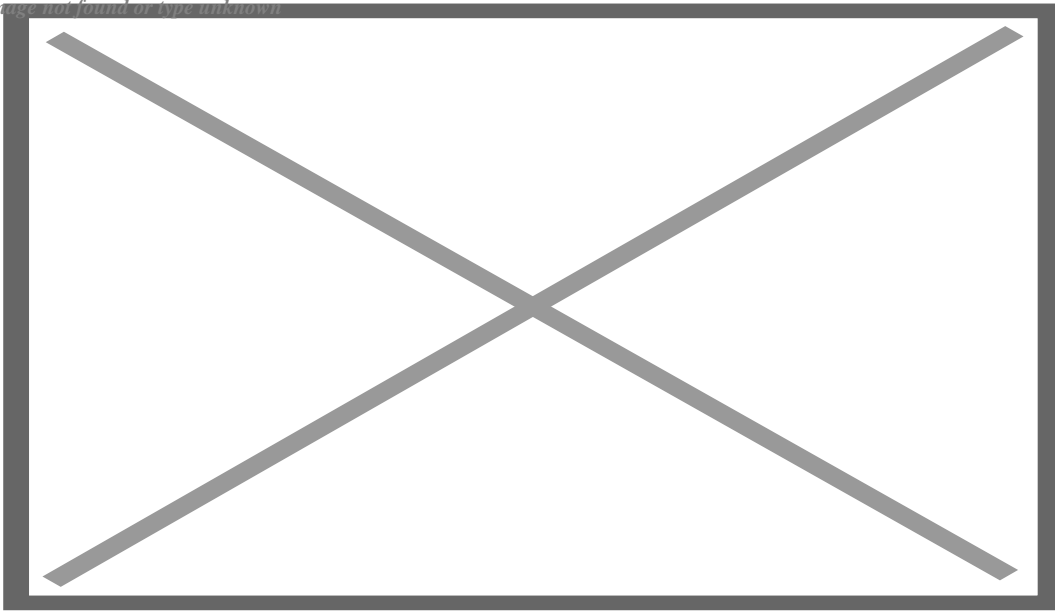


Fires in Brazil's Amazon rainforest jump in October

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Fires in Brazil's Amazon rainforest surged in October. (Photo: AFP)

Brasilia, November 2 (RHC)-- Fires in Brazil's Amazon rainforest surged in October and the number of blazes is up 25 percent in the first 10 months of 2020, compared with a year ago, data from government space research agency INPE showed.

The agency recorded 17,326 hot spots in the world's largest rainforest in October, more than double the number of fires detected in the same month last year. Destruction of the forest has soared since right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro took office in 2019.

The Brazilian president claimed he wanted to develop the region to lift it out of poverty, while environmental advocates said his policies emboldened illegal loggers, miners and ranchers.

The number of fires so far this year remains at a decade high. In only the first 10 months of the year, 2020 has surpassed the total number of fires for full-year 2019, when the destruction spurred international criticism that Brazil was not doing enough to protect the forest.

"With the rate of deforestation increasing in recent years, the government has ignored the warnings of researchers: deforestation and forest fires go together," WWF-Brazil science manager Mariana Napolitano said in a statement. "After cutting down the forest, the criminals set fires to clean up the

accumulated organic material.”

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