

# BRAZIL



**The 2019 Election of President Jair Bolsonaro exacerbated the human rights violations and economic inequality that have long plagued Brazil and contributed to the highest recorded levels of deforestation in the Amazon.**


## Country Context

President Bolsonaro's relaxation of environmental protections has compounded the challenge of climate change and contributed to extensive deforestation and forest fires in the Amazon Rainforest, all of which greatly impact vulnerable rural, indigenous communities. In urban areas, widespread violence between rival drug cartels and the murder of police forces is typical, with 1,538 police killings in Rio de Janeiro in 2018. In April 2018, Brazil's government initiated an emergency response to the massive influx of Venezuelan refugees it was ill-equipped to receive. The Fund for Peace ranks Brazil as 2019's most-worsened country, tied with Venezuela, due to the country's economic failings and rampant corruption.


## Key Figures

 **26.5%**  
of Brazilians live below the poverty line

 **80%**  
increase in fires in the Amazon in 2019

 **Over 180,000**  
Venezuelan refugees reside in Brazil as of August 2019

 **Ranked #1**  
in the world for adolescent homicides

 **57**  
indigenous, community, and environmental activists murdered in 2017

## How is the U.S. Involved?

To combat deforestation, USAID and Brazil's Ministry of Environment signed a Letter of Intent to establish the first-ever biodiversity-focused impact-investment fund for the Brazilian Amazon. USAID, which spent over \$16 million on aid to Brazil in 2019, cites protecting biodiversity as its primary concern.

## On-the-Ground Perspective

- Indigenous communities in Brazil have experienced extensive loss of land due to deforestation and the encroachment of agricultural interests. Rural and indigenous women are most vulnerable, and only 30% own farmland.
- In April 2019, Brazil's government attempted to shut down 55 national multipartite councils that involved civil society in the formulating of public policies. Brazil's Supreme Court blocked part of the decree, but commissions to combat child and slave labor were lost. The incident raised concerns about the future of participatory democracy in the country.

## Responses and Actions

- Through the support of the U.S. Office of Population, Refugees, and Immigrants, by mid-July 2019, UNICEF facilitated WASH monitoring and services, alongside local partner ADRA Brazil, to almost 5,000 Venezuelan refugees.
- The Nature Conservancy works with partners to strengthen indigenous institutions and include indigenous people, especially women, in natural resource management. This not only improves human rights but also helps to ensure land and biodiversity conservation.

References available at [interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport](https://www.interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport).

