



The role of the  
**Brazilian Federal Prosecution Service**  
in combating **environmental crimes**,  
**criminal organizations**  
and **associated money laundering**

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A COMPREHENSIVE AND STRATEGIC ROLE

# The **MPF's** work in **Brazil** is extensive:

- **Dual Scope:** Civil <-> Criminal
- **Actions:** Preventive <-> Repressive

Focusing on civil prevention is **highly effective** at deterring reoffending and preventing new crimes.





# Decapitalizing Environmental Crime

One of MPF’s most emblematic examples of the use of Public Civil Actions (ACPs) of a preventive and compensatory nature against organized environmental crime is the “**Amazônia Protege**” project:

	Focus of Civil and Preventive Action	Impact on the Criminal Organization
Public Civil Action against Deforesters	<p>The MPF uses satellites and data cross-referencing to identify those responsible for large-scale illegal deforestation.</p> <p>The ACP is filed not primarily for arrest, but for the reparation of environmental damage and the obligation to restore the area.</p>	<p><b>Decapitalization:</b> The criminal is forced to bear the financial costs of reparation and compensation, undermining their ability to reinvest in the illegal activity.</p> <p><b>Prevention:</b> The illegally deforested land, which would be used for illegal land grabbing or cattle ranching, is placed under a judicial restoration order, nullifying the economic advantage of the crime.</p>
Action against Land Grabbing	<p>Civil actions target fraudulent land regularization (land grabbing), which is a branch of organized crime used to "launder" the land. The MPF acts civilly to cancel illegal land registrations.</p>	<p><b>Asset Base Destruction:</b> Without the "legalized" land title, the criminal loses the most valuable asset, which would have been used as collateral for loans or future sales.</p> <p><b>Prevention:</b> It interrupts the money laundering chain and the violent occupation of lands.</p>





## Amazon

records around

**50,000 illegal deforestation crimes annually**, making on-site inspection of every case impossible.

# The Challenge



# Technology as an strategic ally in the fight against illegal deforestation







# Amazônia Protege

The “**Amazônia Protege**” project  
innovative concept:

- MPF uses high-precision satellite imagery as central evidence;
- This allows for penalizing the deforester and demanding reparation without the need to physically go to the field.



# Impact & Operational Reach

This strategy **exponentially increases** prosecutor's capacity to file thousands of Public Civil Actions, **overcoming geographic limitations** and **decapitalizing organized crime**.





An aerial photograph showing a large area of deforestation. The image is dominated by a dark green, textured forest canopy. On the right side, there is a large, irregularly shaped area where the forest has been cleared, revealing a lighter brown, textured ground. This cleared area is divided into several rectangular sections, suggesting agricultural or industrial use. The text "How do we view deforestation?" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the image, partially obscuring the forest canopy.

**How do we  
view deforestation?**





PRODES-ID: 49905  
DESMATAMENTO  
2016-07-15  
Área: 224.08 ha





## project results in numbers

3,551

public civil  
actions filed  
(from 2017 to 2023)

68,000

hectares of  
forest recovered

650

judicial  
convictions

R\$316M

in indemnities to be paid  
by those responsible  
for illegal deforestation



AMAZÔNIA PROTEGE PROJECT:

# Legal Innovations

1. Civil conviction of the deforester is possible using satellite imagery alone, **with the Judiciary recognizing the validity of remote technical evidence;**

2. **It allows for filing a Public Civil Action (ACP)** and obtaining a conviction even when the directly responsible party (the defendant) is not immediately identified on the ground. This guarantees damage compensation and prevents the future use of the deforested area.



## The Result:

Environmental crime, no matter how remote or concealed, **does not go unpunished, and the damage is repaired.**



# Attacking

the Logistics of  
Illegal Mining







The **illegal trade of liquid mercury** (essential input in gold mining and highly toxic substance) has frequently been carried out through large **e-commerce platforms**.

# The problem





# MPF's response

To interrupt this supply chain, the MPF signed a Termo de Ajustamento de Conduta (TAC) with platforms, such as **Mercado Livre**.

Measures Adopted in the **TAC (extrajudicial agreement signed between the Public Prosecutor's Office and the company)**:

- Creation of a direct and priority communication channel so that the MPF can request the removal of illegal mercury listings within 24 hours;
- Proactive Search: The company must use technological tools to proactively identify and remove similar listings to prevent new illegal offers.



# Impact

This **preventive action** in the civil sphere avoids filing a lawsuit, ensures the rapid removal of inputs from the criminal chain, and **dismantles the logistics of the illegal mining operation.**





# Severing Criminal Connectivity

Illegal mining has evolved into a **highly complex organized crime**, dependent on **stable communication** for its logistics.





Satellite internet (Starlink) was the only high-speed communication available in the Amazon's most isolated areas (Indigenous Lands and mining sites).

This allowed criminals to coordinate logistics, negotiate supplies (mercury), and smuggle gold in real-time.

**Hence, the MPF signed an extrajudicial agreement (TAC) with Starlink focused on disrupting the criminals' operational capabilities.**







- **End of Anonymity**, by requiring complete identification data for new users in the Legal Amazon, allowing the MPF to track and identify terminals used in mining sites.
- **Logistical Paralysis**, by obligating Starlink to immediately block the internet service of any user confirmed to be linked to illegal mining.
- **Asset Reuse**, enabling the quick transfer of ownership of seized terminals to public agencies, transforming confiscated equipment into tools for government enforcement.

# Key measures



PROJECT

# Fiscalização Preventiva Integrada

(FPI - Integrated Preventive Inspection)  
of the **São Francisco River**





An aerial photograph of the São Francisco River winding through a deep, rocky canyon. The river is a vibrant blue-green color. On the left, a small waterfall cascades down a rocky slope. In the background, a large concrete dam spans the width of the canyon. The sky is filled with white and grey clouds. The overall scene is rugged and natural.

# The "Velho Chico"

The São Francisco River is the backbone of the Brazilian Northeast and one of the **largest river basins in the country**.

- It encompasses **6 states** (Minas Gerais, Bahia, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe, and Goiás, plus the Federal District).
- Approximately **2,863 km in Length**;
- Estimated **over 15 million inhabitants** reside in the Basin and depend, directly or indirectly, on the River for survival.



**Since 2004**, the FPI is a permanent and continuous action, bringing together dozens of institutions in field operations to **inspect and combat socio-environmental degradation in the Basin.**

Its objective is the **protection and preservation of the Basin's natural and cultural heritage** through inspection, environmental education, and the induction of public policies.





The **Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (MPF)** acts as the central coordinating body and articulator of the **Integrated Preventive Inspection (FPI)**, significantly multiplying the capacity to protect the São Francisco River.





# MPF Legal Meat TAC

The Commitment to Sustainable  
Cattle Ranching in the Amazon

Extrajudicial agreement  
signed between the **MPF** and  
**slaughterhouses** operating in  
the Amazon.







It bans large meatpacking companies from purchasing from those who commit crimes in the Amazon; **Ensuring that beef comes from legal and sustainable production.**

main goal





# Pillars

**Prohibit cattle purchases** from areas:

- With **Illegal Deforestation**;
- **Embargoed Farms** by IBAMA;
- **Properties listed on the so-called "Slave Labor Dirty List"**, published by the Ministry of Labor and Employment;
- **Located fully or partially within legalized Indigenous Lands** or those facing judgment for the invasion of these territories (protection extends to areas with severe litigation or agrarian conflict);
- **Located within Conservation Units**

**Requires traceability and monitoring systems for suppliers (audits).** Links market access to socio-environmental compliance.





MINISTÉRIO DA  
CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA  
E INOVAÇÃO

# "Carne Legal" Program and Amazon Deforestation

Key Insights from Historical Deforestation Data (1988–2023)

The program started in 2009.  
**Before the program's launch**, the annual  
deforestation rate in the Brazilian Amazon  
never dropped below 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

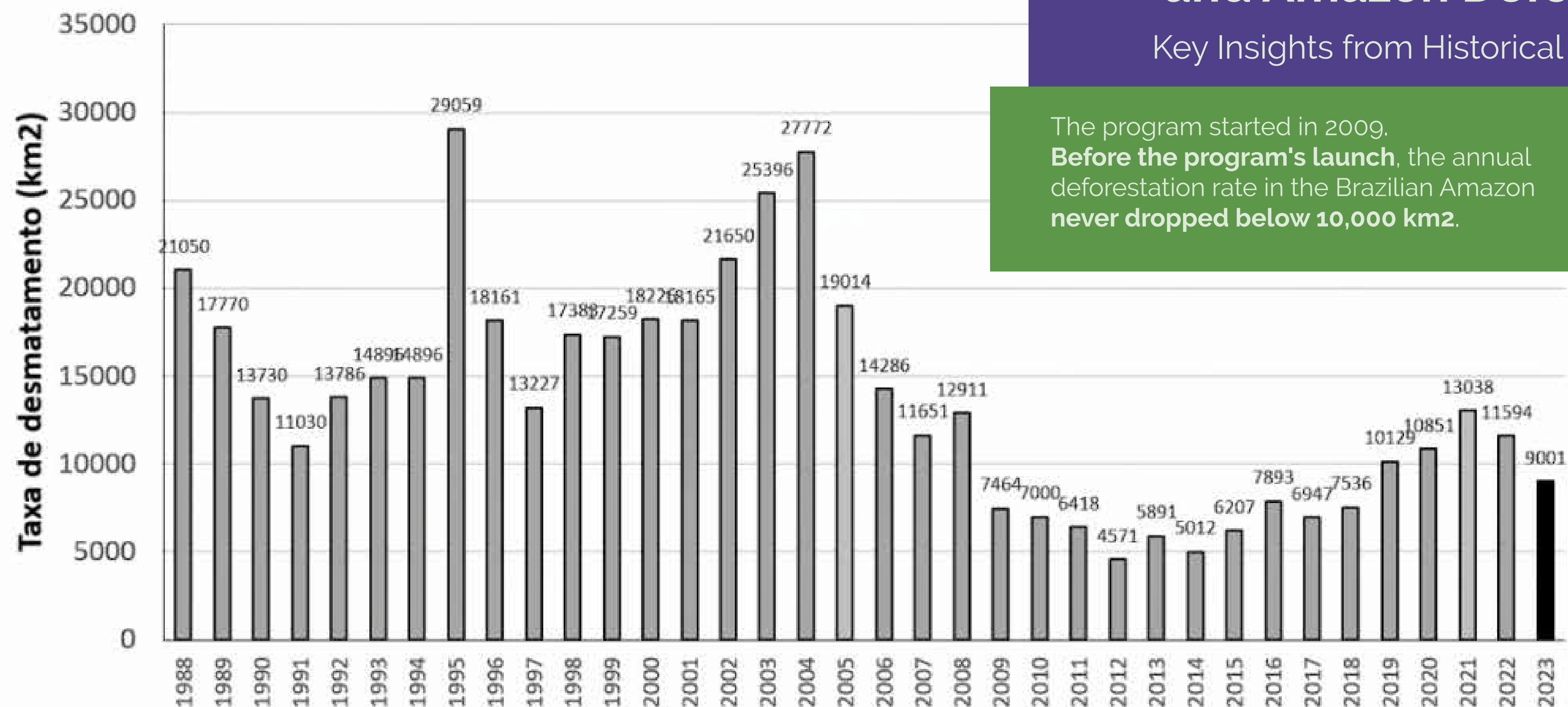


Figura 4 – Taxa anual de desmatamento desde 1988 na ALB. Em preto a estimativa para 2023.



# Impact

The average annual deforestation rate after 2009 is approximately **50% lower** than the average rate recorded before the program's implementation.







# Inspections

2º CICLO AUDITORIAS TAC CARNE - MATO GROSSO Volume abatido/exportado (JAN a DEZ 2022)		Nº animais abate/exportação comercializados	Nº animais auditados (amostra)	Nº animais inconformes (amostra)	Irregularidades (%)
Empresas convocadas que apresentaram auditoria		3.717.746	640.861	15.650	2,44%
	Bombonato - FrigoBom	150.599	20.972	3.845	18,33%
	Pantanal	166.686	23.791	2.983	12,51%
	Agra Agroindustrial	204.371	21.955	2.297	10,47%
	Colíder	13.009	9.380	218	2,32%
	JBS	1.526.663	344.963	6.228	1,81%
	Carnes Boi Branco	47.728	12.550	79	0,63%
	Marfrig	998.047	115.431	0	0,00%
	Minerva	258.174	53.030	0	0,00%
	Vale Grande	352.469	38.789	0	0,00%





# Mangrove Protection and Recovery in Paranaguá (PR)

**MPF Leads the multi-agency task-force** (called Integrated Environmental Enforcement Action –AIEFA) for the protection and recovery of the mangrove ecosystem—a crucial Permanent Preservation Area (APP) in the Paranaguá Estuarine Complex.







Focus Area	Objective	Results
Enforcement	Conduct periodic operations to immediately cease environmental destruction and remove illegal constructions.	More than 100 illegal, unoccupied constructions demolished (including high-standard and holiday homes).
Demolition & Cleaning	Remove physical barriers to mangrove regeneration, such as illegal landfills, waste, and structures, halting the advance of the invasion.	Removal of massive amounts of construction debris and garbage used to fill the mangroves, making way for recovery. Removal of illegal walls and demarcation for future lots, stopping illicit real estate schemes.
Recovery	Environmental Restoration post-demolition, ensuring the natural area can regenerate.	Allowed for the recovery of more than five kilometers of coastline and mangrove areas within the Palmito State Park (Parque Estadual do Palmito).
Legal/ Administrative	Issue administrative recommendations and file lawsuits to ensure municipal bodies and public service companies (e.g., power/water) comply with environmental protection duties.	Mandatory disconnection and removal of irregular power and water services from the invaded areas, preventing further urbanization and growth of the occupations.



OPERATION

# Pronta Resposta

The Largest Illegal Gold Seizure  
in Amazonas History







**47 Kg of gold seized** (in high-purity bars)  
approximately **USD\$ 2.8 milion.**

Extracted from illegal mining and transported by air,  
intercepted in Manaus (Dec./2023).

- **Arrests Made:** Individuals linked to the transport and criminal organization detained (preventive and temporary custody).
- **Dismantling the Chain:** MPF focuses on exposing the entire network, from miners to the major beneficiaries of the scheme.
- **Interagency Integration:** Success of the joint effort between the Federal Police (PF), Federal Highway Police (PRF), and MPF.
- **Strengthening the Rule of Law:** Reinforced protection of Federal Assets and repression of environmental and corruption crimes in the Amazon.



# OPERATION Rios Voadores

Environmental crime in the Amazon is not isolated; **it is the end-product of a complex and profitable network.**





This operation targeted the **largest criminal organization involved in illegal deforestation and land grabbing in the Amazon**, in the state of Pará. The criminal group moved over R\$ 1 billion (between 2012 and 2015).

The operation, in 2016, executed **24 preventive arrest warrants**, in addition to temporary detention orders, spanning several states (including Pará, São Paulo and Mato Grosso).





# Operation Rios Voadores

proves that, to secure the arrest of the main perpetrators and defund the criminal enterprise, the investigation must necessarily encompass the full range of connected offenses: **targeting the Criminal Organization, Money Laundering and Tax Evasion.**





**Thank you**  
for your attention!

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*Deputy Prosecutor General of the Republic of Brazil*



**MPF**  
Ministério Público Federal