

Worst drought in 50 years takes toll in northern Brazil

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A dried out lagoon in Brazil in 1998. Severe drought gripping northeastern Brazil -- the worst in a half-century -- is taking its toll on more than 1,100 towns, even triggering fighting in rural areas, local media reported Sunday.

Severe drought gripping northeastern Brazil -- the worst in a half-century -- is taking its toll on more than 1,100 towns, even triggering fighting in rural areas, local media reported Sunday.

An average of one person a day is being killed in "water wars" in rural areas, while scores of animals are wasting away before perishing, the O Globo newspaper reported over the weekend.

Short [water supplies](#) have devastated farm output, the report said, endangering the lives of local people and their livestock.

Many people in the area have lost half their livestock, and the Brazilian government has reduced forecasts for corn, soy and bean crops.

In Pernambuco, 66 municipalities are on water emergencies, rivers have run completely dry and animals looking for water in the riverbed can only find the odd muddy puddle.

Local dams in the region are running dry, and abuses are rife. In one cited example, water [truck drivers](#) make deliveries -- but only if customers promise to vote for certain local candidates.

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