

Brazil resumes work on major dam after protests

October 19 2012



A handout picture released by Amazon Watch shows Amazonic natives symbolically occupying an earthen dam in Brazil in protest against the construction of the massive Belo Monte Dam project in June 2012. Work has resumed on the dam after the public consortium reached a deal with indigenous groups and fishermen who had occupied one of its building sites.

Work has resumed on the massive Belo Monte Dam in Brazil's Amazon after the public consortium reached a deal with indigenous groups and fishermen who had occupied one of its building sites.

State media reported Thursday that Norte Energia, the consortium building the [hydroelectric dam](#), had reached a deal with the 150 protesters who had occupied Pimentel, one of five [construction sites](#), on October 8.

The protesters had accused the consortium of failing to live up to promises made in June to build schools, homes and a hospital.

They also want their lands demarcated and non-indigenous people removed, as well as a better healthcare system and access to drinking water.

Xingu Vivo, an NGO representing local indigenous groups, said Thursday's agreement had addressed some of the protesters' demands but that other matters would have to be worked out in future negotiations.

[Indigenous groups](#) fear the dam across the Xingu River, a tributary of the [Amazon](#), will harm their way of life, while environmentalists have warned of deforestation, [greenhouse gas emissions](#) and damage to the local ecosystem.

Expected to produce 11,000 megawatts of electricity, the dam would be the third biggest in the world, after China's Three Gorges facility and Brazil's Itaipu Dam in the south.

It is one of several hydroelectric projects billed by Brazil as providing clean energy for a fast-growing economy.

The dam is, however, expected to flood an area of 500 square kilometers (200 square miles) along the Xingu and displace 16,000 people, according to the government, although some NGOs put the number at 40,000 displaced.

The federal government plans to invest a total of \$1.2 billion to assist the displaced by the time the dam is completed in 2019.

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