

Growing support for rationing in drought-hit Brazil

February 9 2015



People protest against the lack of water in Sao Paulo, Brazil in front of the governmental palace on January 26, 2015

A majority of Brazilians support water and energy rationing, as the country faces its worst drought in decades, an opinion poll showed Monday.

The Datafolha poll showed that 65 percent of Brazilians support "immediate" energy rationing, with just 27 percent saying the

government should stay its hand.

Sixty percent of those polled in business hub Sao Paulo said [water](#) should be rationed, against 38 percent who are opposed.

The poll surveyed 4,000 people between February 3 and 5, just a week after regional state water company Sabesp warned it might have to consider severe rationing for up to five days at a time.

For months, Sao Paulo state has been hit by the worst drought in memory, with millions of residents suffering repeated water supply cuts. It was just last month that authorities finally imposed rationing, after reservoir levels sank to historic lows.

After a loss of pressure in the system, the government late last month admitted that some de facto rationing already is in place.

Suppliers, meanwhile, recently acknowledged that water was being provided at reduced pressure after reservoir levels sank to historic lows.

Outlying districts of Sao Paulo have been particularly badly affected.

Sao Paulo state governor Geraldo Alckmin, re-elected last October, had for months steadfastly refused to consider rationing, even as supplies dwindled to critical lows after months of below average rainfall last year.



Dried banks due to the lack of rain at Funil Hydroelectric Plant reservoir, in Resende, Brazil, on February 3, 2015

Experts are predicting no respite this year as they forecast official rationing from April, when the dry season begins.

The lack of rain is also affecting hydroelectric power dams across southern and southeastern Brazil which are supposed to supply the entire continent-sized nation of 200 million.

Central government continues to deny the possibility it may have to introduce general water and energy rationing despite several states suffering power cuts last month.

Although recent weeks have seen the rains return in southeastern states such as Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais, reservoir levels remain far below normal levels.

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