

Brazil vows more aid as Amazon waters dry up

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Brazil's Vice President Geraldo Alckmin is flying on helicopter over the Negro River in Amazonas State that is experiencing severe drought.

Brazil's Vice-President Geraldo Alckmin said Wednesday that more help would be sent to an Amazon state where rivers are drying up in a severe

drought, causing mass die-offs of fish and dolphins.

"There will be no shortage of resources for whatever is needed. We are working to free up more resources as quickly as possible to help the population," Alckmin told journalists in northern Manaus, after a helicopter trip to assess the crisis.

Alckmin and other government ministers visited Amazonas State at the request of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who is recovering from a hip replacement.

Amazonas, Brazil's biggest state, covered in immense expanses of tropical forest, is currently in its [dry season](#), which has been worsened by the El Niño warming phenomenon that reduces cloud formation, meaning even less rain than usual.

Environment Minister Marina Silva said that "the warming of the North Atlantic due to uncontrolled climate change" was exacerbating the dry spell.

Aside from mass die-offs of fish and pink river dolphins, low water levels are impeding travel on the waterways which is crucial for [local communities](#) to receive supplies and move around.

Authorities are prioritizing the supply of food, water, fuel and medicine to affected populations in Amazonas.

Last week Silva announced the government was sending emergency aid to the area, where the drought is affecting some 500,000 people.

The government has also released 138 million reais (\$27 million) to dredge the Madeira and Solimoes rivers to increase the depth of waterways and facilitate navigation.

Alckmin said this could take up to 45 days to complete.

"According to experts, the [rainy season](#) will only begin in November in the region, and it will be hard for rivers to return to their [normal levels](#)," said Amazonas governor Wilson Lima.

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