

Brazil judge says work can resume at Amazon dam

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Handout picture released by Xingu Vivo movement showing activists blocking the road leading to the construction site of Belo Monte hydroelectric dam, in the northern state of Para, Brazil, October 2011. A judge in Brazil on Friday revoked his own order to halt work on a controversial \$11 billion dam in the Amazon region, a project that has been criticized by environmentalists and native groups.

A judge in Brazil on Friday revoked his own order to halt work on a controversial \$11 billion dam in the Amazon region, a project that has been criticized by environmentalists and native groups.

Judge Carlos Castro said the company behind the Belo Monte [dam](#) had shown that local fishing will not be impeded during construction, and the natural flow of the Xingu river will not be affected.

"There are no legal grounds to justify maintaining the stoppage

measure," Castro said.

In September, Castro had ruled in favor of a fisheries group that said the dam could affect local fishing stocks, which are key to the indigenous families who make a living by fishing.

At that time, he barred Norte Energia from "building a port, using explosives, installing dikes, building canals and any other infrastructure work that would interfere with the natural flow of the Xingu River, thereby affecting local fish."

The Belo Monte dam is portrayed by Brazil's government as a key piece of its plan to boost national energy production needed for one of the world's fastest-growing [emerging economies](#).

It would be the third biggest dam in the world, after China's Three Gorges construction and the Itaipu dam on the border of Brazil and Paraguay.

The project is expected to employ 20,000 people directly in construction, flood an area of 500 square kilometers (200 square miles) along the Xingu river and displace 16,000 people.

The government had pledged to minimize the environmental and [social impact](#) of the dam and asserted that no traditional indigenous land was to be affected.

But its construction has been the subject of legal wrangling for decades.

The project also has come under international criticism, including from Oscar-winning movie director James Cameron of "Avatar" fame, who said rainforest indigenous tribes could turn to violence to block its [construction](#).

Fresh protests are expected this Saturday against the dam in several states.

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