

Sludge from deadly Brazil mine accident reaches Atlantic

November 22 2015



Partial view of mud-covered Bento Rodrigues, three days after an avalanche of mud and mining sludge buried the town in southeastern Brazil, on November 8, 2015

The torrent of mud and toxic mineral waste that buried a Brazilian village earlier this month has reached the Atlantic Ocean after a long passage down the Doce River, officials said.

Environment Ministry officials told local media the sludge arrived Saturday at the mouth of the river, and could extend some six miles (nine kilometers) into the ocean.

The material was unleashed November 5 when a waste reservoir collapsed at an iron-ore mine in the state of Minas Gerais, destroying most of the nearby village of Bento Rodrigues.

At least 10 people were killed and 15 are missing.

The sludge then traveled 400 miles (650 kilometers) across southeastern Brazil, funneling down the Doce River to the Atlantic.

Officials in the neighboring state of Espirito Santo built barriers in an attempt to prevent the [waste](#) from polluting the coastline.

But the head of the Brazilian Environmental Institute, Luciano Evaristo, told the news website G1 it has killed marine fauna and could affect the spawning of sea turtles as it empties into the Atlantic.

Brazilian authorities earlier declared a state of emergency in more than 200 towns affected by the spill.

The mine is owned by Samarco, a joint venture of Australia's BHP Billiton, the world's largest mining firm, and Brazil's Vale, the biggest iron ore miner.

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