

Court of Audit Finds Chaos in Brazil's Nuclear Installations

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Published this weekend by Rio daily O Globo, a report by a Brazilian official organization criticized the lack of security at Brazil's nuclear installations, which range from electricity-generating plants to hospital equipment.

"The deficiencies signaled out by the Brazilian Court of Audit (which ensures proper management of federal public resources) go from a state of chaos in radioactive installations to the lack of enough adequately trained technicians supervising the power stations at Angra dos Reis, a seaside resort where two nuclear plants for generating electricity are located, the newspaper said.

The report obtained by the newspaper says that "of the 2,350 pieces of equipment (that use radioactive material) in the country, 1,269 of them representing 54% of the total function very irregularly and have no official authorization to operate."

The report also points out a notorious "lack of human resources" trained to work with nuclear material and "a deficient review of licenses," Augusto Sherman, a member of the Brazilian Court of Audit and author of the report, told O Globo.

Sherman said that the average age of technicians working in Brazil's nuclear sector is 52 and that close to 40% of them are almost ready to retire.

"The National Nuclear Energy Commission could collapse in a few years because of lack of personnel," the official said, adding that he believed "urgent precautions" must be taken for the sector to be adequately supervised because of the potential risk its operations entail.

Most electricity in Brazil is hydro generated, 78%, and nuclear power represents a mere 2%.

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