

# Defending Brazil's 1 Million Dam Victims

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Brazil's Movement of Dam Victims (MAB), as the name itself expresses, is a social organization to defend the rights of people affected by dam construction.

Electrobrás, the Brazilian company in charge of administering Brazil's electric system, calculates that over 34 thousand square kilometers - an area bigger than Belgium - have been flooded by dam construction in Brazil.

The total of people affected by dam construction in Brazil amounts to about a million individuals. They lived or worked in areas taken over by reservoirs.

Over 70 thousand people, for example, were affected by the construction of the hydroelectric plants of Tucuruí, state of Pará; Itaparica, state of Bahia, and Itaipu, in Paraná, .

The fight against dams commenced in the decade of the '70's, when these projects were implanted in greater scale in Brazil.

The dams of Sobradinho and Itaparica (in Northeast Brazil), Itaipu, Machadinho and Ita (in the South), and Tucuruí (in the North) were constructed during this period.

There were mass protests oppósing the construction of these plants. In 1989, during the First National Meeting of Workers Affected by Dams, a survey was conducted of the experiences of these people.

At the end of the meeting the decision was made to create a national organization in defense of dam victims. The MAB was created in 1991.

Brazil is not the only country with organized representatives who oppose dam construction.

In 1997 the MAB held the First International Meeting of Dam Victims, with representatives from 20 countries.

At the end of the encounter, the participants got together to establish March 14 as the international date of the fight against dams.

Main combat zones:

- Implantation of alternative energy sources (wind, solar)
- Alternative proposals to dam construction
- Popular participation in decisions regarding electric energy
- Environmental preservation
- Reform of the electric energy sector

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