

Cities

Threat

Analysis points to the presence of mercury, arsenic, iron and lead in Rio Doce water

"To give you an idea, the amount of arsenic found in the sample was 2.6394 milligrams, with an acceptable maximum 0.01 milligram", quoted Mayor Neto Barros.

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Mayor of Baixo Guandu shows results of laboratory water analysis
Photo: Ricardo Medeiros

The laboratory analysis of the Rio Doce water samples, collected in Minas Gerais, points out the presence of heavy metals in a concentration above the acceptable. The information was confirmed by the mayor of the city of Baixo Guandu, Neto Barros, in the early afternoon of Thursday (12).

According to the mayor, the presence of metals such as mercury, aluminum, iron, lead, boron, barium, copper, among others, was detected. "To give you an idea, the amount of arsenic found in the sample was 2.6394 milligrams, with an acceptable maximum of 0.01 milligram", quoted Barros.

The mayor also said that there are 100 km of toxic material going down the river. "We found practically the entire periodic table in the water. I want to see what the president of Vale is going to do to help all the people," he said.

This week, the Baixo Guandu Autonomous Water and Sewage Service (Saae) sent an expedition to Minas Gerais to collect samples of the water that is coming down with the second runoff. The dense mass of mud was found by the technicians in Governador Valadares, about 200km from the border with Espírito Santo.

Since the rupture of Samarco dams in the mining town of Mariana, last Thursday, experts have warned of the impact caused by the arrival of tailings in Rio Doce.

According to Eduardo Duarte Marques, a researcher at the Geological Survey of Brazil, in Belo Horizonte (MG), the tailings of the dams are predominantly formed by inert substances, except that iron ore may eventually contain portions of metals such as arsenic, antimony, zinc and copper. "At certain points of extraction of the ore there may be higher concentrations of these metals - which would make the mud really harmful. However, to know the concentration, it will be necessary to carry out chemical analyzes," he said.

The mayor of Baixo Guandu says that the result of the water analysis is extremely worrying. He even determined that the Vitória-Minas railroad should still be blocked today, to prevent the transportation of ore that passes through the municipality. In the late afternoon, the city government, according to Neto Barros, will place machines on the tracks to prevent the passage of the train that takes the ore. "We need urgent answers on the problem that affects the entire region. We will not allow any mining activity. If there was no mobilization in the city, the consequences could be even more serious," he said.

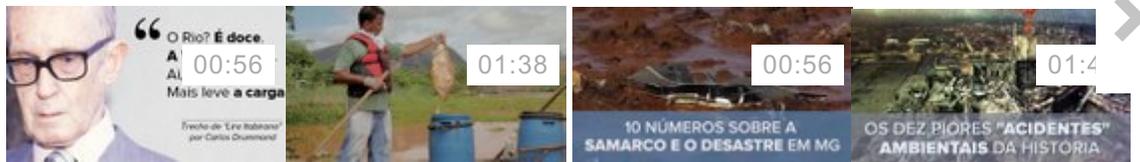
The other side

By means of a note, mining company Samarco stated that it is unaware of the technical report that points to the presence of heavy metals in the mud. "The company reinforces that the waste is classified as inert and non-hazardous material, according to the Brazilian standard of code NBR 10004-04, which means that it does not present risks to public health and the environment. , the waste is basically composed of water, iron oxide particles and silica (quartz) ".



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