

# Bento Rodrigues dam disaster

Bento Rodrigues dam disaster

The village of Bento Rodrigues after the disaster

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<b>Date</b>	5 November 2015
<b>Location</b>	Germano mine complex, <a href="#">Mariana</a> , <a href="#">Minas Gerais</a> , <a href="#">Brazil</a>
<b><a href="#">Coordinates</a></b>	<a href="#">20°13′53″S 43°26′33″W</a>
<b>Type</b>	<a href="#">Dam failure</a>
<b>Cause</b>	Unknown <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Participants</b>	<a href="#">Samarco</a> ( <a href="#">Vale</a> , <a href="#">BHP Billiton</a> )
<b>Deaths</b>	19 <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Non-fatal injuries</b>	16+ <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Property damage</b>	Two villages devastated, <sup>[1]</sup> around 200 homes destroyed <sup>[3]</sup>

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[Map](#)

  
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The **Bento Rodrigues dam disaster** happened on 5 November 2015, when a [dam](#) at a Germano [iron ore](#) mine broke. The disaster is also known as **Mariana dam disaster**, or **Samarco dam disaster**. It happened in a mine near Mariana, Minas Gerais, [Brazil](#). The flooding devastated the downstream villages of Bento Rodrigues and Paracatu de Baixo, 40 kilometres (25 mi) from Bento Rodrigues, killing 19 people. <sup>[4][5]</sup> The damage caused by the tailings dam collapse is the largest ever recorded with [pollutants](#) spread along 668 kilometres (415 mi) of watercourses. <sup>[6]</sup>

The failure of the dam released 43.7 million [cubic metres](#) of mine tailings into the [Doce River](#). A [toxic](#) brown mudflow polluted the river and beaches near the [mouth](#) when it reached the [Atlantic Ocean](#) 17 days later. <sup>[7][8][9][10]</sup> The disaster created a [humanitarian crisis](#) as hundreds were displaced and cities along the Doce River suffered [water shortages](#) when their water supplies were polluted.

The total impact of the disaster, including the reason for failure and the environmental consequences, are officially under investigation and remain unclear.<sup>[11]</sup> The owner of the Bento Rodrigues dam, [Samarco](#), was subject to extensive [litigation](#) and government sanctions. In 2016, charges of [manslaughter](#) and environmental damage were filed against 21 executives, including Samarco's former CEO and representatives from Samarco's owners, [Vale](#) and [BHP Billiton](#), on its board of directors. Controversy over the investigation grew after a 2013 report, indicating structural issues in the dam, was leaked.<sup>[12][13][14][15]</sup>

Satellite images of Bento Rodrigues and the Germano mine before and after the disaster, displaying the flooding and pollution of the Doce River.

An abandoned car caught in the mudflow amidst the ruins of Bento Rodrigues

Satellite image of the [mouth](#) of the Doce River in [Linhares](#), [Espírito Santo](#), where fine waste in suspension reached the southern [Atlantic Ocean](#)

## References

[[change](#) | [change source](#)]

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