

Vale Mining charged with murder after tragedy leaves 270 dead



Brasilia, January 23 (RHC)-- The Brazilian Prosecutor's Office filed a complaint for homicide against the mining company Vale and the German firm TÜV SÜD for their responsibility in the collapse of a mineral dam that left at least 270 dead.

In addition to the crime of intentional homicide, the Public Ministry of the state of Minas Gerais accused 16 executives, as well as both companies directly, of several environmental crimes, since the dumping of mineral residues affected rivers, forests and communities of the region.

The complaint was submitted to Justice just four days after the first anniversary of the tragedy caused by the breach of one of the dams where Vale stored waste from the Córrego do Feijão mine, located in a small municipality of Minas Gerais.

The avalanche of waste and mud caused a tragedy that counts 259 deaths already identified and 11 more bodies missing, most of them employees of the mining company itself.

The Prosecutor's Office decided to press charges of homicide since the mining company hid information about the imminent collapse of the dam.

By doing so, "they made it difficult for the victims to defend themselves and made it impossible for hundreds of people to flee." According to the prosecutors, the mining company had various internal documents that stated that the situation of the dam was risky but "systematically hid this information from the public authorities and society."

Among the accused were Fabio Schvartsman, who was president of La Vale when the tragedy occurred, and ten other executives of the mining giant.

The complaint also extends to five employees of TÜV SÜD, a German company based in Munich that is responsible for issuing safety certificates for industrial facilities.

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