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The Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — The state environment minister has called on a Brazilian steel company to immediately move around 750 people living near its plant in a Rio de Janeiro suburb. Soil there was found to contain up to 90 times the legal limit of toxic and potentially carcinogenic substances including lead and cadmium.

Carlos Minc says the National Steelworks Company could be fined as much as \$25 million for what he called "several environmental crimes."

Minc said at a news conference on Thursday that the company had "put people's lives at risk (and) unlawfully withheld information."

The company said Friday none of its tests showed "risk or immediate danger to the residents' health."

The company donated the land to the steelworkers' union in 1995. The plot is located near the plant's landfill.

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