



MEMORANDUM

FOR : **USEC. MARILOU G. ERNI**  
Chief of Staff and Supervising Undersecretary for  
Strategic Communications  
Task Force Commander, Task Force Naujan Oil Spill

FROM : **THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
EMB – MIMAROPA Region

SUBJECT : **SITUATIONAL REPORT RE OIL SPILL IN NAUJAN, ORIENTAL MINDORO**

DATE : 04 March 2023

This is to apprise the Undersecretary’s on the situation regarding the oil spill due to capsized vessel in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro and the actions taken by the DENR – EMB MIMAROPA Region:

I. SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW

On 28 February 2023, it was reported by various media outlets that MT Princess Empress, an oil tanker, carrying more or less 800,000 liters of industrial oil, sank off along the coast of Tablas Strait in Balingwan Point, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Based on the preliminary reports from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) situated in Oriental Mindoro, the vessel came from Bataan and on its way to Iloilo when it encountered engine trouble due to overheating until it drifted towards the coast of Balingawan Point and eventually submerged.

On 01 March 2023, Governor Humerlito Dolor of the Province of Oriental Mindoro has officially reported through his Facebook account that the MT Princess Empress has sunk.

Relative thereto, the Department, through its various social media platforms, posted an official statement announcing the creation of “Task Force Naujan Oil Spill” which will be headed by Undersecretary and Chief of Staff Marilou Erni as Task Force Commander.

The Philippine Coast Guard, particularly its Marine Environmental Protection Command, is designated as the lead agency tasked with response operations in its affected area.

In response to the reports that the capsizing of the vessel resulted to an oil spill from the diesel fuel of the ship, this Office has immediately deployed personnel from the

Provincial Environmental Management Unit – Oriental Mindoro to conduct water sampling in areas which have been identified to have been potentially affected by the oil spill.

On 03 March 2023, around 2:00 PM, Petron Philippines issued a statement wherein it has clarified that the 800,0000 liters of industrial fuel oil carried by MT Princess Empress was not sourced from the Petron Bataan Refinery nor does the company own the fuel oil cargo carried by the vessel. Petron adds that the company has stopped producing fuel oil since 2016.

Petron also announced that their Waterborne Industry Oil Spill Equipment (WISE) has already been deployed to assist in the containment of the oil spill. The WISE vessel reached the incident site at 3:20 AM of March 1, 2023 and is now in coordination with the Philippine Coast Guard.

Furthermore, Petron's Bataan Refinery and Mabini Terminal have also extended assistance by making their oil spill boom teams and equipment available to further aid in the containment and clearing operations.

As of 5:16 PM, RDC REIELD MARINE SERVICES (RDC), the registered owner of MT Princess Empress, issued a statement through various media outlets.

In their statement, RDC announced that they have already deployed technical experts on the ground, air, and sea to conduct an assessment of the affected areas and come up with an effective dispatch strategy for containing and mitigating the oil spill on the shoreline.

Further, RDC also stated that they have been assisting the PCG in procuring oil spill collection equipment, such as disposable PPEs, open-ended drums, gas masks, and diesel allocation, among others.

Lastly, RDC ensured the concerned local government units of their commitment in providing support despite limited resources and that the company will continue to work closely with the authorities and affected communities until the matter is fully resolved.

As of 6:48 PM, PCG Region 6 posted an update through the official social media platform, regarding the presence of an undetermined quantity of oil slick within the shorelines of Semirara Island and Liwagao Island in Caluya, Antique.

As of 04 March 2023, the PCG, through their official social media accounts, has confirmed that the impact of the oil spill has reached the shorelines of Caluya, Antique.

Specifically, oil slicks were found in the following barangays of Caluya, Antique, to wit:

1. Sitio Sabang, Brgy. Tinogboc (1 kilometer);
2. Liwagao Island, Brgy. Sibolo (2 kilometers);
3. Sitio Tambak, Brgy. Semirara (2 kilometers)

On the same day, Governor Dolor of the Province of Oriental Mindoro has issued a letter addressed to the Embassy of Japan, through Sec. Enrique Manalo of the Department of Foreign Affairs, requesting for assistance and provision of Oil Containment Booms and other equipment that will help contain the oil spill and mitigate the damage to the waterbodies of Oriental Mindoro.

Furthermore, the Provincial Health Office – Oriental Mindoro directed the local residents to temporarily cease from participating in coastal clean-up operations due to lack of protective gears.

## **II. EFFECTS**

As of date, reports of fish kill and seeping of industrial fuel oil has reached the surrounding water bodies of Oriental Mindoro, including mangrove areas and marine protected areas as a result of the oil spill.

## **III. ACTIONS TAKEN BY DENR**

Since 01 March 2023, this Office continues to monitor the all the water bodies and protected areas potentially affected by the oil spill. Our teams from the Provincial Environmental Management Unit (PEMU) – Oriental Mindoro and Environmental Management Services (EMS) – Marinduque continuously conducts water quality sampling on the areas potentially affected by the oil spill and closely coordinates with various government agencies to assess the extent of the impact of the oil spill and assist in the coastal clean-up operations.

As of 6:42 PM of 03 March 2023, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources issued a statement through its various social media platforms, wherein according on the potential impact map developed by the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) based on the last known location of MT Princess Empress, findings showed that approximately 591 Hectares of coral reefs, 1,626 Hectares of mangroves and 362 hectares of seagrass/seaweeds may be potentially affected including the twenty-one (21) locally managed marine protected areas in Oriental Mindoro and Marinduque.

The Department is also performing disaster forensics in collaboration with the University of the Philippines - Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI) to assess the immediate actions needed to be taken. The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), an attached agency of the DENR, will deploy two ships (BRP Hydrographer and BRP Hydrographer Presbitero) for multibeam survey in order to locate the sunken vessel.

Since the incident, the DENR has been actively engaging different sectors to aid in the response efforts. It committed to work with coastal communities to prevent the landing of oil through the deployment of available absorbent materials. The DENR also recommends close coordination with the Department of Health (DOH) to deploy health workers to monitor and address possible health impacts on the community. It also proposes for affected LGUs to consider instituting a cash-for-work program for the coastal clean-up, as a short-term intervention to provide temporary employment.

Secretary Loyzaga reiterated that what is important is to locate the vessel and model the potential flow of oil in order to implement the most effective mitigation strategies so that disruption to livelihood can be minimized and the affected ecosystems can be regenerated.

Later that evening, this Office received a copy of a letter issued by PCG – Coast Guard Sub-station Concepcion, located at Brgy. Sampong, Concepcion, Romblon, dated

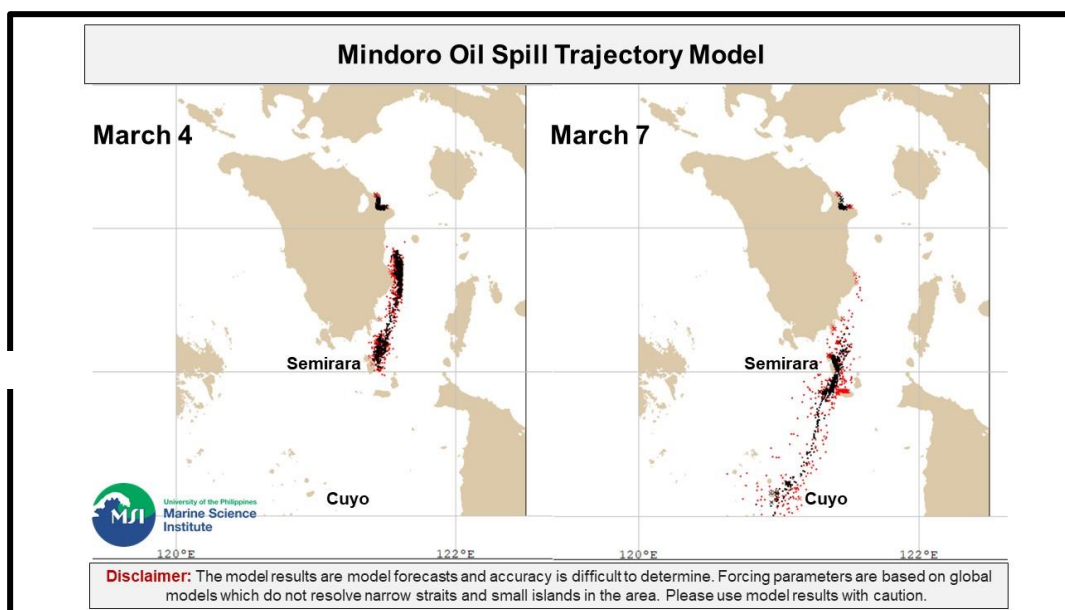
03 March 2023 and addressed to Hon. Limwel F. Cipriano, Acting Municipal Mayor, Concepcion, Romblon.

According to the letter, the PCG found no sightings of oil spill within the coastal waters of Concepcion, Romblon. The PCG also informed the local government of its continuous monitoring and coordination with local fisherfolks to inform them of any possible sightings.

In the early morning of 04 March 2023, UP – MSI, through their website and official social media platforms posted Bulletin No. 02.

In their bulletin, UP – MSI issued a warning to coastal communities – especially on the eastern and southern sides of Oriental Mindoro, Caluya Island (Northwestern Antique), and potentially Cuyo Island of Palawan – to prepare for the possibility that the oil spill could reach their shores. Aerial surveys by the DENR and UP MSI on the morning of March 3 (8-9AM) estimated the slick to be around 25 km long and between 300 to 500 m wide. It is roughly oriented northeast to southwest, with its tail end situated in Pola Bay. This was also confirmed by the satellite images released by the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA).

According to the trajectory models developed to forecast the track and transport of the slick over the next four days (March 4 to 7, 2023), based on prevailing weather patterns and conditions, and on the recent information on the location of the slicks, there is a potential for the oil spill to move southwards considering that oil slicks has reached the municipalities of Pinamalayan and Bongabong in Oriental Mindoro.



Based on the model, the oil spill may potentially pass through Caluya Island (Northwestern Antique) and could eventually reach Cuyo Island in Sulu Sea.

UP-MSI also warned the public and local governments along the projected routes about the possibility of oil slick deposition in many coastal areas south of Mindoro. Aside from the ecological damage to these habitats, damage from the oil slick will also have an economic impact on livelihood and food sources. The public is encouraged to report any sighting of oil slick to authorities and adhere to public guidance to prevent its harmful effects. New model runs will be made available in the coming days.

We will be providing additional updates as soon as verified information becomes available.

#### IV. WAYS AHEAD

This Office will also be conducting water quality sampling in certain locations within the Province of Romblon to determine the extent of the oil spill to the water bodies in the said province. Likewise, continuous coordination is being made by the Environmental Management Services – Coron, Palawan with PCG, LGU, private entities for any possible sightings of oil slicks within the Cuyo and Calamian Group of Islands.

This Office shall continue to monitor the situation and apprise the Director on all the latest situation development.

For the Undersecretary's information, reference, and further instructions, if any.

  
**JOE AMIL M. SALINO**

***Copy furnished:***

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*Undersecretary for Field Operations  
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**ATTY. JONAS R. LEONES, CESO I**

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**LORMELYN A. CLAUDIO, CESO IV**

*Regional Executive Director  
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