



MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

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

DATE : 11 October 2023

This is to apprise the Undersecretary 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, Mayor Jennifer Cruz of LGU – Pola, Oriental Mindoro has declared a state of calamity, due to the massive extent of the impact of the oil spill in the Municipality of Pola, Oriental Mindoro.

Later that day, 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.

On the evening of 03 March 2023, 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.

At 6:48 PM of 03 March 2023, 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.

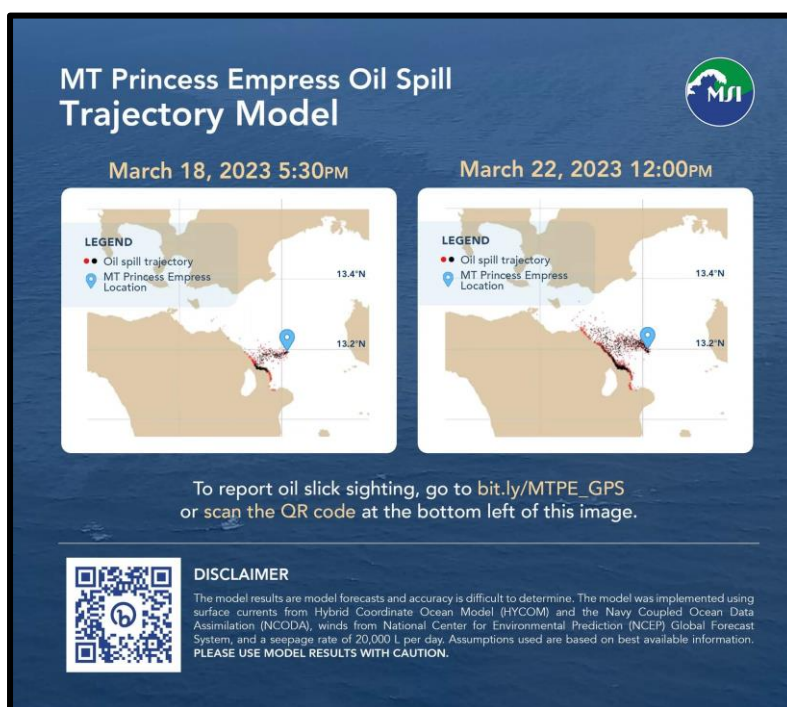
As of 06 March 2023, the Provincial Government of Mindoro has declared a state of calamity in seventy-six (76) coastal barangays across nine municipalities of Oriental Mindoro due to the massive impact caused by the oil spill to the following municipalities, to wit:

1. Municipality of Naujan
2. Municipality of Pola
3. Municipality of Pinamalayan

4. Municipality of Gloria
5. Municipality of Bansud
6. Municipality of Bongabong
7. Municipality of Roxas
8. Municipality of Mansalay
9. Municipality of Bulalacao

On the same day, the Sangguniang Bayan of Caluya, Antique has also passed Resolution No. 31 placing the municipality under the state of calamity. Specifically, the Resolution identified Sitio Sabang in Brgy. Tinogboc, Taong, Banua Proper, and Sitio Balibago in Brgy. Semirara, and Sitio Liwagao in Brgy. Sibolo as areas which have been affected by the oil spill in Antique.

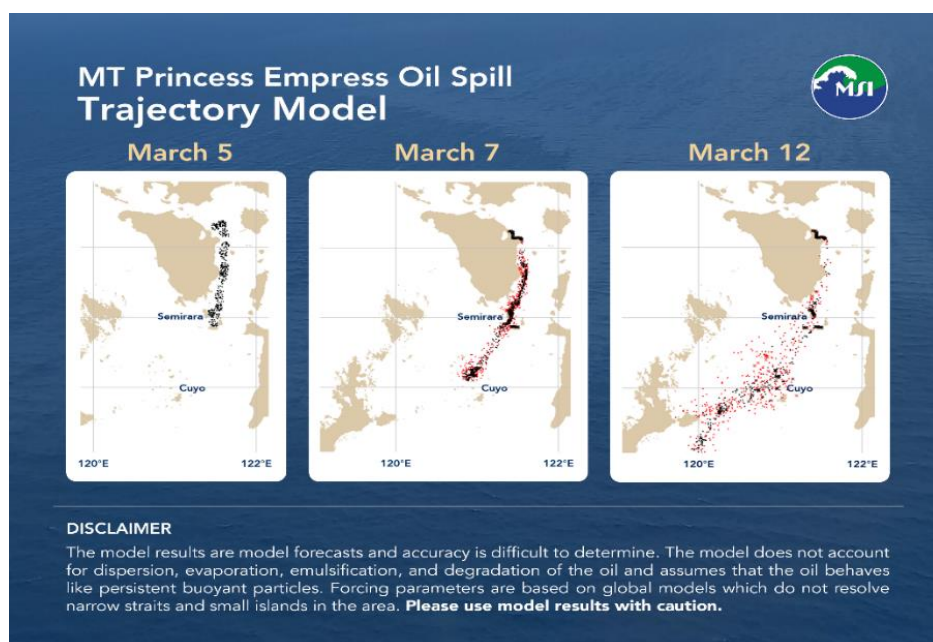
On 18 March 2023, the University of the Philippines – Marine Science (UP-MSI) posted an update on their Facebook page stating that the Oil spill trajectories show northward shift with Calapan possibly receiving most of the oil from March 20-22,2023.



The latest satellite image on March 15 shows that the oil is still leaking out of the sunken vessel. Oil spill trajectories for March 16-22 show a northward shift with Calapan possibly receiving most of the oil from March 20-22. Westward currents along the coast of northern Mindoro towards the Verde Island Passage are forecasted to be more pronounced for this period. The Amihan winds, which contained most of the oil to the coasts of Nauhan and Pola in the previous weeks, are now more variable, allowing the oil to spread northwards. It is critical to stop the seepage before the end of the Amihan season, otherwise more critical biodiversity areas along the Verde Island Passage may be affected.

PALAWAN

On 05 March 2023, UP-MSI posted an update wherein based on their forecast, it was projected that the oil spill will reach Cuyo Islands and get closer to northern Palawan in about a week's time. The projected trajectory of the oil slick is shown in the images for March 7 and March 12, and initialized with spill locations in the image for March 5.



According to the model, the projected spill will continue due southwest to Cuyo Group of Islands (as seen in the image for March 7) and will get closer to northern Palawan mainland in about a week's time (as seen in the image for March 12).

On the same day, the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office of Agutaya, Palawan (MDRRMO) has confirmed that presence of oil slicks has been sighted at Brgy. Concepcion and Algeciras in Agutaya, Palawan.

Subsequently, on 10 March 2023, the Philippine Coast Guard, thru their official social media accounts, has reported that the oil spill has already reached the shores of Brgy. Casian, Taytay, Palawan. Based on their initial report, Brgy. Casian is located 159 nautical miles or 295 kilometers away from Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

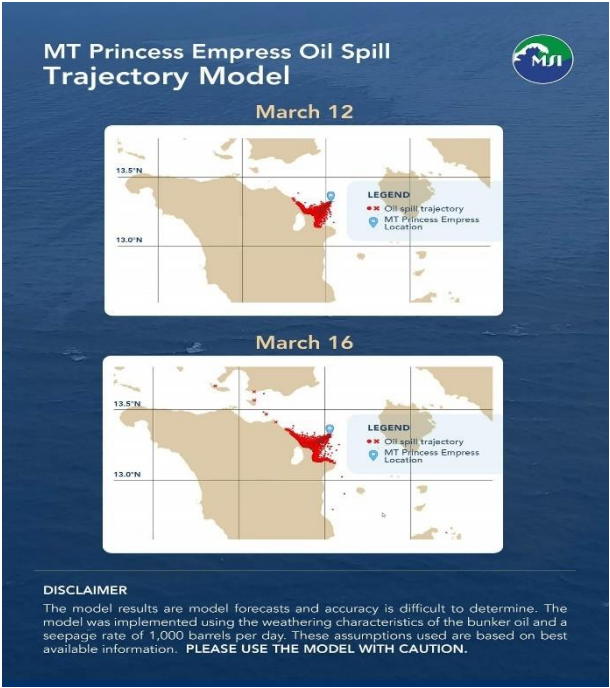
On 12 March 2023, this Office received a copy of the Situational Reports from the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (PDRRMO) - Palawan dated 11 and 12 March 2023 on the preparedness for oil spill response of the province.

Based on their report, Brgys. Concepcion and Algeciras in Agutaya, Palawan have been cleared of oil spill sightings since March 8, 2023.

The PDRRMO also confirmed the presence of traces of brownish oil in the shorelines of the following barangays and sitios in Taytay, Palawan, to wit:

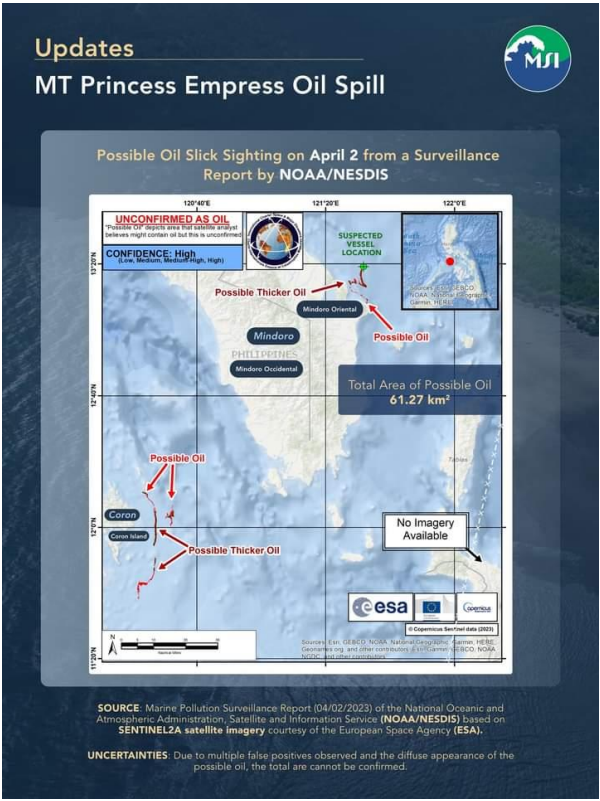
1. Sitio Amogis
2. Sitio Calumpang
3. Brgy. Calawag
4. Brgy. Biton

At around 4:00 PM of 12 March 2023, UP – MSI posted an update wherein according to their trajectory model, it is predicted that the oil spill will reach the Verde Island Passage due to weakening Amihan.



The recent simulation focusing on the area of the tanker's location for March 10 to 16 shows that with continuous seepage of oil, most of the oil will end up along Naujan coast and Pola Bay. However, due to the weakening Amihan, some of the oil may flow northwards towards the Verde Island Passage by March 16, affecting coastal areas of Calapan, Verde Island, and some parts of Batangas.

On 03 April 2023, UP-MSI posted an update regarding the possible oil slick sighting dated 02 April 2023. It was from the Surveillance Report of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Satellite and Information Services (NOAA/NESDIS).



According to the report, possible oil was seen near the location of the suspected vessel at Oriental Mindoro, Coron and Coron Island. The total area of possible oil slick was 61.27km².

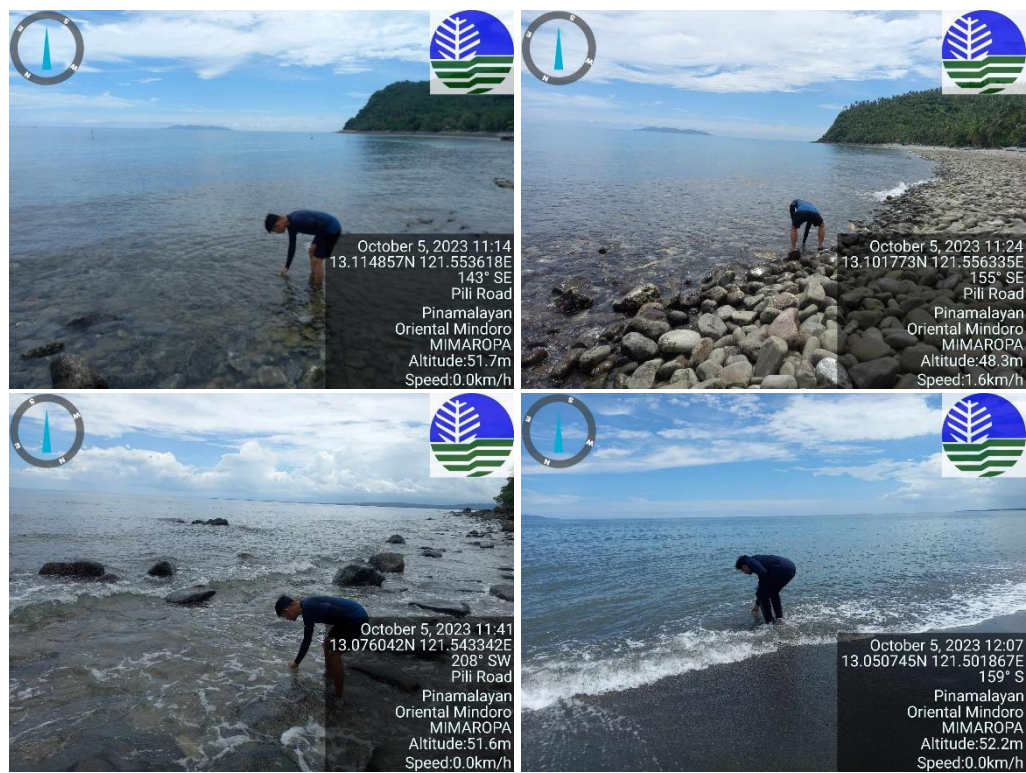
II. ACTIONS TAKEN BY DENR

Since 01 March 2023, EMB – MIMAROPA Region along with our technical teams from the Regional Environmental Laboratory, Provincial Environmental Management Unit (PEMU) – Oriental Mindoro and Occidental Mindoro have been working non-stop in collecting and analyzing the water samples from areas affected by the oil spill, coordinating and providing technical assistance to local government units and other concerned government agencies and assisting in clean- up operations.

On 23-24 August 2023, this Office also conducted water sampling for the determination of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons. Samples were taken at the shorelines of Bulalacao, Mansalay, Roxas, Bongabong, Gloria, Pinamalayan, Pola, Naujan, Calapan City, Baco, San Teodoro and Puerto Galera. Samples were analyzed on 29 August 2023. The results were generally considered not detected. The only PAH with water quality guidelines based on the DENR AO 2016-08 is *benzo(a)pyrene*. All other traces of PAHs recorded such as *dibenzo(a,h)anthracene*, *fluoranthene*, *fluorene*, *naphthalene*, *phenanthrene* and *pyrene* cannot be assessed since there are no existing water quality guidelines for it. Out of the 24 stations, only two stations have undetected PAHs and these are the shorelines of Bgry. Navotas in Calapan City and the Punta Ilag Fish Sanctuary in San Teodoro. Nevertheless, all stations showed undetected levels of *benzo(a)pyrene*, the only PAHs with set water quality guidelines. Hence, in terms of *benzo(a)pyrene*, all stations are free from this PAH. As compared to the first monitoring of PAHs last March 25, 2023, the results gathered last August 29, 2023 have improved. The results are attached as part of the annexes (pp. 58-60) for reference.

ORIENTAL MINDORO

Continuous Water Quality Sampling in Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro on 05 October 2023



III. WAYS AHEAD


This Office commits to continue to coordinate with provincial/local government units as regards clean-up operations, water quality sampling, technical assistance in the collection and transporting of hazardous wastes, and cash for work programs for individuals affected by the oil spill.

This Office commits to continuous monitoring and strategize sampling frequency of water quality sampling in areas affected by oil spill.

Further, for air quality monitoring, this Office commits to continue the source apportionment analysis for PM10 filter paper samples collected from Baco Station, Calapan Station, and Naujan Station of the BCN Airshed.

This Office shall monitor the implementation of the Clean-up Plan submitted by Harbor Star specifically on the hauling, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste.

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


JOE AMIL M. SALINO

Copy furnished:

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