

KEY MESSAGES

- The 15 January oil spill of 6,000 barrels at a refinery off coasts just north of the capital of Lima is roughly equivalent to about 1,100 tons, approximately 400 tons more than international standards for a large spill, a serious test for national response capacities in most countries.
- The spill is currently affecting wildlife and coastlines along five districts north of the spill, as currents push the oil northwards. Nearby communities are dealing with the spill's impact on local wildlife and natural resources, affecting mainly fishing livelihoods and tourism-related activities.
- The team deployed by the UN is on the ground supporting the Government with response coordination and conducting site visits in affected areas. The technical mission, organized by the UN Joint Environment Unit (JEU), is composed of experts from the UN as well as experts from Europe supported by the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism.



6K

barrels of oil spilled just north of Lima

1,1K

tons of oil contained in spill

1,4K

hectares of sea and land affected by spill

512

hectares of protected natural area affected by spill

50+

linear kilometres of coastline at risk

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Following the Government of Peru's declaration of an environmental emergency in response to the 15 January oil spill at the La Pampilla refinery in the Ventanilla district north of the capital of Lima and its subsequent request for United Nations support, the OCHA and UNEP-led Joint Environment Unit (JEU), UNDAC and technical experts identified by JEU with the support of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism are now in Peru supporting various State response efforts.

The 6,000 barrels spilled into the ocean released some 1,100 tons of oil, well above the 700 tons considered by the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited (ITOPF) as the threshold for classifying it as a major spill. This amount would test the response capacity of virtually any country. Official estimates place the affected areas at more than 1,400 hectares of sea and land, as well as more than 500 hectares of marine wildlife reserves in protected natural areas.

The spill is also affecting wildlife and coastlines along five districts north of the spill due to currents pushing the oil north along the shore, endangering the health and livelihoods of communities reliant on fishing and tourism economies. Affected communities are seeking clarity on support measures, while a strong social and ecological activism movement is leading to scores of untrained and unprotected people taking to beaches to tend to wildlife affected by the spill, risking their health in the process.

Moreover, on 26 January, the Peruvian Navy and Peru's OSINERGMIN mining and energy industry regulatory body confirmed a second spill at the same Repsol refinery, a spill that Repsol reports took place during repair work on pipes. OSINERGMIN estimates it to be around 8 barrels, adding that the situation is under control.

RESPONSE

The UN team on the ground continues to develop recommendations on disaster response and coordination and future disaster risk reduction and mitigation as well as environmental impact analysis to deliver to authorities as per the terms of the requested technical advisory mission. There are ongoing exchanges and meetings with relevant Government counterparts, including the Ministry of the Environment tasked with leading the State response, the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister, and the National Civil Defence Institute (INDECI) through the National Emergency Operations Centre (COEN), among others, to gain an understanding of current response and coordination mechanisms, given the unprecedented nature of the environmental emergency for all actors involved.

The Ministry of the Environment continues to develop a response plan with State offices across national and sub-national levels, while the COEN is gathering and analyzing all official information from sub-national sources on the spill's impact and the State response in line with national emergency information management protocols. The Armed Forces have deployed personnel to support with clean-up along affected shores. Other Government bodies ranging from ministries to regulatory agencies are carrying out measures corresponding to their thematic mandates, measures that include clean-up, containment, response monitoring, oversight, analysis and potential support measures for affected families, among others.

Repsol reports they have scaled up clean-up personnel from 1,800 to 2,200 and have deployed more than 70 heavy machinery units, 27 large vessels and 90 boats to tackle the remaining clean-up. The oil company also indicates they have installed 4,400m of containment barriers and removed more than 10,000 m³ of affected sands for treatment, or about 2,000 containers' worth.

The UN team visited the Ancón district to gain a firsthand account of the oil spill's impact on the environment and on the livelihoods of the communities affected by the spill. Technical experts are convening with the Government's scientific council, consisting of technical specialists from the Ministry of the Environment, relevant State technical bodies and Repsol representatives, to ascertain key information to better target the requested technical support and environmental assessments. These exchanges are complementing projections on the spill's evolution to help define further site visits and inform environmental assessments and response recommendations.

The team is also liaising with various embassies in Peru and will coordinate with other missions that are to arrive in coming days to support the response, including from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is also sending experts and monitoring equipment to Peru to develop long-term monitoring of affected areas' coastal waters.

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