

KEY MESSAGES

- The Government of Peru has formally declared an environmental emergency following a 15 January oil spill at a Repsol-owned refinery near the Ventanilla district to the north of the Lima metropolitan region.
- The spill, estimated to be of about 6,000 barrels, has affected more than 700 hectares of water and 180 hectares of coastline, and with currents pushing the oil north, it continues to cause more environmental damage and threatens the health and livelihoods of nearby coastal communities.
- Government response to the disaster is involving several different public offices, while Repsol reports they have deployed 1,800 people to respond to the refinery's spill and specialized machinery to help contain further spread.
- Following the Government's request for UN support, a team of personnel from OCHA, the OCHA and UN Environment Programme (UNEP)-led Joint Environment Unit (JEU), UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and technical experts identified by the JEU is deploying to provide analysis and recommendations on disaster response and coordination.

6K

Barrels of oil spilled just north of Lima

7.1M

m² of water affected by oil spill, or 713 hectares

1.8M

m² of coastline affected by oil spill

90km

of shoreline placed under environmental emergency



Source: Ministry of the Environment

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 21 January, the Government of Peru declared a 90-day environmental emergency for some 90km of shoreline just north of the capital of Lima following a 15 January oil spill at a nearby refinery owned by Repsol. About 6,000 barrels of oil have spilled into open waters, with Peru's Agency for Environmental Assessment and Enforcement (OEFA) reporting affected areas of 7.1 million m² of water (about 713 hectares) and 1.8 million m² of coastline as of 23 January.

The refinery is located near the Ventanilla district of the Callao Region to the north of the Lima metropolitan area, a densely populated district characterized by high levels of urban poverty. Oil continues to spread and be pushed north by currents and has reached the neighbouring district of Ancón, two national marine reserves and, more recently, the northern Chancay port. Authorities describe the situation as the worst ecological disaster in Peru's recent history.

The spill is causing significant environmental damage and poses risks to the health and livelihoods areas along the coastline placed under emergency, especially for fishing families and local tourism economies. The Ministry of the Environment reports that the effects of the spill will likely lead to US\$52 million in direct and indirect losses to tourism livelihoods. Additionally, the situation has led to an outpour of activism, with scores of untrained and unprotected people risking their health in attempting to clean affected wildlife at nearby beaches.

Authorities are working to clean and contain the effects of the spill and rescue endangered wildlife, while also developing monitoring protocols and health response and risk communications campaigns, among other institutional actions. Repsol is deploying specialized machinery and working to build containment barriers as well.

RESPONSE

Government response to the spill is involving several different offices ranging from local authorities and relevant ministries to autonomous regulatory agencies. The Ministry of the Environment is leading an ad-hoc Government Crisis council to spearhead the Government's efforts. Repsol informed they have more than 1,800 people responding to the effects of the spill, supported by more than 50 heavy machinery units and 2,800 meters of containment barrier installed between Cavero and Faro Chancay.

Following a formal request from the Government for international support, the UN Resident Coordinator met with authorities and committed the full support of the country's UN System. A team of personnel from OCHA, the OCHA and UNEP-led Joint Environment Unit (JEU), UNDAC and technical experts identified by JEU is deploying to support this response, with all team members set to arrive by 25 January.

The team, who will operate in full compliance of the national COVID-19 health safety regulations currently in place, will support the UN System in order to provide the Government with specific analysis and recommendations on disaster management and coordination and on environmental risk reduction. This mission will be strictly advisory in nature, with all agencies and team members working under a systemwide response led by the UN Resident Coordinator.

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For more information, please visit www.unocha.org www.reliefweb.int