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## **TASK FORCE MT. PRINCESS EMPRESS OIL SPILL INCIDENT**

### **SITUATIONAL REPORT NO. 2**

3 March 2023

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*Sources: Philippine Coast Guard, Office of Civil Defense, DENR EMB (incl. MIMAROPA and Region VI), DENR BMB, PENROs and CENROs*

#### **I. SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW**

On 28 February 2023, at approximately 04:16 AM, MT Princess Empress was reportedly half submerged at vicinity waters of Balingawan Point, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro with 20 crews onboard, loaded with 800,000 liters of Industrial Fuel Oil. The vessel came from Bataan and was on its way to Iloilo when it encountered engine trouble due to overheating. At approximately 04:20 AM, all 20 crew members were rescued and brought to Subic Bay, Zambales.

On 01 March 2023, MT Princess Empress had already sunk. The exact location of the submerged tanker is yet to be identified.

#### **II. EFFECTS**

Based on the aerial assessment conducted on 03 March 2023, the following effects were observed:

- The estimated length of spill is 25 km trending NE-SW.
- Most of the oil are confined in a narrow band 300-500m.
- The oil slick directly ends in Barangay Calma in Pola Bay. No southern extension of the oil spill was identified today, however, ocean currents may shift southwards in the afternoon. Oil slicks sighted offshore of Bongabong.
- Municipality of Pola will be the most affected because of the site of the spill and northeast wind.



**Figure 1: Location of slick based on Aerial Assessment, 03 March 2023**

There were observed fish kill and seeping of industrial fuel oil reaching the surrounding water bodies of Oriental Mindoro and Romblon, including mangrove areas and marine protected areas as a result of the oil spill.

Strong odor was noticeable during the conduct of water sampling along the coast of Tablas Strait, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro. Black sticky substance was found within the shoreline of Brgys. Calima, Buhay na Tubig, and Bacawan in Pola, Oriental Mindoro while presence of oil film was observed in the coastal waters of Brgy. Lumangbayan, Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro.

On 03 March 2023, Mayor Jennifer Cruz of Pola, Oriental Mindoro declared a state of calamity in the municipality.

Findings of assessment by the DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau showed that within the 40-kilometer radius, approximately 591 hectares of coral reefs, 1,626 hectares of mangroves and 362 hectares of seagrass/seaweeds can be potentially affected. There are also 21 locally managed marine protected areas (LMMPAs) located in the city of Calapan (4), towns of Naujan (3), Pola (7), Pinamalayan (4), and Gloria (2) in Oriental Mindoro Province and the town of Gasan (1) in Marinduque Province. The coastal areas of the municipality of Pola are observed the most affected as of today.

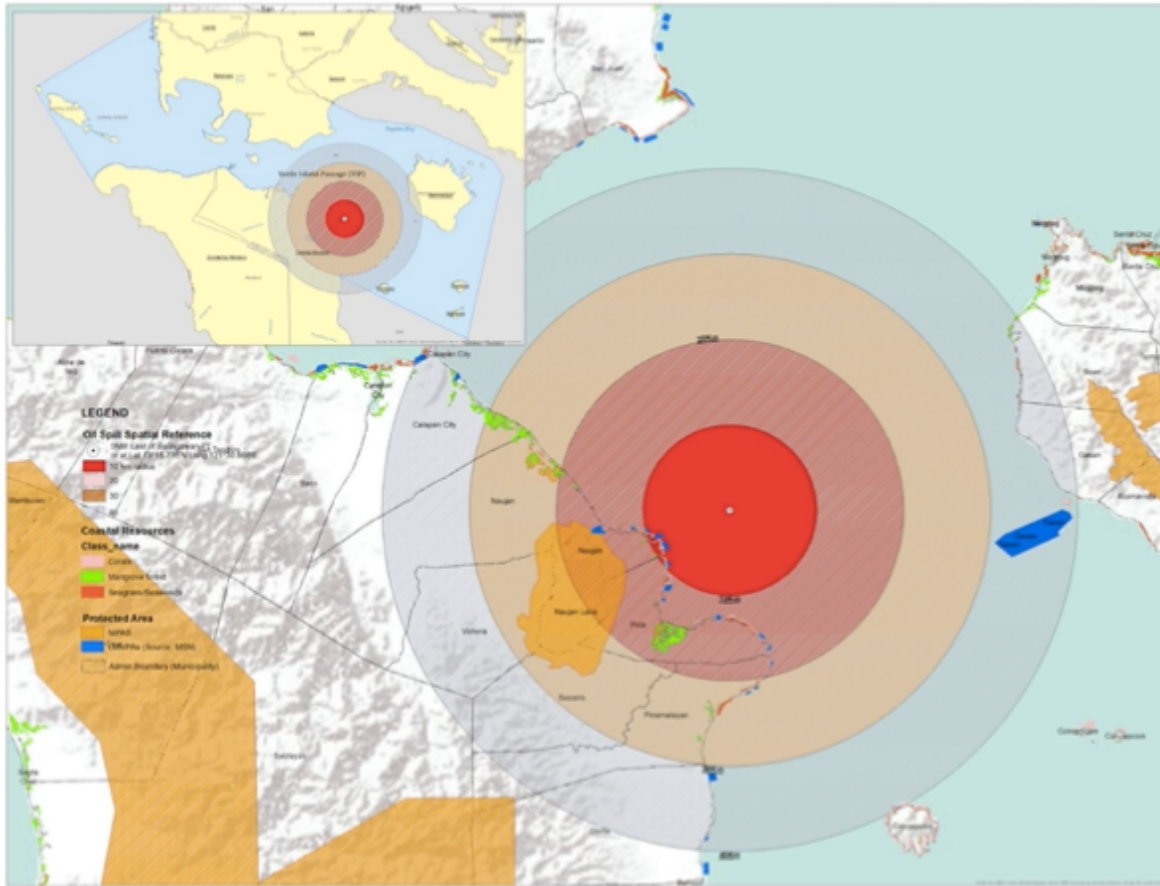


Figure 2: Impact area (10-40 km radius) over coastal and marine resources and locally-managed Marine Protected Areas

### III. ACTIONS TAKEN BY DENR

#### DENR Task Force

- DENR issues daily Department Statements / Press Statements to provide regular updates to the public.
- On 01 March 2023, the DENR Secretary, together with Key Officials from the Central Office, Regional Office MIMAROPA, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) and Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO) met with Oriental Mindoro Governor Bonz Dolor and Naujan Municipality Mayor Henry Joel Teves to prioritize the protection of marine and biodiversity resources and prevent the spillage to reach the protected areas.

In the afternoon, the DENR joined the 1st Quarter Council Meeting of Oriental Mindoro PDRPMC and coordinated with Petron and Shell to deploy equipment including oil spill booms. Task Force Naujan Oil Spill with Usec Marilou Erni as the Task Force Commander was created.

- On 02 March 2023, at approximately 3:00 PM, the Task Force organized a meeting with PCG, the Department of Agriculture- Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic

Resources (DA-BFAR), the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (PDRRMO), and the Provincial Agriculture Office (PAO) for latest situation updates and to arrange for aerial assessment to be led by the DENR Secretary.

- At approximately 4:00 PM, the DENR Secretary gave a video statement on the measures being taken by the Department based on the Strategic Action Plan of Task Force.
- The DENR Task Force has established linkage with the Incident Management Team to be jointly led by the Local Chief Executives, PCG and DENR using Unified Command approach.

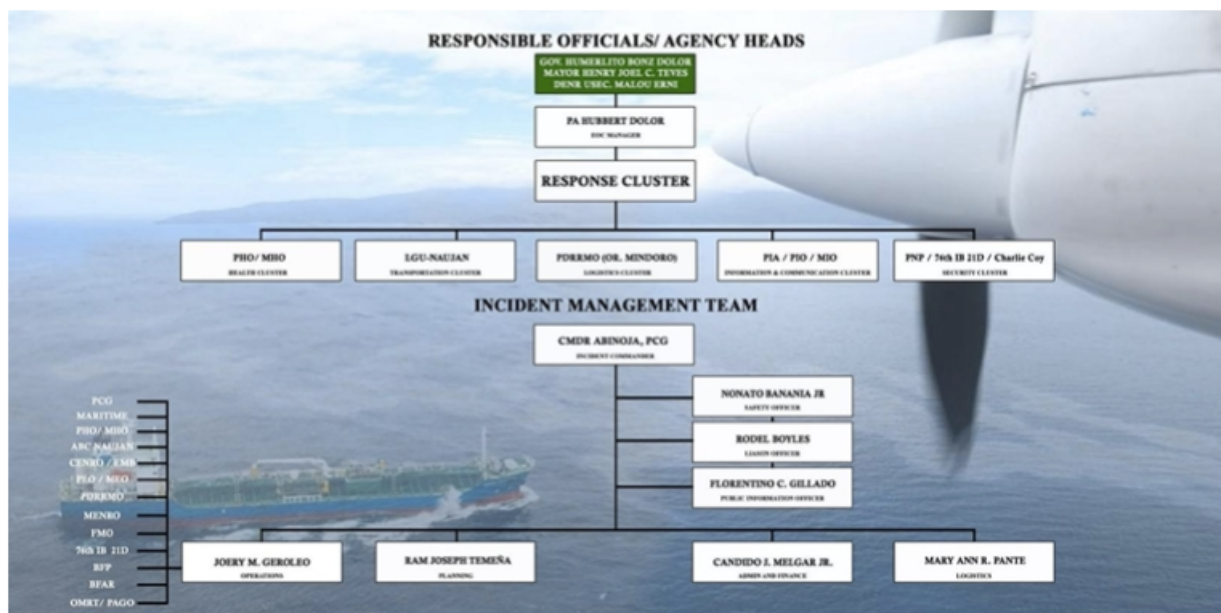


Figure 3: Organization Structure of the Incident Management Team

- On 03 March 2023, at approximately 8:35 AM, the Task Force led by the DENR Secretary conducted aerial inspection over the extent of the slick as well as ground visit to the affected areas.

At approximately 10:00 AM, the DENR met with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) to discuss arrangements as to how the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) can augment the requirements for containment and cleanup. In the said meeting, Asec Bernardo Rafaelito Alejandro IV of OCD directed the deployment of additional manpower from the uniformed agencies and the NDRRMC member agencies to provide assistance. Meanwhile, the PCG was directed to hasten the containment of the oil spill, coastal clean-up and recovery of the vessel.

At approximately 1:00 PM, Sec Loyzaga presented the situation updates to the President.

### DENR MIMAROPA, EMB MIMAROPA, PENRO Oriental Mindoro and CENRO

- On 01 March 2023, preliminary investigation and water sampling commenced in collaboration with PCG, BFAR and the local government units.

At approximately 8:00 PM, Asec Gilbert Gonzales together with DENR Regional Officials met with PCG and BFAR to discuss updates. PCG was requested for assistance in terms of boats and other logistical provisions.

- On 02 March 2023, water samples were collected from the following sampling locations along the coast of Tablas Strait, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro:

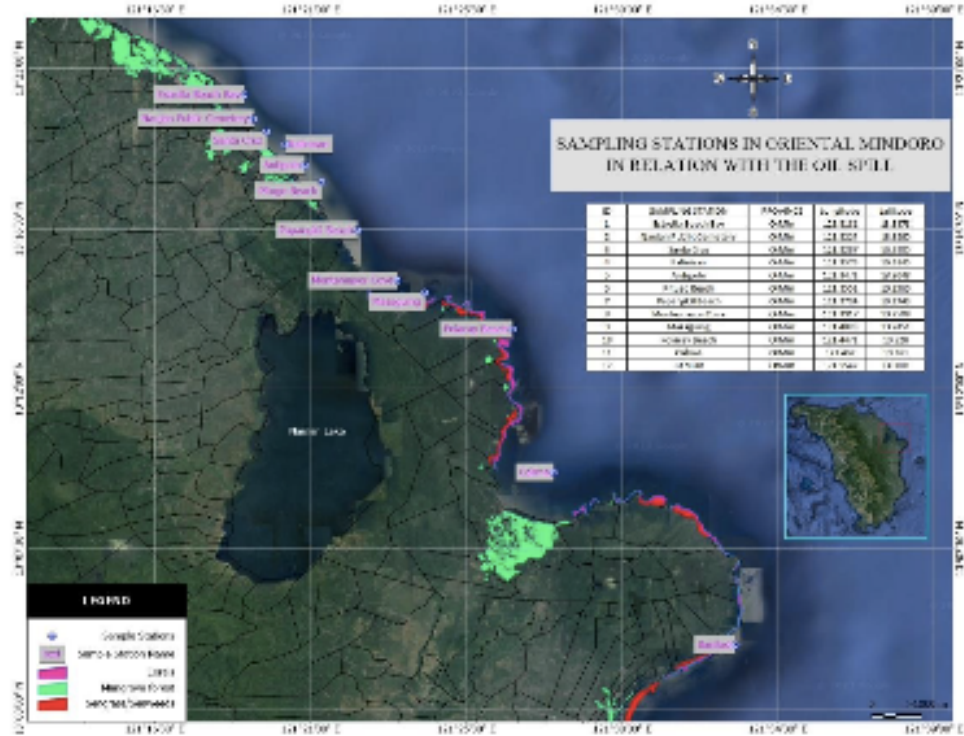


Figure 4: Location of Sampling Stations and Coordinates in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro

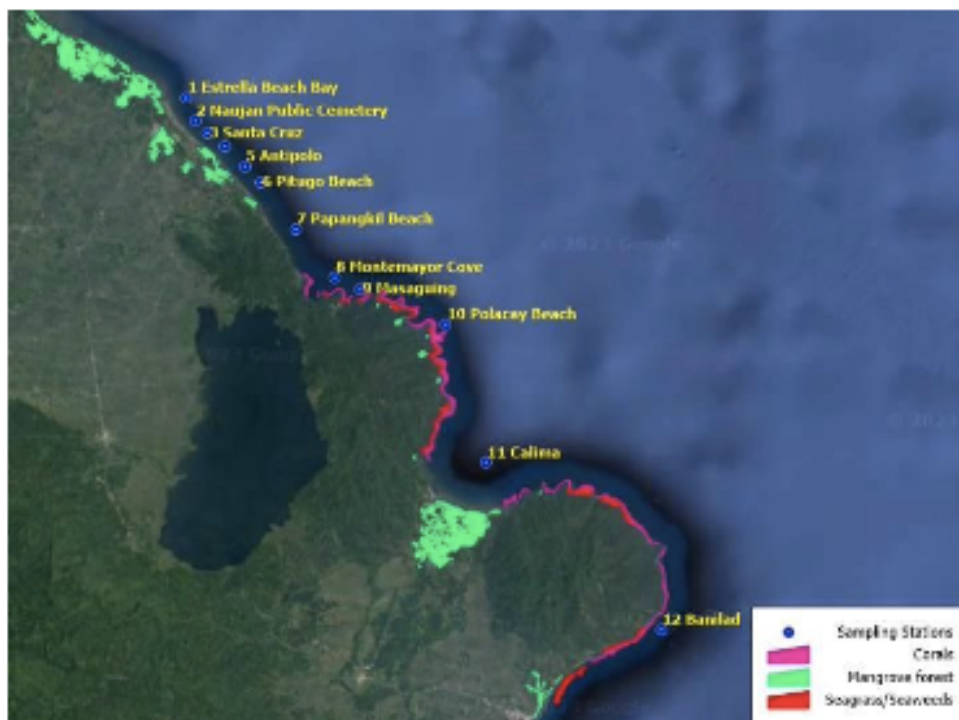


Figure 5: Location of Sampling Stations, Corals, Mangrove Forest, Seagrass/Seaweeds in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro

- At approximately 9:00 AM, PENRO commenced clean-up operations in areas with spotted oil spill from the shoreline covering the barangays of Calima, Buhay na Tubig and Bacawan, Pola, Oriental Mindoro.
- At 10:00 PM, the Regional Environmental Laboratory of EMB – MIMAROPA Region has released the Result of Analysis based on the water samples collected from the established sampling stations in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro and ground zero (oil spillage area) on 01 March 2023.

The water samples collected from ground zero and seven (7) sampling stations namely: Estrella, San Jose 1, San Jose Proper, Pitugo Beach, Papangkil Beach, Montemayor Proper, and Tujod Fish Sanctuary, show that the water quality greatly exceeded the parameters for Oil and Grease as required under DENR Administrative Order No. 2016-08.

- On 03 March 2023, EMB MIMAROPA continued to conduct water sampling in the following locations within the province of Marinduque:

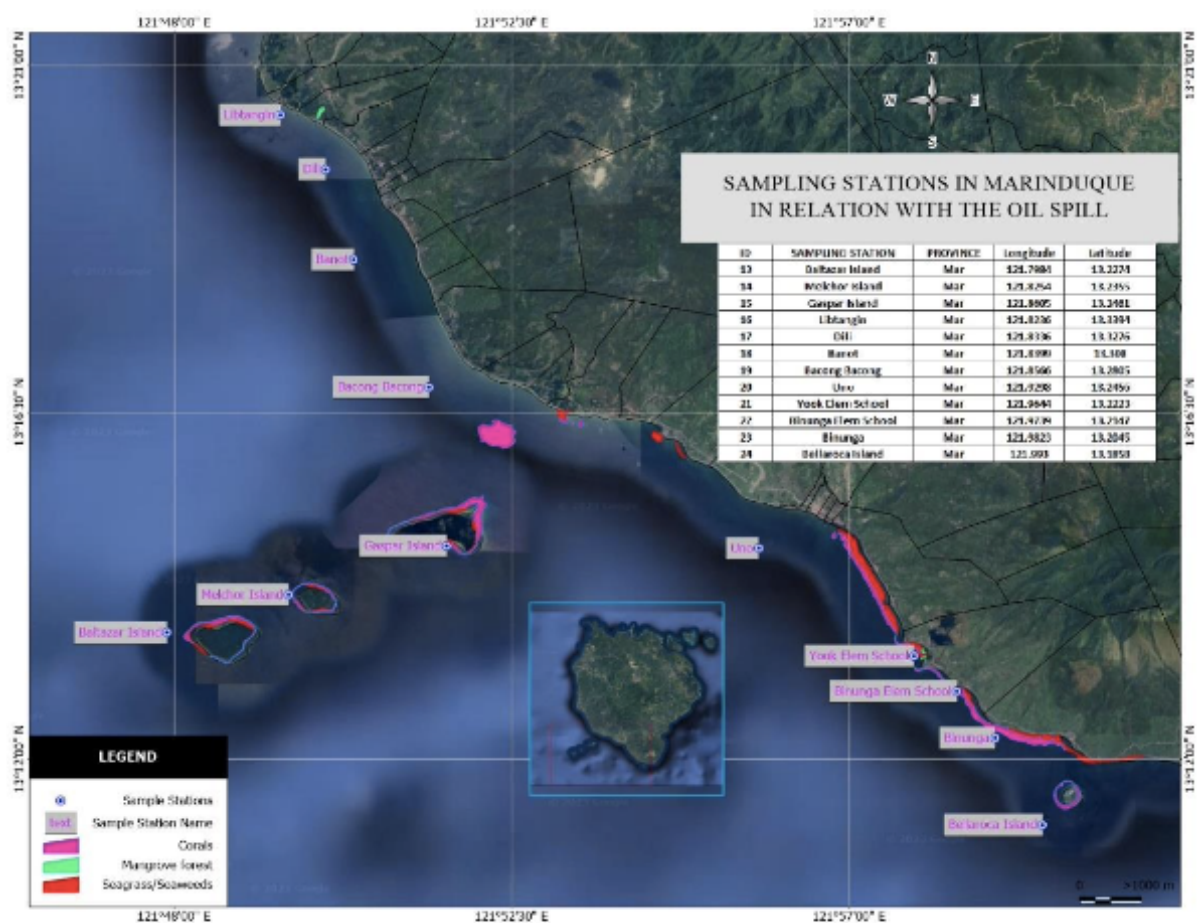


Figure 6: Location of Sampling Stations, Corals, Mangrove Forests and Seagrass/Seaweeds in Marinduque

#### **IV. WAYS AHEAD**

1. Sustain surveillance, water quality assessment and cleanup operations
2. Develop impact area map based on the data available
3. Develop contingency plan for worst-case scenario
4. Coordinate with NAMRIA to deploy two (2) ships (Ventura and Presbitero) for multi beam survey to locate sunken vessel
5. Perform disaster forensics in collaboration with the UP Marine Science Institute to assess what immediate actions need to be taken.
6. Continue to organize pool of resources to be used by the DENR Task Force and collaborate with private sector companies such as Shell, Petro and Prime Energy, as well as other partners

It is important to reiterate the need 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.

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