

Peruvian government considers suspending Repsol's oil company license

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The United Nations technical mission qualified the oil spill occurred in Ventanilla as serious according to international standards. | Photo: @MinamPeru

Lima, January 28 (RHC)-- The Peruvian Minister of Commerce and Tourism, Roberto Sanchez, said that Lima will evaluate the suspension of the license of the company Repsol, after the recent oil spill that affected the sea in front of the Ventanilla area.

Sánchez commented to local media that since the weekend the directors of several ministries have held meetings with the mayors and unions of Chancay, Aucayama, Ancón, Santa Rosa, checking and elaborating an urgent action plan, because environmental remediation is a priority.

He explained that the Peruvian State "will also be evaluating the suspension of the license. I believe that we have to go to all instances so that this ecocide does not remain just another story." He added that "Justice is about to pronounce tomorrow (Saturday) at 08H00 with a restraining order against the manager and the entire board of directors (of Repsol).

The head of Commerce also pointed out that the administrative sanctioning procedure against Repsol includes fines and compensation to those affected by the oil spill. The Judiciary had suspended this Thursday the hearing scheduled to rule on the 18-month prohibition to leave the country against the general manager of La Pampilla S.A. refinery (managed by Repsol Peru), Jaime Fernández-Cuesta Luca de Tena, and three other executives.

Sanchez affirmed that "there is a need for a better regulatory treatment that allows environmental justice not to be a motive for mockery, as Repsol has been doing today, not only complicating our sea and ecological system, but also in the social aspect, to the artisanal fishing, restaurants, entrepreneurs dedicated to the tourist activity".

He underlined that the residents in the area are suffering the ecological disaster caused by the spill in spite of the battle waged by the volunteers, the Army, the Navy, the Ministry of the Environment and its brigades to remove the crude oil that still remains in the sea.

Likewise, the public prosecutor of the Ministry of Environment, Julio César Guzmán, pointed out that in the case of Ventanilla the State is seeking "exemplary compensatory demands" and even to freeze assets of the oil company Repsol, so that the companies invest more in the control of their risks.

The technical mission of the United Nations warned, according to the analysis of the preliminary data provided to the team of experts, the spill occurred in Ventanilla is classified as serious, according to international standards.

The UN said that the level of damage puts the response capacities of any country to the test and the UN mission is developing projections on the evolution of the spill to achieve the greatest impact of the technical visits to the affected areas.

In other statements, Sanchez said that citizens have been able to verify Repsol's negligence and its obstruction to the investigation. "Repsol is not playing by the rules and allowing this crime to be made transparent," he argued.

The Peruvian government will receive donations of about US\$ 250,000 from the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) and another US\$ 200,000 from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to deal with the effects of the oil spill.

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