

Oil spill in Ecuadorian Amazon estimated at 6,300 barrels

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The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Conaie) and other organizations of native populations demanded assistance to the affected communities. | Photo: Twitter @LeonidasIzaSal1

Quito, February 3 (RHC)-- After the rupture of an oil pipeline of the private company Oleoducto de Crudos Pesados (OCP), some 6,300 barrels were spilled in the Ecuadorian Amazon with a great impact on a natural reserve and a river, according to the company itself.

An OCP communiqué, while announcing that "5,300 barrels of crude have already been collected and reinjected into the system" and pointed out that this is 84.13 percent of the spill: "The timely action of the team managed to collect 84.13% of the crude", assured the president of the company, Jorge Vugdelija, however, the hydrocarbon fell into the Quijos river and advanced to the Coca that supplies indigenous

communities.

The information was confirmed by the Ecuadorian Minister of Energy, Juan Carlos Bermeo. The OCP also said that this Tuesday there was a landslide of rocks and mud in a section close to the rupture, so repair times will take seven to ten days.

Last Friday a rock fall perforated the pipeline in Piedra Fina, a mountain range located 80 kilometers east of Quito and on the border between the provinces of Napo and Sucumbios. After the rupture, the OCP says it activated an emergency device to mitigate the damage by opening holes or putting pools where much of the spilled crude oil was deposited.

On Monday, the Environment Ministry said the spill occurred inside the Cayamabe-Coca National Park, located in northeastern Ecuador and home to a large animal diversity and aquatic reserve. Nearly 403,000 hectares of the park were damaged.

The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (Confenaie) demanded that the company supply water and food to the affected populations. "It is evident that the river water cannot be used or consumed," Confenaie assured on its social networks.

A joint statement by Confenaie, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Conaie), the Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (Coica) and the Alliance of Organizations for Human Rights, in the framework of the XVI Annual Meeting on Energy and Oil 2022 and the false illusion of the "legal security" of the Oil Executive Decree 95, criticized the disdain on the part of the State for the communities affected by the spill.

"Not even the recent legal victories of indigenous peoples against oil activity have served for the Ecuadorian State to desist from expanding the extraction of natural resources in the Ecuadorian Amazon and its impacts, proof of which is the latest oil spill of January 28, 2022," the statement argued.

The former Minister of Environment, Tarsicio Granizo warned that State control is necessary. "There are issues that cannot be avoided because they are accidents," he said. But "the least that the State should guarantee is that this operation (oil exploitation) is done in the cleanest possible way", he said in an interview to local media.

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