

## Mindoro oil spill 'significantly controlled': DENR

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MANILA — The recent oil spill in Oriental Mindoro is still ongoing but has been significantly controlled, Environment and Natural Resources chief Toni Yulo-Loyzaga said Monday.

"So, sa ngayon po ongoing pa rin ang oil spill. I would say that it has been significantly controlled from the day that it happened. I think the biggest realization here is from the date of release of some substance like oil, that oil will travel (where) the wind and the current will take it," Yulo-Loyzaga said in a press conference.

"Over the course of time there is a portion of the oil that will evaporate, there is a portion that will not (that's) what we are trying to keep track off so we can anticipate how we can protect our ecosystems. Our (coral) reef, our sea grasses, our mangoves, significantly po, in terms of volume under control na po siya," she added.

Yulo-Loyzaga noted that they are in the last phase of clean up as earlier said by the National Task Force on Oil Spill Management.

"As of the moment, there are ongoing operations, the spill is still ongoing. As far as our latest information, the private contractors of the ship owners were working on capping the last remaining leaks doon po sa vessel na 'yun," she said.

"So, they have to bring in a specialized ROV to actually take over from the work that was done by the partners from Japan and the US na talaga pong significantly nag-decrease po 'yung leakage because they were able to practice. So, ongoing pa rin 'yung hazard management on the side."

The oil extraction is expected to be completed within 20 to 30 days if weather conditions permit, they added.

The MT Princess Empress ran aground off the coast of Pola, Oriental Mindoro on February 28. It was carrying some 800,000 liters of industrial oil as cargo and fossil fuel in its engine.

The oil spill has so far left P58.137 million worth of damage and losses to fisheries, affected more than 27,500 fisherfolk, and caused 15 local government units to declare a state of calamity.

More than 42,000 families have been affected from over 100 affected areas in Oriental Mindoro, Palawan, Antique, and Batangas.