

Madagascar to drain crude from stricken tanker

April 24 2014



The Bahamian-flagged ship Tromso which ran aground near Ramena off Madagascar, pictured here on April 23, 2014

Madagascar will during the weekend pump crude from a tanker that ran aground a week ago off its picturesque northern coast to prevent a spill, maritime authorities said Thursday.

The 120-metre (393-foot) Bahamian-flagged Tromso, laden with 10,000

cubic metres of [crude oil](#), got stricken last week in the Indian Ocean after it bust one of its two hulls.

A Seychelles vessel, the Seychelles Paradise which has a capacity of 1,400 cubic metres will syphon the crude off the Tromso on Saturday to lessen the weight of the tanker, the government's anti-pollution chief Roland Rakotondrasata said.

A Madagascar tug will then tow the tanker to its destination, the deepwater harbour of Antsiranana, formerly known as Diego Suarez, situated roughly 20 kilometres (15 miles) away. By Tuesday the rescue operation should conclude.

International experts flown in by the vessel's owners were checking for leaks and mapping the seabed around the tanker using specialised equipment in preparation for the rescue operation.

Specialist salvage and oil spill response company, Swire Salvage, located in Singapore, will take charge of the emergency operation.

"The operation will be carried out with caution...to ensure zero pollution," according to a statement from the environment ministry.

Jerome Sambalis of Madagascar's ports authority said the ship ran aground because of human error.

Easter holiday tourists who packed the resort town of Ramena last weekend, watched the cargo vessel flounder around two kilometres (1.2 miles) off the coast.

The ship was built in 2008 and last docked in the United Arab Emirates, according to data from [MarineTraffic.com](#).

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Citation: Madagascar to drain crude from stricken tanker (2014, April 24) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-04-madagascar-crude-stricken-tanker.html>

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