

Peru beaches suffer oil spill blamed on waves from Tonga volcanic eruption

January 18 2022, by Carlos Mandujano



Workers on a Peruvian beach clean up an oil spill caused by abnormal waves triggered by a massive underwater volcanic eruption half a world away in Tonga.

Peruvian authorities sealed off three beaches Monday after they were hit by an oil spill blamed on freak waves caused by the volcanic eruption in

Tonga.

The Pampilla Refinery, part of the Spanish company Repsol, said there had been a "limited spill" of oil off the coast of Callao and Ventanilla districts near Lima Saturday due to the violent waves produced by the [eruption](#) on the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

It said the spill occurred during offloading from a tanker.

The National Emergency Operations Center said in a statement that the spill had been brought under control.

Environment Minister Ruben Ramirez said the accident had affected a three-kilometer (two-mile) stretch along three beaches.

"There is great damage to biodiversity, and it could even impact [human health](#)," he said.

"And so it has been ordered that the area is cut off for all kinds of activity," Ramirez told reporters.

Pampilla could face a fine of up to \$34.5 million, the environment ministry said, as prosecutors opened an investigation into the company for environmental contamination.

Pampilla—which did not indicate exactly how much oil was spilled—said it was working with authorities to clean up the affected beaches.

Ships worked on collecting oil still floating in the water, while workers in [protective gear](#) began cleaning oil that had washed ashore.

"We want to tell the environment ministry to please follow up, and that

those responsible receive a punishment, because this affects the fishermen, the population that they feed with the fish, and [marine animals](#)," local Ventanilla resident Brenda Ramos told AFP.

Elsewhere in Peru, two women drowned after being caught in waves caused by the [volcanic eruption](#) in Tonga.

The island nation, in the southwest Pacific, has been nearly entirely cut off from the outside world after the eruption severed an undersea communications cable.

The eruption was recorded around the globe and heard as far away as Alaska, triggering a tsunami that flooded Pacific coastlines from Japan to the United States.

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