

National emergency in Tobago as mystery ship spews oil

Sam Chambers

February 13, 2024



Office of the Chief Secretary - THA

Vessel trackers have been unable to identify the name of a ship which capsized six days ago, creating a national emergency in Tobago as oil rushes up on the Caribbean island's southwestern shoreline.

Divers have not been able to check the 100 m long capsized vessel's International Maritime Organization registered number, saying the volume of oil leaking from the ship obscured the view. Divers have located a towing cable attached to the ship suggesting it was potentially being towed somewhere when it ran into difficulty last Wednesday. The ship is wedged on a reef, with huge amounts of debris on the seafloor reported by divers.

The prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Keith Rowley, has declared the accident a national emergency having visited the scene and seen the many kilometres of coastline soaked in oil. He suggested the ship might have been involved in "illicit" activities.

The ship's name and its owner remain a mystery six days on into the crisis.

"By looking into the playback traffic during that timeframe around Tobago, we can't locate the vessel or a tug operation in the area," a spokesperson for MarineTraffic, a leading vessel tracking service, told *Splash* yesterday.

