



# FISHERMEN AND FRIENDS OF THE SEA

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## Press Statement

### No Accountability in Oil Spill Disasters

Date: March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

Dear Editor/Newsroom,

On Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI) reported “a 10-barrel oil spill” identifying the source as a 6-inch diameter pipeline at Petrotrin’s Trinmar Operated Main Soldado Field (Platform 9 to riser Platform 2).

Up to this time Petrotrin and the MEEI have not disclosed the Tiered Level Response, the nature of the spilled oil, the cause as well as the potential risks to fisheries, marine ecosystems and human health.

How can the public be assured that only 10 barrels of spilled oil based on the track record?

The public needs to be reminded of the inconsistent volumes of spilled oil reported by Petrotrin and the MEEI on the April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 Tank 70 rupture at Petrotrin’s Tank Farm in Point-a-Pierre.

-Petrotrin had initially confirmed a mere 30 barrels and then a few days later in Parliament, Minister of Energy, Franklin Khan confirmed that it was 300 barrels.

-the former Minister of Energy Kevin Ramnarine was reported at the time to have said that Tank 70 contained 125,000 Barrels, and that all of it escaped. (see attached video-the rupture was at the base.)

-Fishermen and Friends of the Sea (FFOS) called for an independent verification of the quantity of oil spilt.

-FFOS made public the 2003 Risk Assessment Report for Petrotrin’s Point a Pierre Tank Farm which clearly stated that there were dangerous human health risks and danger with 11 High Risk tanks, and that these should be condemned. Yet in 2017 this same Tank 70 was in use.

-Where was OSHA? Why was no action taken on the 2003 Risk Assessment Report? Why was no one held accountable? Why was no civil or criminal action taken against the managers and Board of Petrotrin whose duty was to act on and mitigate the impending risks laid out in the 2003 Risk Assessment report?

-the condemned Tank 70 according to the Report had a capacity of 150,000 barrels.

April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 stands out as a time when even the Oilfield Workers Trade Union (OWTU) remained silent. This large volume of oil contaminated the Caribbean Sea all the way to Mexico.

FFOS call on the OWTU and the other stakeholder agencies including the Energy Chamber (who are aware of risks) to make their voices heard for the public interest. Whistle blower protection must come. Be not afraid.

Presently the existing legislation governing oil spill response ought to have inclusive and independent analysis and investigation as to the cause, source, volume, potential risks to the environment, human health and fisheries.

FFOS are concerned there is no legislated independent overview and/or primary stakeholder inclusion in determining, investigating, probing, verifying, validating, reviewing, visiting, and/or inputting in any way into disaster response, assessment and reporting. FFOS is locked out and fewer NGOs are even interested in matters of public health or environmental justice.

There is no accountability by public administrators to report on environmental impact, or how much oil was spilled. These are some of the reported oil spills from recently alone.

1. April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017- Tank 70 ruptured, contaminating the Gulf of Paria, *unverified and conflicting volumes reported.*
2. August 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 oil deposits washed ashore in Point Sable Beach and Carat Shed Beach, La Brea. *Source unknown. unverified unquantified volumes spilt.*
3. October 14<sup>th</sup> 2017, there was a massive oil spill in the Chaguaramas Basin *unverified and unquantified volumes spilt and source withheld from public, and delayed enforcement action.*
4. 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017 a Petrotrin onshore (Santa Flora) oil spill- *unverified and unquantified volumes spilt.*
5. On 16<sup>th</sup> November Petrotrin reported that a “pressurized” 6” pipeline burst and a mere 1.8 barrels of oil flowed into the food basket. *Unverified volumes spilt*
6. 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018 – another oil spill in the Catshill Field off Moruga - *unverified and unquantified volumes spilt.*

Oil spills have a remarkably persistent effect (2013 and ongoing) as seen by the continuous, unusual mortalities of fish, dolphins, and birds in La Brea, including Corbeaux, Pelicans and the Magnificent Frigate Bird. What are the predatory birds eating? Are they eating the same fish as the residents of La Brea and environs?

Minister Rambharat needs to be informed and act responsibly. **Pelicans and Frigate birds do not consume decomposing fish. There is nothing normal in a persistent, reoccurring, localized mortality of marine animals in the designated 2013-2014 Petrotrin “Red Zone” area of the Southern Peninsula.**

FFOS publicly remind our Prime Minister and Cabinet that ***every drop of hydrocarbon in our waters has an everlasting impact on our health.***

Sincerely,

Gary Aboud

Corporate Secretary