



MARSEILLE/FOS-SUR-MER



B.P. 59446

**10, place de la Joliette - Les Docks - Atrium 10.8
13567 Marseille Cedex 2 - France**



Tel. : +33 (0)4 91 14 04 60

Fax : +33 (0)4 91 56 12 81

E-Mail : mail@eltvedtosullivan.com
www.eltvedtosullivan.com

To: Correspondents' Manager

Date: 31st January 2013

Pointe Noire, Congo

Oil Pollution at Berth

We would like to draw the attention of the Club and their Members to the continuing problem of oil pollution in the port of Pointe Noire, Congo.

The situation regarding oil pollution within the port of Pointe Noire has been well known for several months now (since September 2012) and the PORT AUTHORITY is perfectly aware, but has yet to take measures to stem the leak. Consequently this represents an obstacle to vessels calling at this port. We would recommend that all vessels intending to call to at Pointe Noire, Congo should be advised of the prevailing situation and should charterers direct owners to this port any clean-up consequences should be sought from the former.

The water and fenders in the port are polluted with oil due to a pipeline in the port having been struck during dredging operations as work was / is carried out on quays G1, G2, G3 & G4.

We regret to advise that there have been no signs of any improvement in Pointe Noire with regards to this oil contamination. As there has been no concrete action taken to clear the slick in the port, the quays G1, G2, G3, G4, D1, D2, D3, D4, P5, P6, P7 and P8 are contaminated. Vessels calling at the port continue to have their hulls contaminated to a lesser or greater extent depending on local conditions at the time.

With regards to any action to be taken we would advise as follows:

1. The Master should issue a letter of protest and transmit it to his agent to have it signed by the Port Authorities (if even the Harbour Master refuses to sign the LOP regarding this problem the agent should do so). TCI Pointe Noire can assist the Master in drawing up his LOP.
2. Should it be necessary to prove that the oil pollution is not emanating from the vessel TCI Pointe Noire can, if required, arrange to collect samples of the oil from the water around the vessel. However, sometimes the port security refuses to allow this to be carried out as the Port Authorities do not want to draw further attention to this problem. We are not aware of any instances where the Port Authority has tried to shift the blame for the oil pollution onto the vessel.

3. If hull cleaning is required it has to be carried out at anchor (it is not allowed to be done in the port) either by the crew or by a local company hired for the purpose. Whether or not hull cleaning is necessary is really at the discretion of the Master / Owner bearing in mind the extent of the contamination and the vessel's itinerary etc. (Some vessels choose not to clean the hull, but rely on the natural cleaning of the sea water on the subsequent voyage depending on the extent of the contamination, anticipated length of voyage, next port, draft etc.) There are approximately four local cleaning companies who can be engaged via the agent to clean the vessel's hull. TCI Pointe Noire can assist with this if needed.

4. It may be prudent to consider ensuring that the vessel has appropriately approved oil cleaning chemicals / solvents on board prior to arrival at Pointe Noire as this may assist in keeping down any cleaning costs, especially if the cleaning can be carried out by the crew.

Issued 31/01/2013
