



Ship Type: Crude Oil Tankers Trade Area: Arabian Gulf

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### Suspect Oil Pollution at SPM - Ras Tanura (Saudi Arabia)

We have recently been made aware that while securing to one of the **single point moorings** at Juaymah terminal in Ras Tanura, (operated by Saudi Aramco), the ship's crew of a VLCC noted an oil slick visible around the bow of the ship. This was reported to the pilot and the port authorities. The ship commenced loading cargo and deballasting from clean ballast tanks. At daylight oil was still visible on the sea surface and again the authorities were so advised by the ship. The shore authorities then stopped loading and the loading master took samples from the ship's ballast lines and ballast tanks which are reported to have shown no visible evidence of any oil.

On completion of taking samples the ship was ordered to vacate the loading berth and proceed to a holding anchorage pending further investigation. The ship was subsequently allowed to return to the loading berth and resume loading but only after security was demanded from owners of the ship in respect of clean up costs and unberthing and reberthing costs.

**We understand from the correspondent that this is not an isolated incident and that many tankers calling at Ras Tanura recently have been facing such allegations of oil pollution. In the cases we know of, no evidence has been found that the oil has leaked from the ship!!!**

*We would recommend that Masters of ships loading at Ras Tanura keep a good look out for oil in the water and report any found to the pilots, port authorities, officials and charterers. In case any allegation is made that the ship is responsible for pollution then the Master should immediately contact with the local correspondent, and collect evidence to assist the ship in defending the claim, including but not limited to samples from the ship's ballast tanks and ballast lines. Log book entries should be made concerning any sighting of oil, together with records of all checks and precautions taken onboard the ship. The pollution should be reported to the authorities, and names of all witnesses recorded. You should note that photography of oil installations and ports in Saudi Arabia is generally prohibited.*

Source of information : Anonymous (see Karl Lumbers)