

IMO expresses ‘deep concern’ over impact of X-Press Pearl fire and sinking

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Kitack Lim, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, has issued a statement expressing his “deep concern to all impacted by the incident involving the container vessel X-Press Pearl”, which caught fire whilst at anchor near Colombo, Sri Lanka on May 25, eventually sinking on June 1.



The vessel was en route from the UAE via Qatar, India and Sri Lanka to Singapore, and reportedly had notified an onboard leak of nitric acid from the containerized cargo before arriving in Sri Lanka.

“I wholeheartedly appreciate the efforts of the Sri Lankan and Indian authorities, for their successful rescue of the crew, bringing them to safety. I also thank the salvors for their efforts,” said Secretary-General Lim. “We are closely monitoring the situation as it evolves, including reports of chemical pollution, debris coming ashore in the form of plastic pellets, and the potential for oil pollution.”

The IMO is liaising with its UN partners (UNEP and OCHA) and with the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), the regional organization for South Asia, with regards to possible assistance. IMO is also in communication with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Environment (MEPA) for any specific technical assistance that IMO may provide.

“I look forward to receiving the investigation report into this incident in due course”, the head of the IMO concluded.