

Peru declares 'environmental emergency' on coastal area hit by oil spill

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Peru declared an environmental emergency Saturday as an oil spill caused by freak waves from a volcanic eruption in the South Pacific keeps spreading.

With the 90-day decree, the government said it plans “sustainable management” of 21 beaches tarred by 6,000 barrels of oil that spilled from a tanker ship unloading at a refinery recently.

Key Highlights

- One aim of the decree is to better organize the various agencies and teams working in the aftermath of the disaster, said the environment ministry.
- The spill followed the stunningly powerful eruption last Saturday of an undersea volcano near the nation of Tonga, unleashing tsunami waves around the Pacific and as far away as the United States.
- In Peru the oil spill near Lima has fouled beaches, killed birds and harmed the fishing and tourism industries.
- The government is demanding payment of damages from the Spanish energy giant Repsol which owns the refinery.
- The environment ministry said 174 hectares —equivalent to 270 football fields —of

sea, beaches and natural reserves were affected by the spill.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*