



## GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

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### PRESS RELEASE

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#### SALVAGE OPERATION 'NEW FLAME'

The operation to assist the break in two of the stricken vessel 'New Flame' has been halted after further surveys undertaken by the diving team earlier today revealed that despite the external forces applied by the specialist salvage tug Fotiy Krylov, 60% of the vessel strength still remains. In this condition it is unlikely the vessel will break in two at this stage as first envisaged.

Currently, the salvage team are carrying out further calculations and considering the option of the possibility of salvaging the entire vessel, by introducing buoyancy to the forward part of the vessel, which will enable her stern to float free of the seabed in a controlled manner with two tugs attached.

The operation to remove fuel oil from the vessel, and to improve her buoyancy, has recommenced. This operation will continue on a 24hr basis until a decision on the salvage of the vessel has been reached.

If the entire vessel were to be re-floated, it will be held in its current position by the two tugs until such time as sufficient buoyancy can be introduced and her stability controlled.

Thereafter, the vessel will be towed to a more secure location where operations to improve her condition, as well as to remove any fuel which may remain, will commence.

"As I've said before, in these complex operations situation can change in relatively short periods of time, and so these need to be carefully considered and changes of plans adopted where necessary", said Acting Chief Minister, The Hon Joe Holliday. "The Government continues to be satisfied that every possible course of action is being taken by the salvage team of experts in order to bring this operation to a successful conclusion. At all times, the priority of the Government is to maintain maximum safety and minimum risk to the environment.