



MEDIA RELEASE

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GOVERNMENT CONTINUES ACTION ON ISSUE OF FSO NABARIMA

PORT OF SPAIN: 16TH OCTOBER, 2020

Since learning of reports that there had been tilting of the Venezuelan oil storage vessel the FSO Nabarima, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has engaged in consistent action in the best interest of our citizens. There was swift communication of our concerns to the Government of Venezuela on behalf of our people and our environment.

Since those initial reports the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has consistently utilized all available channels to press for verification of the status of the vessel in question. The Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, and the Ministry of National Security have all been actively working on solutions to the Nabarima issue.

The Venezuelan Government has indicated that the vessel was indeed tilting some time ago, but emphasized that they had conducted initial stabilization works on the Nabarima and that it is no longer in any danger.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago then immediately sought actual verification of this.

Our Government has engaged via repeated and consistent communication, including multiple Notes Verbale sent to Venezuela on the matter, with persistent efforts to achieve access to the vessel in order to make our own determinations.

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The Venezuelan Government then agreed to permit a team of our Experts to cross the border and assess the Nabarima, but subsequently shifted from an initial position that this could be done by the end of September to their current position that the inspection team would receive permission to visit on 20th October.

Without such permission, our officers cannot cross the border and approach or access any Venezuelan asset.

On 15th October the Venezuelan Ambassador categorically described a new photograph being locally circulated on social media, which purports to represent severe tilting of the Nabarima in October, as total propaganda. He has claimed that the photograph was actually taken over one month ago before the stabilization work was done on the vessel, and that it is now being held up as a current photo in an effort to mislead.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has once again reiterated its concerns and maintains its request to be permitted to access and inspect the vessel for ourselves as soon as possible.

During the intervening period the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has pursued the matter responsibly and has used all available channels to verify the truth of the situation and to achieve access. We have held related discussions with the Ambassador of Venezuela to Port of Spain, with the Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs and with other Senior Venezuelan Officials, with the Trinidad and Tobago Ambassador to Caracas, with the Ambassador of the United States of America to Port of Spain, and with our local energy, health and national security officials.

Our Government maintains its concerns about the threat to the environment and continues to seek the best for our people in this matter. Our expert inspection team is ready to proceed and we continue to press for access to the FSO Nabarima as soon as possible.

Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs