

# Newsletter



## XELO TANKER SINKING - UPDATE

On 22<sup>th</sup> April 2022, the Tunisian authorities announced that the tanker Xelo sank on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2022; in the offshore of the Gulf of Gabes in South-Eastern coast of Tunisia; was empty avoiding any risk of pollution; after indicating in a first step that the tanker was carrying 750 tons of diesel.

According to the same release, the ongoing preparations to pump the diesel from the tanks of the tanker will cease and the authorities will now explore the possibility to tow the shipwreck at a later stage.

According to divers mobilized on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2022, in order to conduct the inspection operations, the vessel sank at a depth of around 20 meters; in a horizontal position and shows no cracks; indicated by the Ministry of Environment.

On the other hand, the spokesman of the Tunisian Navy, the Colonel Major Mazeri Letaief revealed during a press conference held on Friday; 22 April 2022; at the commercial port of Gannouch in Gabes; that the tanks of the ship Xelo who sank since Saturday; 16<sup>th</sup> April 2022 in the offshore of the Gulf of Gabes; does not contain any drop of diesel and are filled with seawater.



The Colonel Major Mazeri Letaief indicated that the Xelo vessel is not dedicated for the transportation of oil products. He also underlined that after the inspection operations conducted by the divers inside the pumphouse of the tanker, it appeared that the pumping units are corroded proving that they have not been used for a period. In addition, he pointed that the command center and the GPS plotter of the vessel were destroyed; qualifying it as a criminal act.

The Colonel Major Mazeri Letaief also stated that the navigational instruments were pulled from their anchorage points. He also said that the response operations conducted by the Tunisian Navy for combating marine pollution will be stopped, pending the recovery the wreck of the vessel.

According to a declaration of the public prosecutor, the court of the first instance in Gabes decided to prohibit the whole crew of the Xelo vessel to leave the Tunisian territory during 15 days; that can be renewed for the requirements of the investigation.

In view of the latest developments of this affair, the Tunisian justice launched an investigation to determine the cause of the incident, the activities nature of the vessel and its trips made during the past few weeks.