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JUSTICE NEWS

**Attorney General Eric Holder Announces Civil Lawsuit  
Regarding Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill**

Washington, D.C. ~ Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Good afternoon, and thank you all for being here.

I am pleased to be joined by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson; Assistant Attorney General Tony West, who leads the Justice Department's Civil Division; and Assistant Attorney General Ignacia Moreno, who leads the Environment and Natural Resources Division.

In the wake of the largest oil spill in our nation's history, Tony and Ignacia helped to lead the Justice Department's efforts to hold accountable any and all parties found responsible for this disaster. Today, we are here to announce the initial results of our ongoing civil investigation.

This investigation began shortly after April 20th of this year, when an explosion and fire destroyed the Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling rig that was located in the Gulf of Mexico, approximately 50 miles from the Mississippi River delta.

This incident claimed the lives of eleven rig workers. It marked the start of a massive oil spill that would take more than three months to contain. And it set off a chain reaction of devastating consequences for the people, the environment, and the economy of the Gulf Coast – a region still struggling to recover from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

While oil spill response efforts were underway, the Department of Justice launched both criminal and civil probes into this matter. We dispatched dozens of top attorneys to the gulf region, and members of the Department's senior leadership have also made multiple trips to the area. For months, Department lawyers and investigators have been working night and day – and in close coordination with local U.S. Attorneys' Offices and State Attorneys General.

As a result of this work, today, the United States filed a civil lawsuit in U.S. District Court in New Orleans against nine defendants.

The defendants named in the lawsuit include:

- BP Exploration and Production Inc.;
- Anadarko Exploration & Production LP;
- Anadarko Petroleum Corporation;
- MOEX Offshore 2007 LLC;
- Triton Asset Leasing GMBH;
- Transocean Holdings LLC;
- Transocean Offshore Deepwater Drilling Inc.;
- Transocean Deepwater Inc.; and
- QBE Underwriting Ltd./Lloyd's Syndicate 1036.

In the complaint, the United States alleges violations of federal safety and operational regulations, including:

- Failure to take necessary precautions to secure the Macondo Well prior to the April 20th explosion;
- Failure to utilize the safest drilling technology to monitor the well's condition;
- Failure to maintain continuous surveillance of the well; and
- Failure to utilize and maintain equipment and materials that were available and necessary to ensure the safety and protection of personnel, property, natural resources, and the environment.

We intend to prove that these violations caused or contributed to this massive oil spill, and that the defendants are therefore responsible – under the Oil Pollution Act – for government removal costs, economic losses, and environmental damages.

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We are also seeking civil penalties under the Clean Water Act, which prohibits the unauthorized discharge of oil into the nation's waters. We allege that the defendants named in this lawsuit were in violation of the Act throughout the months that oil was gushing into the Gulf of Mexico. And we intend to hold them fully accountable for their violations of the law.

Over the past year, I have visited the gulf region multiple times. I have seen the devastation that this oil spill caused throughout the region – to individuals and families; to communities and businesses; to coastlines, wetlands, and wildlife.

Even though the spill has been contained – even though it is no longer the focus of round-the-clock news coverage and the subject of front-page headlines – the Department's focus on investigating this disaster, and preventing future devastation, has not wavered.

While today's civil action marks a critical step forward, it is not a final step. Both our criminal and civil investigations are continuing. And our work to ensure that the American taxpayers are not forced to bear the costs of restoring the gulf area – and its economy – goes on. As I have said from the beginning, as our investigations continue, we will not hesitate to take whatever steps are necessary to hold accountable those responsible for this spill.

The civil investigation into the Gulf Coast Spill is being handled by the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement. I want to thank all these partners for their tremendous efforts.

As our investigations move forward, Justice Department attorneys will continue to work closely with our federal, state, and local partners to get to the bottom of what caused this disaster and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable – and brought to justice.

The American people – and especially the people of the Gulf Coast – deserve nothing less.

Thank you. And, now, I'd like to turn it over to a key leader and partner in this effort, Administrator Lisa Jackson.



**U.S. DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE** | 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001

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The Attorney General  
DOJ Agencies  
Budget & Performance  
Strategic Plans

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Business Opportunities  
Grants

#### RESOURCES

Forms  
Publications  
Case Highlights  
A-Z Index

#### BRIEFING ROOM

Justice News  
The Justice Blog  
Videos  
Photo Library

#### CAREERS

Student Opportunities  
Internships

#### CONTACT

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Site Map  
A to Z Index  
Archive  
Accessibility  
FOIA  
No FEAR Act  
Information Quality  
Privacy Policy  
Legal Policies &  
Disclaimers

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General  
Government  
Resources  
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