



HAIDA NATION

Friday, October 17, 2014

PRESS RELEASE

SHIP ADRIFT ON WEST COAST OF HAIDA GWAI

At 7:30 am this morning the Coast Guard contacted the Council of the Haida Nation to mobilize vessels to assist with a marine emergency.

In the early morning, the 135-metre container vessel *Simushir* lost power. By 7:30 am, the Russian registered vessel was drifting 12 miles off the coast of Gowgia Bay carrying 500 metric tonnes of bunker fuel and 60 metric tonnes of diesel. Thirty-five to forty-five south-east winds are blowing the vessel to shore in a 7-10 metre sea. The winds are expected to turn westerly this afternoon.

If the forecast holds the container ship is expected to run aground in approximately nine hours. The ship has a Russian crew and the captain has been injured. Coast Guard is attempting to get to the site by helicopter to respond to the situation.

An emergency command centre has been set up by the Council of the Haida Nation in Old Massett in the event the ship comes ashore.

"The Haida Nation's worst fear is coming true," said President of the Haida Nation *kil tlaats'gaa Peter Lantin*. "Our priority is to minimize the impact on our homeland and get our people on-site to start dealing with the grounding. We'll deal with the politics of the situation later."

The west coast of Haida Gwaii is tremendously rich in marine life and is home to dozens of ancient village sites.

Media contact - Simon Davies
p. 250.637.1130
e. simon.davies@hgqci.org