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Talks on Montara oil spill remain unclear

Negotiations with an foreign company for compensations for an oil spill in the Timor Sea remain unclear, despite the imminent expiration of the decree empowering the Indonesian team.

Transportation Minister Freddy Numberi previously issued a decree, which was expected to expire on Saturday, creating a negotiation team comprised of senior officials from the Foreign Affairs, Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministries.

The team was established 10 months after the Montara oil platform operated by Thai-owned oil-rig operator PTTEP Australasia exploded in August 2009.

Environment Minister Gusti Muhammad Hatta said that the Indonesian team and PTTEP representatives would meet again on Monday to continue discussions.

“I will report to Minister Freddy [and ask him] to extend the decree so the team can continue the negotiations,” Hatta said on Tuesday.

Hatta said that Indonesia wanted PTTEP to admit its culpability for the oil spill, which damaged Indonesian territory.

Indonesia has unofficially demanded Rp 23 trillion (US\$ 2.5 billion) in compensation for damage from the spill.