

Captain Fined Over Bulgaria Incident

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The captain of a vessel that passed by the sinking Bulgaria cruise ship without stopping to help rescue drowning passengers was fined, but avoided jail time, Interfax reported.

A district court in Tatarstan ruled that Yury Tuchin failed to provide help to victims of the July disaster on the Volga River, in which 122 people died when the 55-year-old Bulgaria foundered in a storm.

Tuchin, skipper of the Arbat dry cargo ship, pleaded guilty to not stopping to collect survivors, but said he had only done so because his ship risked crushing the lifeboats.

The prosecution asked to jail the 60-year-old sailor for 14 months and ban him from working on ships for three years afterward, but the court only fined Tuchin 130,000 rubles (\$4,200), the report said. Neither party said Monday whether it planned to appeal.

A similar case against the captain of the Dunaisky-66 towboat is under review in a Kazan court. Several officials and the head of the company that leased the decrepit Bulgaria also face charges over the disaster.

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