

Dozens of Charges Filed Against Owner of Doomed 'Dalny Vostok' Trawler

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Russian Emergencies Ministry ship is seen through the window of a helicopter during a rescue operation after a Russian trawler Dalniy Vostok sank off the coast of Kamchatka, off the Sea of Okhotsk in Russia, April 2, 2015.

Regional prosecutors have filed nearly 50 administrative cases against the owner of the trawler that sunk in the Sea of Okhotsk last month, claiming at least 57 lives, TASS news agency reported Tuesday.

On the night of April 1, the "Dalny Vostok" trawler sunk 330 kilometers off Russia's far eastern coast with 132 crew members onboard, including 54 foreign nationals. Sixty-three sailors were saved, 57 perished and 12 crew members are still considered missing, Interfax news agency reported Tuesday.

The illegal employment of foreign citizens is among the 49 cases that have been opened against Magellan, the company that owned the ill-fated trawler. Regional authorities claimed last month that the foreigners aboard the ship had not been authorized to work in Russia.

There were 42 Burmese nationals, as well as citizens of Latvia, Ukraine and Vanuatu on the vessel, emergency services reported last month. Yevgeny Vitrikus, a Russian crew member rescued from the sinking ship, claimed that the foreign sailors aboard the trawler had bribed its owners to be hired, TASS reported at the time. Company representatives denied any knowledge of foreign nationals working on the trawler.

Magellan now faces a fine of up to 800,000 rubles (\$16,000) and can be ordered to cease its activities.

The deputy director of Magellan, Alexander Kudritsky, was detained last month in connection with the tragedy. A search warrant was also issued for Yegor Gashchenko, the company's director.

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