

U.K. Police Arrest Russian Captain Over North Sea Ship Collision

By [AFP](#)

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Smoke rises from the MV Solong cargo ship in the North Sea. **Paul Ellis / AFP**

The captain of a cargo ship that collided with a stationary tanker in the North Sea is a Russian national, the ship's owner confirmed to AFP on Wednesday.

U.K. police arrested the man after the Solong cargo ship, owned by Ernst Russ, struck the U.S.-flagged Stena Immaculate on Monday, leaving one crew member missing and presumed dead.

"Ernst Russ confirms that the master is a Russian national," the company said in a statement to AFP. "The rest of the crew consists of Russian and Filipino nationals."

The confirmation follows the arrest of a 59-year-old man on Tuesday on suspicion of manslaughter in connection with the incident, which occurred off the northeast coast of England.

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Ernst Russ said the man, arrested by Humberside police, is the Russian captain of the Portuguese-flagged Solong.

On Monday morning, the Solong collided with the Stena Immaculate, which was anchored about 20 kilometers (13 miles) off the northeastern port of Hull, causing both vessels to catch fire.

The incident also led to jet fuel from the tanker leaking into the North Sea, raising concerns for the environment and wildlife, as well as questions about the cause of the crash.

While the fire on the tanker had "greatly diminished with no visible flames" by Tuesday evening, according to its U.S.-based operator, Crowley, the volume of jet fuel released into the sea remained "uncertain."

"Initial review shows impacts have been limited due to exposure to the fire and evaporation of the Jet A1 fuel," Crowley said in a statement.

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The U.K. Coastguard, which led the rescue operation, saved 36 people on Monday, including all 23 crew members from the Stena Immaculate, which had been chartered by the U.S. military.

However, a member of the Solong's crew remains missing and is presumed dead, U.K. Under-Secretary for Transport Mike Kane told Parliament.

"Whether there was foul play, I think is speculation," he said regarding the crash. "There is no evidence to suggest that at the moment."

The Stena Immaculate was on a short-term U.S. military charter with Military Sealift Command, a spokesperson for the command said. Military Sealift Command operates civilian-crewed ships for the U.S. Defense Department.

According to data from the VesselFinder website, the crash caused the tanker to be displaced by "more than 400 meters."

The Daily Telegraph reported Wednesday that Irish officials discovered the Solong's emergency steering compass was deficient during a routine safety inspection last year. The deficiency was one of 10 noted during the inspection when the ship visited Dublin in July 2024.

British law enforcement is investigating air quality and environmental impacts in the North Sea and has launched inquiries into how the cargo ship collided with the tanker.

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