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Captain arrested on suspicion of gross negligence manslaughter over North Sea collision

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The captain of the containership *Solong*, involved in a collision with the *Stena Immaculate* tanker in the UK North Sea, has been arrested on suspicion of gross negligence manslaughter.

The incident, which took place on [Monday](#) with both ships bursting into flames after the jet fuel-carrying tanker's hull was ruptured, led to one crewmember from *Solong* missing and presumed dead.

The 36 other crewmembers were brought ashore safely.

UK police detained the 59-year-old captain, reportedly a Russian national, after the extensive search for the missing seafarer was called off on Monday evening.

The ship's owner, Ernst Russ from Germany, confirmed that "the master of the container ship *Solong* has been detained by Humberside police."

"The master and our entire team are actively assisting with the investigations," the company said.

Detective Chief Superintendent Craig Nicholson of Humberside police said the force had “taken primacy for the investigation of any potential criminal offences which arise from the collision between the two vessels.”

[Initial fears](#) that *Solong* could sink have been reduced. Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said later on Tuesday that “early indications suggest that both vessels are now expected to stay afloat.”

The coastguard said it had attached a tow line to the *Solong*, which was now offshore “in a safer position”, and that a salvage plan for both ships was being developed.

The *Stena Immaculate* was carrying 220,000 barrels of jet fuel for the US Air Force when it was struck while anchored near Hull. At least one of its tanks is leaking into the North Sea.

Specialist pollution-control vessels arrived at the scene on Tuesday to try to measure the scale of the spillage and contain any toxins.

An initial review of the fuel released into the North Sea has suggested the impact has been limited.

The tanker’s manager, Crowley, said in an update on Tuesday evening, “It remains unclear at this time what volume of fuel may have been released as a result of the incident, but initial review shows impacts have been limited due to exposure to the fire and evaporation of the Jet A1 fuel.”

While the cause of the collision remains unclear, a spokesperson for the UK government said initial information did not contain “any suggestions of foul play at this time”. However, transport minister Mike Kane noted that something had clearly gone “terribly wrong.”

Investigators were expected to speak to many of the 36 crewmembers rescued from both ships in the coming days to determine the cause of the accident. Industry experts suggested human error was likely to have played a significant role in the incident but that a technical issue or oversight could not be ruled out.