
In Sakha (Yakutia), captain of ship found guilty of safety breach causing death to 11 people



A court has recognized the evidence collected by the East Siberian Transport Directorate of the Investigative Committee sufficient to convict 35-year-old captain of the Aleksey Kulakovsky diesel tug Anatoly Solovyov. He was found guilty of a crime under Part 3 of Article 263 of the RF Penal Code (violation of safety for traffic and operation of marine and inland waterway transportation entailing death of two or more people by negligence).

The court and investigators have revealed that on 26 August 2010, Solovyov while being the captain of the Aleksey Kulakovsky diesel tug owned by OAO Lena United River Steamship Company with 14 crew aboard wanting to help a ship in distress made a decision to head from the Lena River mouth to the Laptev Sea. However, the tug was not designed to be used in the open sea, it had been technologically altered and had damages of the hull that affected its stability and buoyancy. Additionally the captain was aware about adverse weather conditions present on the way – there had been a storm warning stating that waves might get between 2.4 and 4.5 meters high.

After the ship had arrived in Buor-Haya Bay in the Laptev Sea, water started coming inside through

cracks in the hull. The ship tilted and sank. All crew members were in water and despite life jackets they had on, owing to sever storm and nighttime the ship that had come to the rescue managed to save only 3 sailors, including captain Solovyov. 11 crew members of the Aleksey Kulakovsky diesel tug died.

The investigators worked hard and long to reveal all the reasons and details of the crime, they examined the ship on the depth of 30 meters. They questioned over 50 people as witnesses and specialists. A number of complex forensic inquiries, including situational, medical and navigational ones were run. Experts studied the files of the case, including statements of witnesses, technical documentation, reports of specialist and pictures made during the underwater examination of the ship.

The available evidence allowed the investigators and the court to make a conclusion that the death of the crew was caused by Solovyov's breaches of the Inland Water Transport Code, Inland Water Navigation Rules, and other safety regulations.

The court has sentenced Solovyov to 5.5 years to be served in a penal settlement.

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