



Manila readies to charge shipowner over tanker sinking

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Philippine Coast Guard

The Department of Justice (DOJ) in Manila is finally getting around to press charges against the shipping company RDC Reiel Marine Services regarding the [sinking of *Princess Empress*](#) and the subsequent oil spill in Oriental Mindoro.

The ship went down in stormy conditions off the island of Mindoro in February last year, its cargo of more 800,000 litres of industrial fuel oil then gradually seeping into the sea in the worst oil spill to hit the Philippines since 2006.

A panel of prosecutors has recommended charges against individuals working for the shipowner, as well as someone working for the country's shipping regulator for offences including falsification of public documents.

The ship's history was brought into question in the weeks following its sinking. While shipping database Equasis listed the locally flagged *Princess Empress* as being built in 2022, the country's justice secretary said the vessel was in fact very old, a candidate for scrapping, that had been modified twice, including a period where it traded as an LPG carrier.