

# Court hands Petrakis seven years in jail for sinking

A GREEK court has sentenced shipowner Andreas Petrakis of Iolcos Hellenic to seven years in prison over the sinking of the 132,600-dwt capesize bulkier *Iolcos Victory*

(built 1980) six years ago. Petrakis was sentenced in absentia but will be free pending appeal of the sentence, which was handed down by a three-member Athens court.

The *Iolcos Victory* was 16 years old when it sank on 14 September 1996 with the loss of four lives, including the Greek master.

Petrakis was charged with manslaughter, causing a shipwreck and causing injuries. Two Greek engineers that survived the sinking were acquitted.

The *Iolcos Victory* sank about 100 miles off the South African coast while it was on a laden voyage from Tubarao, Brazil, to China. Five of the 21 crew

members who survived suffered injuries.

The court was told that a crack in the NK-classed vessel had been "patched" with cement.

Piraeus lawyer George Trantalides, a specialist in representing the interests of crew and families in such accidents, says the defence's assertion that the sinking was caused by force eight winds tumbled like a stack of cards.

He said the court's decision is "the best memorial" for the lost seafarers.

By Gillian Whittaker  
from Athens

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