

# Singapore files charges over last year's fatal tanker collision

Sam Chambers July 3, 2025

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Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) has filed formal charges stemming from the deadly 2024 collision involving the Singapore-flagged *Hafnia Nile* and the shadow tanker *Ceres I*, an incident that drew international attention for both its human toll and its implications for shadow fleet operations.

Two crew members from the *Hafnia Nile* — a Sri Lankan officer of the watch and an Indian lookout — now face prosecution under Singapore's Merchant Shipping Act. If convicted, they could each face up to two years in jail and fines of S\$50,000 (\$\$39,000).

The *Hafnia Nile* — a 69,999 dwt product tanker built in 2017 — was fully laden and transiting through Singapore's eastern approaches when it collided with

the anchored *Ceres I* around 35 nautical miles northeast of Pedra Branca on July 19, 2024.

The *Ceres I*, flagged in São Tomé and Príncipe, was widely identified as part of the so-called shadow fleet—a loosely tracked group of older tankers used for sanctioned oil trades. The vessel was reportedly unladen and drifting at anchor when the *Hafnia Nile* struck it at speed.

The impact caused a major fire that engulfed both vessels. The *Hafnia* crew was successfully evacuated, but one seafarer aboard *Ceres I* was killed, and another sustained life-threatening burns. The *Hafnia Nile* suffered severe structural damage and was later salvaged, offloaded, and laid up. It remains out of commercial service.

At the time, Malaysian authorities claimed the *Ceres I* had tried to flee the scene — a claim they later retracted, stating the vessel may have drifted while attempting to fight the fires. The tanker was briefly detained and then released, with its last known AIS signal placing it off Nigeria. According to Equasis, it is still active in the shadow fleet, now listed under an unknown flag.

The two men charged are Wickramage Viraj Amila Shavinda Perera, 40, Sri Lankan, an officer of the watch, and Soosai Anthony Vainer, 35, Indian, a lookout.

According to the Singapore State Court filing, Perera is accused of failing to maintain situational awareness, failing to properly appraise navigational risks, and failing to ensure a proper bridge watch was in place.

Vainer is charged with not alerting the officer of the *Ceres I*'s close proximity and taking control of the vessel's steering without authorisation. The filing suggests Vainer made helm adjustments without instructions, a breach of standard bridge procedures.

Court proceedings have been scheduled in Singapore for later this month.