The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Workers Trickle Out of Restive Egypt

By Anatoly Medetsky

January 31, 2011

Reporters meeting Indian nationals as they disembark from a special flight from Cairo in Mumbai on Monday. **Rafiq Maqbool**

Energy companies LUKoil and Novatek are flying their employees out of strife-torn Egypt but say the evacuations won't affect operations in the country.

Novatek planned to arrange a flight to take six employees out of Cairo on Monday, company spokesman Mikhail Lozovoi said. Russia's second largest gas producer maintains an office there for coordinating exploration of oil and gas reserves off Egypt's Mediterranean coast.

"All work will continue" uninterrupted at the El-Arish area that Novatek is exploring in a 50-50 venture with Egypt's Tharwa Petroleum, Lozovoi said.

LUKoil flew 15 people from Cairo to Dubai on Sunday, a company spokesman said, Interfax reported. That group, and one more employee who is working on an Egyptian production site, are scheduled to return to Moscow on Tuesday.

LUKoil and its international partners, which include the Egyptian government and a unit of Italy's Eni, will do business as usual, producing oil from two fields that each hold a little more than 30 million barrels of oil. The West Esch El Mallaha field is on the Red Sea shore, near Hurghada, while the Meleiha field is in the middle of the Egyptian part of the Libyan Desert.

Some other Russian companies that have offices in Egypt, such as software company Softline and satellite tracking firm Russian Navigation Technologies, rely on local staff and won't need to arrange evacuations, their spokespeople said.

Russian students in Cairo appealed for evacuation Monday, saying they had to barricade themselves on the fourth floor of a dormitory to keep away marauders. The 120 students, including 50 people from the Bashkortostan republic, said they were running out of food, according to Bashkortostan presidential spokesman Artyom Valiyev, RIA-Novosti reported.

Bashkortostan authorities have forwarded the plea to the Cabinet, the Foreign Ministry and the Emergency Situations Ministry, Valiyev said.

Russian tourists in Egypt are safe and don't require any rescue measures, deputy Sports and Tourism Minister Nadezhda Nazina said Monday.

“Judging from the information that comes from various sources, including special representatives of the Federal Tourism Agency ... everything is quiet at the places where Russians are vacationing,” she said, Interfax reported.

Russian officials nevertheless issued a sterner warning to travel agencies Sunday to stop sending tourists to the country, where more than 100 Egyptians have died in anti-government riots, she said. Agencies that don’t heed the instruction are in violation of the law, given the security threats there, she said.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/01/31/workers-trickle-out-of-restive-egypt-a4636