

Khimki Forest Activists Claim Workers Beat Them

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Trees being felled in the Khimki Forest in 2010. **Denis Grishkin**

A construction company developing land in the Khimki Forest announced Monday that it will sue a group of environmental activists who claim to have been beaten up in the latest skirmish over the Moscow region woodland.

On Sunday, a group of 10 activists demanded that a construction foreman show them permits for working on land in the Khmiki Forest near the Fakel factory on Ulitsa Akademika Grushina, activist Sergei Ageyev told Interfax. A group of workers then attacked the activists, with three receiving severe injuries, according to Ageyev.

One forest defender sustained a broken jaw, another had head trauma and a third received a broken finger. The trio went to a hospital, then to a police station to file a complaint, Ageyev said.

The fight took place after environmental activists blocked the path of a truck, Moscow region police spokesman Yevgeny Gildeyev told Interfax, citing construction workers involved in the

incident. Police are investigating what happened.

Meanwhile, the construction company is preparing a lawsuit against the activists for preventing lawful activity of the firm leading to financial losses, Gildeyev said.

Environmental activists, led in part by opposition leader Yevgenia Chirikova, have waged a battle against construction projects in the Kimki Forest since 2007. The activists' biggest effort, opposing the building of part of a Moscow–St. Petersburg highway, led to a confrontation with authorities in 2010, when then-President Dmitry Medvedev temporarily postponed the project. It was later modified to decrease the amount of forest that was cut down.

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