

Russia Restarts Talks Over Sailors Held in Nigeria

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian sailors under arrest on weapons charges in Nigeria were in good spirits Monday as negotiations for their release resumed following the celebration of Eid al-Adha.

The crew of 15 remained detained on their vessel after negotiations were postponed for the Muslim holiday this weekend, an unidentified official with the ship's owner, Moran Security Group, told Interfax.

But the 15 sailors are feeling well. "We have food and water, and the Nigerian security forces are treating us well," one sailor said by telephone, Interfax reported.

The Nigerian Army seized the vessel in the port of Lagos on Oct. 19 on suspicion of arms smuggling after finding 14 AK-47 rifles and about 8,500 rounds of ammunition on board without the necessary documentation.

Moran, a Moscow–based security group, has denied the accusation, saying that although there were weapons and ammunition on board, Nigerian authorities had been notified of the Dutch–flagged ship entering the port.

The Foreign Ministry stressed in a statement on Oct. 24 that the weapons were properly registered and were necessary for the ship's normal operations.

"The vessel, which visited Nigeria to conduct repairs, replenish stocks, and relieve the crew, was temporarily detained by Nigerian authorities for inspection, because it had a certain amount of firearms and ammunition on board," the ministry said.

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