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Evacuation of North Pole Station to Cost $2M

By The Moscow Times

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The government will consider allocating 65.6 million rubles (over $2 million) from the budget to cover expenses caused by an urgent evacuation of a drifting polar research station, the government's press service said in a statement.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Sergei Donskoi ordered in late May preparation of an urgent evacuation plan for the North Pole 40 (SP-40), due to the break-up of the ice floe it is located on.

The Yamal nuclear icebreaker was dispatched from the port of Murmansk on its rescue mission on June 1 and reached the station on June 10.

Some members of the evacuated mission will be landed at Baranov Cape on Bolshevik Island, off the north coast of Russia, to allow the researchers continue their work safely.

Finding a suitable ice floe for the stations is becoming harder every year due to global climate change. The coverage of ice in the Arctic in summer 2012 had declined by nearly 50 percent since the start of satellite tracking in the late 1970s, according to BarentsObserver.com, a Norway-run news service.

This is not the first time that Russia, which opened its first Arctic station (SP-1) in 1937, has made an early evacuation in the Arctic. In late April 2012, the previous research station, SP-39, was moved to another ice floe because its original one was breaking up, and in May 2010, the Rossiya nuclear-powered icebreaker evacuated floating station SP-37.

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