

Greenpeace Activists Jailed Amid Probe

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A policeman removing the handcuffs from activist Roman Dolgov, who protested near an oil platform last week. **Efrem Lukatsky**

MURMANSK — A Russian court on Thursday jailed the U.S. captain of a Greenpeace ship along with a photographer and several activists who were part of a 30-member team protesting near an oil platform in the Arctic last week.

The Russian Coast Guard disrupted an attempt by the activists on Sept. 18 to scale the Russian Arctic platform. Russian authorities seized Greenpeace's ship, the Arctic Sunrise, the next day and towed it with the 30 activists aboard to Murmansk.

No charges have been brought against any of the activists, and several activists' cases are still being considered by the court. Judges have been deciding whether to jail each activist pending the investigation. Russian authorities are looking into whether they could be charged with piracy, among other offenses.

The court on Thursday denied bail and sanctioned a two-month jail term for Russian

photographer Denis Sinyakov and Greenpeace spokesman Roman Dolgov, also from Russia.

It handed out similar terms to the ship captain, Pete Willcox of the United States; Canadian crew member Paul Douglas Ruzycki; boat mechanic Jonathon Beauchamp of New Zealand; Francesco Pisanu of France and Gizhem Akhan of Turkey. Some other activists were jailed only for three days pending the probe.

Russia's Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin said some of those jailed could be released before two months are up as investigators clarify what roles they played in the protest.

Although Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday the activists aren't pirates, he defended their detention.

The detained activists are from 18 countries, including Russia, and a long detention or trials could draw unwelcome international attention to Russia's tough policy against protests.

Greenpeace's executive director, Kumi Naidoo, said in an e-mailed statement that "the Russian authorities are trying to scare people who stand up to the oil industry in the Arctic, but this blatant intimidation will not succeed."

The platform, which belongs to an oil subsidiary of the state gas company Gazprom, is the first offshore rig in the Arctic. It was deployed to the vast Prirazlomnoye oil field in the Pechora Sea in 2011, but its launch has been delayed by technological challenges. Gazprom said earlier this month it was to start pumping oil this year, but no precise date has been set.

The Arctic Sunrise sails under the Dutch flag. The Netherlands has asked Russia to release the ship and its crew immediately, explain the legal basis for its actions and any charges against the activists.

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