

Detained Greenpeace Activists Charged with Piracy

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Arctic Sunrise entering the Northern Sea Route off Russia's coastline to protest against Arctic oil drilling. **Will Rose**

Five Greenpeace activists detained while protesting Arctic drilling last month have been charged with piracy.

Ria Novosti reported Wednesday that five members of the "Arctic 30" had been charged with committing piracy as part of an organized group, an offense that carries up to 15 years in prison. One of the accused environmental activists is a Russian citizen.

The crew of the "Arctic Sunrise", comprised of 28 activists, a photographer and a videographer, was detained in September while protesting oil drilling off Russia's northern coast. After the protesters attempted to board a Gazprom oil rig using climbing equipment and hang up a banner, their ship was seized by Russian special forces and taken to Murmansk, where the entire crew is still being held.

The activists' lawyer Irina Isakova said that the piracy charges were "unfounded and unproven," adding that evidence against the activists had been collected unlawfully and that many of the detentions took place without legal representation.

Weighing in on the matter last week, President Vladimir Putin said the protesters broke Russian law but added "it is evident that these people are not pirates."

However, on Monday the Investigative Committee said the activists had posed a "real threat" to the members of the Gazprom drilling platform when they violated the 500-meter security zone around the rig, The Associated Press reported.

Greenpeace said that the perimeter was only crossed by inflatable boats, which pose no security threat.

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