

Kremlin Human Rights Council Backs Release of Greenpeace Activists

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Kremlin's human rights council has appealed to investigators to release from pretrial detention the 30 people arrested during a Greenpeace protest against oil drilling in the Arctic.

The panel has written a letter to Investigative Committee chief Alexander Bastyrkin, asking him to consider releasing the 28 Greenpeace activists and two journalists until trial, said Mikhail Fedotov, head of the presidential human rights council. The letter was to be mailed on Friday, Interfax reported.

Russian prosecutors on Thursday brought the additional charge of resisting arrest against several of the protesters, on top of the hooliganism charges they face for sailing to a Gazprom oil platform and attempting to place a Greenpeace banner on it.

The activists' Dutch-flagged Greenpeace ship, the Arctic Sunrise, remains docked in the Arctic port of Murmansk, as the Netherlands demands its release, and that of the crew, through

the Hamburg-based International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

Russia failed to show up for a hearing this week, saying it didn't recognize the tribunal's authority, and accused the Dutch authorities of failing to block the Greenpeace protest.

"Russia has counterclaims against the Netherlands over this incident," Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said. "This situation to a large degree has been caused by the inaction of the Netherlands as a state, when it was well known that the ship intentionally entered the Russian economic zone to commit premeditated illegal actions."

The fate of the ship will be decided by a Russian court, Lukashevich said.

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