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Greenpeace Activists Seeking Exit Visas

By The Moscow Times

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Twenty-six of the “Arctic 30” posing in St. Petersburg. The four not pictured: Francesco Pisanu of France, Tomasz Dziemianczuk of Poland, and Yekaterina Zaspa and Andrei Allakhverdov of Russia.

Environmental campaign group Greenpeace said Wednesday it was seeking to obtain documents allowing its foreign activists being prosecuted by the Russian authorities to return home to their families for Christmas.

Twenty-six of the 30-member international crew of the icebreaker Arctic Sunrise, detained by Russian border guards in the Arctic in September and bailed last month, plan to leave the country pending trial as soon as they receive the proper permits, the organization said.

"They were not planning to come to Russia, so they do not have any visas," Mikhail Kreindlin, a representative of Greenpeace Russia, said Wednesday.

The activists have been registered by the Federal Migration Service at a St. Petersburg hotel where they are staying. They have their passports but no documents that would allow them to cross the Russian border, Kreindlin said.

The 28 activists and two journalists were arrested last month after some of them attempted to scale the Prirazlomnaya oil platform, owned by an affiliate of state-owned energy giant Gazprom, in protest at offshore drilling in the environmentally sensitive Arctic.

They face a maximum sentence of seven years in jail in convicted.

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