Dutch Police Blocks Greenpeace Protest Against Arctic Oil

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A Dutch police boat passes the Greenpeace ship, the Rainbow Warrior, as it tries to prevent the Russian oil tanker Mikhail Ulyanov from entering the harbour of Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Dutch police stormed a Greenpeace ship on Thursday to prevent environmental activists blocking delivery of the first oil from Russia's new Arctic drilling platform reaching port in Rotterdam.

The Rainbow Warrior was crewed by the activists who were detained last year by Russia in the Arctic, the campaign group said. Greenpeace is opposed to drilling in the Arctic Sea which it says risks causing a catastrophe in a fragile ecosystem.

Police said the activists had reneged on an agreement they had made with harbor authorities not to interfere physically with the ship during their protest.

"The Russian ship is very big, about 250 metres long, and there are safety concerns when you try and stop it mooring," Rotterdam police spokesman Roland Ekkers said.

He said the activists had been detained in a room on the Rainbow Warrior until it docked, and the captain was arrested. The oil-tanker, the Mikhail Ulyanov, was able to enter the harbor unhindered, Eckers added.

"Arctic oil represents a dangerous new form of dependence on Russia's state-owned energy giants at the very moment when we should be breaking free of their influence," Greenpeace executive director Kumi Naidoo said in a statement.

Tensions between Russia and Ukraine have prompted many analysts to warn that Europe is over-dependent on Russian gas, with some saying that the continent's reliance on Russia for energy makes it too costly to impose sanctions on the country.

"Thirty of us went to prison for shining a light on this dangerous Arctic oil," Dutch activist Faiza Oulahsen said in the Greenpeace statement.

The Russian vessel, which had come from the port of Murmansk, according to Thomson Reuters data, was carrying some 70,000 tonnes of oil from Gazprom's Prirazlomanaya oil platform in the Arctic Pechora Sea. The platform was briefly occupied by Greenpeace activists last year.

They were arrested by Russian military forces and charged with piracy, carrying a potential prison term of decades, but released under an amnesty initiated by President Vladimir Putin.

See also:
[Greenpeace Activists Jailed Amid Probe](#)