The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Dutch Police Arrest 30 Greenpeace Activists for Scaling Gazprom Rig

By Allison Quinn

May 27, 2014



Activists hang a protest banner from the Gazprom oil rig on Tuesday.

Police in the Netherlands on Tuesday detained 30 Greenpeace activists for blocking an oil rig owned by Russian energy giant Gazprom to stop it from reaching the Arctic shelf, Interfax reported.

Divers on Monday immobilized the platform in the Dutch port of IJmuiden by tying chains around it while other activists unfurled a banner reading "Save the Arctic," from the top of the rig.

The rig was scheduled to be towed to Rotterdam on Tuesday for later transportation to the Pechora Sea, close to the Prirazlomnaya oil rig where dozens of the environmental group's activists were held in detention by Russia late last year after a similar protest.

"One oil rig in the vulnerable Arctic region is already one too much, but a second is lunacy,"

Greenpeace said on its Dutch website.

Vladimir Chuprov, head of the energy program at Greenpeace Russia, said the protest was staged to call attention to the "numerous legal violations" being committed by Gazprom in its drilling of the Arctic shelf.

"The GSP Saturn platform has never before conducted drilling in the northern sea, and its characteristics do not allow it to safely work in the extreme conditions of the Arctic," Chuprov said in a statement on the Greenpeace website.

Chuprov warned that this could lead to a catastrophe, citing as an example the Kolskaya drilling rig collapse of 2011, which claimed more than 50 lives. The Kolskaya capsized off Russia's far eastern island of Sakhalin during exploration work.

But the group hasn't limited itself to Gazprom: activists also blocked a rig contracted by Statoil in the Norwegian part of the Barents Sea on Tuesday morning.

Chuprov said in comments on the Greenpeace website that "such actions are the only way for Greenpeace to get the point across that drilling on the Arctic shelf is dangerous and economically senseless."

An international group of 28 Greenpeace activists and two other people on board the environmental organization's Arctic Sunrise icebreaker were detained by Russian border guards last September after attempting to stage a protest at Gazprom's Prirazlomnaya rig. They were charged with hooliganism and kept in custody for several weeks before being released on bail and eventually cleared of the charges by a presidential amnesty in December.

See also:

Dutch Police Blocks Greenpeace Protest Against Arctic Oil

Contact the author at a.quinn@imedia.ru

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/05/27/dutch-police-arrest-30-greenpeace-activists-for-scaling-gazprom-rig-a35850