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Russia Releases Greenpeace's Arctic Sunrise Ship

By The Moscow Times

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Greenpeace activists had staged a similar stunt in 2012, but that protest had no legal repercussions.

The Investigative Committee has released the Greenpeace icebreaker seized last year for picketing a Russian oil drilling platform in the Arctic, the environmental group said Friday.

But the Arctic Sunrise is missing navigational equipment and needs maintenance it was denied for seven months before it can sail, a Greenpeace representative told The Moscow Times.

The case has not been closed, and investigators are still examining the seized equipment, Greenpeace said in a press release, citing unspecified Investigative Committee representatives.

The committee had not commented on the report as of this article's publication.

Russian border guards seized the Arctic Sunrise along with all its crew at gunpoint last September after some of the activists on board tried to scale an offshore oil rig owned by the state-run Gazprom.

Greenpeace opposes all plans to drill for oil in the Arctic, saying it is a danger to the region's fragile ecosystem.

All 30 people on board the Arctic Sunrise, including two journalists, were taken into custody and charged with piracy and later hooliganism, which carry lengthy prison sentences in Russia.

Greenpeace activists had staged a similar stunt in 2012, but that protest had no legal repercussions.

The 30 suspects were released after two months in detention following an amnesty, but were never acquitted.

The Arctic Sunrise, which sails under a Dutch flag, remained in Russian custody in the northern port of Murmansk after the crew's release, despite the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea ordering Russia in November to release it.

Russia said it rejected the authority of the tribunal. A separate appeal was thrown out by a Russian court in March.

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