The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Train Operators Who Allegedly Crashed Into Bear 'Just Wanted to Scare It'

By Allison Quinn

December 08, 2014



The men, who were employed by Norilsk Nickel, which owns the railway tracks, now face up to two years in prison if found guilty of animal cruelty.

Men accused of intentionally crashing the train they were driving into a bear last week in Krasnoyarsk told prosecutors that they only "wanted to scare" the animal, not to do it any harm, a news report said Monday.

Prosecutors opened an inquiry into the incident last week after video footage went viral showing a large brown bear rushing along the train tracks before being hit by the approaching train, as the driver and colleagues aboard jeered.

The railway workers "explained that they couldn't beep the horn because the corresponding button wouldn't work, so they decided to scare the bear, but they didn't mean it any harm," Oksana Gorbunova, the aide to the regional prosecutor, was cited as saying by Interfax on Monday.

The men, who were employed by Norilsk Nickel, which owns the railway tracks, now face up to two years in prison if found guilty of animal cruelty. The 30-year-old train driver — who shot the video clip later uploaded to YouTube — has already been questioned by police.

The bear is believed to have survived the collision. Residents in the area reported seeing the bear alive afterward, and no body has been recovered from the tracks, Interfax reported.

A spokesman for Norilsk Nickel said the company was conducting its own investigation into the incident.

"If it is confirmed that our employees are responsible for what happened, the company will take the harshest disciplinary measures against them. We are certain that the actions of these people will receive a corresponding assessment from law enforcement officials," the spokesman was cited by Interfax as saying.

"I would like to note that the attitude toward the animal in the video is not characteristic of the company Norilsk Nickel, and it cannot evoke anything but indignation," the spokesman said.

Contact the author at a.quinn@imedia.ru

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/12/08/train-operators-who-allegedly-crashed-into-bear-just-wanted-to-scare-it-a42091