

Thousands of Workers Stuck On Remote Arctic Construction Sites

By [The Barents Observer](#)

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Few flights are currently operating from the remote industrial centers of the Arctic. minenergo.gov.ru

Russian companies argue that work must go on, as they isolate several large industrial sites in the Arctic. The result is that many thousands of workers are stranded on site, unable to get back to their homes in the central parts of the country.

Among the construction sites that have now been closed to the outside world is the Belokamenka project outside Murmansk. Up to 9,000 workers are reported to be isolated on site by project developer Novatek in a measure aimed at limiting the spread of the coronavirus among workers.

According to [MMK.News](#), entry and exit to the construction site can now be made only with special permission, and shift workers coming to the area are placed in quarantine in adjacent facilities for ten days.

The workers, most of them from other Russian regions, will work on site for up to two months before they are replaced by new people.

The new regulations have been imposed by regional authorities in Murmansk, MMK reports.

Until recently, a large number of Chinese workers were employed in the project. However, most of them were sent back to China early in the year, Governor Andrey Chibis told [SeverPost](#).

The Belokamenka project includes the building of a plant for construction of LNG production platforms. Time limits are short and the plant is getting the first platform ready for operations in the Gulf of Ob by 2022.

Similar isolation of industrial sites is occurring in other parts of the Arctic. In Sabetta, the industrial hub of the Yamal Peninsula, more than 20,000 people are stuck as flight connections have been halted.

Judging from flight information and [the local airport](#), there are no longer any regular commercial flights to and from the remote company town. On social media, locals express great frustration that they can not make it off the desolate Arctic peninsula.

Regional Governor Dmitry Artyukhov confirms that a number of precautionary measures are being taken against the coronavirus. Among them is the prolongation of the current work shifts for people working in the regional petroleum projects, [newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta reports](#).

People in Gazprom Neft's Novy Port oil project are being told to extend their work stays in the remote Yamal tundra. [According to the company](#), all work stays in remote field sites are being extended to 60 days. All flights to the area have been cancelled, news site [muksun.fm](#) reports. The Novy Port is among the biggest oil fields in the Russian Arctic. In 2019, the field delivered 7.7 million tons of oil, according to [Gazprom Neft](#).

The workers in Russia's remote Arctic oil and gas projects come from all over the country and are flown in and out of the region on commuter basis. The remote energy fields are of crucial importance to Russia, and provide a key share of export revenues.

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