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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

IKEA Used Illegal Russian Wood in Furniture, Campaigners Say

NGO says Swedish firm sourced Siberian pine from company in break with environmental and forestry laws.

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The Swedish manufacturer is in hot water over alleged use of illegally-sourced wood from Russia.
Ikea.com

Campaigners have accused Swedish furniture giant IKEA of using illegal Russian wood in a range of their products in a report published Thursday.

After a yearlong investigation into IKEA's use of Russian wood, environmental NGO Earthsight claimed the retailer "sourced pine from a group of companies guilty of illegally logging some 4 million trees in the climate-critical forests of Siberia over the past decade."

Earthsight said it was "beyond reasonable doubt that illegal wood has entered IKEA's supply chain" as a result, with manufacturers in Indonesia, China and Russia having used the "suspect Siberian pine" to manufacture a range of children's products sold in IKEA stores

across Europe and the U.S.

The allegations refer to IKEA supplier ExportLes, a timber company based in Siberia and controlled by Irkutsk region politician Yevgeny Bakurov. Investigations by Russian authorities, as well as Earthsight, have uncovered a number of breaches in environmental and forestry laws by Bakurov's companies, including illegal logging in protected forests.

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IKEA denied wrongdoing and said it cut ties with Bakurov once the discrepancies came to light.

"Under no circumstances does Ikea accept illegally logged wood," IKEA said in a statement sent to The Moscow Times.

The Swedish furniture manufacturer acknowledged it had historically sourced wood from "companies affiliated with Bakurov," but said the supplies had been "formally authorized by the Russian forestry authorities" and were purchased "following correct legal procedures."

It added that it had stopped working with a number of companies linked to Bakurov in March 2021 based on the results of investigations by Russian authorities into wrongdoing surrounding the logging permits issued to ExportLes which authorized the felling of trees.

Russia is IKEA's second-largest source of wood, with the equivalent of around 1 million Russian trees being used to make IKEA furniture every year.

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