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Chinese Workers Protest Unpaid Wages in Russia's Far East

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Chinese workers building a fuel-making unit at a Rosneft refinery in Far East Russia's Khabarovsk region took to the streets on Sunday to protest unpaid wages, regional authorities said Monday.

At least 200 employees of the Russian-Chinese contractor Petro-Hehua marched through the city of Komsomolsk-na-Amure demanding back payments and help from both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin.

In a statement, the regional government said the Rosneft subsidiary, Komsomolsk Refinery, and the mayor's office had "established contact" with the protesting workers and promised to "provide assistance." It claimed Komsomolsk Refinery had paid Petro-Hehua, a subsidiary of China's Haihua Industry Group, in full and did not owe wages to its personnel.

Regional prosecutors said Sunday their office was investigating compliance with Russia's labor laws in connection with the reports of unpaid wages, promising "response measures" if

the allegations turned out to be true.

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A senior regional official claimed the Chinese workers demanded the reinstatement of Rosneft's contract with Petro-Hehua, which was reportedly terminated over "poor quality and delays."

The workers were promised help with returning to China, the Khabarovsk region's minister of interior affairs and information policy Sergei Dmitriyev told the news outlet Podyom.

Dmitriyev said that Petro-Hehua's chief executive, who should "initiate" the repatriation of the workers, was abroad and had not yet met with the protesting employees.

Russia's Foreign Ministry and China's consulate in Khabarovsk were also reportedly involved in an attempt to resolve the conflict.

Meanwhile, the workers reportedly renewed their protests on Monday, with anti-riot police and National Guard troops deployed to block roads near the refinery.

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