

Norway Seizes Russian Ship to Enforce \$4.2Bln Claim by Ukraine's Naftogaz

By [Reuters](#)

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The Professor Molchanov. **Naftogaz**

Norway has seized a Russian ship in the Arctic to enforce a \$4.2 billion compensation claim won by Ukrainian energy firm Naftogaz over Moscow's seizure of its assets following the 2014 annexation of Crimea, officials said late on Wednesday.

The vessel, the Professor Molchanov, was seized off the Norwegian Arctic archipelago of Svalbard after a 24-hour standoff with the Norwegian Coast Guard, according to Covington, the U.S. law firm representing Naftogaz.

Russian state news agency TASS quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesperson as saying the seizure of the ship amounts to an act of "piracy."

Naftogaz has been pursuing legal action against Russia since 2016 to seek compensation for the expropriation of its property in Crimea.

A tribunal in The Hague in April 2023 ordered Russia to pay Naftogaz \$4.2 billion plus interest and legal costs.

"Russia cannot evade responsibility simply by refusing to comply with an international arbitral award," Naftogaz Acting CEO Sergii Fedorenko said.

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Covington, the law firm, said it had been tracking the Professor Molchanov, a Russian-owned vessel that is used for commercial cruises, for months.

Anticipating the ship's arrival in Svalbard en route to Barentsburg, a Russian mining settlement, Naftogaz's lawyers applied to a Norwegian court for the vessel to be arrested there and subject to a compulsory sale.

The application was approved by the Nord-Troms and Senja District Court on Monday. In its ruling, it required the governor of Svalbard to enforce the order, supervise the vessel and ensure that it is not moved.

The governor's office issued a statement confirming that the ship had been seized and would be held on Svalbard.

Naftogaz has said it is coordinating enforcement measures across multiple jurisdictions, including the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Finland, where Russian assets have been frozen. Russia is appealing the process, saying no notice was given.

"We will continue to pursue Russian assets around the world until the compensation awarded to Naftogaz and other Naftogaz Group companies is paid," the Ukrainian company said.

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