



PSA-006-Russian Arctic Oil Tanker-Holland

How do we save coral reefs?

Vic Ferguson

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Dutch arrest 44 Greenpeace activists blocking Russian Arctic oil tanker

Activists including members of 'Arctic 30' detained as they try to stop
Gazprom ship delivering oil to Rotterdam

- [John Vidal](#)
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Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior along with inflatables and paragliders surround Russian oil tanker Mikhail Ulyanov to protest against first shipment of Arctic oil in Rotterdam. **To see a larger version of this photograph, [click here](#).** Photograph: Ruben

Neugebauer/Greenpeace

The very different reactions of European countries to Greenpeace protests was seen on Thursday when 10 Dutch armed anti-terror police boarded the environment group's flagship outside Rotterdam port and arrested 44 activists trying to stop a Russian tanker from unloading its shipment of Arctic oil.

Although the activists were taken to several Rotterdam police stations and the Rainbow Warrior towed ashore, the ship and most of the protesters were released without charge within a few hours. This represented a stark contrast to September 2013, when 20 armed Russian navy commandos [boarded the group's Arctic Sunrise icebreaker](#), towed it 200 miles to Murmansk and jailed the crew of 28 environmental activists and two freelance journalists for more than two months on [charges of piracy and then hooliganism](#).

Greenpeace activists, who used paragliders, climbers, a fleet of boats and inflatables in Rotterdam, said the action was a serious attempt to prevent the Gazprom tanker Mikhail Ulyanov from entering



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the port and was not stage-managed, despite a boatload of journalists being present and the port given advance warning of a protest.



Police on board

Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior ship. Photograph: Chris Grodotzki/Greenpeace

"It tells us more about how the authorities deal with dissent in Holland compared to Russia. We had every intention of stopping the oil being offloaded. The intention was just as serious as it was in Russia last September," said Ben Ayliffe, Greenpeace International Arctic campaigner.

Seven of the "Arctic 30" were part of the Rotterdam protest, including the captain Peter Willcox.

"Thirty of us went to prison for shining a light on this dangerous Arctic oil, and we refuse to be intimidated. This tanker is the first sign of a reckless new push to exploit the Arctic, a place of incredible beauty which is melting before our eyes. I stand with 5 million others against those who put short-term profit above the common interests of humanity," said Faiza Oulahsen from the Netherlands, who took part in both protests.

The group is calling for an end to offshore Arctic oil drilling both in Russia and elsewhere in the world. The environmental group has heavily criticised international companies like Shell, BP and Statoil for their global Arctic ambitions as well as their joint ventures with Russian energy firms.

Greenpeace International executive director, Kumi Naidoo, said: "It's increasingly clear that our reliance on oil and gas is a major threat not just to the environment, but to global security. Arctic oil represents a dangerous new form of dependence on Russia's state-owned energy giants at the very moment when we should be breaking free of their influence. We cannot hope for any kind of ethical foreign policy while our governments remain hopelessly dependent on companies like BP, Shell and Gazprom."

Last night the Mikhail Ulyanov was docked and preparing to offload its oil.



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Russia is still holding the Arctic Sunrise in Murmansk.

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