

Khimki Forest Workers Drill

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The  **Moscow Times**

Construction-related work in the Khimki forest proceeded Monday despite an order by President Dmitry Medvedev to suspend all activity, environmentalists claimed, Interfax reported.

A drilling machine was collecting soil samples in the forest, environmental activist Yaroslav Nikitenko told Russian News Service radio.

He said the workers claimed to have a permit from the Khimki town administration but they refused to say what organization they belonged to.

A police officer was present at the scene but did not intervene until pressured to do so by environmentalists, Nikitenko said.

The Khimki forest is slated for partial demolition to make way for an \$8 billion highway. Public outrage caused by the project prompted Medvedev on Thursday to order a review of the construction plans. Public hearings are expected to start this week. ❏

(MT)

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