

# Prosecutors Get 6 Arctic Sea Cases

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**The**  **Moscow Times**

Investigations into six suspected hijackers of the Arctic Sea freighter have been completed and sent to the Prosecutor General's Office, the Investigative Committee said Wednesday.

In a [statement](#) on its web site, the Investigative Committee identified the six as Alexei Andryushin, Dmitry Bartenev, Igor Borisov, Alexei Bulev, Vitaly Lepins and Yevgeny Mironov. It did not give their citizenship.

The men are accused of piracy and face a maximum of 15 years in prison if convicted. They have denied wrongdoing, claiming to be environmentalists abducted by the ship's crew.

Earlier media reports have said Lepins is an ethnic Russian from Latvia while the rest hail from Estonia.

The freighter carrying a cargo of timber from Kaliningrad to West Africa mysteriously disappeared in July 2009 off the coast of Sweden and was rediscovered and boarded by the Russian Navy off Cape Verde a month later.

Russian officials say the ship was hijacked by a motley group of eight ethnic Russians: four

Latvians, two Estonians and two Russian citizens.

Two of the eight have pleaded guilty. In June, their purported leader, Latvian citizen Dmitry Savins, was given seven years in prison. Another hijacker, Estonian resident Andrei Lunev, was sentenced to five years in May.

Earlier this month, the Investigative Committee sent the case of a suspected ninth member of the group, Sergei Demchenko, to court.

Demchenko, who went to school with Savins, is accused of helping train the hijackers in Estonia.

The ship saga has prompted speculation that the timber freighter might have carried a secret cargo, possibly missiles for Iran or drugs.

Savins told a Moscow court in June that former Estonian intelligence official Eerik Kross had paid him to orchestrate the hijack. Experts have voiced doubts about the credibility of Savins' accusation.

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