

A world map with a light blue background and green landmasses. The map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean, showing the Americas on the left and Europe and Africa on the right. The text is overlaid on the map.

Combating Illegal Logging in Russia: Case study of Primorsky Region

Alexey Morozov
Greenpeace Russia

Primorsky region: 2000

Objectives:

- Push regional and federal authorities to take some steps and not only 'be aware' of illegal logging
- G8-related political work

Primorsky region: 2000

Initial information/knowledge of NGOs:

- amount of logging and wood export
- estimates of how much is illegal
- means of illegal export
- illegal logging ‘technology’
- problem areas and wood transportation routes
- general public and government awareness of the problem especially regarding high-value tree species

Primorsky region: 2000



Official Responses

GREENPEACE
RUSSIA

7 of July 2000

Head of Nature Resource
Committee of the Primorsky
regional Administration
Mr. Stomatyuk:

“There are no problems
with illegal logging in the
region. Less than 1% of
total amount is logged
illegally...”

10 of July 2000

Primorsky nature protecting
prosecutor's office has
finished special investigation
on legality of logging
operations in the region.
As a result prosecutor's
office ordered Primorsky
regional forestry department
to suspend about 80% of
forest lease agreements and
stop all logging permissions
for these companies.

The Russian Far East

Results:

- direct request for information from the Ministry of Interior and the Federal Forest Service and the FSB (KGB)
- 4 governors of other regions stated that they will start investigations of illegal logging in their regions
- Primorsky region Prosecutor's office decision
- Primorsky regional authorities speed up the creation of special body for licensing export operations
- changes in the Federal Crime Code

Scale of illegal logging and the position of Russian authorities

GREENPEACE
RUSSIA

...A barbarian destruction of valuable tree species growing stock is what actually taking place in the region. While annual logging limit for the region remains at 260 thousand cubic meters, 930 thousand cubic meters of valuable species timber have already been licensed for export....

(From the letter signed by the Governor of the Prymorsky Krai to the head of Russian Government. Letter was dated 7 June 1999 #11-43/1704)

...On October 6 there was an ordinary session of the Inter-agency Committee for Concerted Action to Monitor Exports of Valuable Timber...

None of the submitted applications for export licenses for ash-tree and oak was approved. ..

In the six months of 2000 the Committee considered 55 applications for exports of 108,000 cubic meters of ash-tree and 104,000 cubic meters of oak, whereas authorization was given for the export of only 56,000 cubic meters of ash and 67,000 cubic meters of oak, **which implies that almost half the timber was logged illegally.**

(Extract of the article based on the official press release of the Inter-agency Committee. Published in the newspaper Zolotoy Rog, 10.10.2000, #78)