

Hello,

Please find below and attached a press release on a protest that we are planning against the arrival of Russia's polar research vessel, the **Akademik Alexander Karpinsky**, in Cape Town.

The protest will take place at the **V&A Waterfront harbour wall**, on **Thursday, 26 January at 10:00-11:00**.

Any questions, please feel free to give me a call.

Elaine Mills
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On behalf of:

- Extinction Rebellion Cape Town
- Greenpeace Cape Town Volunteers

Protest against polar explorer, Akademik Alexander Karpinsky

Who: Extinction Rebellion, Greenpeace Cape Town volunteers and concerned citizens

What: To protest the arrival in Cape Town of Russia's polar research vessel, the Akademik Alexander Karpinsky, which has been conducting seismic surveys in Antarctica's sensitive Southern Ocean in search of oil and gas for nearly 25 years.

When: Thursday, 26 January 10:00-11:00

Where: V&A Waterfront harbour wall near Cabo Beach Club. Meet on steps by Zeitz MOCCA Museum.

Protest against Akademik Alexander Karpinsky

Russia's polar research vessel, the Akademik Alexander Karpinsky, will [dock in the port of Cape Town](#), on 26 January.*

The ship employs seismic technology similar to that which oil giant Shell wanted to use to search for oil and gas off the Wild Coast, which ignited protests across South Africa.

Extinction Rebellion, Greenpeace Cape Town volunteers and concerned citizens will gather at the Waterfront to protest the Russian ship's arrival – and the fact that the port of Cape Town has served as its launch pad for more than two decades.

In the process, the ship and others like it in all likelihood have harmed Antarctica's vulnerable marine ecosystems and [inflicted sonic distress on marine species](#), including critically endangered blue whales and emperor penguins.

This constitutes a breach of the 55-nation Antarctic Treaty System (ATS), to which both Russia and

South Africa are signatories, under which resource exploration and extraction in the Antarctic region has been banned since 1998.

Marine mammals such as whales and dolphins rely on sound to navigate, communicate, feed and breed, so they are acutely sensitive to acoustic disturbance. There is substantial scientific evidence that seismic blasting can disturb essential behaviours and result in hearing loss, organ rupture and mass stranding. It also kills whales' primary food source krill, as well as plankton that forms the basis of the food chain on which all marine life depends.

But beyond seismic blasting's immediate harm to marine life lies a more sinister threat. The Kremlin has built up detailed hydrocarbon inventories that indicate the region could hold up to 500 billion barrels of oil and gas – equal to 15 years of global oil consumption.

It seems that Russia hopes to start extracting some of these oil or gas resources at some point in the medium- or long-term future. If that happens, Antarctica – and the whole world - will suffer even more devastating impacts.

The Antarctic region is already under severe climate change distress and melting at an average rate of [150 billion tonnes per year](#). West Antarctica's Thwaites Glacier is in a [phase of fast retreat](#) and a total loss of the glacier and surrounding ice could raise global sea levels from three to ten feet, with disastrous consequences for Africa, the continent most vulnerable to climate change.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has concluded that, if we are to remain below the 2°C limit and prevent catastrophic climate change, fossil fuel exploration must end.

Climate change is the defining crisis of our time and no corner of the globe is immune to its devastating consequences. The UN's secretary-general António Guterres has described continued fossil fuels exploitation as “moral and economic madness.”

As one of 29 countries - and the only African country - with decision-making powers under Antarctic Treaty System (ATS), South Africa must ensure that sanity prevails – for the sake of Africa.

- We urge the South African government to fulfil its moral duty towards its own citizens, as well as Africa and its future generations, by refusing port entry to the Akademik Alexander Karpinsky and all other vessels engaged in harmful exploration activities in the Antarctic region.
- We demand that the Akademik Alexander Karpinsky and similar vessels prove they are engaged in bona fide scientific research as defined by Antarctic treaties, and that they have neither the intention nor the technologies to prospect for fossil fuel reserves in the Antarctic region, before being allowed to transit via South Africa.
- We support [the proposal](#) that individual states and the decision-making Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties explicitly unilaterally commit now to never commence hydrocarbon extraction in Antarctica.