

Russian Factory Ship Catches Fire, Prompting Mass Evacuation

BY [THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE](#) 2019-09-24 21:31:52

The giant fish processor ship *Piotr Zhitnikov* caught fire Monday at a position off the island of Shikotan, Japan, forcing the evacuation of 363 members of her crew. 53 other crewmembers remained on board to fight the fire, according to officials at the marine rescue center in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

Early reports from state media indicated that the fire broke out in packing material in an onboard processing plant area. Helicopter evacuation was reportedly not available due to weather conditions, but the factory ship *Vsevolod Sibirtsev* was operating in the area and arrived shortly to assist. The *Sibirtsev* and other vessels helped to evacuate the crewmembers and accommodate them. About half of the evacuees will be delivered to the island of Shikotan, according to Kommersant.

"In general, they are in good condition, we are accommodating [them] in hotels, hostels, and hostels," said Oleg Mazur, local director of a fishermen's union, speaking to Vesti.

No injuries were reported, and Rosmorrechflot reported Tuesday that the remaining crew have managed to restart the ship's engines and make way towards the island of Iturup. The shipowner reported that smoldering continues.

According to the Russian Register of Shipping, the *Zhitnikov's* class has been temporarily suspended due to the casualty.