

Bergen, February 15. 2019



## Press release: Mercury pollution risk and copper mine waste pollution danger in the Barents Sea

1. German submarine U-864 risk of severe pollution of the Barents Sea.
2. Norwegian copper mining will dump 2 million tonnes waste in the sea, affecting the Barents Sea.

**Norwegian copper mining will dump 2 million tonnes waste in the sea, affecting the Barents Sea.**  
February 14. 2019 a Norwegian owned mining company, Nussir was allowed to dump 2 million tonnes waste from the copper mining in the fjord, Repparfjorden, Kvalsund Kommune, Northern Norway. This will directly affect the marine ecosystem in The Barents Sea.

**Now a meeting is soon coming up between Norway Eco and Climate Minister Ola Elvestuen and Russian representative Dmitrij Kobylkin.**

**The meeting takes place in Moskva 19.february 2019.**

**We want the press to ask the minister for climate and environment in Norway Ola Elvestuen why Norway choose to amongst the worst marine polluters in the world by allowing the 67 tonnes of Mercury to be covered under sand, with risk of spreading in the marine environment, and why Norway allows 2 million tonnes of waste from copper mining to be dumped in Repparfjord, sea waters connected to the Barents Sea.**

### Background information:

#### 1. Acute pollution hazard of mercury in the Barents Sea from 67 tonnes of Mercury in the North Sea.

The Norwegian Environmental Protection Association / NMF / Green Warriors of Norway (NGO) The environmental organization expresses great skepticism to the Norwegian Government's plans to cover a German submarine wreck from 1945 on the seabed. *The submarine had a load of 67 tonnes of mercury and probably 2 tonnes of uranium oxide.*

NMF wants the Russian authorities to ask the Norwegian Government to stop the cover, and that Russia will have access to the wreck area with Russian expertise on mercury-contaminated sediments in salt water. Norway Coastal Administration (operating the U-864 issue), lacks competence in Methylation in salt water and refuses to invite specialists in Mercury from the University of Bergen.

The wreck area consists of 30,000 m2 of contaminated sediment and two wreck parts located approx. 4 km west of a small island community Fedje. The Norwegian Government plans to cover wrecks and seabed with sand and stone to prevent leakage from the mercury which is partly stored in the submarine's keel, and partly located in steel bottles down in the sediment. Norway bases its decision on coverage on research from the University of Austin-Texas, America.

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NMF will demonstrate that the research is not relevant, as it is based on empirical data from fresh water. **We know that the formation of toxic methylmercury occurs much faster in saline than in fresh water.**

The estimate by Dr. Reibel at the Texas University states that it will take 3400 years before the mercury travels through a layer of sand of 1 meter and that it will leak only 0.3 g per liter. years from the 67 tonnes of Mercury. **The Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA) admits in a report that has been kept secret since 2006 until December 2018 that the calculation 3400 years was a calculation error. The calculation does not take into account the leaching of the cover from strong subsea currents where the wreck lies.** This means that the mercury will leak out much more quickly and form mercury chloride in the salt water, which is easily water-soluble. The Mertyl mercury is then seen in the marine environment, and is a dangerous nerve poison that binds to the fat in organisms and can cause serious brain damage at higher levels in the food chain, such as humans.

**A cover can also cause collapse of the hull under sand and rock, and can ignite TNT and other explosives located in the wreck. An explosion will give an instantaneous and acute blow-out and spread of mercury, which will follow the ocean currents northwards and be able to reach the Barents Sea in 12-14 days.**

A cover will also crack due to earthquakes, and lately scientists have shown that the latest strong earthquakes outside the Norwegian coast are of much more recent date than previously assumed.

Norway's choice of method to ensure mercury is very primitive, and there are far better technology that can give a good result for the environment. Now it seems that the Norwegian Coastal Administration already have chosen a method to take out some few mercury bottles from the wreck, and let the rest, several tonnes of Mercury remain in the sea bed covered under sand.

**THE RISK OF COLLAPSE OF THE HULL AND EXPULSION FROM THE AMMUNITION IS STILL A POSSIBLE SCENARIO.**

**Green Warriors state that this cover operation is considered as environmental crime, and extremely irresponsible of the Norwegian Government.**

**We therefor ask that the Russian authorities ask Norways Prime Minister Erna Solberg to stop preparations for covering U-864, and that a solution where wrecks and mercury are taken out of the marine environment and taken care of in a responsible manner for future generations.**

## **2. Norway allows dumping of copper waste in the sea, connected to the Barents Sea.**

Green Warriors of Norway (NMF) looking with disbelief at the government's decision to allow Nussir to be allowed to start up with copper recovery in Kvalsund Municipality. Mining Lamb will be dumped directly into the national salmon fjord Repparfjorden during mining.

To see this in a perspective corresponding to the dumping of 2 million tonnes of mining waste in the bay every year that 17 truckloads of stone, gravel and fine grained copper-containing dust is dumped into the bay every hour in the next 20 years.

**Mining sludge contains heavy metals such as copper, nickel and chromium which are considered highly toxic to life in the fjord.** Mining Lamb will directly kill all life in bottomfauna in the landfill area, but the fine-grained masses containing heavy metals could also spread to the rest of the fjord, and slowly but surely killing most of his life in the bay. The fjord is in addition to being a protected national salmon also spawn area for cod.

NMF believes that the Norwegian government once again shows its true face where money always fronts environment and biodiversity. Norway as a (former) world famous scenery nation within a few years become an enemy of the environment in line with the country we possibly do not like to compare ourselves with. NMF believes that such environmentally damaging decisions that this simply is a shame for the country.

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NMF can add that at a meeting in Hawaii organized by the World Wildlife Union in 2016 voted 53 countries welcomed that mine tailings from mining should be dumped in the sea. Only Norway and Turkey voted to allow the dumping of mining waste in the sea. Again proof that Norway is about to come in the company of nations previously criticized strongly against their environmental policies.

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Best, Regards



Kurt Oddekalv  
President Norges Miljøvernforbund /Green Warriors of Norwar

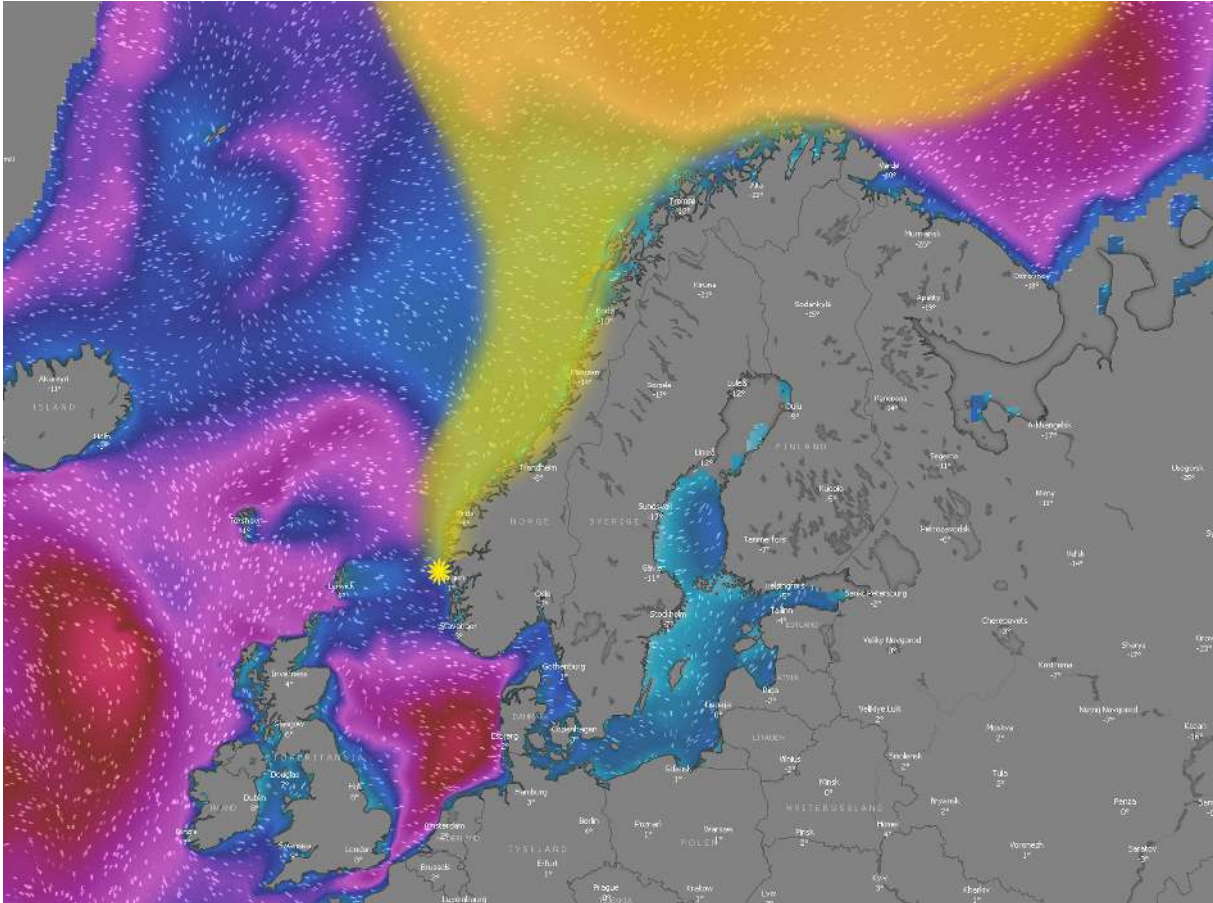
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*Mercury pollution scenario at an explosion of the torpedoes in the sunken German WWII submarine U-864 outside the West Coast of Norway in the North Sea. Can reach Barents Sea in 12-14 days.*