



# ISAR IN FOCUS

Initiative for Social Action and Renewal *in Eurasia*

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## ISAR Spins off New Organization to Protect the Caspian

ISAR is proud to announce the January 2003 spin-off of ISAR's Caspian program into a new organization, Crude Accountability. Crude Accountability, an international nonprofit based in Alexandria, VA, works with local activists and citizen groups in the Caspian Basin to protect the region's natural environment and to ensure environmental justice for communities impacted by natural resource development and extraction. ISAR's Caspian program staff members Kate Watters, Michelle Kinman, Megan Lee, Timur Berkeliev, Aleksey Knizhnikov, Enver Safarzade and Giorgi Tsintsadze (of Horizonti, the Foundation for the Third Sector in Georgia) are the founding members of Crude Accountability.

To empower residents and protect the unique, threatened ecosystems of the Caspian region, Crude Accountability provides information and technical assistance to citizens and organizations working to preserve the environment of the Caspian. Crude Accountability works with local activists to conduct public environmental monitoring and to hold accountable all those exploiting the region's natural resources, including petroleum extraction corporations.

Crude Accountability's current projects include:

- A series of workshops and the creation of community councils on public involvement in oil spill response in the Caspian Basin;
- The development of a public environmental monitoring network on the Caspian coast of Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan, and along pipeline routes in Georgia;
- A public environmental health project in oil and gas communities in western Kazakhstan.

"The creation of Crude Accountability is a natural outgrowth of the past four years of ISAR's work in the Caspian," said Kate Watters. "Without the support and encouragement of ISAR, Crude Accountability would not be able to take this next step, which enables us to work directly with local environmental activists." Crude Accountability staff in the DC area and in the Caspian region are building on the programmatic focus of ISAR's Caspian program and focusing specifically on community-level projects in the region. "We will miss having our Caspian colleagues under ISAR's roof," said Eliza Klose, ISAR's executive director, "But we wish them the best of luck in their new endeavor and look forward to working with them regularly in the future."

Contact Crude Accountability at P.O. Box 2345, Alexandria, VA 22301; tel: 703-299-0854, or visit the website at [www.crudeaccountability.org](http://www.crudeaccountability.org). Kate Watters can be reached at [katekaspri@yahoo.com](mailto:katekaspri@yahoo.com).

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## New Grants Awarded in Russia

ISAR's work in Russia has been recognized this spring with three new grants to offices in Moscow, Novosibirsk, and Vladivostok.

- The Ploughshares Fund has awarded a two-year, \$80,000 grant to ISAR-Moscow and ISAR-DC to support the continuation of regional nuclear safety seminars for NGOs. Over the next two years, four regional seminars will be held in Central and Western Siberia, the Volga/Don Region and in Northwestern Russia. Seminar participants will have the opportunity to apply for small seed grants for cooperative projects.
- The Foundation for Russian American Economic Cooperation (FRAEC) with support from USAID awarded a \$100,000 partnership grant to ISAR-DC and ISAR-RFE. This one year grant will support public participation activities along the proposed Angarsk-Primorye pipeline route, as well as a trip to Alaska for three Russian activists to meet with Alaskan NGOs and community groups.
- ISAR-Siberia received a \$12,000 grant from the Winslow Foundation in support of its environmental small grants program. The office also received a \$10,000 grant from the Russian Regional Environmental Center which will support an environmental advocacy program focused on forestry issues.

## Strengthening the role of NGOs in Environmental Decision Making in Belarus

This January ISAR-Minsk gave out 16 grants worth a total of \$40,000 to local environmental NGOs in Belarus. Selected by a board of local environmental experts from all over the country, the projects include public monitoring of environmental threats to parks, rivers and city air; roundtables with representatives of local business and government; media campaigns; public hearings and work with youth groups. The ISAR Belarus program, which is funded by the Eurasia Foundation, is the only program currently providing small grants to environmental activists in Belarus.

### ISAR in Focus

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