

## Call To Keep Nuke Ships Out

Written by Rudi Prinsloo  
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An anti-nuclear group has urged the South African government to make sure that two vessels carrying what is reportedly the biggest ever shipment of plutonium stay out of its waters.

"What we don't want is an accident at sea where we as a country have to carry the consequences," said Mike Kantey, chairman of the Coalition Against Nuclear Energy, on Tuesday.

The heavily armed Pacific Pintail and the Pacific Heron left Barrow-in-Furness in the north-west of England last week.

They will collect their freight -- a load of MOX nuclear fuel containing what environmentalists say are 1800 kg of plutonium -- at Cherbourg in France, then head for Japan.

The route around the Cape is one of a number of possible routes the ships -- which have been barred from the Suez Canal -- may use.

In previous years the Pintail has used the Cape route when carrying nuclear materials.

Kantey said Cane called on the government to ensure that the vessels stayed outside South Africa's 200 nautical mile economic exclusion zone.

He said South Africa did not have the capacity to deal with any accident.

"It's no good to say it will never happen. There is precedent for a nuclear cargo going down.

"It's a risk that is unacceptable to the South African people."

Freedom Front Plus Western Cape leader Corne Mulder said in a statement that the ships should not be allowed in South African waters.

His party would ask African Union head Muammar Gaddafi to see to it that no African state's territorial waters were made available to the ships.

"Africa has to protect its territorial integrity at all costs," he said.

The two ships carry an on-board armed force as a measure against hijacking.

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Head of the British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) plant in Sellafield, Lancashire, has urged the government to keep nuclear power companies out of the country's ports.