

Rainbow Warrior sunk agents

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A crew member died when French secret agents mined the Greenpeace vessel *Rainbow Warrior* in Waitematā Harbour, Auckland.

The *Rainbow Warrior* had taken part in protests against French nuclear testing in the Pacific. French Secret Service (DGSE) agents were sent to prevent it leaving for another protest campaign at Mururoa Atoll in the Tuamotu Archipelago. Two limpet mines attached to the hull of the ship created a massive hole that rendered the vessel useless. Photographer Fernando Pereira was killed when the second mine exploded while he was retrieving equipment after the first explosion.

DGSE officers Dominique Prieur and Alain Mafart were arrested while attempting to leave the country and charged with murder. After pleading guilty to manslaughter, they each received a 10-year prison sentence. Within a year, the pair were sent to French Polynesia, and from there they soon returned to France.

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The case caused the French government considerable embarrassment. While the attack was on an international organisation and not New Zealand as such, most Kiwis did not make this distinction. The fact that it was carried out on New Zealand territory by a supposedly friendly nation caused outrage and damaged relations between New Zealand and France.

Read more on NZHistory

Sinking the *Rainbow Warrior* – Nuclear-free New Zealand

New Zealand crime timeline – Crime timeline

1985 - key events – The 1980s

External links

Rainbow Warrior (Christchurch City Libraries)

The bombing of the Rainbow Warrior (Greenpeace NZ)

Rainbow Warrior sunk at dock sound file (Te Ara)

The Rainbow Warrior and Mikhail Lermontov (Te Ara)

The French in New Zealand (Te Ara)

Nuclear-free New Zealand collection (NZ On Screen)

Eyes of fire thirty years on (David Robie)

The Rainbow Warrior: 30 years on (Stuff)



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