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Russian Winner of 'Mrs. World' Actually Won Ecuadorian Pageant

By Anna Dolgov

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Yulia Ionina has been crowned the winner of "Queen of the World."

A mother-of-three from St. Petersburg who claimed to have won the “Mrs. World” beauty pageant has conceded she in fact competed in a different contest, and has proposed an alternative title by which she would now like to be known: “Queen of the World.”

But it seems this grand-sounding honorific is also not the official title that 28-year-old businesswoman Yulia Ionina won last weekend, following a little-known contest held in South America.

Ionina's spokeswoman, Olga Filatova, initially claimed Ionina had won this year's “Mrs. World” contest, an international beauty pageant for married women, news agency ITAR-Tass reported Sunday, also quoting Ionina as praising the victory,

However, according to media reports and an account posted Monday to Ionina's VKontakte

social network page, her actual victory came from a pageant called “Queen Beauty World 2014” — a contest held in Ecuador that few people seem to have heard about until this week.

None of these nuances seem to have troubled Ionina, who said on her VKontake page that it was “unacceptable” to accuse her of “fabrications.”

“My international representative at that contest said that I could officially use the Mrs World title and add that the victory was conferred in the Queen Beauty World contest that was held in Ecuador on Aug. 9,” she said.

Since that did not seem to have worked out, she went on to propose another “official” honorific.

“To avoid future misunderstandings, I ask the media from now on to officially refer to me as the Queen of the World 2014,” Ionina said. She used a Russian phrase — “Koroleva Mira” — for the newest moniker.

And if the real Mrs. World contest organizers have any objections to Ionina's “representative” authorizing the use of their pageant's name, they may have trouble pressing charges.

Mrs. World Russia coordinator Yevgeny Frolov told Komsomolskaya Pravda that his staff tried to search for the contest's website,” but “we did not find it — there is no such website.”

“I have the impression that this beauty pageant has no history. It appeared out of nowhere. It is unclear where and to whom claims can be presented,” Frolov was quoted as saying. He also called Ionina's claim a “falsification, deception.”

Ionina lashed out at the bad press that she said Russian newspapers had given her.

“I had trained for that World Beauty Contest for six months and got what I wanted — a victory for Russia!” she wrote on her VKontakte page.

The rest, according to Ionina, is in the details: “No matter what my title is called — Mrs. World, Mrs. Queen of the World, Queen of the World — none of this matters!” she said.

Earlier, she also praised her success as having brought glory for her country, saying in her initial interview with ITAR-Tass that her victory marked a "big accomplishment for myself and, in general, for participants from Russia.”

Ionina also said that ongoing tensions between Russia and the West over the Ukraine crisis had not cast a shadow over the contest and that she received a warm reception from other she got from other contestants and organizers, ITAR-Tass reported.

Russian women had won the real Mrs. World pageant twice, in 2006 and 2009, according to the contest's website.

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