The Moscow Times
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# Mrs. America Defies Politics and Brings Beauty Pageant to Crimea

By The Moscow Times

September 05, 2014




The Mrs. America beauty contest will be held in 2015 in Crimea.

While NATO on Thursday called on Russia to "end its illegal annexation of Crimea," the organizers of a U.S. beauty pageant seem unfazed about the peninsula's political status, and are planning to ship the country's most beautiful married women to Sevastopol.

Organizers of the Mrs. America beauty contest revealed Monday that they were planning to hold their 2015 pageant in the Black Sea port of Sevastopol in Crimea, which was in March annexed by Russia from Ukraine.

The contest will feature 51 married women from the U.S. as well as an equal number of married women from Russia, actress Florence Henderson, who was speaking on behalf of organizers, said in a video uploaded Monday to YouTube.

The joint Mrs. America-Mrs. Russia pageant was a Russian initiative and U.S. organizers were

approached by phone last week, Henderson said.

The contest will not be the first to take place with participants from both the U.S. and Russia. Twenty-five years ago, the then-Soviet government invited Mrs. America to hold the contest in Moscow "to help build a bridge between our two countries and our people," Henderson said in the video.

"It was a great idea then and, you know what, it's a great idea now," Henderson added.

But the location of the 2015 contest has already stirred some controversy given the ongoing tensions between the West and Russia over Ukraine.

"Has this organization go[ne] insane!? Crimea is a Ukrainian land, illegally annexed by Russia, in a move that was widely opposed by the whole world community," said one user in a YouTube comment.

"I wonder for how many rubles did the Mrs. America organizers sell their souls for. I'm sure this pageant will be great propaganda material for the state media while Russia continues with its ethnic and cultural cleansing of the peninsula. You people are disgusting," said another user on Facebook.

For the organizers of Mrs. America, the political status of Crimea and Sevastopol is not an object of dispute, however. "Mrs. America-Russia in Sevastopol, Russia," an announcement on the pageant's website reads.

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