

Cafes Named After Ukraine's Rebel-Held Areas to Open in Moscow

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The two cafes will be named after the rebel-held areas of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine.

Two cafes bearing the names of self-proclaimed rebel-held republics in eastern Ukraine — Donetsk and Luhansk — are set to open in Moscow, allowing patrons to discuss the latest politics of the war-torn region over a cup of Russian coffee.

The DNR (Donetsk People's Republic) and LNR (Luhansk People's Republic) cafes will be located on Moscow's Donetsk and Luhansk streets, respectively, the Izvestia newspaper reported Monday, citing the project's founder, who remained unidentified.

The project head, who said he fought alongside pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, estimated his initial start-up costs at about 400,000 rubles (\$10,360) per cafe and said he planned to raise the money through a crowdfunding campaign.

"It will be an accessible establishment. People will pay as much as they see fit, and the cafe will operate on this money," he was quoted as saying by Izvestia.

Anatoly Aranov, whose company First Patent Company is participating in the project as a consultant said that in addition to functioning as eateries, the cafes would also be a place for patrons to discuss politics.

"This will be the first place where you can hear the news first-hand. At the cafes, they will also show videos about the situation in the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, as well as hold meetings with representatives of the DNR and the LNR," Aranov told Izvestia.

Following the ousting of Ukraine's former President Viktor Yanukovich in February, many in Luhansk and Donetsk have refused to acknowledge Kiev's new pro-Western government and have rallied in favor of joining Russia.

Thousands have been killed in the subsequent standoff, which has seen Ukrainian government forces clash with the eastern rebels, whom the West says have been armed with Russian weapons — a charge Moscow denies.

The project head says he will use social media to promote his idea and will stage a competition to find the best logo for the cafes. If everything goes to plan, the cafes should be opening later this year, he said.

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