The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia's Kalashnikov Drops Actor Steven Seagal Over Tensions With U.S.

September 23, 2014



The actor Steven Seagal will no longer promote Kalashnikov weapons.

Russia's iconic weapons maker Kalashnikov Concern has changed its mind about having action hero Steven Seagal promote the brand, with relations between Russia and the U.S. on sharp following the crisis in Ukraine.

"At the moment we have no plans to invite Steven Seagal to be the ambassador of our brand," a Kalashnikov spokesman said, the Izvestia newspaper reported Tuesday.

Discussions between Seagal and representatives from Kalashnikov were opened in January when it was thought the American star could boost the weapons maker's image in the U.S., the company's biggest market, the report said.

Since then relations between the U.S. and Russia have steadily soured, following Moscow's annexation of Crimea in March and its perceived support of separatists in the east of Ukraine. Kalashnikov Concern has also found itself among the Russian companies blacklisted by Washington in response to the crisis in Ukraine.

Having turned its back on Seagal, Kalashnikov is now looking for new ambassadors to help it break into emerging markets, namely Asia, Africa and Latin America, the company spokesman said.

It is estimated the decision not to work with Seagal will save the weapons maker between 17-21 million rubles ($444,000-$544,000) a year, Izvestia reported, citing an analyst.

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