The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Planning Aid Convoy of Christmas Trees for Eastern Ukraine

December 05, 2014



Russian officials are discussing the possibility of sending Christmas trees in their next aid dispatch to eastern Ukraine.

With the holiday season fast approaching, Russian officials are considering including a couple of Christmas trees in their next dispatch of aid to war-torn eastern Ukraine.

"We have been thinking about how to congratulate the children [in eastern Ukraine] ... and [we thought] why not send a couple of fir trees from the hometown of Father Frost?," Deputy Emergency Situations Minister Vladimir Artamonov said, the TASS news agency reported Thursday.

Father Frost, Russia's secular equivalent of Santa Claus and a symbol of New Year celebrations, is believed to reside in the Vologda region town of Veliky Ustyug, some 750 kilometers northeast of Moscow.

Artamonov added that officials had been in talks with Vologda region authorities to obtain the holiday trees, which would be sent to Ukraine as part of a humanitarian-aid dispatch that

is currently being assembled.

The cargo, coming on the heels of the eight convoys that Russia has already sent to eastern Ukraine, will comprise primarily of essential day-to-day items, Artamonov was quoted as saying by TASS.

If Artamonov gets his way, the cargo will also contain "gifts for the children," he was quoted as saying.

Earlier this year, Kiev's municipal administration said any holiday events staged in the capital would see Father Frost replaced by Saint Mykolay — the country's Orthodox analogue of Santa Claus.

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