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Controversial Eye of Sauron for Moscow 'Hobbit' Premiere Canceled After Church Objects

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A giant 'Eye of Sauron' over Moscow City.

Design firm Svechenie has canceled a promotional stunt for the release of the second part of "The Hobbit" trilogy, offering its apologies for the controversy stirred by plans to raise a giant "Eye of Sauron" on a Moscow-City skyscraper.

The installation was expected to light up for a few hours at Thursday's premiere of the film "The Battle of the Five Armies" — part of the blockbuster trilogy that is loosely based on J.R.R. Tolkien's book "The Hobbit."

"The project has no religious or political overtones. Because we don't want any negativity, we've stopped all work on it," Svechenie said Wednesday on its Facebook page.

Earlier, the Russian Orthodox Church said the installation would bring doom on the city, calling it a "demonic symbol."

"This symbol of triumphant evil will rise above the city, becoming practically the highest object in the city," Church spokesman Vsevolod Chaplin told the capital's Govorit Moskva radio station on Tuesday.

"One shouldn't be surprised if afterward the city would start taking a turn for the worse," Chaplin said.

City Hall, meanwhile, warned that all commercial installations — whether "evil" or not — need prior approval from the Mayor's Office.

Svechenie said it had not expected that the stunt would spur such a negative public reaction.

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