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U.S. Company Avoids Sanctions by Making Own Kalashnikov AK-47s

By The Moscow Times

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To keep Kalashnikov rifles in stock, RWC has decided to produce its own copies of the rifles on U.S. soil.

The exclusive U.S. distributor of Russian-made Kalashnikov rifles has found a novel way around sanctions preventing their import — launching a domestic production line, news channel CNNMoney reported.

The Russian Weapons Company (RWC) early last year won an exclusive contract to import up to 200,000 Russian-made Kalashnikov rifles to the North American market, but Western sanctions imposed on Kalashnikov and other Russian arms manufacturers last summer sank those plans.

"We were forced to stop doing business with them [Kalashnikov] because of the sanctions," RWC CEO Thomas McCrossin told CNN earlier this week. "We are not permitted to pick up the phone and talk to them."

American gun owners were dismayed by the sanctions, and criticized the move as a government ploy to violate the second amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees the right to bear arms.

RWC said that it still has stocks of Russian-made Kalashnikov rifles, but that it will have no way to replenish its supply once they run out.

To keep Kalashnikov rifles in stock, RWC has decided to produce its own copies of the rifles on U.S. soil, McCrossin said. It was not immediately clear whether the company's contract included provisions for localized production of weapons under the Kalashnikov brand.

Kalashnikov, which proudly claims to be one of the most recognizable brand names in the world, has recently revamped its imagine to appeal to new markets in Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa.

The company hopes its new marketing push will offset the losses incurred from being shut out of the U.S. market.

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