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Russia Starts Blocking Websites Selling Banned Western Food

By The Moscow Times

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A worker arranges cheese for sale at a grocery store in St. Petersburg.

Russia's Prosecutor General's Office has blocked access to three websites selling imported food as it strengthens control over the illegal sale of select Western goods sanctioned by Russia, newspaper Izvestia reported Tuesday.

The blocked websites sold banned cheeses, according to news website Lenta.ru. Prosecutors have also filed lawsuits against four more online shops that sell banned European and American goods.

A one-year ban on select Western products was introduced in August last year in response to Western sanctions imposed on Russia over the Ukraine crisis. The ban applies to beef, pork, fish, vegetables, fruit and dairy products from the EU, the U.S, Canada, Australia and Norway.

The websites were found during inspections initiated by a petition from Civic Chamber

member Pavel Sychov, in which he drew the attention of the Prosecutor General's Office to the fact that some e-retailers continued selling cheese, seafood and meat delicacies from the European Union and United States despite the ban.

“I think that after the blocking of several sites, the owners of other online shops will no longer risk [selling banned goods]” Izvestia quoted Sychov as saying.

The Prosecutor General's Office was not available for comment.

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