The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Coca-Cola Blames Ad Agency for Map Showing Crimea as Part of Russia

By The Moscow Times

January 06, 2016



U.S. drinks firm Coca-Cola on Wednesday blamed a marketing agency for a map used in an online advertising campaign that showed Crimea to be part of Russia and which drew protests and threats of a boycott from angry Ukrainians.

Russia annexed the peninsula from Ukraine in March 2014, leading to condemnation from Western governments which imposed sanctions on Russia in response. Only a handful of countries have recognized Crimea's incorporation into Russia.

In a statement on Wednesday, Coca-Cola said: "We, as a company, don't support any political movements. The company has removed the post and apologizes for the situation that occurred."

Coca-Cola said that the map, which appeared on Dec. 30 on Coca-Cola's page on VKontakte, a Russian social networking site similar to Facebook, had been changed by an advertising agency without Coca-Cola's approval.

Furious Ukrainians took to social media to vent their anger against Coca-Cola, and some threatened to boycott the company's products.

The Ukrainian Embassy in the United States said in a statement on its Facebook page that it had expressed concerns to the company and to the U.S. State Department.

"The Embassy emphasized that Coca-Cola's actions violate the official U.S. position condemning Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea, which is and has always been an integral part of Ukraine," the statement said.

Coca-Cola is not the only multinational company to have inadvertently faced embarrassment recently because of the festering tensions between Russians and Ukrainians.

Google said on Tuesday that problems experienced by some users in translating terms into Russian from Ukrainian using Google Translate were the result of errors in its automated algorithms, Russian agency RBC reported.

Earlier Ukrainian media had reported that the translation service was rendering "Russian Federation" as "Mordor," a region in J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trilogy which is ruled by the evil character Sauron, and "Russians" as "occupiers."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/01/06/coca-cola-blames-ad-agency-for-map-showing-crimea-as-part-of-russia-a51383