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Russian Pressure Forces Google to Return Crimea Names

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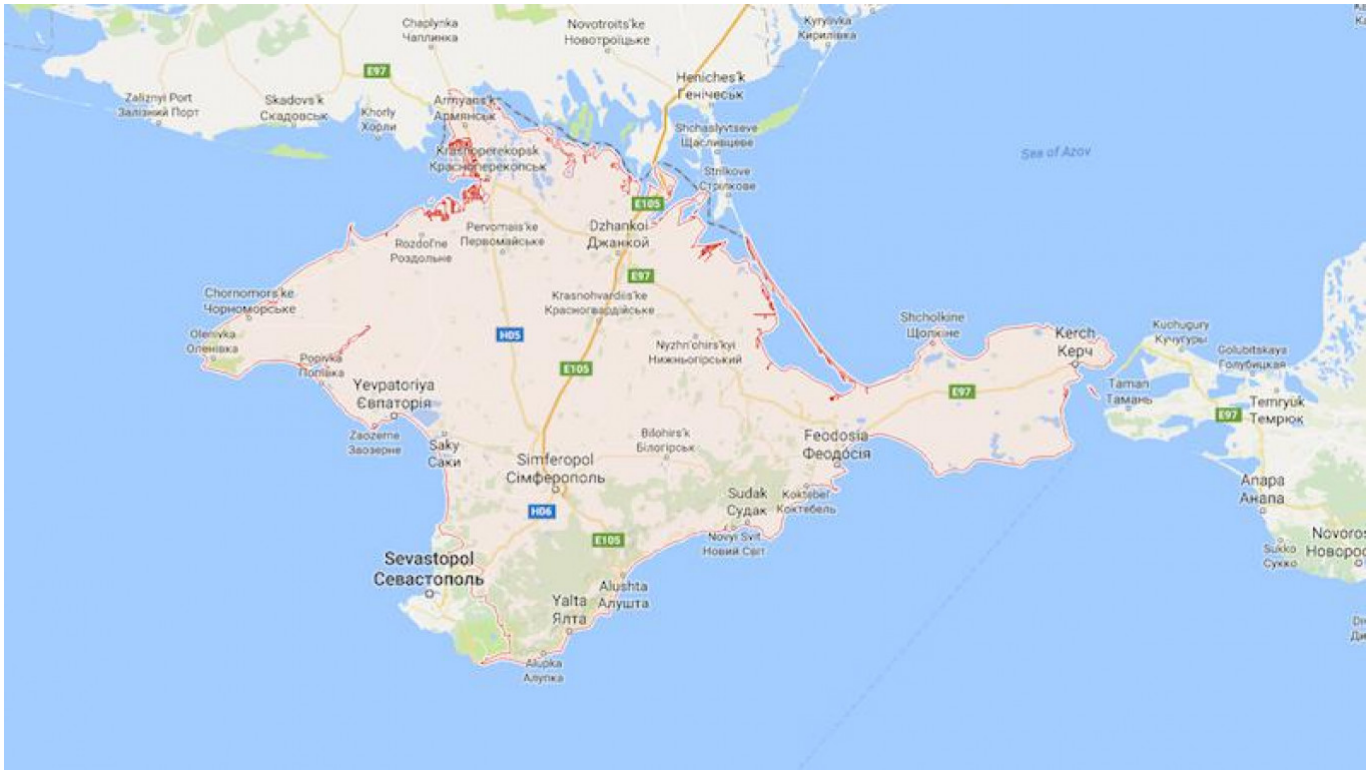

Map of Crimea **Google Maps**

Google has reversed its decision to change the names of towns in the Crimea peninsula to comply with Ukraine's de-communization law, the RBC news agency reported Friday.

The company's maps service listed new names for several settlements in the annexed peninsula on Thursday, much to the dismay of Russian officials.

Crimea's Prime Minister Sergei Aksyonov claimed Google was "pandering to Kiev and feelings of Russophobia in Ukraine," while another Crimean official accused the company of "topographical cretinism."

Russia's Communications Minister Nikolai Nikiforov said Google was "out of its mind" when it made the changes.

"If Google so casually ignores Russian legislation on names of settlements, it will be very difficult for the company to conduct business on Russian territory," he said, RBC reported.

The traditional Soviet names for Crimean settlements had been restored Friday. The town of Kirovskoe had been listed as Islam-Terek, and the village Krasnogvardeiskoe as Ichki. Along with several other settlements, these towns once again bear their Soviet names on Google Maps.

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