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# Russia's Ongoing War on Halloween

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Religious groups and conservative politicians in Russia attempt to ban Halloween every October. They say the holiday is anti-Christian and cannot coexist with Russian national traditions. The number of attempts to do so have been increasing since Moscow's standoff with the West.

The leader of Russian-annexed Crimea Sergei Aksyonov called Halloween a "means of cultural and spiritual aggression directed at destroying the traditional values of Russia." Writing on his Facebook page, Aksyonov called the holiday "pure Satanism disguised in costumes and performances."

A lawyer in the Kirov region decided to take matters into his own hands and went straight to the local prosecutor's office demanding a ban on the holiday. Yaroslav Mikhailov, who used to investigate gay propaganda in emojis on social media, claims that "celebrating Halloween violates Russian law."

He cited this year's counter-terrorism and public safety laws drafted by hardline Duma deputy Irina Yarovaya, which also include strict laws on offending religious beliefs. His

request is currently being reviewed.

Local church authorities in Kirov suggested that National Unity Day (a holiday on Nov. 4 that marks ousting Polish-Lithuanian forces out of Moscow in the 17th century) be celebrated for the entirety of the week instead of Halloween.

Last year, the local Education Ministry in Arkhangelsk banned celebrating Halloween, claiming that the holiday "does not correspond with the traditions beliefs of Russians and also negatively influences children."

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