The Moscow Times
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FIFA 'Error Message' Bars Crimeans From Buying World Cup Tickets

December 15, 2017



fifa.com

Crimean residents are struggling to buy World Cup tickets through the FIFA website, the Crimean news outlet Primechaniya has reported.

The Crimean peninsula, which Russia annexed after a controversial referendum in 2014, faced similar complications when Russia hosted the 2017 Confederations Cup, said Yuri Vetokha, the president of the Crimean Football Union. Local football officials say the problems arise because FIFA does not recognize Crimea as a part of Russia.

Crimeans reportedly get an error message when they try to order tickets through the FIFA website, but are able to do so if they are within the original borders of Russia.

"The interface of the FIFA website does not recognize Crimea as Russia," Vetokha said. "FIFA considers Crimea to be a part of Ukraine."

“We circumvented this easily," he added. "People approached us with requests and we took these requests and bought tickets through the Russian Football Union.”

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FIFA responded with a statement that there are no technical restrictions on buying World Cup tickets, the RNS news agency reported.

The federation’s press service added that FIFA allows all potential ticket buyers to select which country they reside it.

Primechaniya however said he did a test and found out that people could not buy tickets from Crimea regardless of whether they entered “Russia” or “Ukraine” in the country field.

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