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Nude ‘Divine Shawarma’ Ad Sparks Fury of Russian Church

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shaurmanezagorami / Vkontakte

Shawarma so good, it’ll send you straight to heaven.

Russia’s Orthodox Church will go to court against a cafe in the Urals city of Perm for using religious imagery in a shawarma ad.

The offending image shows a nude model posing in front of a halo of shawarmas and holding a doner sandwich to cover her breasts, with its caption urging readers to “succumb to temptation.”

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The since-deleted online ad stirred more anger than hunger within the local diocese, which said it plans to sue the cafe owner, the Kommersant business daily reported Thursday.

“Obviously, we’re not going to go on a crusade around the place, but we’ll give an adequate

response [to the ad]. Shawarma is a Muslim dish. Why do they use our religion?" asked the regional church spokesman Andrei Litovka.

The national anti-monopoly watchdog's Perm branch later said it planned to inspect the cafe for violations.

The reaction of the church's national branch was more muted. Archbishop Dmitry Smirnov said that while the church opposes the ads, "there have been similar cases before."

The cafe, Shawarma Ne Za Gorami, has a number of creative if racy ads on social media.

"We're trying to create non-trivial content," Veronika Burdina, the cafe owner and creative mind behind the ads, explained. "There are well-established cliches online such as a 'divine shawarma.'"

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