

Write Letters to Soldiers Not Valentine's Cards, Russian Politician Urges

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Girls with a red heart balloon are seen in central Moscow on Valentine's Day. **Artyom Geodakyan / TASS**

The Russian governor of the city of Sevastopol in annexed Crimea has called on Russians not to celebrate Valentine's Day on the grounds that the holiday is alien to the country's traditions and was "imposed by the Western entertainment and consumption industry."

Instead, Mikhail Razvozhayev suggested in a [Telegram post](#) on Tuesday that people write letters to Russian soldiers at the front on Feb. 14.

"Who really wants to send a 'valentine' in February, I suggest writing a letter to a soldier instead. Our defenders will smile and say 'thank you!' That's our way!" [wrote](#) Razvozhayev.

Concerned about those who "deny their origins and faith" such as the inhabitants of Ukraine, Razvozhayev suggested that Russians should work to popularize the Day of Family, Love and Fidelity, a traditional Orthodox holiday celebrated on July 8, as an alternative to Valentine's Day.

Despite being a Kremlin-appointed interim governor of the Crimean city where Russia's Black Sea fleet is based, Razvozhayev's message might still resonate with some in the West: "This so-called 'holiday' has always looked fake, but now especially," Razvozhayev said, admitting however that it would "certainly take many more years to eradicate the craving for Western 'ideals' from our lives."

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