



U-turn: Paul Smith in the Red Square store he's now closing

NEWS / UKRAINE WAR

# Paul Smith shuts Russia shops after Mail revelations

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Paul Smith is pulling out of Russia after the Mail confronted him over his commercial ties to the rogue state.

The fashion tycoon says he has 'ceased all supplies' to the country and intends to close his stores there. There had been a growing backlash over his failure to pull out following Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

A Mail investigation revealed on Saturday that Paul Smith was one of three British luxury brands still open for business in central Moscow.



As pressure mounts over UK brands still trading in Moscow, Paul Smith speaks out

## Ukrainian troops fly to Britain to start tank training

Ukrainian troops have arrived in Britain to start tank training. The British Army has agreed to provide training for Ukrainian tank crews. The training will be conducted at the Bovington Tank Centre in Dorset.

## Revelation: The Mail exposes Paul Smith's Russia links

TAP HERE to read how we confronted Paul Smith

Our reporter visited its showpiece branch at the GUM shopping centre in Red Square, a stone's throw from the Kremlin. It was open from 10am to 10pm seven days a week.

We found shelves fully stocked with many of the very latest Paul Smith products, including £197 ties and a £1,050 'embossed leather folio' from its new season range, which only recently went on sale in the UK.

Sir Paul's company, which he founded in 1970, initially refused to discuss its presence in Russia. Both its stores and a lucrative online shopping operation are run through a franchise arrangement with a politically-connected oligarch called Mikhail Kusnirovich.

For his part, the British tycoon feigned ignorance saying he 'didn't really know anything about' the Moscow store when the Mail paid a visit to his £7.5million London mews house at the weekend.



Outlet: The Paul Smith shop at GUM in Moscow

But Sir Paul performed a U-turn yesterday, admitting he had indeed been supplying stock to Mr Kusnirovich throughout the Ukraine war. He pledged to end the commercial relationship immediately.

'The company does not trade directly with Russia, but, for two decades, we have had a franchise partner who operates stores in Russia,' said a spokesman.

'We now realise it was a mistake to allow these stores to continue trading in our name against the background of the war in Ukraine.

'We have requested that these stores are closed and we have now ceased all supplies to the distributor.'

Hundreds of outraged customers have bombarded his firm's social media accounts with criticism, calling him a 'greedy traitor' who has been making 'blood money'.



Doing business: A store assistant hands over a purchase

Several MPs added to the chorus of disapproval, describing the revelation that Sir Paul's Nottingham-based firm was trading in Russia as a 'matter of great concern'.

There were even calls for Sir Paul, who was made a CBE in 1996, given a knighthood by Tony Blair in 2000 and made a member of the Order of the Companions of Honour in 2020, to have his titles withdrawn.

The Moral Rating Agency, a lobby group which campaigns against Western firms trading in Russia, had said: 'Unless Russia is stripped of Paul Smith shirts, Paul Smith should be stripped of his knighthood. It's a simple moral equation. No honours for dishonour.'

Yesterday the agency said: 'We withdraw our campaign revoking Sir Paul's knighthood. He moved fast to clean up his act. It's sad that it takes such threats to make people do the moral thing.'

Bob Seely, a prominent Tory MP and former soldier who has successfully campaigned against law firms which have profited from Putin's cronies, also applauded the move.



Suits you: The fitting room at the Paul Smith GUM outlet

He said: 'Credit to Paul Smith for finally doing the right thing and well done to the Mail for bringing this scandal to public attention via another superb investigation.'

Mr Seely insisted that the two other companies revealed by the Mail to still be operating in Moscow – car firm Rolls-Royce and Mike Ashley's lingerie retailer Agent Provocateur – should now follow suit by pulling out.

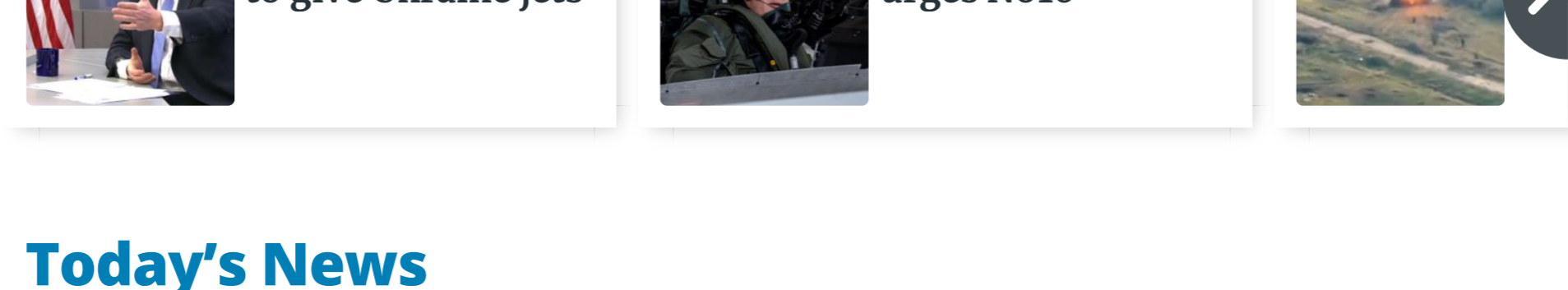
'This is a really important subject,' he added. 'We should not be helping an authoritarian neo-fascist state to wage war.

'This must serve as a warning to other Western brands who continuing to trade in Vladimir Putin's Russia.'

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