

# Unilever CEO vows to look at Russian operations with 'fresh eyes' as pressure to exit the country mounts

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By [James Rogers](#) [Follow](#)

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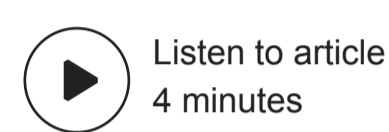


Unilever PLC is coming under renewed pressure to exit its Russian operations (Photo by JOHN THYS/AFP via Getty Images)



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Consumer goods giant Unilever PLC is coming under renewed pressure to exit Russia following recent comments from the company's CEO Hein Schumacher.

The U.K. Telegraph [reports](#) that Schumacher told a Ukrainian war veteran that he will look at the company's decision to maintain its Russian business with "fresh eyes."

"We really hope this means he'll do the right thing," tweeted the Ukraine Solidarity Project this week. "Good leaders make bold decisions."

**Related:** ['Unilever has descended into a vortex of immorality': Pressure mounts on consumer goods giant to exit Russia](#)

The [Moral Rating Agency](#), an organization set up after the invasion of Ukraine to examine whether companies were carrying out their promises of [exiting Russia](#), reiterated its calls for Unilever to end its Russian operations. "Unilever needs to stop running down the clock as a way to keep making blood money," said MRA founder Mark Dixon, in a statement this week. Unilever "simply needs to get out of Russia," he added.

"We have always said we would keep our position in Russia under close review," a Unilever spokesperson told MarketWatch Friday. The spokesperson also directed MarketWatch to the company's [statement](#) on the war in Ukraine released in February 2023.

Unilever was recently [added](#) to the Ukrainian government's 'International sponsors of war' list amid calls for a boycott of the company's products.

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At the end of June Unilever employed approximately 3,000 people in Russia, according to the company's second-quarter results. In the first six months of the year Russia represented 1.2% of the Unilever Group's turnover and 1.5% of net profit, the company said. As of June 30, the company's Russia business had net assets of around \$870 million, including four factories.

In March 2022 Unilever announced its decision to suspend all imports and exports of Unilever products into and out of Russia and cease any capital flows in and out of the country. However, the company continues to supply what it describes as "everyday food and hygiene products" made in Russia to people in the country. "We understand why there are calls for Unilever to leave Russia. We also want to be clear that we are not trying to protect or manage our business in Russia," the company said, in its [statement](#) released in February. "However, for companies like Unilever, which have a significant physical presence in the country, exiting is not straightforward."

**Related:** [Unilever urged to exit Russia: 'It's making their hands bloodstained,' says Economic Security Council of Ukraine](#)

Earlier this year, on the anniversary of Russia's invasion, the Economic Security Council of Ukraine [criticized Unilever](#) over its Russian presence.

The Ukraine Solidarity Project recently launched a high-profile campaign urging Unilever to get out of Russia using the images of Ukrainian veterans injured in the war with Russia. Last month, activists from the Ukraine Solidarity Project held a giant poster featuring the veterans outside Unilever's London headquarters.

A slew of major Western corporations such as U.S. giants Apple Inc. [AAPL, +0.28%](#), Alphabet Inc. [GOOGL, -1.89%](#) [GOOG, -1.80%](#), Amazon.com Inc. [AMZN, -0.57%](#), International Business Machines [IBM, +0.53%](#) Corp. and McDonald's Corp. [MCD, -0.04%](#) [left Russia](#) in response to Moscow's devastating invasion of Ukraine.



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