



Hein Schumacher, Unilever's chief executive, said none of the options were good but this was the "least bad"

WAR IN UKRAINE

# Unilever continues to sell ice cream in Russia despite criticism

Joshua Thurston

Wednesday July 26 2023, 5.40pm BST, The Times

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Unilever has faced criticism for continuing to sell Cornetto and Magnum ice creams in Russia.

Campaigners have accused the food and toiletries giant of plunging into a "vortex of immorality" as the company raked in an estimated £556 million in Russia last year.

Unilever's chief executive insisted continuing to operate in Russia was the "least bad" option for the company, whose brands include Dove, Ben & Jerry's and Marmite.

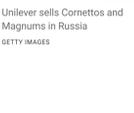
Hein Schumacher said abandoning the business "could result in it being nationalised, given all of the developments that have recently taken place".

This month, the Russian state took control of French yoghurt maker Danone's Russian subsidiary and Carlsberg's stake in a local brewer.

Schumacher said Unilever has not been in touch with the government since the takeovers.

"The second option is to sell the business, but the reality is, we have not found a viable solution that meets our stated objectives.

"None of the options are actually good, but the final option of operating our business in a constrained manner is the least bad, and that is where we are," said Schumacher.



Unilever sells Cornettos and Magnums in Russia  
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The British-Dutch multinational was one of the first prominent European brands to suspend Russian imports and exports after last year's [invasion of Ukraine](#).

It has continued to sell everyday essential food and hygiene items, which it says the company will not profit from.

However, the company confirmed it would continue selling ice creams to Russian-based stores.

Chris Bryant, a Labour MP, said he was angered "beyond belief" by the continued sales.

"Is it the least bad option for people in the UK who use Unilever products but don't want to dip their hands in Ukrainian blood? The idea of Unilever making money out of selling Magnums to Russians, as essential items apparently, it angers me beyond belief."

Mark Dixon, spokesperson for the Moral Rating Agency, a lobbying group which monitors western firms operating inside Russia, said: "Unilever has done nothing but wriggle with excuses in response to our year-long demands for it to leave Russia. Unilever has descended into a vortex of immorality."



Unilever has been accused of "ethically confused behaviour"  
ALAMY

Bob Seely, a Conservative MP, said: "I understand it's difficult for them but they are effectively paying millions in taxes supporting the Russian war economy when Russia is doing something fundamentally incredibly evil. The question is why should we support Unilever when Unilever is supporting the Russian war economy?"

Seely attacked Unilever for "shallow virtue-signalling" and "ethically confused behaviour" from brands like Ben & Jerry's running campaigns about social and political issues.

Unilever reported a turnover of £26.2 billion over the six months to the end of June, with an operating profit increase of nearly 21 per cent to £4.7 billion.

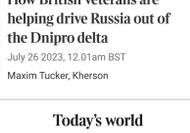
Despite this, Unilever has warned that [increased prices](#) of dozens of household favourites are likely.

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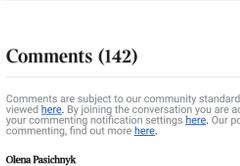


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**Olena Pasichnyk** [Icons]

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26 JULY 2023  
Let's start sanctioning Hein Schumacher and the other Unilever executives and their assets. Call it the least bad option until they do change course.  
It might concentrate their minds about whether they think it is acceptable to carry on as normal with terrorist regimes.  
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**P Professor H Cochrane**  
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Meanwhile, the Unilever subsidiary Ben & Jerry continues to virtue signal incessantly. #Havingitbothways.  
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**B Ben McCormick**  
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That's it. No more Marmite. My favourite breakfast spread. But I am binning what's left and won't buy any more. Or any other Unilever product. What a cowardly, greedy, immoral company. Disgraceful.  
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**J J Hood**  
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Let's all stop buying Unilever products here in the UK and across Europe.  
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**S Simon Anthony**  
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Boycott Ben and Jerry's.  
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**A ANDY DAWSON**  
26 JULY 2023  
I wonder how my local Tesco/Sainsbury's/Waitrose etc. would react if I started sticking "Unilever helps support Putin" labels on bottles of Dove, etc?  
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Why haven't the West's pathetically weak sanctions been extended to all companies doing business in Russia?  
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**C C Davis**  
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In response to a post below —other Unilever brands include:  
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**K Kevin Laughlin**  
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