

WORLD

The creator of Ben & Jerry's is under pressure to leave Russia. Why are companies refusing to leave?



By [ComplaintRoom Desk](#)

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key points

- Unilever is under pressure to close operations in Russia.
- After the invasion of Ukraine, many companies left the Russian market.
- But some people have stuck around and say breaking up is complicated.

Unilever, the parent company of the Ben & Jerry's and Cornetto ice cream brands, continues to resist pressure to close its business in Russia.

The anti-war activist organization Moral Rating Agency is campaigning for Western companies to end all business with Russia in order to put more economic pressure on the country, hoping it will impact the war effort.

"Unilever must stop hiding behind its balance sheet and excuses and face the reality of what selling ice cream [Vladimir] Putin would have to pay for a pill," said founder Mark Dixon.

The agency estimates that Unilever contributes more than \$1 billion annually to the Russian economy.

Unilever, which owns other brands such as Dove, Lynx, OMO and Ben & Jerry's, told the BBC this week that the exit was "not straightforward".

The company reiterated a February statement saying, "We understand why Unilever is being asked to leave Russia."

"We also want to clarify that we are not trying to protect or manage our business in Russia. However, for companies like Unilever, which have a significant physical presence in the country, the exit is not straightforward."

The company said that if it left Russia, its companies there would be "appropriated by the Russian state – and then operated".

Unilever said it had been unable to find a way to sell the business that "prevents the Russian state from potentially making further profits, and that protects our people".

At the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Starbucks and several other large companies, including McDonald's, closed stores in Russia in protest and to sever all financial ties with the country's war effort.

However, some are staying put and potentially profiting as the brutal war continues – here's why.

shell

Oil and gas giant Shell has been criticized for continuing to operate in the Russian gas market. Source: AAP

Oleg Ustenko, an economic adviser to the Ukrainian president, this week accused British oil company Shell of accepting "blood money" to trade Russian gas after agreeing to withdraw from the market.

"It's quite simple: By continuing to trade in Russian gas, Shell is putting money in Putin's pocket and helping to finance Russia's brutal aggression against the people of Ukraine," he said.

"The vast sums of money that Shell and the entire oil industry earn in Russia should be used to help rebuild Ukraine, instead of lining the pockets of its shareholders."

But Shell responded, saying the business did not violate laws or sanctions and was the result of "long-term contractual commitments".

A Shell spokesperson said, "There is a tradeoff between pressuring the Russian government over its atrocities in Ukraine and ensuring stable, secure energy supplies. It is up to governments to decide on incredibly difficult trade-offs."

Environmental campaigner Global Witness estimates that shale was crucial to the trading of Russian gas between March and December 2022, buying and selling 12 per cent of all exports.

Tigers Field Coal

Australian miner Tigers Realm Coal, which has been operating in Russia for more than a decade, was warned in April by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade that it could be in breach of Australian sanctions against Russia.

But there are growing calls for the Australian government to review the activities of publicly listed coal miners still working in Russia.,

Representatives of Tigers Realm did not respond to SBS Russian, but denied in April that the company was operating in breach of Australian sanctions.

Tigers Realm continued its mining operations after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and its annual sales revenue is expected to grow from \$104 million in 2021 to \$186 million in 2022, according to its annual report.

However, it also noted that most of its activities were conducted in China.

Procter & Gamble

In February, the Ukrainian government named US-based household goods maker Procter & Gamble (P&G) as an 'international sponsor of war' over its continued operations in Russia.

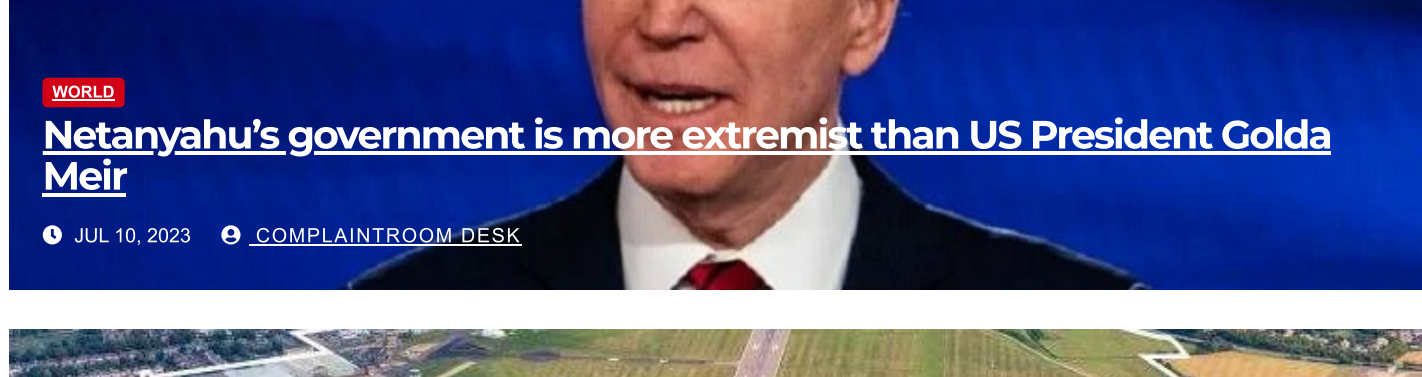
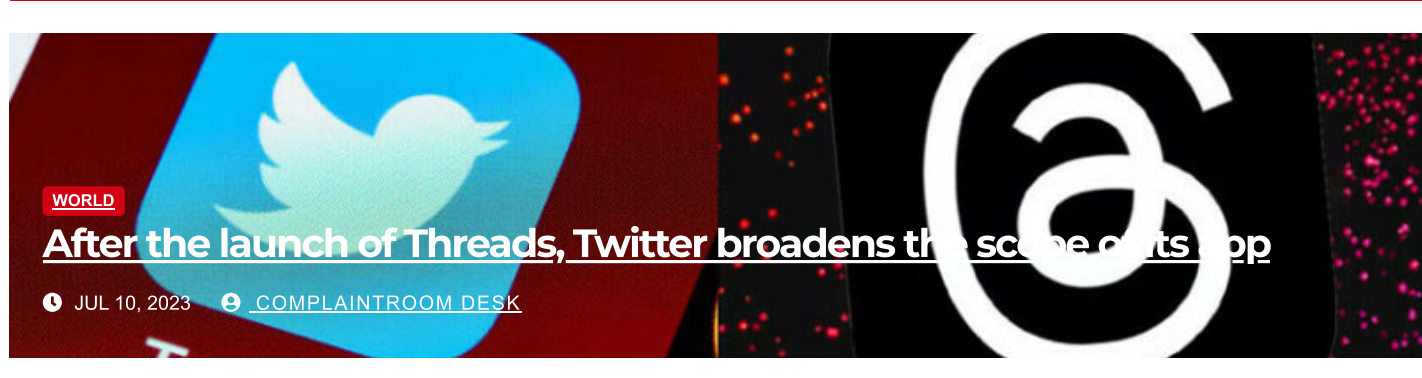
In March 2022, P&G, whose products include Tide detergent pods and Gillette razors, announced it was reducing its product share in the country and said it would focus only on health and hygiene products there.

The activist project Leave Russia, led by researchers from the KSE Institute, an analytical center in Kiev, Ukraine, says P&G is one of the largest foreign investors in the Russian economy and has been operating in the country since 1991. Is.



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