

United Russia's Rip-Off Ad Called Legal

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Moscow election officials said Tuesday that they see no problem with United Russia ripping off the design of an official get-out-the-vote street billboard, created with state money.

"There is no violation of election law here," Dmitry Reut, spokesman for the Moscow Elections Commission, told Interfax.

United Russia raised eyebrows after blanketing Moscow on Monday with campaign posters that were virtually identical to ones already put up by election authorities, urging people to vote in the State Duma elections on Dec. 4.

The striking similarity of the ads led opposition groups and election watchdogs to accuse election authorities of de facto supporting United Russia's campaign.

Reut said the only issue that could be raised in this case is the matter of "intellectual property law." So far, election officials have not complained about their design being stolen.

United Russia said Monday that it obtained the rights for the poster design from the advertising company IMA-Consulting, which also worked with Moscow's elections

commission.

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