

Duma Deputy Wants Check of Google Maps Crimea Policy

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A State Duma deputy wants authorities to check the activities of Google for labeling Crimea as part of Ukraine and not Russia, a report said Wednesday.

United Russia Deputy Anatoly Sidyakin's request to the Federal Mass Media Inspection Service also asks for Microsoft's Bing and the Russian language Wikipedia to be evaluated for labeling the Black Sea peninsula as a disputed territory, Izvestia reported.

Sidyakin cited popular Russian search engine Yandex as an example, approving of the site's decision to show Russian users that Crimea is part of Russia, while showing it as part of Ukraine to Ukrainians after Russia formally annexed the region last week. Along these lines, Google and other companies would be forced to change their map for Russian users.

Ukraine and many members of the international community have refused to recognize Crimea

as Russian territory and claimed that the regional referendum in which the peninsula's residents voted to secede from Ukraine was illegitimate.

The society said that its "cartographic policy is to portray to the best of our ability current reality," adding that generally the political boundaries depicted on their maps and atlases are "stable and uncontested."

Last Friday a representative for Yandex said that users of Yandex.ru would view the area according to Russia's position and users of Yandex.ua according to Ukraine's. Maps viewed using Yandex's Belarus service convert to the Yandex.ru version, while the site's Turkish version shows the peninsula as Ukrainian.

The secession and subsequent annexation of Crimea has put cartographers at some tough coordinates, as they must now decide under whose control the region rests. News reports last week said that National Geographic would call the breakaway region part of Russia, though a statement from the organization before the official annexation said that if the Russian annexation process went through, then the region would be labeled as a gray, disputed region.

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