# UK MPs demand Mondelez quit Russia amid claims of funding Kremlin war machine



Leading members of Parliament have sharply criticised Mondelez, the parent company of Cadbury, accusing it of prioritising profits over ethical considerations amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. More than 70 UK MPs and peers have formally called on the company's CEO, Dirk Van de Put, to withdraw its operations from Russia, stating that the continued sale of Cadbury chocolate effectively funds Russia's military actions in Ukraine.

Alex Sobel, chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ukraine, characterised the lack of response from Mondelez as 'disrespectful' to Parliament. He stated emphatically, "Mondelez must exit Russia now or face the consequences of funding the Kremlin's war machine." This sentiment is echoed throughout the political landscape in the UK, where growing discontent exists concerning companies that maintain business ties to Russia during these turbulent times. Tory MP Sir John Whittingdale remarked that the firm appeared “too busy” counting its profits to engage meaningfully with legislative concerns about its operations.

Critics have pointed to the ethical ramifications of such decisions. An open letter published in the Financial Times has labelled Van de Put’s justification for remaining in Russia as contradictory to Cadbury's long-standing legacy of social responsibility. The letter warns of risks including potential complicity in war crimes and challenges companies to align their practices with human rights principles by withdrawing from Russia altogether. There's a growing argument that staying in Russia not only undermines ethical standards but also weakens a brand's reputation, particularly one with roots in Quaker values like Cadbury.

Despite the mounting pressure, Mondelez maintains that a full withdrawal from Russia could be detrimental, arguing that it would leave operations vulnerable to confiscation by the Kremlin. The company claims to have "scaled down" its activities in the country; however, it still operates three factories there and generates approximately 2.8% of its global revenues from Russian operations. This ongoing engagement has drawn ire from both MPs and consumer advocacy groups, which argue that Mondelez's presence contributes to a financial lifeline for the Russian state.

Mondelez has not been insulated from the broader scrutiny affecting multinational corporations. While major shareholders, including investment giants like Vanguard and BlackRock, have not exerted pressure for an exit from Russia, public sentiment and ethical calls for action are becoming increasingly insistent. The company's commitment to transparency regarding its activities in Russia could play a pivotal role in mitigating reputational damage. Previous reports indicate that Mondelez is not alone in facing criticism, with other corporations such as Nestlé and Unilever also grappling with similar ethical dilemmas.

In addition to calls from UK parliamentarians, international pushback against Mondelez has emerged, highlighting a unified front against businesses perceived as complicit in supporting Russia during its military invasion of Ukraine. Notably, West Midlands Mayor Andy Street has also emphasised the inconsistency between UK taxpayers' support for Ukraine and Mondelez's continued business operations, which critics argue bolster the regime accused of committing serious human rights abuses.

In light of these developments, the future of Mondelez's operations in Russia hangs in the balance. As the international community continues to apply pressure, the company faces a critical juncture that will likely define its ethical standing for years to come.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14769929/Cadbury-owners-disrespect-MPs-Russia-demand.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://b4ukraine.org/whats-new/uk-mps-demand-mondelez-exit-russia)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14769929/Cadbury-owners-disrespect-MPs-Russia-demand.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/81db4adf-0b46-4bee-bd02-51e7f9d1b0f2), [[6]](https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/british-mps-call-on-mondelez-to-leave-russia-stop-funding-war-machine-incl-co-comments/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/10621358-55f2-4152-90a4-4cb4fea5116a), [[7]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/05/01/andy-street-urges-cadbury-owner-quit-russia/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/after-repairing-its-war-damaged-factory-mondelez-resumes-making-oreos-ukraine-2024-05-31/), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/10621358-55f2-4152-90a4-4cb4fea5116a), [[6]](https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/british-mps-call-on-mondelez-to-leave-russia-stop-funding-war-machine-incl-co-comments/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://b4ukraine.org/whats-new/uk-mps-demand-mondelez-exit-russia), [[6]](https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/british-mps-call-on-mondelez-to-leave-russia-stop-funding-war-machine-incl-co-comments/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[7]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/05/01/andy-street-urges-cadbury-owner-quit-russia/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14769929/Cadbury-owners-disrespect-MPs-Russia-demand.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/81db4adf-0b46-4bee-bd02-51e7f9d1b0f2> - A letter published in the Financial Times highlights concerns about businesses maintaining operations in Russia amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The letter criticises Mondelez CEO Dirk Van de Put's defence of the company's decision to stay in Russia, arguing that it contradicts the legacy of social responsibility associated with Cadbury. The letter warns of risks such as complicity in war crimes, asset seizure, and the funding of Russia's war efforts, urging companies to align their practices with human rights principles by exiting Russia.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/after-repairing-its-war-damaged-factory-mondelez-resumes-making-oreos-ukraine-2024-05-31/> - Mondelez has resumed production of Oreo cookies at its factory in Trostyanets, Ukraine, which was damaged during Russia's invasion. The factory has been fully rebuilt and partially reopened last year to produce chocolates. The Oreo cookies and other chocolates made in Ukraine are not being exported to Russia. Mondelez operates three factories in Russia and continues to sell its products there despite boycotts and pressure to cease operations. The Trostyanets factory's products are sold domestically and exported to Eurasian countries like Georgia and Kazakhstan.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/10621358-55f2-4152-90a4-4cb4fea5116a> - Dirk Van de Put, CEO of Mondelez, stated that investors do not 'morally care' if companies continue operations in Russia, noting that Mondelez's shareholders had not pressured the company to exit Russia despite its invasion of Ukraine. Van de Put argued that disruptions would matter more to investors if a company had a significant business in Russia. Mondelez's Russian operations contributed 2.8% of its global revenues in 2023. Major shareholders like Vanguard and BlackRock have not requested the company leave Russia. Criticism arose from consumers and Ukrainian groups, but Van de Put justified staying, saying that selling assets to Putin's allies would fund the war more than the taxes Mondelez pays. Mondelez employs 2,700 people in Russia and continues to function as a standalone unit. Other companies, such as Nestlé and Unilever, also face challenges in exiting Russia, and transparency about their reasons for staying is increasing. Letters in response criticised Mondelez for potential complicity in Russia's war efforts.
5. <https://b4ukraine.org/whats-new/uk-mps-demand-mondelez-exit-russia> - Over 70 UK parliamentarians have called on Mondelez, the owner of Cadbury, to cease operations in Russia, accusing the company of funding Russia's war machine. The MPs and peers argue that Mondelez's continued presence in Russia is providing a financial lifeline to the Kremlin and eroding Cadbury's ethical reputation. They demand that Mondelez disclose the extent of its activities in Russia and all financial contributions to the Russian government, urging the company to align its practices with human rights principles by exiting Russia.
6. <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/british-mps-call-on-mondelez-to-leave-russia-stop-funding-war-machine-incl-co-comments/> - British MPs have called on Mondelez to leave Russia and stop funding its war machine. Campaigners argue that Mondelez's decision to operate in Russia sends a worrying message and suggests a disregard for the suffering of those affected by the conflict. Mondelez has stated that a full exit would cause more harm than good, as its operations could fall into the hands of the Kremlin. The company has also faced criticism from other countries, including Scandinavia, for its continued presence in Russia.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/05/01/andy-street-urges-cadbury-owner-quit-russia/> - West Midlands mayor Andy Street has called on the owner of Cadbury, Mondelez, to cease operations in Russia, urging the company to reflect on the confectionery brand’s Quaker roots. Street highlighted the disparity between British taxpayer support for Ukraine and Mondelez's actions, which critics argue empower the Russian government accused of perpetrating war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine. Mondelez has defended its decision to continue operations in Russia, stating that suspending full operations would mean cutting off part of the food supply for many families who have no say in the war.