

Mr. Mike DUKE

President and Chief Executive Officer

Mrs. Doug MCMILLON

President and Chief Executive Officer of Walmart International

Walmart Headquarters
702 S.W. 8th St. Bentonville, AK 72716
United States

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ADDRESS OF BALTIC POLITICIANTS REGARDING COMMERCIAL USE OF TOTALITARIAN REGIME SYMBOLS

We, Members of Parliaments and Government from the three Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — want to express our deepest concern regarding inappropriate promotion and sales of items featuring symbols of the Soviet totalitarian regime on the walmart.com website¹. The items depict, in various combinations, the hammer and sickle, five-pointed star and letters *СССР* (Russian abbreviation for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, i.e. Soviet totalitarian empire).

It is utterly disappointing that the biggest retailer in the world and the biggest retailer brand in the USA — Walmart Inc. — does not recognize and does not show respect for the millions of different nationalities having fallen victim to the Soviet totalitarian regime: deportees, including the elderly, infants and minors, political prisoners, dissidents, resistance movement members, and all those who lost their life, health or their family members to Gulag or other forms of repression of the Soviet totalitarianism. This also may be hurtful to many members of the vast diaspora living in the USA and descendants of refugees who fled the occupation and repression in their nation states. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and many other countries were occupied by the Soviet Union for half a century, and today the Soviet symbols are banned in these countries, the same way as those of Nazism, another totalitarian regime.

At the very least, selling clothes with the letters *СССР/USSR* and emblems of the Soviet Union at Walmart's Inc. online store demonstrates lack of human decency. Walmart Inc. thus participates in promotion, among its customers worldwide, of totalitarianism, human rights abuse and suppression of freedom and democracy, the values that allowed such corporations as Walmart to grow and prosper. As you may know, a similar clothing line with the letters *USSR* and emblems of the Soviet Union were put on sale by sports good giant Adidas ahead of the football World Cup in Russia, but were recalled after a public outcry. Walmart Inc. should follow suit.

¹ <https://www.walmart.com/ip/Men-s-Soviet-CCCP-Hammer-and-Sickle-Tee-Shirt-Red-5XL/178834845?wmlspartner=wmtlabs&selectedSellerId=5725&adid=2222222228061624815&wl0&wl1=g&wl2=m&wl3=165266441749&wl4=pla-272158532522&wl5=9026567&wl6&wl7&wl8&wl9=pla&wl10=113942903&wl11=online&wl12=178834845&wl13&veh=sem>

We call on Walmart Inc. to demonstrate their corporate responsibility, respect the memory of victims who suffered at the hands of the Soviet totalitarian regime and immediately discontinue selling of the abovementioned items.

Sincerely yours,

Radvilė MORKŪNAITĖ-MIKULĖNIENĖ, MP, Lithuania

Gabrielius LANDSBERGIS, MP, Chairman of the Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats, Lithuania

Rasa JUKNEVIČIENĖ, MP, Vice-President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Lithuania

Sandra KALNIETE, Member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair of the EPP Political Group in the European Parliament, Latvia

Tunne KELAM, Member of the European Parliament, Estonia

Emanuelis ZINGERIS, MP, Lithuania

Urmas REINSALU, Minister of Justice, Estonia

Helir-Valdor SEEDER, MP, Chairman of Isamaa, Chairman of the Isamaa Political Group in the Parliament, Estonia