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THE DAY
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 NEWS TO OPEN MINDS

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The Christmas ad banned for being too political

Should the ban be lifted? Thousands have signed a petition demanding that Iceland's banned "Rang-tan" advert be allowed on TV. They say its urgent environmental message must be heard.



Viral: Despite being banned from TV, the ad has been watched over two million times on YouTube.

"There's a human in my forest and I don't know what to do, he destroyed all of our trees for your food and your shampoo."

This is one of several heartbreaking lines from Iceland's controversial new Christmas advert. The short animation stars Rang-tan, a young **orangutan** whose rainforest home has been cut down to make way for palm-oil plantations.

But you will not be seeing it on TV any time soon, after it was banned for being too political. The video was originally produced for the environmental activist group **Greenpeace**, however, regulations specifically prohibit adverts which are "directed towards a political end".

Palm oil is a base ingredient in thousands of food and household products that many of us use every day, from candles, soap and lipstick, to biscuits, pizzas, margarine and chocolate. It is found in around half of all supermarket products.

In order to produce palm oil, huge swathes of **rainforest** are cut down and replaced by palm tree plantations, devastating habitats and driving animals towards extinction. Approximately 100,000 orangutans have been wiped out since 1999.

In an effort to tackle the problem, this year, Iceland pledged to remove palm oil completely from all of its own-brand food.

Should the advert be lifted?

No-rangutan

Of course, some argue. The ad communicates a crucial environmental message – it would make a bigger impact if it was seen more widely. More companies should follow Iceland's example too.

Not necessarily, others respond. The ad has an admirable message, but the rules which prohibit political ads should be upheld – it would become maddening if every advert started pushing a political cause.

YOU DECIDE

1. Should more big businesses make political adverts?

ACTIVITIES

1. Use the link in Become An Expert to watch the banned Iceland advert. What are your first impressions? How does it try to make the audience care about the environment? Do you think it should have been banned?

SOME PEOPLE SAY...

“Advertising is the greatest art form of the 20th century.”

Marshall McLuhan
What do you think?

Q & A

Q: What do we know?

A: Every hour, the equivalent of 300 football pitches of forest is cut down across south-east Asia to make way for plantations.

Q: What do we not know?

A: How much impact the advert will have. It being banned from TV may, ironically, give it a much larger audience – thanks to the publicity and social media interest the story has attracted.

WORD WATCH

Orangutan – A species of great ape native to Malaysia and Indonesia. Orangutans are extremely intelligent: they use sophisticated tools and live in complex social groups.

Greenpeace – Founded in 1971, its stated goal is to “ensure the ability of the Earth to nurture life in all its diversity.” It campaigns on worldwide issues including climate change, deforestation, overfishing and whaling.

Rainforest – Primarily located in Indonesia and Malaysia, the two countries dominate global palm oil production accounting for 85% of the supply.

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