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Rolls-Royce Motor Cars ends five years' growth after China sales slump

Luxury carmaker reports 54% drop in sales to China, now relegated to its third largest market behind US and Middle East

A slump in sales in China has ended five years of growth for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. The slowing Chinese economy and tough new anti-corruption laws led to a 54% year-on-year drop in sales in the country in 2015. China has driven the expansion of luxury car sales since the financial crisis, and its slowdown has hurt a number of brands.

Rolls-Royce, which is owned by BMW suffered a 6.8% fall in the number of cars it delivered worldwide last year. The 3,785 vehicles delivered in 2015 was still the second-best performance in the brand's 112-year history, but marks the end of five consecutive years of sales growth.

The fall in Chinese sales, the company's second biggest market before 2015, was partly hidden by a 7% rise in the US, it biggest market, and a 2% increase in the UK. The Middle East, which recorded a 4% increase in sales last year, has now replaced China as Rolls-Royce's second biggest market.

Twenty-fifteen was a year of tremendous challenge for the entire luxury industry because of global uncertainty.

Jaguar Land Rover, the biggest carmaker in Britain, has also suffered in China. Its sales in the country fell 24% in 2015. Record performances in the US, UK and Europe, however, led it to report a 5% rise in worldwide sales last year.