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# Ukraine to Establish 'Internet Army' to Fight Online Russian Propaganda

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Russian-language Pervy Baltiysky Kanal (PBK) news program directors Svetlana Korotkaja and Vladimirs Rodionovs supervise a broadcast in Riga, Latvia.

Ukraine's Ministry of Information Policy has called on its citizens to enlist in the country's "information forces" to battle against online propaganda spread by Russian trolls and pro-Kremlin media.

Volunteer Internet fighters can apply by leaving their name and e-mail address at a new website i-army.org, the ministry said Thursday in an online statement.

"Many fronts have been opened against us, and one of the most crucial ones is the information one," reads a note to potential volunteers on the newly launched website.

"Now it's time to fight back the Russian invaders on the information front," the website said.

Russia reportedly employs what has been described as an army of trolls to attack its critics

and spread false claims about the crisis in Ukraine.

Ukraine also has online buffs countering Moscow's stance through social networks. But unlike the efforts of Russian trolls — many of whom work full time and draw modest wages for posting dozens of comments per day, according to Novaya Gazeta — the posts by Ukrainian activists appear to have been so far uncoordinated.

To unify the individual soldiers and enlist more recruits, the Ministry of Information Policy has initiated the creation of an information force, it said in its statement. "The main goal of the project is to mobilize social network users to deliver accurate information and fight Russian propaganda."

Yuriy Stets, the ministry's chief, pledged to create the so-called Internet army earlier this year, telling Ukraine's 24 television that the more people signed up, the better.

"Anyone who is familiar with the Internet will become [part of] our Internet army of Ukraine," he was quoted as saying.

The Ministry of Information Policy, established late last year amid heavy fighting between Moscow-backed separatists and government forces in eastern Ukraine, has also moved to fight Russia's "propaganda" from another flank.

It recently announced plans to create a television channel called Ukraine Tomorrow to counterbalance the Kremlin-funded network RT, also known as Russia Today. The new Ukrainian channel will begin broadcasting next month, Stets said.

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