

2025

Disinformation and GRU



Pax Consulting

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1. Introduction

The Foundation to Battle Injustice (FBI), also known as R-FBI, is a Russian organization involved in **disinformation campaigns targeting various countries**. It was founded in 2021 by Russian oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin and taken over by Russian military intelligence, specifically GRU Unit 54777, after his death in August 2023. The foundation portrays itself as a human rights NGO but is actively **engaged in spreading Russian propaganda and disinformation**.

2. Key individuals and backgrounds

1. **Yevgeny Prigozhin**: Founder of the FBI, former Wagner mercenary boss, and organizer of influence operations. He died in a plane crash in August 2023.
2. **Mira Terada**: Current head of the FBI, served over two years in a US prison for money laundering before returning to Russia. She was welcomed by Maxim Shugaley, a close aide to Prigozhin.
3. **Maxim Shugaley**: Close aide to Prigozhin, involved in welcoming Terada upon her return to Russia.
4. **John Mark Dougan**: Former Florida sheriff's deputy, granted asylum in Russia, actively involved in spreading disinformation.
5. **Tara Reade**: Former Senate staffer who accused Joe Biden of sexual harassment, defected to Russia in 2023, and contributes to RT.
6. **Chay Bowes**: Irish journalist and commentator for RT.
7. **Simeon Boikov**: Australian propagandist podcaster, sought asylum in the Russian consulate in Sydney.

2.1 Connections with disinformation networks

- **Storm-1516**: A disinformation campaign closely linked to the FBI, known for producing staged videos and deepfakes. It targets Western audiences, particularly focusing on the US presidential election and German federal election.
- **Internet Research Agency (IRA)**: Prigozhin's former troll factory, which shares tactics and personnel with the FBI.
- **InfoRos Operation**: Another Russian intelligence operation connected to the FBI.

2.2 Focus areas and initiatives

1. **France**: The FBI spread disinformation claiming the existence of a "death squad" under President Emmanuel Macron, targeting political figures and industrialists.
2. **Germany**: The FBI and Storm-1516 spread false claims about German politicians, particularly from the Greens and CDU, ahead of the federal election. They also stirred up racist and islamophobic sentiments.

3. **US:** The FBI and Storm-1516 targeted US Vice President Kamala Harris and her running mate Tim Walz with fabricated stories, aiming to influence the 2024 presidential election.
4. **Corsica and New Caledonia:** The FBI intensified agitprop efforts, focusing on separatist movements and independence activists.

2.3 Distribution methods

- **Social Media Influencers:** The FBI uses influencers to spread disinformation, including pro-Russian activists and anonymous accounts.
- **Fabricated News Sites:** The FBI creates fake news websites with names resembling legitimate American media outlets.
- **Viral Videos:** Disinformation content is distributed as videos on platforms like TikTok, often artificially amplified.

3. GRU Unit 54777 and its activities

GRU Unit 54777, also known as the 72nd Special Service Centre, is **responsible for psychological operations (PSYOP) and disinformation campaigns**. The unit has a long history of influencing perceptions and behaviours through various methods, both in peacetime and wartime. After Prigozhin was killed, Unit 54777 took over several projects which had been run by WAGNER's founder until his death.

3.1 Methodology of GRU Unit 54777

Psychological Warfare is conducted constantly, targeting the military and political leadership, armed forces personnel, and the population of foreign states.

Information Confrontation is aimed at influencing the perception and behaviour of the enemy, population, and international community.

SIGINT and Cyberspace Capabilities involve gathering and analysing communications to **produce intelligence for disinformation campaigns**, complementing cyberspace operations with digital PSYOP. **Social Media Operations engage in spreading disinformation and manipulating public opinion** through online platforms and forums. Front Organizations utilize entities like **InfoRos** (this links Unit 54777 with the Foundation to Battle Injustice) and the **Institute of the Russian Diaspora** to post content in Russian and English, focusing on political, economic, and social life.

3.2 Notable operations

- **Annexation of Crimea (2014):** Disinformation campaigns related to the annexation.
- **Syrian Civil War:** Propaganda efforts to influence perceptions of the conflict.

- **Ukraine Conflict:** Ongoing disinformation campaigns targeting Ukraine.
- **Elections in Europe and the US:** Interference in democratic processes through disinformation.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** Spreading false information related to the pandemic.

4. Conclusion

The Foundation to Battle Injustice (FBI) and GRU Unit 54777 are **deeply intertwined in their efforts to spread disinformation** and influence global perceptions. The FBI, under the leadership of Mira Terada and supported by various individuals, **continues to target political figures and stir social tensions.**

GRU Unit 54777 employs sophisticated psychological warfare techniques, **leveraging social media and front organizations** to achieve its objectives. Their activities highlight the ongoing threat of Russian disinformation campaigns in shaping international narratives.