



# Hollande, Merkel targets for Ukrainian Internet trolls

KIEV, UKRAINE: Furious Ukrainian Internet users have bombarded the social networking sites of French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel for allegedly cosying up to Russia despite the ongoing fighting in their country.



Angela Merkel's Facebook page has been disabled after widespread criticism from Ukrainians for pictures of her enjoying the World Cup Final with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Image: Wikipedia

Thousands of messages flooded Merkel's Facebook page criticising her after she was pictured laughing with Russian President Vladimir Putin at Sunday's World Cup final in Rio de Janeiro.

"Danke Frau Ribbentrop (Thanks Mrs Ribbentrop)" read the most common post, in reference to Nazi-era foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop who signed a secret deal with the Soviet Union to carve up Poland.

The deluge of comments prompted a terse response from the German leader's media team.

"Dear fans of the Angela Merkel site, there is currently a spam attack on this page that floods all posts with certain comments," the online editor of Merkel's page wrote, adding that they would delete messages that "contain insults, slander, racism and political extremism."

"We look forward to a substantive and constructive dialogue in the future and hope that we can go back to it again soon," the message said.

## Facebook pages taken down

The official Facebook page of French head of state Hollande has also started attracting a barrage of comments from users furious with Paris for pushing on with the sale of two state-of-the-art Mistral warships to Russia despite accusations from the West and Kiev that Moscow was behind the bloody conflict in Ukraine.

"Merci pour le 'Mistral' a la Russie, Monsieur President! Vous aiderez les Ukrainiens a mourir! (Thanks for giving Russia the Mistral, Mr President! You will help Ukrainians to die!)," the most popular message read.

Away from the battlefields of eastern Ukraine where a pro-Moscow rebellion has claimed about 600 lives, Ukraine's crisis is being played out in cyberspace with trolls from both Russia and Ukraine frequently inundating media outlets with critical comments on articles about the subject.

Germany and France have been spearheading European efforts to revive a failed truce in Ukraine that would lead to peace negotiations and take some pressure off the bloc to punish Russia.

Hesitant European leaders are set to discuss possible further sanctions against Moscow amid pressure from Washington and Kiev for more decisive action.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge



French President Francois Hollande has lost his Facebook page for the moment as Ukrainians bombarded it with messages about the decision to sell Mistral warships to Russia. Image: Wikipedia

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