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## **RUSSIA CALLS ON UN TO DESIGN MECHANISM FOR COUNTERACTING FAKE NEWS**

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Isolated efforts by different countries to suppress fake news will unlikely bring about any desired effect and the risks are high that the struggle with fakes will result in suppression of dissent or the removal of unwanted media from the sphere of public information, Maxim Buyakevich, the director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's directorate for international information problems said on Tuesday.

As he spoke at the 40th session of the UN Committee on Information, he made public Russia's proposal on the mechanism for counteraction to fake stories.

"One-sided and oppositely directed attempts to struggle with fake news some countries make at the level of national legislations will hardly prove to be efficacious," Buyakevich said.

"Practice shows along with it the risks are high that the vigor of this struggle may force international law and commonly accepted humanistic norms and principles into the background, thus giving way to totalitarian methods of suppression of dissent, as well to removal of unwanted media or even individuals from the information space," he said.

"As a result, this will lead up to a degradation of the legal foundations normally functioning civic society and universal freedoms, which humankind has fought over centuries for," Buyakevich said.

He said Russia called on all the countries "to cooperate in this sphere and to put joint efforts into working out a system of counteraction to the fakes, the one that would meet the interests of all countries."

In the light of it, Buyakevich recommended that the UN Department of Public Information should give more attention to the planning of its activities over the medium term.

He recalled that the Russian mission to the UN made a recommendation last year to start working out the basic parameters of struggle with fake news under the umbrella of the UN Secretariat.

"Still its important to admit we havent seen any considerable progress in that area while the related risks are only getting deeper on the background of global turbulence and the comeback of the principles and methods of information contentions in along Cold War prescriptions in a number of countries," he said.

Buyakevich said it was quite obvious now that the main challenge came from the desire on the part of some countries to use fake stories for cynical political purposes and as a tool for tightening control over the national media space.

"This deals a blow to the institute of independent journalism, which is the cornerstone of civic society and violates the most fundamental principles of law like equal access to information for everyone and the freedom of expression," he said.

Buyakevich voiced concern over the plans of the UN Secretariat to stop the uploading of recorded accounts of plenary sessions of the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in all the six working languages at the UN website. The working languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

All the recording will appear from now on in English only.

"We cannot admit of a situation where knowledge of English will turn into a pass for entering the UN world, as this will undermine the global embrace of this organization," Buyakevich said.

<http://tass.com/politics/1002647>

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