

Ukraine Government Asks Public for Donations to Equip Special ‘Anti-Separatist’ Units

By [RT](#)

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Ukrainian soldiers sit in a tank at their newly erected checkpoint near the eastern Ukrainian city of Slavyansk on April 25, 2014. (AFP Photo/Genya Savilov)

The cash-stripped Ukrainian Interior Ministry is asking the public for donations to equip the newly formed special forces. It is offering a place in a public commission, which would control the cash flow, to biggest donors.

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The ministry has recruited 8,000 out of a planned 12,000 troops since April 13, when Interior Minister Arsen Avakov [decided](#) to form the new units in response to the wave of protests in eastern Ukraine. But it lacks the money to properly equip them, it said in a statement.

“The state budget allocates funds for the functioning of the special units of the Interior Ministry. But in they are not enough in the circumstance of rigid resource saving, state spending sequestering and an [economic war](#) unleashed by the Russian Federation,” the statement said.

The list of what the troops need includes bulletproof vests, Kevlar helmets, communication equipment, transport and even underwear, linen and soap.

The ministry says it accepts both money donations and actual body armor and hygiene products. It pledges a transparent mechanism for spending the donations with monthly reports and offers seats at a public commission, which would control the cash flow, to sponsors who donate more than 100,000 hryvnas (nearly \$9,000).

Money problems are hampering the effort to form new Interior Ministry units in some regions. The Odessa region unit managed to recruit only 18 volunteers out of the 500 planned, the region’s police chief, Petr Lutsuk, reported Thursday. He said the ministry budget offered about \$45 a month per force member, while the job description includes working at least 12 hours a day, neither of which helped with attracting people.

It is the second Ukrainian ministry which has decided to seek crowdfunding to fill its coffers. Last week the Ukrainian Defense Ministry reported that it had collected more than \$7 million in donations to rearm the national army.

Kiev decided to pour some \$700 million of budget money into its military, which is suffering from poor morale and [shortage](#) of even basic equipment, while slashing social spending and

raising utilities prices.

The Ukrainian government is struggling to establish control over the Donetsk region, where local protesters have declared that they consider the central government illegitimate and are planning to hold a referendum on the region's autonomy. Armed anti-government activists seized a number of buildings throughout the region, with the city of Slavyansk becoming the center of resistance.

Kiev has launched what it calls an "[anti-terrorist](#) operation" by the military to quash the protest, but so far despite several gunfights and fatalities they [have failed](#) to gain any ground. Russia has warned that if the Ukrainian troops use heavy weapons against the protesters, Moscow may use its troops to intervene.

The Ukrainian government accuses Russia of orchestrating the protest, saying Russian special operations teams are operating in eastern Ukraine. So far all the evidence Kiev has produced to substantiate its allegations have been either inconclusive or have proven to [be false](#).

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