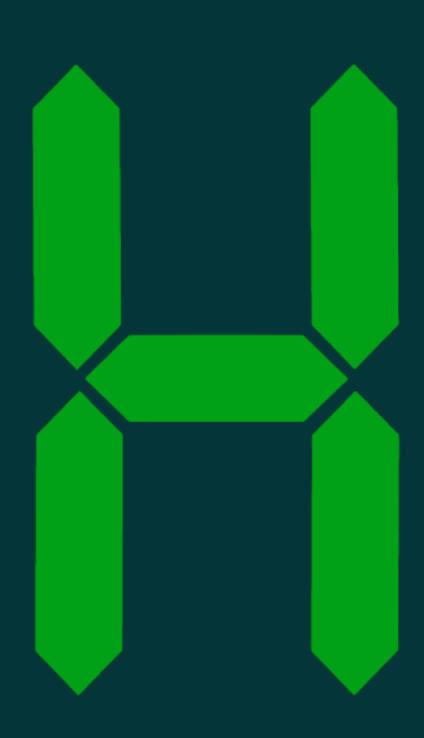
Monthly report on information disorder November 2023

Action for Democratic Society hibrid.info



Monthly report on information disorder November 2023

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Introduction

This summary and descriptive report, offers an overview of the state of information (misinformation) throughout the month of November 2023, based on the data provided by the fact-checking platform - hibrid.info. The format of this report is the first and only of its kind. It is a monitoring report and presents the situation over a one-month period of time and this is seventeenth monthly report published so far.

This report is designed by the fact-checking platform hibrid.info, part of the Kosovar NGO "Action for Democratic Society" (ADS) and is supported by the American Foundation "National Endowment for Democracy" (NED) under the project "Promotion of Objective Journalism and Fighting Disinformation".

In this monitoring report is provided an overview of the form of media information on events in and around Kosovo. In the course of this report, several figures (graphics) deriving from the hibrid info database is presented, divided under several rating categories that are part of the fact-checking methodology of this platform.

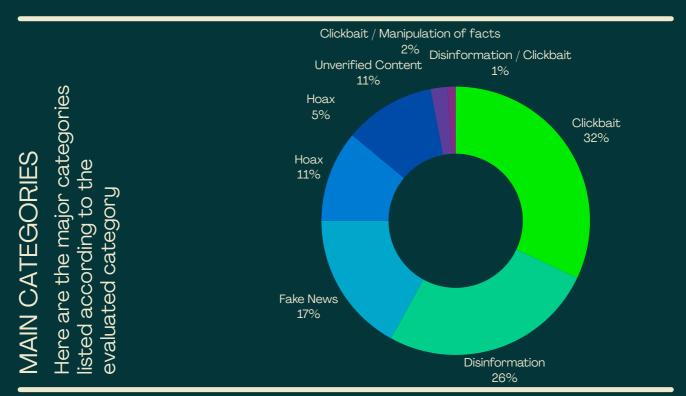
The report addresses 8 comparative categories of data, aiming to provide a more objective clarification of the state of information and to explain the trends of disinformation for this monitoring period.

The monitoring categories are:

- · Rating of disinformation articles
- The topics used to create and disseminate disinformation content
- · Areas upon which disinformation articles are created and disseminated
- Institutions and persons tackled by the disinformation articles
- Types of media that have created and disseminated disinformation content
- Categorization of media in Albanian and Serbian language that have created and disseminated misleading conten
- Types of social media that have created and shared disinformation content
- Types of publishers in social media that have created and disseminated misleading content
- Checking and evaluation of statements

The content analyzed by the researchers of hibrid.info and that has served for the preparation of this report is primarily that published in Albanian and Serbian languages.

Evaluation categories of the disinformation



Monitoring of misinformation content processed during November (88 pieces of content) indicates that articles labeled as "clickbait" were created and disseminated the most during this month. This category is followed by disinformation and fake news, as the three categories with the highest percentages.

While in October, unverified content related to the Israel-Hamas conflict, which began on 7 October, dominated the scene, however, in the month of November, the prevalence of "clickbait" content has made a comeback. Despite the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, misinformation content associated with it has decreased, allowing the "clickbait" category to regain dominance in November. This comparison highlights that "clickbait" articles are the most common form of misinformation, which diminishes in the event developments in the security domain occur, especially those linked to the north or international events like the Israel-Hamas conflict or the earthquake in Turkey (in February 2023).

While during October 2023, unverified content was at the top of misinformation categories, during November 2023, "clickbait" content ranks first with 32%, followed by disinformation at 26%. These two categories are followed by fake news at 17%, hoax at 11%. Even though in the previous month (October 2023), publications rated as unverified content ranked first, in this month (November 2023), it ranks fifth with 11%.

Misinformation content rated as "clickbait" has increased during November due to the publication of misinformation content in the black chronicle domain, mainly by information portals (digital media outlets). Meanwhile, disinformation was mainly published in the security domain by various publishers on social media.



32% of misinformation articles processed have been rated as "clickbait".

Analysis of rating types

1 "Clickbait"

All content that has been rated as "clickbait" is published by media outlets in the Albanian language. The majority of them are created and published in the domain of black chronicle and social issues. Various articles from the black chronicles regarding tragic events, murders and accidents have dominated this assessment category. These contents are related to events that did not occur in Kosovo. and their headline titles do not disclose the location of the event, leaving room for clickbait and misinformation. Meanwhile, clickbait articles on social topics contained information about paid services of social networks Instagram and Facebook, as well as the decision to prohibit tobacco smoking. However, all of these, were not connected to developments in Kosovo. Hence, irrelevant information for the Kosovo audience used solely to increase click-ability. Additionally, "clickbait" articles related to the football match Kosovo-Israel were published, making false claims in relation to the safety of the football players. There were manipulated pieces of information regarding the strike of miners at the Trepça mine and other topics from politics and health.

02. Disinformation

Disinformation during November (2023) were published by social media (17%), dubious portals (6%), and media (3%). Contents rated as disinformation were mainly published in the domain of security, followed by social issues and politics. In the security domain, disinformation mainly revolved around the Israel-Hamas conflict with the dissemination of misleading photos and images on social media. Meanwhile, in the social issues domain, disinformation were spread about jobs opportunities in Switzerland. In the political domain, there was disinformation with unsaid statements by Member of Parliament Ganimete Musliu regarding the Kurti Government and U.S. President Joe Biden on Kosovo.

04. Hoax

All deceptive content was published by various publishers on social media. hoaxs were published in the social domain related to reward-based gaming publications, leveraging the figure of boxer Florian Marku and singer Leonora Jakupi, as well as deceptive publications involving distribution of money to the audience utilizing the figure of Behgjet Pacolli. Meanwhile, in the political domain, an manipulated photo was published, depicting the portrait of former President Thaçi during a meeting of the LDK.

O3. Fake news

Almost all fake news was published on social media, mainly on TikTok. These false contents were primarily from the security domain, followed by black chronicles, politics, sports, and social issues. In the security domain, false news was published about the arming of the KSF with helicopters, airplanes and military vehicles. While, in the domain of black chronicles, false news about earthquakes in Albania and the death of 10 Albanians from a tornado in Germany were published. In the domain of politics, a false news item was noteworthy on social media regarding the health condition of former President Hashim Thaçi. In the sports domain, an image generated with artificial intelligence was published, falsely claiming to represent a project for construction of a stadium in Pristina. In the domain of social issues, false content related to the Israel-Hamas conflict was also published.

05. Unverified Content

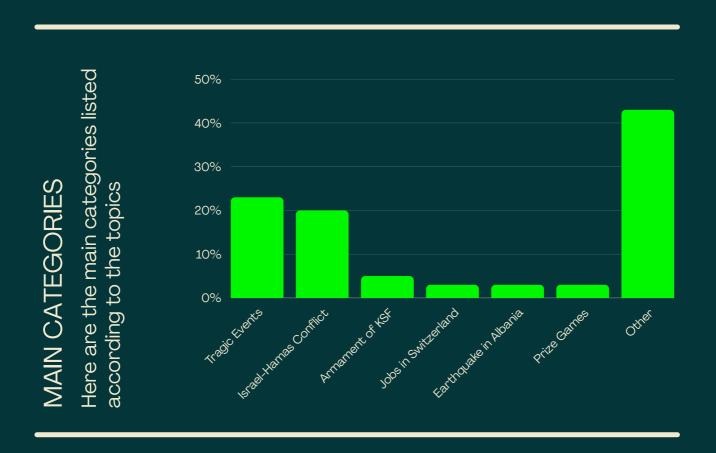
Publishers of unverified content are mainly from social media. While the topics utilized for such contents are from the social domain. While in the Albanian language unverified content was published on social media related to the Israel-Hamas conflict, in the Serbian language, unverified content related to an incident in a church, without facts claimed to be done by Albanians, was published.

06. Clickbait / Manipulation of Facts

The content published in mainstream media that was rated as clickbait / manipulation of facts was related to the resignation of Blerim Vela, a former staff member of the Kosovo Presidency.

Other articles with misinformation content were rated in the categories: disinformation / clickbait.

The topics used to create and disseminate disinformation content



The main topics that have dominated this month are various tragic cases (death, murder) and the Israel-Hamas conflict. While in October, the topic of the Israel-Hamas conflict dominated (49%), followed by tragic cases (6%), in November, there has been a shift in positions, with the topic of tragic cases ranking first (23%), followed by the Israel-Hamas conflict (20%).

Publications in the black chronicle with ratings as "clickbait" increased this month. The main reason was that different publishers used events of this kind from different places, aiming to present them as events related to Kosovo or Albanian speaking regions by not specifying the location through the headline. Meanwhile, despite the fact of the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, misleading content related to the event has decreased in contents in the Albanian language, reducing this topic in the disinformation ecosystem.

The arming of the KSF continues in the third position regarding the topics that were misinformed more. Just like in October, in November as well, this topic has taken the third position with 5%. Regarding this topic, baseless claims were made about the arming of the KSF with various weapons, including military vehicles, airplanes, helicopters, etc. Misleading content related to other supplies with weapons is still circulating on social media. This is because information on this topic, after news of drone purchases in June, seems to be attractive to the audience.

Similarly, in November, there has been misinformation regarding topics such as: earthquakes in Albania, job opportunities in Switzerland and prize games.



57% of the main topics are about tragic events in various circumstances, the Israel-Hamas conflict, arming of the KSF, earthquake in Albania, work in Switzerland and prize games.

Fact-checking analysis according to topics

In the following are summarized analyses of four main topics (themes) addressed by various media and publishers, based on the measurements from the hibrid.info platform through fact-checking methodology.

Tragic cases (death, murder)

All misinformation content related to articles on this topic has been published in the domain of black chronicle and has been rated as "clickbait," fake news and disinformation. These articles are mainly published on informative portals, followed by dubious portals and publishers on social media in the Albanian language. Articles, under this disinformation topic, have covered tragic events such as death, murder, accidents and disasters in various circumstances and for which the location of the events is undisclosed in their headlines with the intention of encouraging clicks from readers.

O3. Arming of the KSF

All contents concerning this topic has been published by various publishers on TikTok. These contents, claiming that the KSF has been supplied with military vehicles, helicopters and airplanes from the security domain, have been rated as fake news.

02. Israel-Hamas

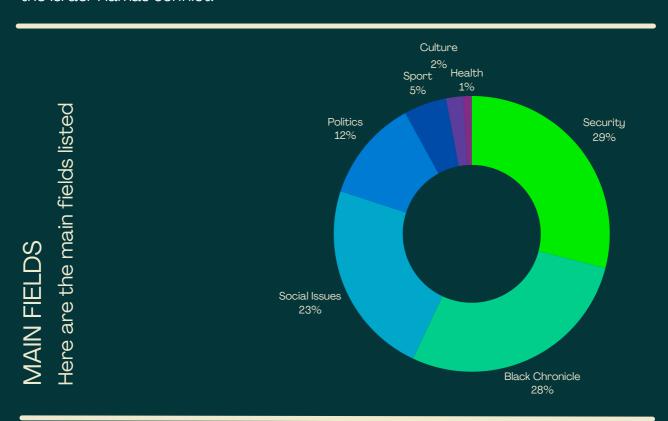
Misinformation content related to the Israel-Hamas conflict has been published by various publishers on social media in the Albanian language. Such contents were published in the domain of security and social issues, which were rated as disinformation, unverified content and fake news. Images and photographs claiming to depict situations or conditions from the conflict have been published on accounts and pages on social media in the Albanian language.

04. Jobs in Switzerland

Old news regarding the topic that Switzerland is seeking workers continues to be republished on dubious portals with the claim to present them as current and which has been rated as disinformation.

Types of domains

The monitoring results for November 2023 show that different publishers (mainstream media, dubious portals and social media) have produced and disseminated most of the misleading contents in the security domain. The main topics that have dominated in the security domain are the arming of the KSF and the Israel-Hamas conflict.



Misinformation contents from the security domain has also dominated this month (November), just like in the previous month (October), but with a significant decrease of 23% (52% in October to 29% in November). The continuation of the Israel-Hamas conflict, which begun on 7 October, as well as misinformation about the arming of the KSF, has influenced the prevalence of misinformation in the security domain during this month. It is followed by the black chronicle, which is presented with a significant increase of 19% compared to the previous month (from 9% in October to 28% in November). This derives as a result of publishing contents rated as "clickbait" for various tragic cases. These two domains make up more than half of the misinformation contents published in the misinformation ecosystem.

Misinformation articles in the domain of social issues show a change from the previous month (October) in terms of percentage. While during October, it ranked third with 9%, in November, the domain of social issues also ranks third but this time with an increase of 19%. The political domain, compared to the previous month, has experienced a decrease of 9%, (from 21% as the second in October 2023, now at 12% as the fourth in November 2023).

The majority of misleading publications with content on security have been published by social media with 28%, followed by mainstream media with 2%. In the security domain, 14% of misinformation content is disinformation, 9% is fake news, 5% is unverified content and 2% is "clickbait." Disinformation, fake news and unverified content are published by publishers on social media, while "clickbait" articles are published in mainstream media. The dominant topics were the Israel-Hamas conflict and the arming of the KSF.

Misinformation content from the black chronicle domain has mostly been rated as "clickbait" (23%), followed by fake news (3%) and disinformation (2%). Almost all "clickbait" contents have been published by media in the Albanian language in relation to tragic cases such as death and murder under various circumstances, accidents, murder, death and injury. While fake news and disinformation have been published on dubious portals and social media.

The majority of misleading articles with social topics have been published by publishers on social media in the Albanian language, where deceptive content (6%) dominates regarding prize games using the figures of singers and unverified content (6%) related to the Israel-Hamas conflict. Disinformation and fake news have also been published regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Meanwhile, misinformation about politics has been published by media, dubious portals and publishers on social media which have been rated as disinformation (5%), hoax (3%), fake news (2%), clickbait (2%) and clickbait/disinformation (2%).



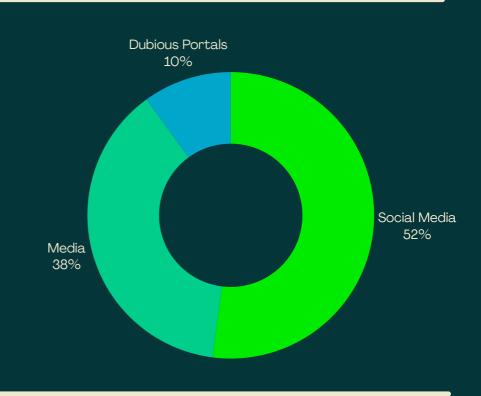
92% of the misinformation content is related to security, the black chronicle, social issues and politics.

Types of publishers

Similar to the previous month (October 2023), during November 2023, the highest number of misinformation articles were published by social media, accounting for 52%. Compared to October, social media experienced a decrease of 21% (from 73% in October 2023 to 52% in November 2023). On the other hand, mainstream media observed an increase of 11% (from 27% in October 2023 to 38% in November 2023) as a result of publishing almost all "clickbait" articles in mainstream media. Additionally, during November, 10% of the processed misleading content was published on dubious portals, which were absent during October.

According to this month's measurements, 52% of the misinformation articles were created and disseminated by various publishers on social media, 38% by mainstream media and 10% by dubious portals. Compared to the previous month, it is observed that there has been a 21% decrease in content published on social media, an 11% increase in articles published in mainstream media, while dubious portals have returned with a 10% after being absent in the previous month.







90% of articles with misinformation content were published by publishers in social media (52%) and in media outlets (38%).

5

Classification of publications in the Albanian and Serbian language

This measurement reveals the language in which the scrutinized disinformation articles have been published over the course of one month, categorizing the media into Albanian, Serbian and other languages concerning their coverage reports of the developments in and around Kosovo.





Throughout this month as well, diverse Albanian language publishers have predominantly disseminated misleading content, accounting for 97%, pertaining to developments in and around Kosovo. This is understandable given that hybrid.info monitoring platform sample places a heightened focus to content associated with Kosovo. Furthermore, this sample dataset is more extensive in the context of content published in the Albanian language from mainstream media, publishers on social media and dubious portals, whereas, in the Serbian language primarily is carried out the monitoring of misleading reports related to developments in and around Kosovo, within the mainstream media.

Based on the monitoring data, it's evident that 52% of content in the Albanian language is published by pages and accounts on social media, while 35% by mainstream media and 9% emerges from dubious portals. Meanwhile, all instances of misleading information in the Serbian language are published by mainstream media (3%).

Analysis of articles in this category

In this section of the report, disinformation publications published by media outlets in Albanian, Serbian and other languages are analyzed. The following narrative provides an overview of their interrelations across categorizations, domains, and

1. Publications in Albanian language

addressed topics.

Misinformation contents processed in the Albanian language during November were published by pages and accounts on social media, while 35% originated from mainstream media and 9% from dubious portals. While in October. unverified contents dominated. November. "clickbait" articles rank first. mainly due to the fact that all content from the black chronicle have been rated under this category. This is followed by disinformation at 25%, continuing with fake news at 17%. With regard to the domain, 29% of them were published in the security domain, followed by the black chronicle at 28% and social issues at 22%.

O2. Publications in Serbian language

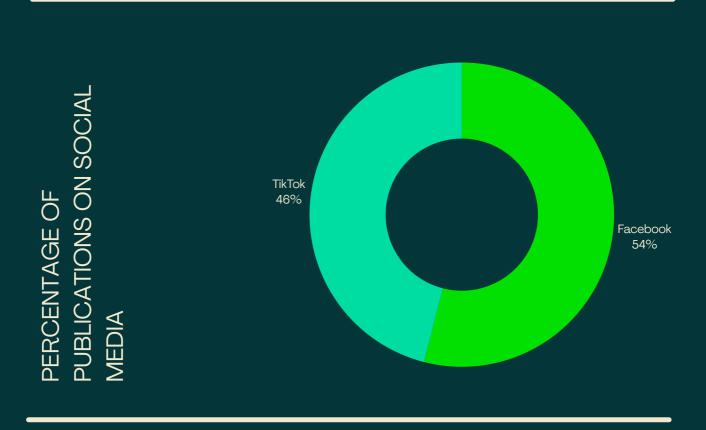
All misleading content processed in the Serbian language originated from mainstream media focusing on sports and social topics. Media publications in the Serbian language were as disinformation categorized and unverified content. While the disinformation pertained to the claim non-appearance goalkeeper of the Israeli national football team in the match against Kosovo, on the other hand, unverified content was associated to an incident in an Orthodox church in Bardhosh. where allegations, without evidence, suggested that it was perpetrated by Albanians.

Types of social media

In this section, only disinformation articles published and disseminated on social media are analyzed, excluding publications in other media outlets (mainstream media and dubious portals).

ISimilar to the previous month (October 2023), in November 2023, misinformation contents from Facebook publishers continue to dominate, but suffering a decline of 34% (from 88% in October to 54% in November). Meanwhile, misinformation on TikTok has experienced an increase during November 2023, rising at 34% compared to October (from 12% in October 2023 to 34% in November 2023).

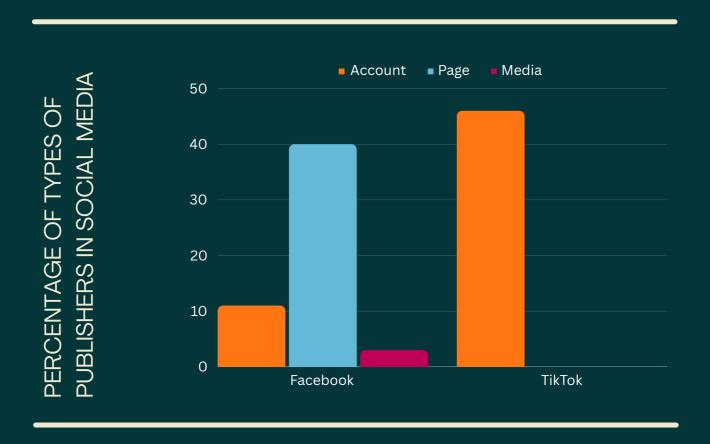
Therefore, 54% of misinformation contents were published and disseminated on Facebook, followed by TikTok with 46%.



Types of publishers in social media

This measurement analyzes, through monitoring data, the interaction on social media regarding the publication and dissemination of disinformation articles by various publishers on social media platforms. This is done through these main categories of publishers: accounts, pages, profiles, media and channels managed by social media users.

Misinformation in the Albanian language, during November 2023, was predominantly published by various pages on Facebook (40%), followed by accounts (11%). Also, during this month in 2023, Facebook pages have dominated in terms of the dissemination of misleading articles, followed by TikTok accounts (46%).



Analysis of Types of Publishers on Social Media

The following categories of social media are analyzed in relation to the publication and dissemination of disinformation content.

01 Facebook

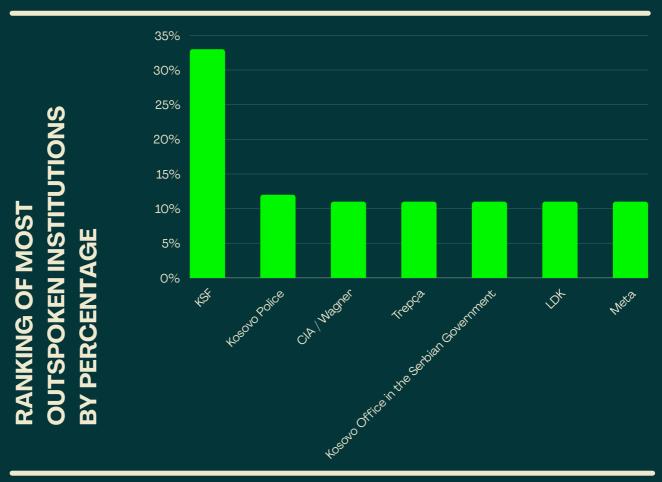
Misinformation published the Albanian language on Facebook is categorized as disinformation (23%), hoax (14%), unverified content (14%) and fake news (3%). The majority of content published misleading Facebook is from social and political domain. The overwhelming majority of misleading publications from the political domain involve disinformation and unverified content related to the Israel-Hamas conflict. Meanwhile. articles with social topics are linked to disinformation and unverified content pertaining developments of social nature stemming from the Israel-Hamas conflict, as well as the misuse of well-known figures from Kosovo in hoaxulent publications claiming to be prize games on Facebook.

02. TikTok

all of the misinformation Almost contents published by TikTok accounts falls within the security domain which as fake news rated disinformation. On TikTok, false news. disseminated, has been makina allegations about the arming of the KSF with various weapons like helicopters and disinformation airplanes. The encompasses publications that claim an attack in the north, a fabricated statement attributed to Minister Hekuran Murati regarding police salaries and а deceptive claim suggesting that Imam Elvis Naçi was denied entry into the USA.

Most outspoken personalities and institutions

This measurement analyzes data to determine which institutions and personalities (political public figures) have been most outspoken through the monitoring of articles with disinformation content.

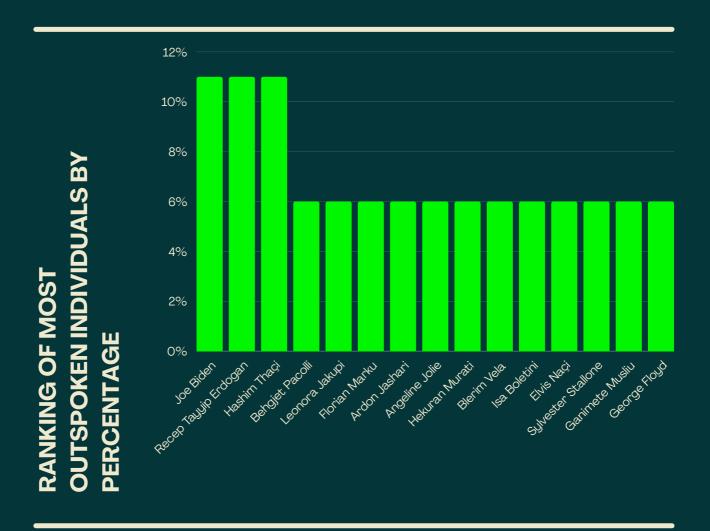


The security institutions continue to be the most mentioned in the misinformation created and disseminated by various publishers in the Albanian language.

The Kosovo Security Force (KSF) was mentioned in misinformation contents published on social media (TikTok) with claims that the KSF would be equipped with military vehicles, helicopters and airplanes.

The Kosovo Police is the second most mentioned institution in misinformation contents. This institution was mentioned in a TikTok post regarding their salaries, linked to a manipulated statement by Minister Hekuran Murati.

All the institutions mentioned in the above table have been mentioned at least on time in the misinformation contents published by various publishers during the month of November 2023.



U.S. President Joe Biden, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and former President of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi are the most mentioned figures in the misinformation published in the month of November.

Biden was mentioned on social media and dubious portals. These types of publishers created and disseminated articles featuring an unsupported statement about Kosovo and a manipulated photo linked to his persona. Erdogan was implicated in the false information disseminated on TikTok concerning the arming of the KSF, making baseless claims that Turkey would be involved. Former President Hashim Thaçi was referenced on TikTok, where a manipulated image of him at an LDK meeting was circulated, along with false information about his health status in The Hague.

Personalities such as Behgjet Pacolli, Leonora Jakupi and Florian Marku were mentioned in deceptive content on social media (Facebook) with deceptive claims about prize games and money distribution to followers.

Other mentioned personalities and figures include Ardon Jashari, Angelina Jolie, Hekuran Murati, Blerim Vela, Isa Boletini, Elvis Naçi, Sylvester Stallone, Ganimete Musliu, and George Floyd.

8

Checking and evaluation of statements

Hibrid.info, in addition to monitoring and analyzing media articles, also conducts checking and evaluations of statements made by high-ranking political and institutional officials, as well as those figures with public influence. The evaluation of these figures, according to the methodology of hibrid.info, is carried out under the categories of truthfulness, sustainability and holding of promises.

RANKING OF CHECKING AND EVALUATION OF STATEMENTS



Within the content monitored during the month of November, hibrid.info checked and analyzed two statements of promises.

Xhelal Sveçla, the Minister of Internal Affairs, inferring upon the members of the Special Intervention Unit (SIU) of the Kosovo Police, wrote in a Facebook post that the average income for these officials during this year surpasses 2200 euros. Hibrid.info has corroborated that according to the Law on Salaries for public officials, none of the positions within the Kosovo Police receives the amount asserted by Minister Sveçla and, furthermore, it has been determined that the claimed payment involves police officers engaged in the north of the country due to extended working hours.

The population census was expected to start on 1 November 2023, based on the decision of the Government of Kosovo. The decision was also confirmed by Prime Minister Kurti through a statement. However, after fact-checking by hibrid.info, it has been confirmed that the decision hasn't begun with implementation yet.

Methodology

For the preparation of this monitoring report, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used.

With regard to quantitative methods, a database was initially created from ADS/hibrid.info in order to break down and analyze in details the misinformation trends. Through this database, maintained and updated on regular daily basis by the ADS/hibrid.info staff, articles with misinformation content are monitored. The selection of misinformation contents for analysis is based on importance, relevance, virality and context. These criteria are determined by the experienced monitoring team in the information sphere.

This means that all articles published on the hibrid.info platform are placed in the database, and the latter serves as the main source for preparing the monitoring report. Furthermore, the methodology used to analyze the presented data in the monitoring report enables data filtering into daily, weekly, and monthly basis, mainly in quantitative form, to better understand the phenomenon of disinformation of those analyzed articles for this one month period of time according to various categories and ratings.

Parallel to this, another important source for this report is the ADS/hibrid.info methodology (published on the hibrid.info website) for combating informational disorder. This methodology, which is first and foremost based on qualitative methods, has been developed by the professional staff of ADS/hibrid.info and is in line with the highest international standards for fact-checking, following the guidelines of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), respectively. ADS/hibrid.info is a full member of this international mechanism - IFCN.

This monitoring report covers the period from 1-30 of November 2023, having processed 88 misleading contents.

Consions

This short monitoring report provides a snapshot of the one month state of play of information (misinformation) during November 2023, based on the data from the fact-checking platform – hibrid.info.

Throughout November 2023, various media outlets and publishers published "clickbait" articles with 32%, followed disinformation with 26% and fake news with 17%, while deceptive content held the fourth place with 11%. The majority of "clickbait" content was created and published in the black chronicle domain with 23% and social media with 3%, and all were published by mainstream media. On the other hand, disinformation were published by social media publishers, dubious portals and mainstream media in the Albanian language, where overwhelming majority was from the domain of security, politics and social issues. Almost all fake news articles were published on social media, most of them related to the domain of security and black chronicle. All deceptive contents were published by pages and accounts on social media related to social and political topics. So, the moment there is no significant development in Kosovo, "clickbait" articles reappear as a form of informative disorder with the idea of encouraging clicks, a practice adopted by informative portals. While, disinformation continues to be published on social media, by intervening in old topics and discussions (making changes to headline titles and content).

Tragic cases, including deaths, murders, accidents and disasters, along with the Israel-Hamas conflict, were the predominant two topics of misinformation this month. Articles disseminating misinformation about these tragic events covered deaths, murders, accidents and disasters under various circumstances and upon which omitted location details in their headlines, aiming to attract clicks, were mainly categorized as "clickbait,", and published on informative portals. Regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict, social media published predominantly disinformation and fake news in the domain of security and social issues, in most cases, featuring images and photos that inaccurately portrayed the conflict's situation. Despite the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, the volume of misleading content from social media pages and accounts related to it has decreased. This opens way that tragic topics to dominate Kosovo's misinformation landscape.

Despite the fact that are not being directly related, security, black chronicle and social issues constitute the overwhelming majority (80%) of the misinformation contents published for November 2023. The majority of misinformation contents from the security domain was rated as disinformation (14%) and fake news (9%) and was published on

social media. Meanwhile, misinformation content from the black chronicle was mostly published in mainstream media, with most of them being categorized as "clickbait." Contents related to the arming of the KSF and the Israel-Hamas conflict have made security to dominate this month, while "clickbait" articles were published in the black chronicle domain, focusing on various tragic cases. Also, the overwhelming majority of misinformation from the social domain was published on social media, where hoax, unverified content and disinformation predominated in terms of categories. Other domains of misinformation include politics (12%), sports (5%), culture (2%) and health (1%).

Also, throughout November 2023, misinformation published on social media continued to dominate with 52%, followed by mainstream media (38%) and dubious portals (10%). Based on the monitoring sample, during November, 97% of misleading content was published by media outlets and pages on social media in the Albanian language, while 3% in the Serbian language. The overwhelming majority of misleading content in the Albanian language is in the domain of security, black chronicle and social issues, while those in Serbian language are in the domain of social issues and sport. While the majority of misleading content in the Albanian language was categorized as "clickbait", disinformation and fake news, those in the Serbian language were categorized as disinformation and unverified content. In regard to the publications by social media publishers, 54% were published on Facebook, followed by TikTok with 46%.

Joe Biden, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Hashim Thaçi are the three most mentioned figures in misinformation published by publishers in the Albanian language. As an institution, the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) was included in the misinformation published during November.

Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, did not keep the promise declared on 27 October that the population census process would start on the specified date (1 November) based on the decision of the Government of Kosovo, a decision that has not yet been implemented.

The Minister of Internal Affairs, Xhelal Sveçla, made a semi-true statement, writing that the average income for these officials during this year surpasses the amount of 2200 euros, even though, according to the Law on Salaries for public officials, none of the positions within the Kosovo Police is paid the amount asserted by Minister Sveçla and it has been determined that the alleged payment involves police officers engaged in the north of the country due to the extended working hours.

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