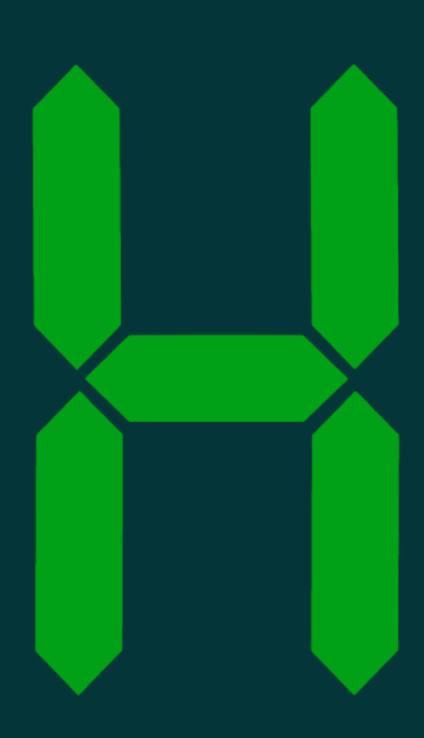
Monthly report on information disorder December 2023

Action for Democratic Society hibrid.info



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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 nineteenth 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.

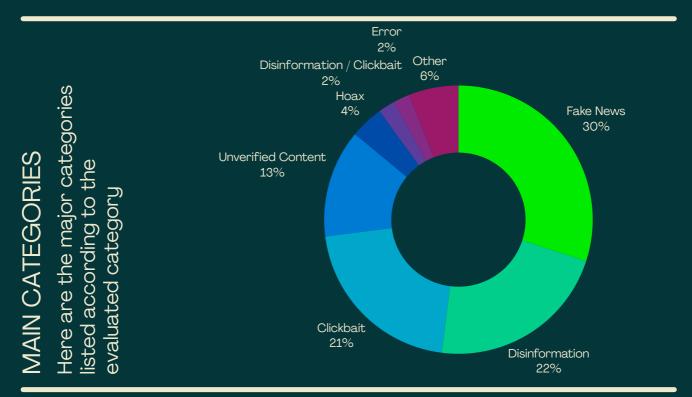
The report addresses 8 comparative categories of data, aiming to provide a more objective clarification of the state of information and to explain the trends of disinformation for this monitoring period.

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



Out of 67 contents of misinformation that have been processed during December 2023, they signify shifts in terms of the trends of misinformation content published by various media and publishers.

Whereas "clickbait" articles, disinformation and unverified content have been prevalent in recent months, this month sees a shift, with fake news taking the lead in the rated categories. Based on the conducted monitoring, it appears that fake news primarily take place on the TikTok social network and has been predominant this month due to a substantial dissemination of misinformation concerning the arming of the KSF, all of which has been categorized as fake news.

Fake news is trailed by disinformation, maintaining its second position rank (as in November). Throughout this month, inaccurate content, predominantly disseminated on social media and dubious portals covering diverse social topics, has been categorized as disinformation, leading this category to take the position right behind fake news.

"Clickbait" articles, as the most frequent form of misinformation from informative portals (media) during this month, are ranked in the third position. Although "clickbait" articles dominated the previous month, their prevalence has diminished this month, making way to fake news published on social media for the take.



30% of misinformation articles processed have been rated as "fake news.".

.1 Analysis of rating types

$\bigcap 1$ Fake news

Almost all of the fake news processed has been published by pages or accounts on social media. The majority of them have been created and published in the security domain. In the security domain, fake news related to the arming of the KSF and the north of Kosovo were published. Following the agreement reached for the purchase of several drones by the Government of Kosovo, certain TikTok accounts have created and disseminated fake news about other supplies of various weaponry. In regard to the security, several fake news about the north were also published, specifically with false claims that the "Wagner" mercenary group appeared, that there are maneuvers around the Kosovo-Serbia border as well as the killing of three police officers there.

03. Clickbait

A considerable percentage of "clickbait" articles were published in the domain of social issues, followed by the black chronicle, law and sports, which mainly were published in the mainstream media. Topics in the social domain were related to drug seizures, attacks by stray dogs, the Self-Employment Program, etc., for which the headlines are unclarified. Meanwhile, those of the black chronicle were about tragic cases, murders, accidents related to events that did not occur in Kosovo and their locations were not disclosed in their headlines, leaving room to entice clickbait and misinformation.

05. Hoax

All frauds were published by pages on social media in the social domain. Deceptive contents were published concerning the topic of loan provision, where dubious pages have published various false announcements about providing loans in different amounts of money.

02 Disinformation

Throughout December, disinformation was published in the domain of social issues (12%), security (6%) and political (4%). Such disinformation was mainly published by social media (12%) and dubious portals (7%). Disinformation was published related to certain topics, notably the north and protests in Serbia. For the north, inaccurate content was published in the Albanian language, claiming that 200 armed people had entered and there was an explosion in the north. As for the protests in Serbia, disinformation from media in the Serbian language was published, claiming the involvement of Prime Minister Kurti in these protests through media and social media accounts.

04. Unverified Content

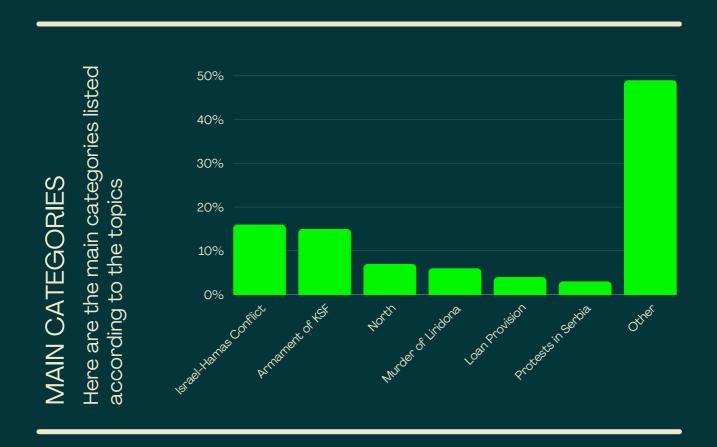
All unverified content was published in the domain of social issues and security. These unverified contents were published by pages and accounts on social media in the Albanian language. The continuation of the Israel-Hamas conflict, starting from October 7 of the previous year (2023), has led to the publication of many unverified contents related to the conflict on social media, dominated by images generated by artificial intelligence or old photographs.

06. Disinformation/ Clickbait

An article published in the media from the sports domain claiming that Albania leads in terms of ticket requests for the European Football Championship. Fact-checking has confirmed that the claim in the published article's title that Albanians lead in ticket requests for Euro 2024 turned out to be inconsistent with the content of this article, which was rated as disinformation/clickbait.

Other articles with misinformation content have been rated in categories such as: error, unverified content/disinformation, unverified content/satire, deep-fake and manipulation of facts.

The topics used to create and disseminate disinformation content



Based on the monitoring of misinformation content, various media outlets and publishers have predominantly published misleading articles regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict (16%) and the arming of the KSF (15%). These two topics continue to be exploited for misinformation on various social media pages.

The ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict has resulted that this topic is used for misinformation on social media during this month as well. Misinformation related to this topic was disseminated in the domains of social issues and security, primarily featuring old photographs and images generated through artificial intelligence. Despite the prevalence of this topic and the ongoing conflict, misleading content related to the event has decreased in contents of Albanian language, leading to a reduction in the prominence of this topic in the misinformation ecosystem.

The topic of the arming of the Kosovo Security Forces (KSF) persists as a subject for misinformation during December 2023 as well. Speculations about arms procurement by the Kosovo Government for the arming of KSF have continued circulating since June when the purchase of drones was announced.

In December, misleading content related to the north was also published in the security domain. This misinformation published on social media contained false claims about the situation in the north, linking it to the entry of armed groups and the "Wagner" mercenary group, as well as military maneuvers around the border.

Throughout December, misleading content has been published in regard to claims about the case of murder of Liridona Murseli, announcements for credit provision in certain amounts and misinformation about protests in Serbia.



51% of the main topics are about the Israel-Hamas conflict, arming of the KSF, the north, the murder of Liridona Murseli, credit provision and protests in Serbia.

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.

1 Israel-Hamas Conflict

Almost all content related to this topic that has been processed was published by pages and accounts on social media, the majority of which have been rated as unverified content. These contents were published in the domains of security and social issues. Security-related content involved old photos and images falsely claiming the arming of Israel by the USA and Turkey, or the current situation in Gaza. Meanwhile, misinformation in the social domain included images of children among ruins generated through artificial intelligence, as well as protests for hostage exchange or the establishment of new Israeli settlements in Gaza.

03. North

About the north topic continues to be published misinformation in the security domain. All of these contents have been published on social media which have been rated as disinformation and fake news. Misinformation regarding this topic has included false claims about military maneuvers on the Kosovo-Serbia border, the entry of 200 armed individuals into the north and the appearance of the Wagner mercenary group there.

02. Arming of KSF

Misleading content regarding the KSF's arms supply has been published by various accounts on TikTok in Albanian language. These contents fall under the security domain, making false claims that various military equipment has been purchased by the Kosovo government or donated by countries like Turkey and the USA.

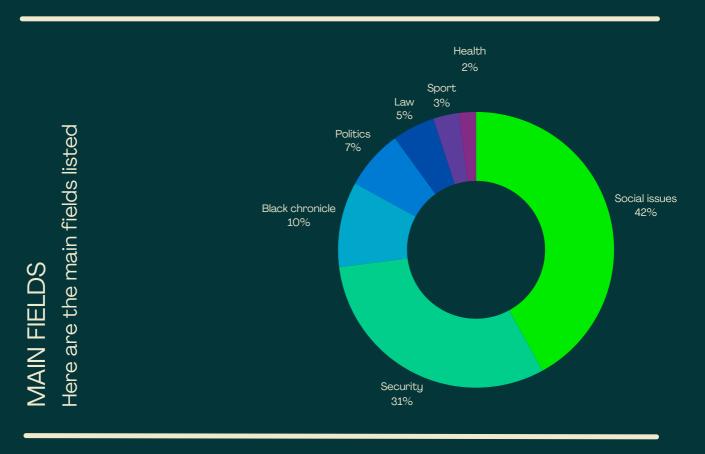
04. Murder of Liridona Murseli

Misinformation published about this topic from the black chronicle has disseminated on social media mainstream media. Regarding this topic in social media pages, two fake news articles were published claiming that the suspect in this case, Naim Murseli, was physically attacked in prison as well as that he took his own life, and additionally, a deep-fake video was shared, showing victim's image adding a voice recording, falsely claiming that she is speaking about her own murder. Meanwhile, in mainstream media, an article rated as "clickbait" was published, using an analyst's opinion in the headline as news, falsely claiming that investigations have started against former Kosovo President Behgjet Pacolli in regard to the recent case of the woman's murder in Prishtinë.

3

Types of domains

Based on the monitoring and processed misleading contents during December, it is evident that various publishers (mainstream media, dubious portals, and social media) have mostly produced and disseminated misleading contents in the domain of social issues. This is a result of processed misleading contents covering various social topics, where all deceptive contents and a significant number of "clickbait" articles and disinformation, originate precisely from this domain.



While in the course of previous months (September, October, November), have dominated misleading contents from the security domain, this month, social topics have taken the lead in the misinformation ecosystem, followed by security related topics. A considerable portion of the contents related to the Israel-Hamas conflict, as the main topic of this month, has come from the social domain. Misleading contents from the social domain is followed by those from the security domain, where disinformation related to the arming of the KSF, the north and some articles about the Israel-Hamas conflict, have been published. Despite not directly correlating with each other, these two domains constitute more than 73% of the processed misleading contents for the month December.

Regarding misinformation from the black chronicle, there is evidently a decrease in percentage compared to the previous month (2023), correlating with the fact that not all contents classified as "clickbait" have originated from this domain, similar to the previous month (November 2023).

A considerable number of misleading contents from the social domain have been published on social media (24%), followed by dubious portals (9%) and mainstream media (9%). The majority of contents from this domain are rated as disinformation (12%), clickbait (10%), unverified content (9%) and fraud (4%). Disinformation, unverified content and fraud are primarily published on social media and dubious portals, while the majority of clickbait contents are published on mainstream media.

However, almost all of the processed misleading contents from the security domain was published by pages and accounts on social media. The majority of these contents were rated as fake news and were related to the arming of the KSF and the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Misinformation contents from the black chronicle domain were published on both mainstream and social media, and have been rated as "clickbait", fake news and deep-fake. Whereas, clickbait articles published in mainstrema media were related to different tragic cases, fake news and deep-fake were associated with the murder of Liridona Murseli.

With regard to the misleading contents from the political domain, they were published on social media in Albanian language and on mainstream media in Serbian language. Misinformation contents in Albanian language were related to the Kurti's policies as fake news and the document on Kurti's release from prison in 2001 was labeled as a manipulation of facts. In Serbian language, misinformation was related to false claims about Prime Minister Kurti's involvement in opposition protests in Serbia, and rated as disinformation.



90% of the misinformation contents processed pertain to social issues, security, the black chronicle and politics.

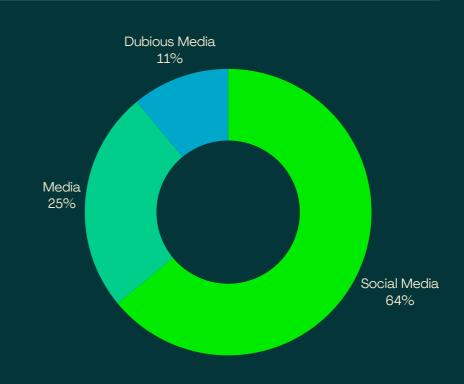
Types of publishers

Based on the findings and processed misinformation contents, it appears that the majority of misinformation has been published by social media, accounting for 65%. Compared to November, social media has seen an increase of 13% (from 52% in November 2023 to 64% in December 2023). This is a result of the publication of all fake news and disinformation from pages and accounts on social media.

Meanwhile, misinformation contents processed by mainstream media have taken a decline of 14% (from 38% in November 2023 to 25% in December 2023) as a result of the publication of almost exclusively "clickbait" articles in mainstream media, which were less prevalent during this month.

In dubious portals, similar to November, they have published and processed almost the same number of misinformation contents (from 10% in November 2023 to 11% in December 2023). A portion of the misinformation rated as "clickbait" and disinformation has been published by these dubious portals.



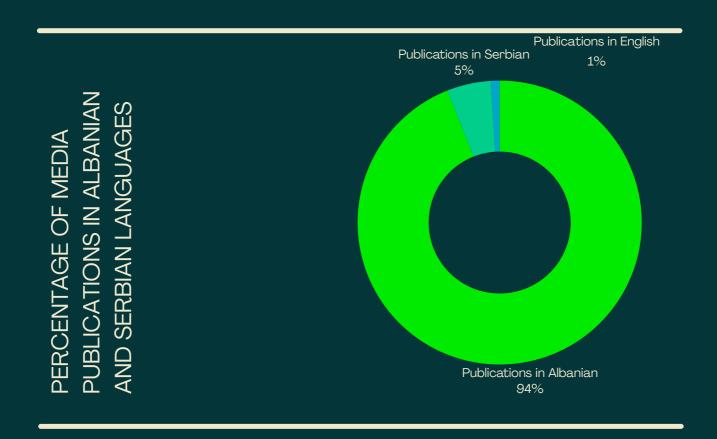




89% of articles with misinformation content were published by publishers in social media (65%) and in media outlets (24%).

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.



Taking into consideration that the monitoring sample from the "hibrid.info" platform focuses on misinformation content in the Albanian language published in media, dubious portals and pages and accounts on social media, publications in this language dominate in terms of the content processing with 94%. Meanwhile, in the Serbian language, mainly only the misinformation reports in the mainstream media linked to the developments in and around Kosovo are monitored and primarily those contents are processed, resulting in a smaller percentage of processed content with 5%.

Analysis of articles in this category

.1

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 addressed topics.

1. Publications in Albanian language

Misinformation content processed in the Albanian language during November has been published by pages and accounts on social media by 65%, while 35% in mainstream media and 9% in dubious portals. While "clickbait" articles dominated in November, in December, fake news with 30%, ranks first, due to the overwhelming majority of contents from the security domain, have been classified under this category. "Clickbait" articles are ranked second with 20%. followed by disinformation with 18%. Misinformation contents from domain of social issues dominate with 39%, followed by security with 32% and black chronicle with 11%.

O3. Publications in English language

Several foreign accounts on the social network X (former Twitter) and on Facebook have published an image of the singer of Albanian descent, Dua Lipa, supporting the caption "Dua Lipa stands with Palestine." After fact-checking, it was found that such a stance is not true and for that has been rated as disinformation.

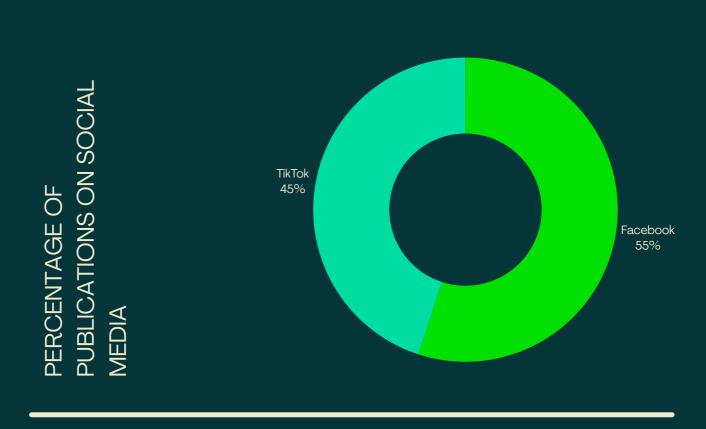
02. Publications in Serbian language

All of the processed misinformation contents in the Serbian language have been published by mainstream media that have covered topics of politics and social issues. Publications from media in the Serbian language are rated as disinformation and unverified content/disinformation. While disinformation was related to opposition protests in Serbia, falsely claiming that Prime Minister Kurti's robot account on the X platform posted about the opposition protest in Serbia and that Kurti ordered the media to give full coverage to the protest in Serbia. opposition Meanwhile, unverified content /disinformation was related to the claim that the Prishtina capitol and municipal structures were involved in the case of the Orthodox Church in Podujevë, where Father Nikolla Xhufka had presented a mass.

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).

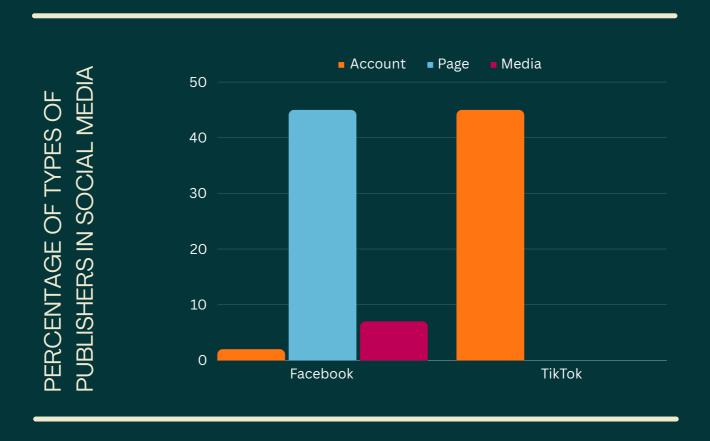
Similar to the previous month, during December as well, misinformation contents published on social media have been processed in the same percentage, with Facebook leading (55%), with a 1% increase compared to the previous month. Facebook is followed by TikTok with 45%, a 1% less compared to the previous month.



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 December 2023, was predominantly published by various pages on Facebook (45%), followed by media (7%) and accounts (2%). Also, during this month of 2023, Facebook pages have dominated in terms of the dissemination of misleading articles, followed by TikTok accounts (45%).



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.

1 Facebook

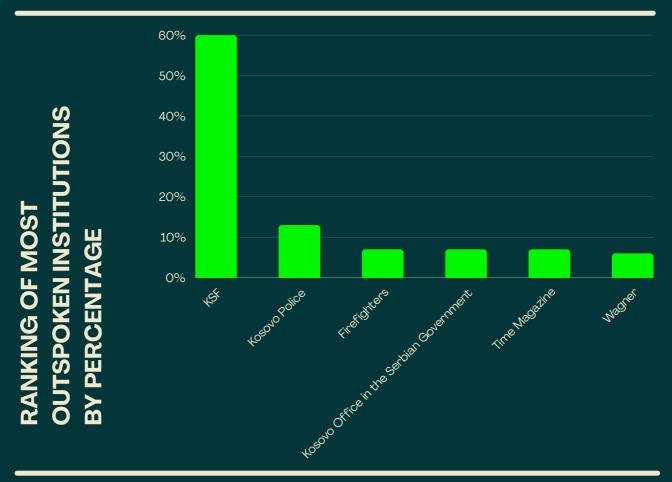
misinformation ln the content published on Facebook. have dominated unverified content (20%). disinformation (9%) and fake news (9%). The majoritu the misinformation content published on Facebook is from the social and security domains. From the social domain, misinformation was primarily published about the Israel-Hamas conflict in a social context, followed by other topics such as loan provision, work in Germany, subsidizing electricity firefighter salaries. and The overwhelming portion of misinformation from the domain was about the Israel-Hamas conflict and the arming of the KSF.

02 TikTok

all misinformation Almost content published by accounts on TikTok is in the security domain and has been rated as fake news and disinformation. On TikTok, fake news and disinformation were published with claims about the arming of the KSF with various weapons like helicopters and airplanes. Parallel to this, fake news and disinformation about the north were also published, making false claims about the presence of Wagner members and armed groups, as well as military maneuvers around the Kosovo-Serbia border.

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.

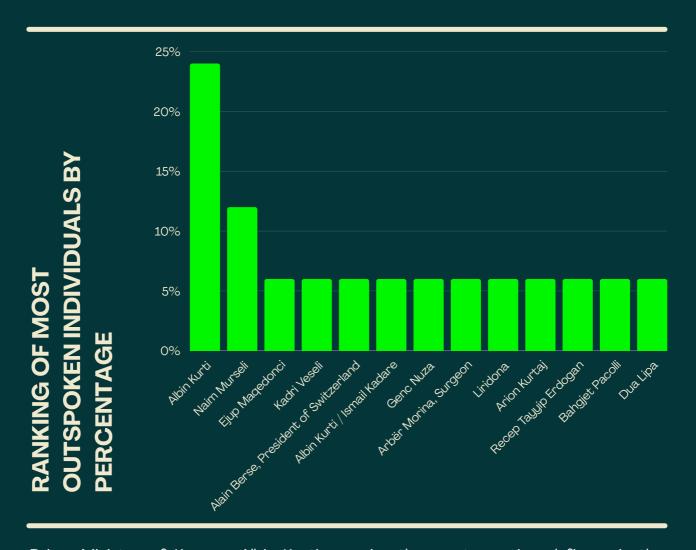


Under some of the processed misinformation content, specific institutions have been mentioned, becoming intertwined with misinformation. Security institutions continue to be the most mentioned in the misinformation created and disseminated by various publishers in the Albanian language.

The Kosovo Security Force (KSF) was mentioned in misinformation content published on social media platforms (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 the misleading contents. This institution was mentioned in TikTok publications, falsely claiming that three police officers were killed in Mitrovica, as well as that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey has praised the Kosovo Police.

All the mentioned institutions in the above table were mentioned at least once in the misinformation contents published by various publishers during December 2023.



Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, remains the most mentioned figure in the misinformation contents published by various publishers during December 2023. Kurti continues to be one of the most talked-about figures in misinformation contents. During this month, he was involved in misinformation content in the Albanian language published on social media platforms related to the release of a deep-fake video featuring an airplane with the caption "Albin Kurti - Kosovo USA", as well as about the document of the decision for the release of Albin Kurti from prison in 2001.

Naim Murseli, the main suspect in the murder of Liridona Murseli, is the second most mentioned figure this month. Murseli was mentioned in misinformation contents published on TikTok, falsely claiming that he was physically attacked in prison or even that he had taken his own life.

All other mentioned personalities in the above table were mentioned once in the misinformation contents published by various publishers during December 2023.

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 December, hibrid.info checked and analyzed two untrue statements.

Minister of Economy, Artane Rizvanolli, had stated that the salaries of the Trepça miners, based on the agreement reached between the miners' union and some deputies, would be executed during the dates of 6th to the 10th of each month. However, after verification and investigation by hibrid.info, it has been confirmed that, despite the minister's statement, the salaries for the month of October were not executed until 27 November.

Minister of Health, Arben Vitia, made a statement that the infant mortality rate in Kosovo is around 7 per thousand, for some years now. However, after verification and investigation by hibrid.info, through several reports from international organizations, data has been found that contradicts Minister Vitia's statement regarding this issue.

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 1-31 of December 2023, having processed 67 misleading contents.

Conclusions

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

Based on the monitoring of 67 pieces of misinformation for the month of December 2023, various publishers have created and disseminated predominantly fake news 30%, followed by disinformation 22% and clickbait 21%. The overwhelming majority of fake news has surfaced on social media platforms (TikTok), revolving around the domain of social issues, specifically concerning the arming of the KSF and the north. Disinformation has been published in the domain of social issues and security, primarily, with a focus on publication through social media and dubious portals. Mainstream media outlets, in the domain of social and black chronicle, have been responsible for nearly all clickbait articles. The significant volume of fabricated content related to the arming of the KSF, disseminated on TikTok, has propelled fake news to dominate this month's narrative.

The conflict between Israel and Hamas, despite its continuance, has seen a reduction in unverified content, however, it still ranks high in terms of topics. A significant number of unverified content continues to be published on social media accounts, primarily focusing on the social aspects of the conflict. On TikTok, the publication of content with false claims about the military supply to the KSF with various equipment persists. Various TikTok accounts share photos showing tanks, drones, helicopters and airplanes, falsely claiming that they have been donated or purchased by the government of Kosovo for the FSK. Due to ongoing developments in the north being unpredictable, this topic continues to be used to create and disseminate various misinformation.

Although not directly related, the domains of social issues, security and black chronicle are the three main fields that have constituted the overwhelming majority (83%) of misinformation content published in December 2023. The majority of misinformation from the social domain was rated as disinformation published on social media and dubious portals, "clickbait" articles primarily published in the media and unverified content published on social media. Misinformation content related to the Israel-Hamas conflict, but from the social context (while in November it was primarily in the security domain), as well as those

about loan provision and related to various social topics, has made this domain dominant during December 2023. Meanwhile, the processed misinformation about the arming of the KSF, the north and portion of misinformation from the Israel-Hamas conflict has influenced this domain to be ranked second, followed by the black chronicle with misinformation related to the murder of Liridona Murseli and other different tragic events.

Throughout December, misinformation published on social media has dominated with 64%, followed by mainstream media with 25% and dubious portals with 11%. According to the monitoring sample, 94% of misinformation content has been published by media and pages on social media in the Albanian language, while 5% in media in the Serbian language and one piece of content is in the English language. While the overwhelming majority of Albanian language misinformation is from the social and security domain, those in the Serbian language are related to politics and social issues. The majority of Albanian-language misinformation has been rated as fake news, "clickbait" and disinformation, while in the Serbian language, it is disinformation and unverified content/disinformation. Regarding publications by social media publishers, 55% are published on Facebook, followed by TikTok with 45%.

Prime Minister Albin Kurti and the suspect in the murder of Liridona Murseli, Naim Murseli, are the two figures most mentioned in the contents processed, while the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) is the most mentioned institution during December.

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