

**Monthly report on  
information  
disorder  
March 2024**

**April 2024**

**Action for  
Democratic Society  
[hibrid.info](http://hibrid.info)**



# Monthly report on information disorder March 2024

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# Content

Evaluation categories of the disinformation

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01. 02. 03. 04. 05. 06. 07. 08.

# Introduction

This summary and descriptive report, offers an overview of the state of information (misinformation) throughout the month of March 2024, 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 21st 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:

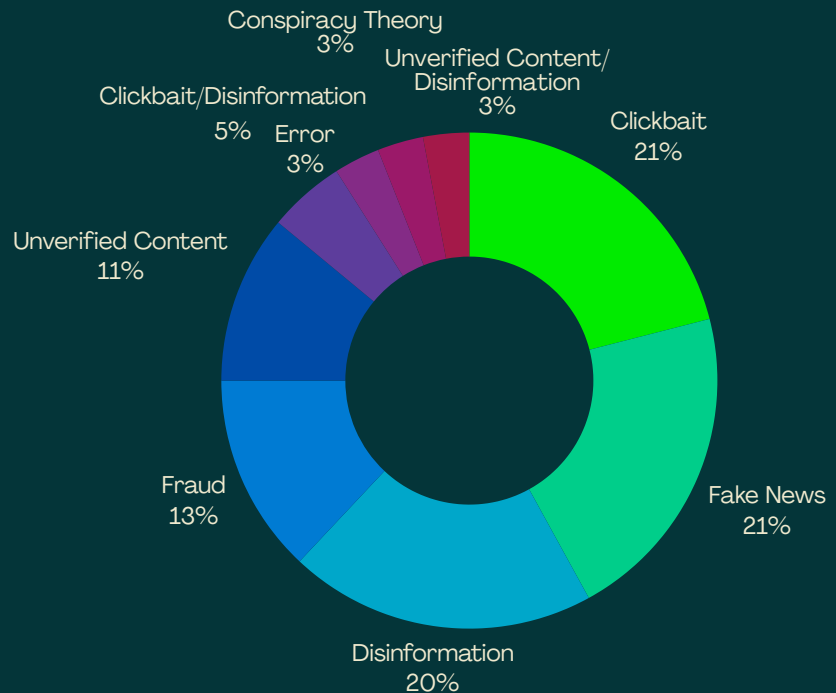
- Rating of disinformation articles
- The topics used to create and disseminate disinformation content
- Areas upon which disinformation articles are created and disseminated
- Institutions and persons tackled by the disinformation articles
- Types of media that have created and disseminated disinformation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

## MAIN CATEGORIES

Here are the major categories listed according to the evaluated category



Based on monitoring and processing of 62 misinformation contents in the course of March 2024, it results that clickbait and fake news articles have dominated in terms of misinformation categories. In the course of this month, clickbait and fake news lead with 21% each and disinformation with 20%.

Just like in the previous month (February 2024), when clickbait content held domination, in the course of March as well, this category of misinformation continued to dominate, due to a substantial amount of misinformation in the domains of politics, black chronicle and social issues was rated as clickbait. Because misinformation did not focus on a singularly prominent topic of misinformation this month and given that numerous misinformation contents from core domains were flagged as clickbait, this category ranked with the highest percentage.

This category is followed by fake news, which has the same percentage as clickbait, at 21%. Fake news was published on social media platforms covering various political, social, black chronicle and other topics. Compared to February, the fake news category has seen a 14% increase (7% in February, 21% in March).

Fake news is followed by disinformation, as one of the most common forms of published misinformation, which ranks third. This category has noted an 8% increase compared to February (13% in February, 20% in March).



21% of misinformation articles processed have been rated as “clickbait” and “fake news”.

# 1.1 Analysis of rating types

## 01. Clickbait

All content rated as "clickbait" has been published by publishers (mainstream media and social media) in Albanian language. Black chronicle (5%), social issues (5%) and politics (5%) emerged as the two major domains linked to the publication of clickbait articles, while other domains like security, sports and weather were also not lacking far behind.

## 03. Disinformation

Disinformation was primarily published in mainstream media (10%) and social media (8%) regarding politics, social issues and security. In the media in Serbian language, unsupported statements from Zaharova about NATO intervention in 1999 and the "March 2004 riots," as well as unsubstantiated claims about the so-called "Yellow House" were published. Meanwhile, in the media in Albanian language, there were publications about the CBK's decision on the dinar currency, the war in Ukraine, the north, the Association of Serbian Municipalities, etc.

## 05. Unverified Content

These contents were published in mainstream media (8%) and social media (3%) on various topics, where predominate published images claiming to depict Trepça miners eating suhoor at 800 meters, even though the image was taken in Turkey, as well as photos of city decorations for the month of Ramadan. Alongside these, unverified content related to the arming of the KSF, the special court and the Israel-Hamas conflict were also published.

## 02. Disinformation

Almost all fake news articles were published by pages and accounts on social media. Security, black chronicle and politics were the domains where fake news took precedence. Fake news was published about the death of the artist's son, Ardit Gjebrea, false claims about developments on the Kosovo-Serbia border, the north and the arming of the KSF.

## 04. Hoax

Almost all hoax content was published from the domain of social issues and one from the security domain. Security-related content was about the launch of a website published to raise funds for the KSF. Meanwhile, hoax misinformation from social domain was about the online sale of dubious products claiming to cure certain diseases, as well as publications of false campaigns for loan provision from suspicious Facebook pages.

## 06. Clickbait / Disinformation

Clickbait/disinformation contents were published linked to the topic of climate conditions, including old articles about weather deterioration and warnings of flooding due to rain in Albania, published as current events. All of these were published on social media.

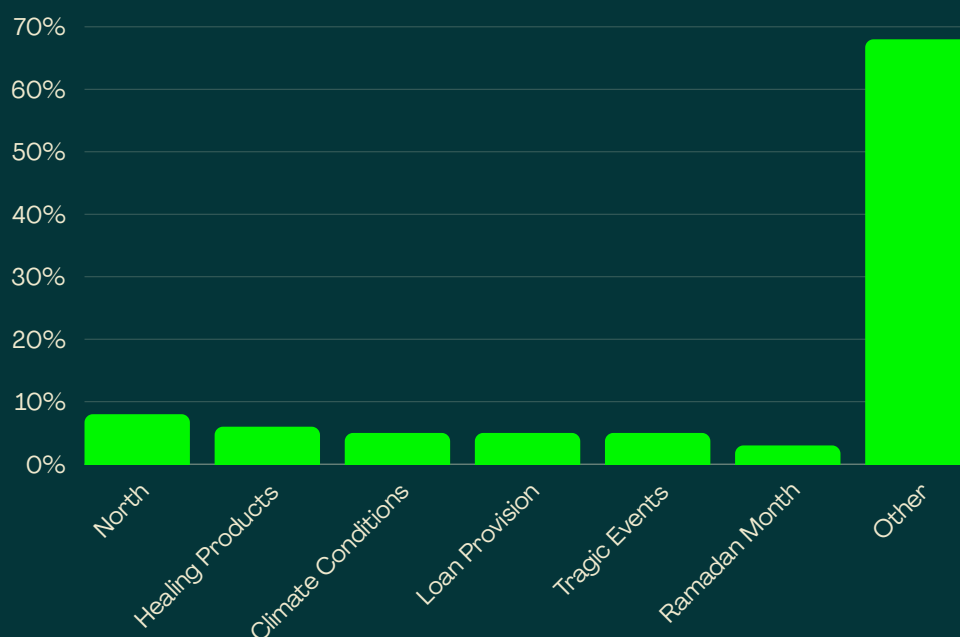
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Other articles with misinformation content have been rated in categories: error, conspiracy theories, unverified content/disinformation.

## The topics used to create and disseminate disinformation content

### MAIN CATEGORIES

Here are the main categories listed according to the topics



Several false claims published by various publishers (mainstream media, dubious portals and social media) regarding developments in the security domain in the north of Kosovo have turned this topic dominant during the month of March. The diversity of topics, despite its dominance, has resulted in a low percentage of misinformation associated with it. Compared to the previous month (February), the topic of north ranked sixth among the most misinformed topics. However, in this month, it ranks first, with 8%, due to the diversity of topics misinformed about during this period.

During March, a number of hoax articles claiming that given products can cure various diseases were published. This surge led to the identification and processing of these deceits during this month, resulting in this topic to rank second.

In the course of misleading contents processed during this month, old news about climate conditions claiming them as current events have been published. Additionally, hoax content claiming for loan provision or showcasing consumer satisfaction with loans, has been published. Coded contents such as tragic events (deaths and murders), besides clickbait articles where the location of the event is not disclosed in the title, false news claiming the death of artist Ardit Gjebrea's son, among others, have also been published, etc.



32% of the main topics cover the north, healing products, climate conditions, loan provision, tragic events and the month of Ramadan.



# Fact-checking analysis according to topics

## 2.1

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.

### 01. North

Misinformation associated to the north was published on social media (5%) and mainstream media (3%). The majority of content related to this topic is from the security domain (5%), followed by social issues (2%) and politics (2%). In the media, a false claim was published regarding a statement by publicist Shkelzen Maliqi, stating that O07 agents have entered in the north of Kosovo, as well as a clickbait article where the title does not clearly state that the fines for population census will cover the entire country, not just the north. Meanwhile, on social media, a false news story was published claiming that Kosovo is building four military bases on the border with Serbia, unverified content that the Russian flag has been raised in the Zvečan fortress and conspiracy theory in the Serbian language suggesting that action against smuggled medications in the north constitutes an "anti-Serb" act.

### 03. Climate conditions

Misinformation about climate conditions was rated as clickbait and clickbait/disinformation which were published on social media and mainstream media. With regard to this topic some old articles about weather deterioration and rain flooding in Albania were published, claiming to be current events.

### 02. Healing products

Misinformation content associated to this topic was published on social media (5%) and dubious portals (2%). All of this content was rated as hoax and were related to topics such as: A herbal product falsely marketed as honey for gastral healing, a product sold online as 100% natural under the name "potency honey", online sale of a product called "O CAPS" falsely claiming to be a medicine that helps restore vision.

### 04. Provision of loans

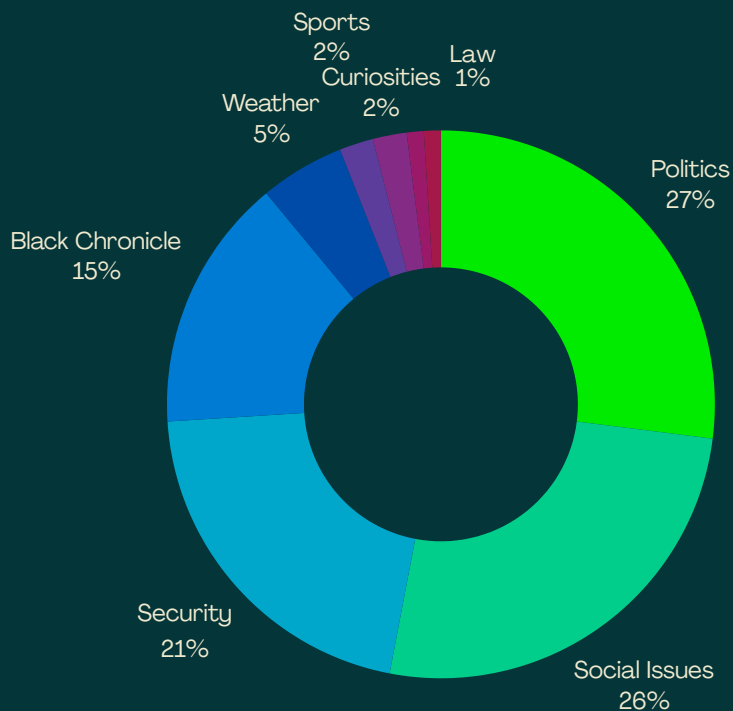
All content related to provision of loans was published on social media and were rated as hoax. Dubious pages on Facebook have published false loaning campaigns, as well as customer reviews of a microfinance institution, falsely presenting them as their own.

# 3

## Types of domains

Based on the monitoring and analysis of misinformation content during March, it is evident that various publishers (including mainstream media, dubious portals and social media) have predominantly generated and disseminated misinformation in the domain of politics. Similar to the previous month, politics remains the primary domain of focus, that was mostly misinformed about.

**MAIN FIELDS**  
Here are the main fields listed



The publication of misinformation across a variety of topics related to different political developments, associated with the Serbian municipalities, NATO's intervention in 1999, the riots of March 2004, dialogue and other, has led this domain to dominate even during the month of March. This has resulted in politics having the same percentage of misinformation discovered and processed compared to the previous month (February). Political domain is followed by social issues, as in February, but in March, misinformation content related to this domain has increased by 6% (from 20% in February to 26% in March). These two domains constitute more than half of the misinformation content processed in this month.

These two domains are followed by the security domain, which has seen a slight increase compared to the previous month (from 18% in February 2024 to 21% in March 2024). The security domain is followed by the black chronicle, which has experienced a slight decline (from 17% in February to 15% in March).

Almost all of the content from the political domain has been published in the Albanian language in the media (15%) and social media (11%). Disinformation (10%), fake news (6%) and clickbait articles (4%) are the misinformation categories with which misinformation has been rated against a variety of topics from the political domain.

Misinformation from the social issues domain has been published on social media (13%), dubious portals (5%) and mainstream media (3%). Hoax contents related to healing products and provision of loans dominate this domain.

Regarding misinformation published in the security domain, a considerable part has been rated as fake news (6%), disinformation (5%) and clickbait (3%). These have been published on social media (13%) and mainstream media (5%) with regard to the arming of the KSF, developments at the Kosovo-Serbia border and in the North.

A significant portion of black chronicle contents has been rated as fake news (6%) and clickbait (5%) associated to tragic events like false claims about the death of the artist Ardit Gjebrea's son and the death of King Charles III, etc. All of these content have been published on social media (10%) and mainstream media (5%).



82% of the misinformation contents processed pertain to political, social issues, security and black chronicle domain.

# 4

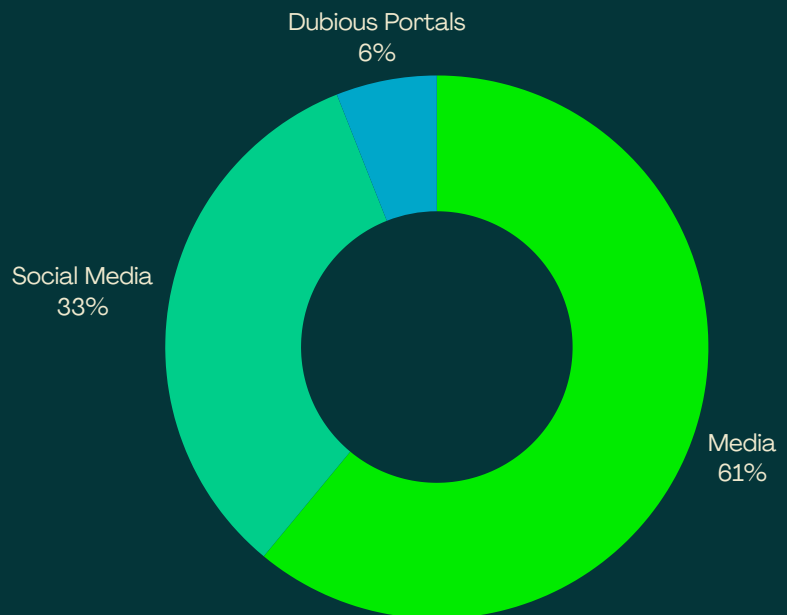
## Types of publishers

In contrast to the previous month (February) where misinformation published in mainstream media dominated, during this month (March), misinformation published by pages and accounts on social media prevails. Based on the discovery and the processing of misinformation contents, there has been a 20% increase in misinformation published on social media compared to February (from 41% in February 2024 to 61% in March 2024), thus ranking as the top one. This can be explained by the fact that all misinformation rated as fake news and , along with a considerable portion of unverified content and disinformation, have been published on social media.

On the other hand, misinformation content discovered and processed, and published in mainstream media (news portals), has suffered a decline of 23% compared to the previous month (from 56% in February 2024 to 33% in March 2024). In the misinformation published in mainstream media, clickbait articles and disinformation dominate. Meanwhile, only 6% are published by dubious portals.

Compared to February 2024, misinformation content discovered and processed in March, published on social media has increased, whereas those in mainstream media have declined, meanwhile there is an almost identical percentage in dubious portals noted.

DIFFERENCE IN PERCENTAGE BETWEEN PUBLISHERS WITH DISINFORMATION CONTENT



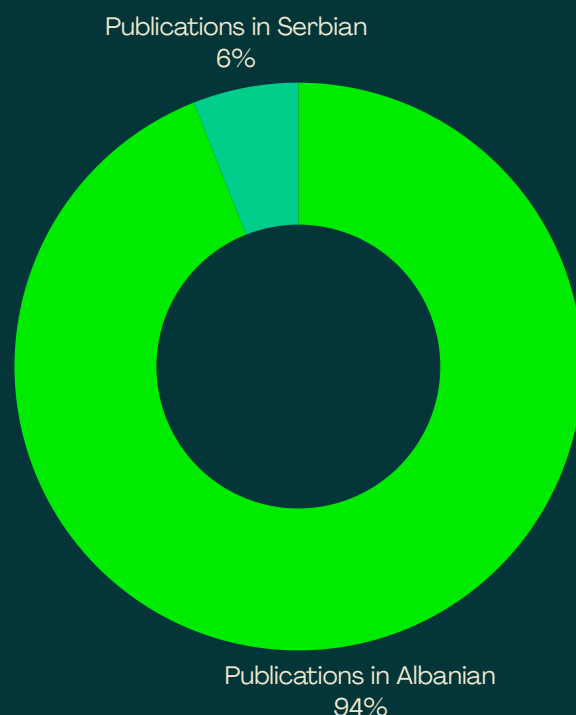
94% of articles with misinformation content were published by publishers in social media (61%) and media outlets (3%).

# 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.

PERCENTAGE OF MEDIA PUBLICATIONS IN ALBANIAN AND SERBIAN LANGUAGES



The sample of monitoring and processing of the misinformation contents from the "hibrid.info" platform focuses on misinformation in the Albanian language published in mainstream media, dubious portals and pages and accounts on social media, as a result of which during March 2024, publications in this language dominate the analysis by 94%.

Meanwhile, in the Serbian language, are primarily monitored reports of misinformation in mainstream media as well as social media platform "Telegram", regarding developments on and about Kosovo and precisely such contents are processed. In the course of March 2024, several pieces of misinformation related to incidents in Serbian settlements and developments in the north have been published, constituting 6% of the discoveries and processing conducted.

# Analysis of articles in this category

## 5.1

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.

### 01. Publications in Albanian language

More than half of the misinformation content published in Albanian language is published through social media (58%), while the rest through mainstream media (29%) and dubious portals (6%). All fake news and hoax, as well as a considerable portion of disinformation and unverified content, are published by pages and accounts on social media. Meanwhile, in mainstream media, a considerable amount of clickbait articles, along with some disinformation and unverified content, has been published. Both in social media and mainstream media, misinformation content was published from the political, social issues and security domains.

### 02. Publications in Serbian language

Misinformation content in Serbian language is published in mainstream media (5%) and social media (2%). Content published in mainstream media is from the politics domain, while in social media, it is from the security domain. In mainstream media, disinformation has been published associated to the spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maria Zakharova, regarding NATO's intervention in 1999 and the riots of March 2004, as well as unfounded claims about the so-called "Yellow House" and conspiracy theories by Zakharova mentioning Kosovo in relation to terrorism after the armed attack on the 22 March in a concert hall near Moscow. Meanwhile, in social media, a conspiracy theory has been published interpreting the action against smuggled medicines in the north without evidence as "anti-Serb activity".

# 6

## Types of social media

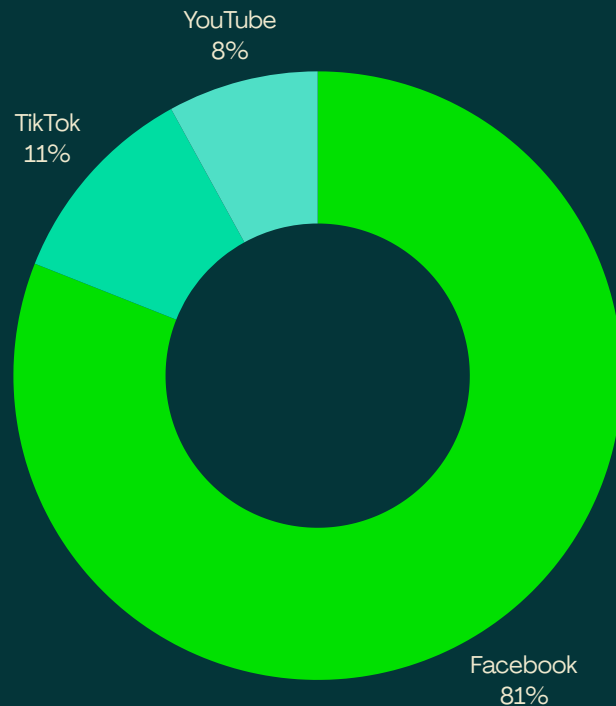
In this section, only disinformation articles published and disseminated on social media are analyzed, excluding publications in other media outlets (mainstream media and dubious portals).

Regarding misinformation publications on social media, during March, 81% of the content was published on Facebook, on TikTok 11% and on YouTube 8%.

During March, similar to the previous month, misinformation continued to dominate on Facebook, maintaining the same percentage. Misinformation content on TikTok was also published in almost the same percentage.

In addition to these two platforms, two pieces of misinformation were also published in Albanian on the YouTube platform during February, constituting 8% of the content published on social media overall.

PERCENTAGE OF  
PUBLICATIONS ON SOCIAL  
MEDIA



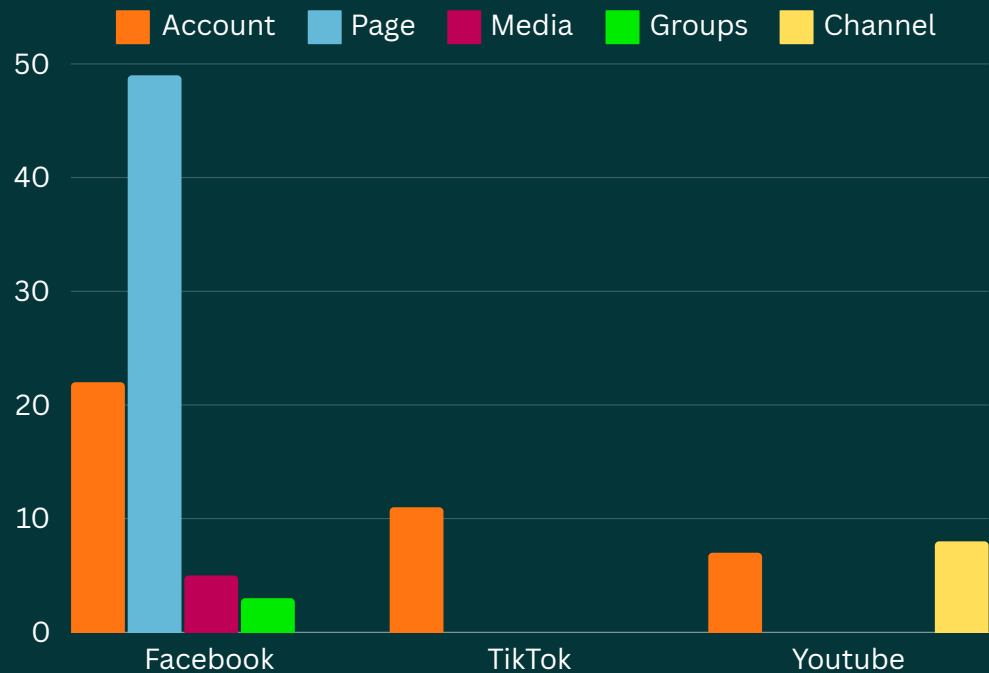
# 6.1

## Types of publishers in social media

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

The misinformation content discovered and processed on social media for the month of March 2024 was mostly published on Facebook pages (49%), accounts (22%), followed by accounts on TikTok (11%). In addition to this, 5% of the contents was published by media pages on Facebook and 3% from groups on Facebook. During March, 8% of misinformation contents were published by different channels on YouTube platform.

PERCENTAGE OF TYPES OF PUBLISHERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA





# Analysis of Types of Publishers on Social Media

The following social media categories are analyzed in relation to the publication and dissemination of misinformation contents

## 01. Facebook

Hoax (16%), unverified content (14%), disinformation (14%) and fake news (14%) are the categories under which misinformation published on Facebook was mostly rated. With regard to the domains that were mostly misinformed on Facebook, social issues (22%), politics (19%) and security (11%) dominate. Misinformation published on Facebook has covered a variety of different topics from the aforementioned domains, including hoax with health products, unverified content of artificially generated images and photographs of miners in Trepça, as well as disinformation related to political developments, the north, etc.

## 02. TikTok

All content published on TikTok was rated as fake news (11%). These fake news published on TikTok were related to the domain of security issues, more specifically associated to false claims about armed shooting and conflict between Kosovo's Special Unit and Serbia's one, about the construction of four military bases on the border with Serbia, as well as the arming of KSF with heavy military artillery.

## 03. Youtube

Misinformation content published on YouTube was rated as fake news and was published in the domain of the black chronicle. Two fake news articles were published claiming the death of the son of the artist Ardit Gjebrea, as well as a news about the suicide of the Brazilian moderator in Albania, Andresa Ambrosio.

# Most outspoken personalities and institutions

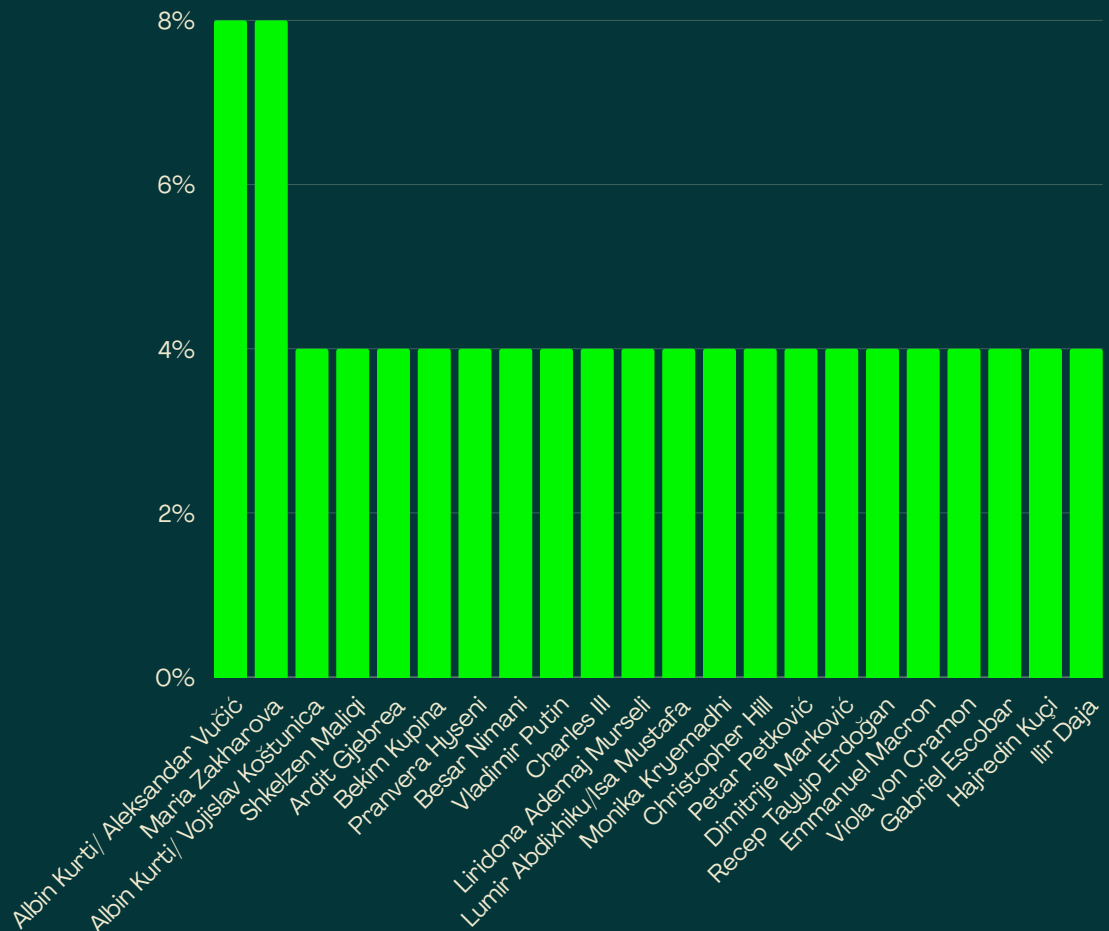
This measurement analyzes data to determine which institutions and personalities (political public figures) have been most outspoken through the monitoring of articles with disinformation content.



Based on the misinformation contents processed for Mars 2024, out of which only on six of them have mentioned institutions, the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) is the most mentioned institution. This security institution is mentioned by pages on social media regarding claims about arming this institution with heavy military artillery. Concerning the KSF, a suspicious link was published with the aim of donating funds to the KSF security foundation.

All other institutions were mentioned once in the misinformation contents published in the media, dubious portals and social media. Trepça was used in an image published with the claim that the images show miners eating suhoor under 800 meters, even though the photo was from a mine in Turkey. KFOR was mentioned with the false claim that this security institution has taken over the transport of Dinar currency in Kosovo. Meanwhile, the Office for Kosovo and political party Serbian List, were mentioned in an article associated to the action against smuggled medicines in the North, which was interpreted without facts, by these two institutions, as "anti-Serb activity".

## RANKING OF MOST OUTSPOKEN INDIVIDUALS BY PERCENTAGE



The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, is the most mentioned personality in relation to the other personalities, in three misinformation contents where personalities were mentioned. Kurti was mentioned together with the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, claiming that they've met for Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, and also in the old statement re-published as current by Vučić regarding the non-acceptance of the association. In the media, the edited photo of Kurti with former Serbian President Vojislav Koštunica was re-published.

The second most mentioned personality in the misinformation contents published in March is Maria Zakharova, the spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Zakharova was mentioned in the media in relation to her public statements misinforming about NATO's intervention in 1999 and the riots of March 2004, as well as mentioning Kosovo in connection with terrorism after the armed attack at a concert hall near Moscow on the 22 March.

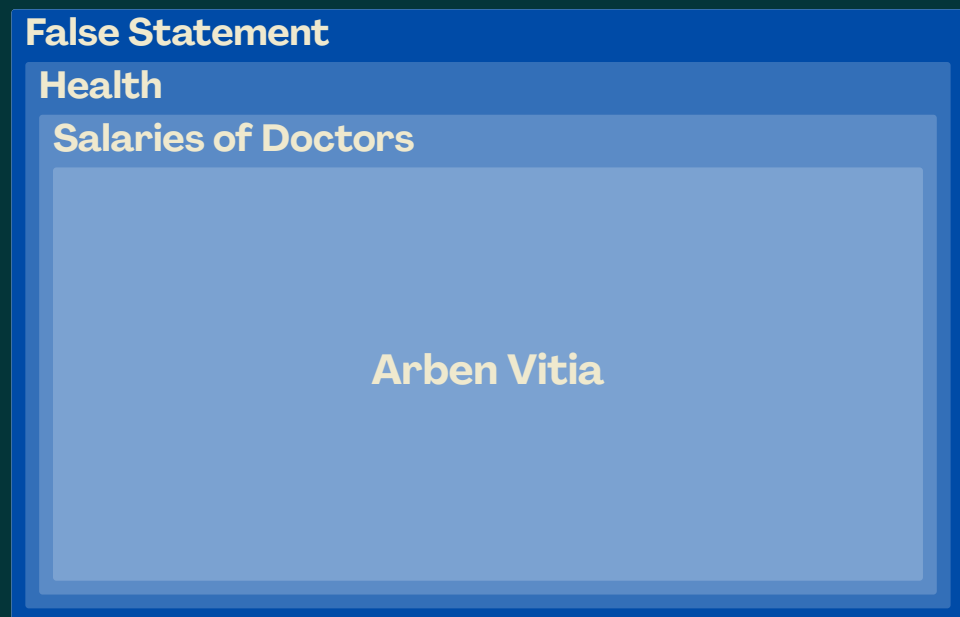
All other personalities were mentioned once in the misinformation contents published during the month of March.



# 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



In the course of monitored content in March, hibrid.info has checked and analyzed one statement.

Minister of Health, Arben Vitia, in an interview published on the 25 February for the News Agency, stated that doctors in Kosovo have one of the highest salaries in the Western Balkans region. After fact-checking by hibrid.info, it has been confirmed that compared to other Western Balkan countries, only Serbia has lower salaries for doctors compared to Kosovo, which according to the evaluation, makes Minister Vitia's statement inaccurate.

# Methodology

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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 March 2023, having processed 62 misleading contents.

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# Conclusions

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

Based on the monitoring and processing of 62 misinformation contents during March 2024, it appears that clickbait articles with 21% and fake news with 21% have been dominating in terms of misleading categories. Due to the fact that during this month, misinformation did not focus on a single dominant topic capturing widespread attention, as well as that several misinformation contents from the main domain were rated as clickbait and fake news, has led that these categories are ranked with the highest percentage. These two categories are followed by disinformation with 20%, hoax content, unverified contents, etc.

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Misinformation published by various publishers (mainstream media, dubious portals and social media) regarding developments in the security domain in the north of Kosovo has led this topic to dominate with 8% during March. The diversity of topics has resulted in a low percentage of misinformation related to it, even though this topic prevails. Compared to the previous month (February), the north topic with 5% ranked sixth among the topics mostly was misinformed about. During this month, several deceptive contents related to claims about products curing various diseases were published. Within the misleading contents processed during this month, old news about climate conditions have been published claiming to present them as current events. Likewise, deceptive contents claiming to provide loans or showcasing consumer satisfaction with loans have been published. Coded contents as tragic events (deaths and murders), besides clickbait articles where the location of the events is not disclosed in the title, false news claiming the death of the son of the artist Ardit Gjebrea, among others, have been published.

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With regard to the domains, politics with 27% continues to be the primary domain where misinformation is most prevalent, followed by social issues with 26% and security with 21%. The dissemination of misinformation on a variety of topics related to various political developments, associated to the association of Serbian municipalities, NATO's intervention in 1999, the March 2004 riots, dialogue and other, has led this domain to dominate even during the month of March.

Almost all content from the political domain has been published in Albanian language in the media (15%) and social media (11%). Disinformation (10%), fake news (6%) and clickbait articles (4%) are the misleading categories through which misinformation about a variety of political topics has been rated.

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The political domain is followed by social issues, where misinformation from this domain has been published on social media (13%), dubious portals (5%), and mainstream media (3%), predominantly featuring hoax content related to healing products and provision of loans. These two domains are followed by the security domain, where a considerable portion has been rated as fake news (6%), disinformation (5%) and clickbait (3%) and have been published on social media (13%) and mainstream media (5%), in relation to the arming of the KSF, developments at the Kosovo-Serbia border and the north.

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The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, is the most mentioned personality in relation to the other personalities, such as with the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, claiming that they've met for Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, and also in the old statement re-published as current by Vučić regarding the non-acceptance of the association. In the media, the doctored photo of Kurti with former Serbian President Vojislav Koštunica was re-published. The second most mentioned personality in the misinformation contents published in March is Maria Zakharova, the spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in relation to her public statements misinforming about NATO's intervention in 1999 and the riots of March 2004.

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In the context of fact-checking statements and promises, the statement of the Minister of Health, Arben Vitia, in an interview published on the 25 February, has been processed, where he stated that doctors in Kosovo have one of the highest salaries in the Western Balkans region. After fact-checking by hibrid.info, it has been confirmed that compared to other Western Balkan countries, only Serbia has lower salaries for doctors, compared to Kosovo, which according to the evaluation, makes Minister Vitia's statement inaccurate.

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