

**Monthly report on
information
disorder
June 2024**

July 2024

**Action for
Democratic Society
hibrid.info**



Monthly report on information disorder June 2024

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Content

Evaluation categories of the disinformation

The topics used to create and disseminate disinformation content

Types of domains

Types of publishers

Classification of media publications in the Albanian and Serbian language

Types of social media

Most outspoken personalities and institutions

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

Introduction

This summary and descriptive report, offers an overview of the state of information (misinformation) throughout the month of June 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 24th 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:

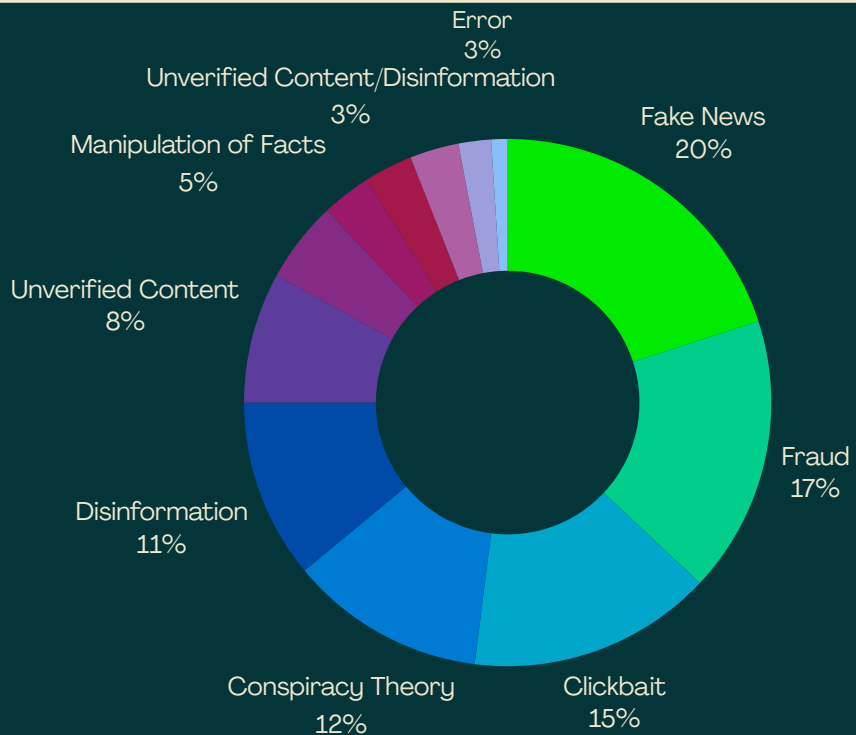
- Rating of disinformation articles
- The topics used to create and disseminate disinformation content
- Areas upon which disinformation articles are created and disseminated
- Institutions and persons tackled by the disinformation articles
- Types of media that have created and disseminated disinformation 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 the findings and processing of 65 misinformation contents during June 2024, it has been evident that fake news dominated as the main category of misinformation, accounting for 20%. This category is followed by hoax content at 17%, clickbait at 15%, conspiracy theories at 12% and disinformation at 11%.

Despite the fact that last month, disinformation and hoax content were the dominant categories, this month, fake news, which was ranked sixth in the previous month, leads with a 10% increase compared to the previous month (from 10% in May 2024 to 20% in June 2024). This resulted due to the fact that there were a multitude of topics in the political and social domains being evaluated as fake news.

While hoax content led last month (May) with 19% in terms of misinformation categories, it ranks second this month with a slight decrease of 2%. In regard to the hoaxes, a considerable portion of content in the social domain has been rated under this category.

These two categories are followed by clickbait articles with 15%, which have marked an increase compared to May, when they were ranked fourth (from 12% in May 2024 to 15% in June 2024). All clickbait articles were published in the media, with misinformation from the domain of politics dominating.

Clickbait articles are followed by conspiracy theories, which have seen a slight increase of 2% compared to the previous month (from 10% in May 2024 to 12% in June 2024) and disinformation, which has decreased by 8% compared to May (from 19% in May 2024 to 11% in June 2024).



37% of misinformation articles processed have been rated as "fake news" and "hoax".

1.1 Analysis of rating types

01. Fake News

Almost all fake news was published by pages and accounts on social media (Facebook, TikTok). Politics and security are the dominant domains upon which most misinformation was published. Regarding the topics, misinformation related to elections claiming that the American ambassador supports Bedri Hamza for Prime Minister, that LDK is considering a coalition with PDK and false electoral polls; and arming of the KSF where it was claimed that Turkey was providing military vehicles, drones and helicopters.

03. Clickbait

All articles with sensational titles were published in mainstream media from the domain of politics, which dominates, followed by black chronicle, culture, social issues and security. Although tragic cases (death, murder) are the leading topic, other topics such as the arming of the KSF, Kosovo negotiations, the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities, etc., are also prevalent.

05. Disinformation

All disinformation was published by pages and accounts on social media, from the domain of security, sports and politics. Regarding the topics, the arming of the KSF and EURO 2024 were the main topics. Disinformation related to the topic of arming the KSF was claimed that "the Kosovo Army will be strengthened by September with 10,000 troops and anti-missile systems and that Kosovo will receive a donation of two helicopters from the USA in 2026". For Euro 2024, it was falsely claimed that Rama stated he would be in the stadium supporting Serbia against England and that an official from the Ministry of Sports of Serbia falsely reported the arrest of Albanians at Euro 2024.

02. Hoax

Almost all hoax content was published by pages and accounts on social media (Facebook, TikTok). The vast majority were from the social domain, including topics such as loan provision, products claiming to cure certain diseases, free courses from the government, hoax SMS, financial aid for medical treatment, etc.

04. Unverified Content

The vast majority of conspiracy theories were published in the media in Serbian language. This misinformation was from the domain of politics and security, including topics such as developments in Serb-majority settlements interpreted as attempts for "ethnic cleansing", threats of war by Albin Kurti, the north and claims that Kurti is working for a "Greater Albania".

06. Unverified Content

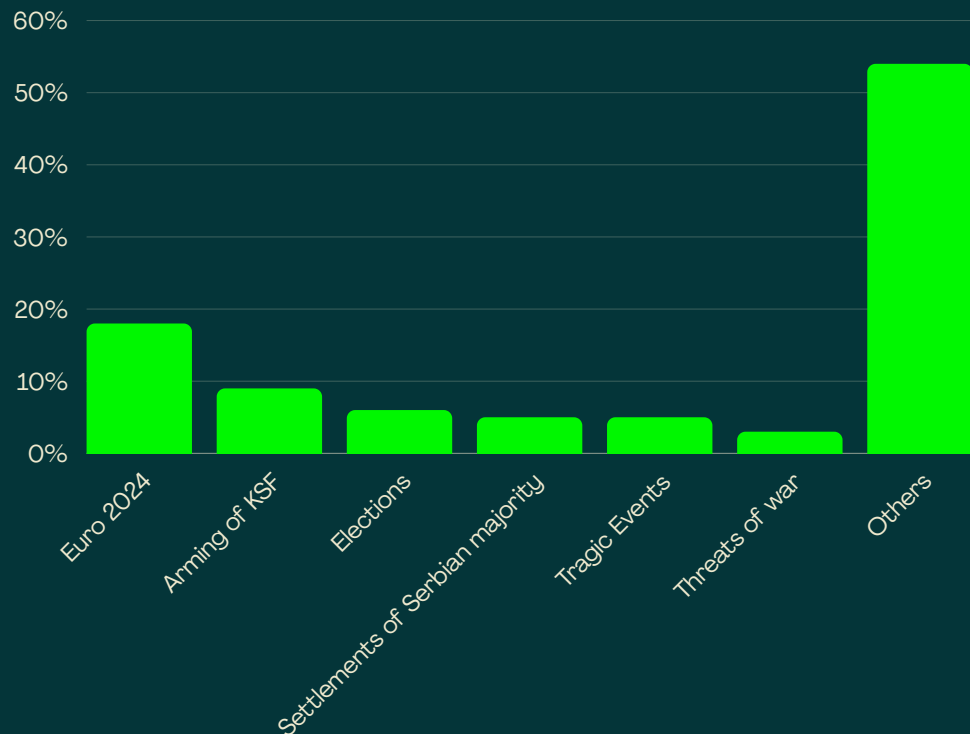
0.1. Misinformation in this category was published in mainstream media (5%) and social media (3%). This content was from the domains of sports and politics. Claims that Jose Mourinho spoke about the Albanian national team, that certain video materials in the media and social media depict fans of national team and that the statue of Gjergj Kastrioti – Skanderbeg was not moved to Dortmund are some of the topics from the European Football Championship – Euro 2024.

Other misinformation content articles were rated in the categories: manipulation of facts, disinformation/clickbait, unverified content/disinformation, error, manipulation of facts/hoax and manipulation of facts/disinformation.

The topics used to create and disseminate disinformation content

MAIN CATEGORIES

Here are the main categories listed according to the topics



The European Football Championship, Euro 2024, which started in mid-June and the participation of the Albanian national team have led to various information being published in the media and on social networks. Among these published contents, there were also baseless claims related to the Albanian national team, its players and fans. The publication of misinformation regarding Euro 2024 has made this topic dominate in June in the categorization of topics about which misinformation was spread.

Misinformation with regard to various unfounded speculations about the supply with weapons of the KSF, including heavy artillery (helicopters, tanks, airplanes) were included among the topics most frequently was misinformed about during June. Several disinformation and fake news regarding arming were also published this month, making this topic rank second in the number of misinformation cases.

During June, several incidents in Serbian majority settlements in Kosovo were used by certain channels to create conspiracy theories about the perpetrators and the purposes of these acts, without providing any concrete evidence.

Among misinformation contents identified this month, misinformation about tragic events (deaths and murders) in media in the Albanian language, threats of war (from Kurti, published in media in the Serbian language) and electoral polls were also analyzed.



46% of the main topics are about Euro 2024, the arming of the KSF, elections, settlements of Serbian majority, tragic events and threats of war.

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. Euro 2024

A portion of the misinformation from the European Football Championship, Euro 2024, from the domain of sports was published on social media (Facebook and TikTok), while the rest appeared in mainstream media. On social media, disinformation was published with claims that Croatia's coach, Zlatko Dalić, praised the Albanian national team, that Rama would be in the stadium supporting Serbia against England, and that an official of the Ministry of Sports of Serbia spread disinformation about the arrest of Albanians at Euro 2024. Manipulation of facts was published with claims that Rron Gjinojci publicly supported Serbia against Slovenia at Euro 2024, and that Asani and Ramadani mocked Hysaj after the match against Italy. Social media also featured AI-generated content claiming that former actor Arnold Schwarzenegger praised the Albanian national football team, fake news that former German footballer Lothar Matthaus spoke about the Albanian national team, and unverified video content claiming to depict national team fans in Dortmund. While in mainstream media, unverified content was published with claims that Pope Francis did not greet the Albanian national team with the double-headed eagle symbol, that Jose Mourinho posted about the Albanian national team on "X" (formerly Twitter), that the statue of Gjergj Kastrioti – Skanderbeg was moved to Dortmund and that a published video showed national team fans before the match against Italy in Dortmund.

02. Armament of KSF

Almost all the content related to the arming of the KSF was published on social media. These contents were evaluated as fake news and disinformation. Fake news have been rated claims published on social media that Turkey donated military vehicles to Kosovo, that it would supply Kosovo with "T129 ATAK" helicopters and that Kosovo and Turkey signed an agreement for the Kizilelma combat drone. Disinformation have been rated claims that "Kosovo's army will be reinforced by September with 10,000 troops and anti-missile systems", that Kosovo will receive a donation of two helicopters from the USA in 2026.

03. Elections

All the misleading content related to the elections topic was evaluated as fake news and was mainly published on social media. Fake news on social media claimed that the American ambassador supported Bedri Hamza for prime minister, that the LDK was considering a coalition with the PDK and the publication of a manipulated poll for the upcoming elections in Kosovo. An article was published in the media with the false claim that a poll was conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in June, reflecting citizens' support for political parties in Kosovo.

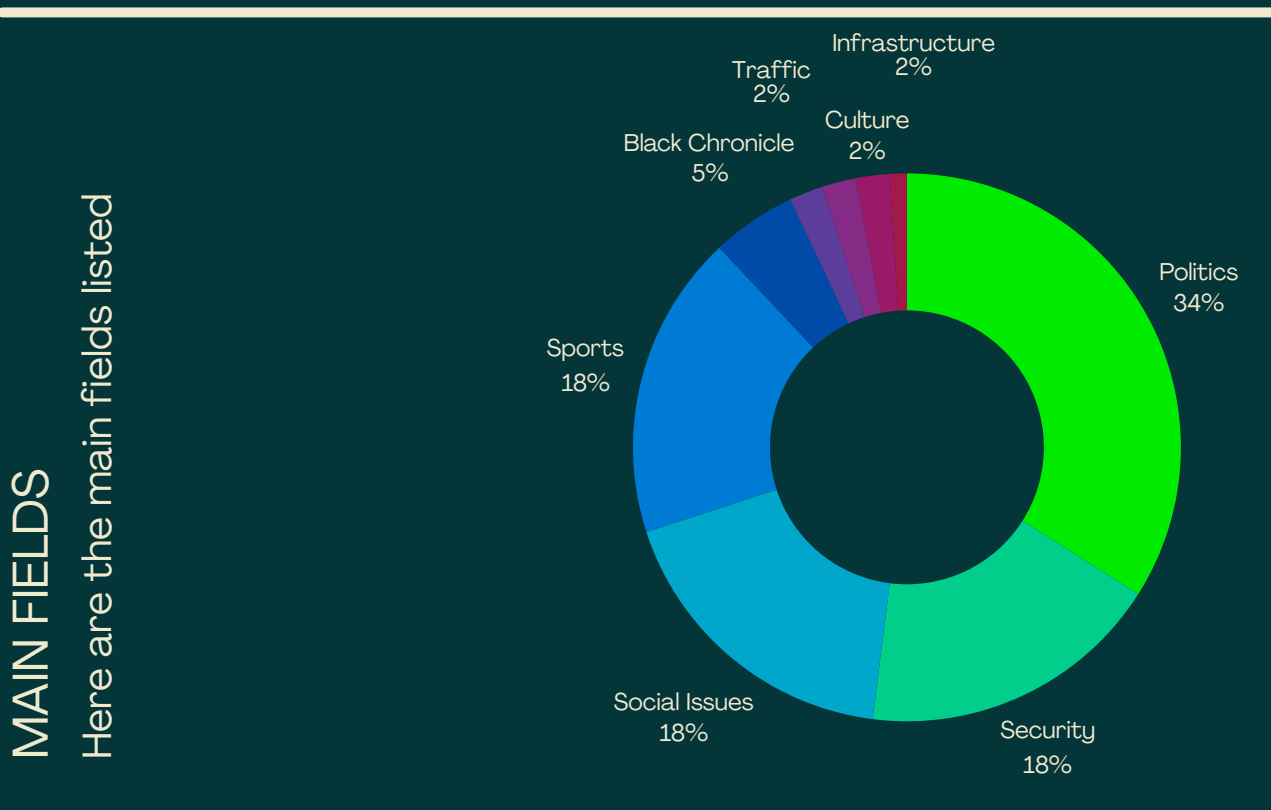
04. Settlements of Serbian majority ts

Misinformation content related to some events in settlements of Serbian majority and the Serb community in Kosovo was published in mainstream media in the Serbian language. These contents were rated as conspiracy theories, with claims that the Kurti government has started "the final phase of closing everything Serbian" in Kosovo and that Kosovo's judicial actions and "Albania" graffiti in Shushicë are related to the "ethnic cleansing" of Serbs.

3

Types of domains

Based on the monitoring and findings of misinformation content processed during May, it turns out that various publishers (mainstream media, dubious portals and social media) produced and disseminated mostly misinformation content in the domain of security.



In the previous month (May), the domain of politics was ranked second with 28%, but during June, it increased in percentage, ranking first with 34%. Misinformation from politics was mainly rated as fake news, clickbait, conspiracy theories and manipulation of facts. In the domain of politics, misinformation covered a variety of topics, with dominant contents related to the elections, settlements of Serbian majority, the Association of Serbian Majority Municipalities, negotiations on Kosovo, the EU and Kosovo, the recognition of Kosovo, etc.

Politics is followed by the domains of security, social issues and sports, which all share the same percentage this month. Security, which was ranked first in the previous month (May) with 29%, misinformation on this domain have suffered an 11% decrease in June, making it the second-ranked domain with 18%. In the domain of security, have dominated contents rated as disinformation, conspiracy theories and fake news. With regard to the topics, the arming of the KSF dominates, including topics such as threats of war, the war in Ukraine, the north, the Israel-Hezbollah conflict, etc.

The domain of social issues suffered a 5% decrease compared to the previous month, placing it third in ranking (with the same percentage as the second ranked). In the topics of social issues dominate hoax contents about loan provision, products claiming to cure certain illnesses, free courses from the government, medical services, hoax SMS messages, financial aid for medical treatment, etc.

Due to the European Football Championship, Euro 2024, misleading content from the sports domain marked a 10% increase compared to the previous month (from 8% in May to 18% in June). All misinformation was related to Euro 2024 and were rated as unverified content, disinformation, hoax, fake news, disinformation/clickbait, unverified content/disinformation, manipulation of facts/hoax and manipulation of facts.



88% of the misinformation contents processed pertain to politics, security, social issues and sports domain.

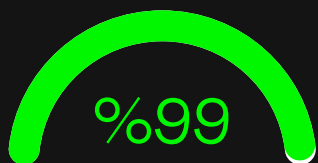
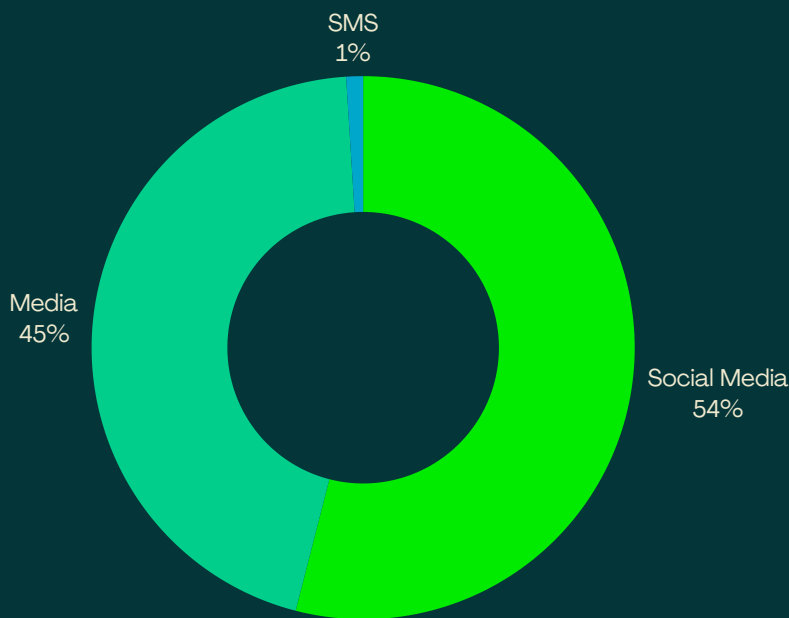
4

Types of publishers

Based on the findings and processing of misinformation content, the misinformation content published by pages and accounts on social media continue to dominate in June as well. Compared to the previous month (May), misinformation content published on social media during this month suffered a decline of 13% (from 67% in May to 54% in June 2024). All hoax content and disinformation, as well as a considerable portion of fake news, were published on social media, thus resulting in misinformation content on social media continue to dominate this month as well.

The misinformation identified and analyzed in this month, published in mainstream media (news portals) increased by 13% compared to the content published during the previous month (from 32% in May to 45% in June 2024). This can be explained by the fact that all clickbait articles (media in Albanian language) and conspiracy theories (media in Serbian language) were published in mainstream media.

DIFFERENCE IN PERCENTAGE
BETWEEN PUBLISHERS WITH
DISINFORMATION CONTENT



99% of articles with misinformation content were published by publishers in social media (54%) and media outlets (45%).

5

Classification of publications in the Albanian and Serbian language

This measurement shows in which language misleading articles monitored have been published during the one-month period, categorizing the media into Albanian, Serbian and other languages in relation to their reporting on and about developments in 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, during the month of June 2024, publications in this language consisted 86% of the analyzed cases.

During this month, in the course of monitoring, content in Serbian language (14%) related to developments in Kosovo were also analyzed..

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

Slightly more than half of the misinformation content in Albanian language was published by social media pages and accounts (52%), while the rest were published in mainstream media (34%) and SMS (1%). Almost all fake news (18%), hoax content (15%) and disinformation (9%) were published on social media. In mainstream media, all clickbait articles (15%) and a portion of unverified content (5%), errors (3%), and manipulation of facts (3%) were published. While in social media primarily lead misinformation content from the domain of social issues (14%), politics (12%), sports (11%) and security (11%), in the mainstream media dominate politics (17%), sports (6%) and black chronicle (5%).

02. Publications in Serbian language

Almost all misinformation content in Serbian language was published by media in Serbian language and portion of them on social media. In media, misinformation content was published in the domains of politics, security and social issues and was categorized as conspiracy theories and manipulation of facts/disinformation. On social media, misinformation content was predominantly in the domain of sports. The manipulation of facts/disinformation was rated the manipulation of Serbian media's misinterpretation of Dua Lipa's comments in Pula, Croatia, while conspiracy theories were rated unfounded claims in the domain of security that the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, was threatening with war, he is preparing children for war, arresting Serbs to incite tensions, and in the domain of politics, linking incidents and graffiti in settlements of Serbian majority for which the perpetrators and motives are unknown to the narrative of "ethnic cleansing" of Serbs.

6

Types of social media

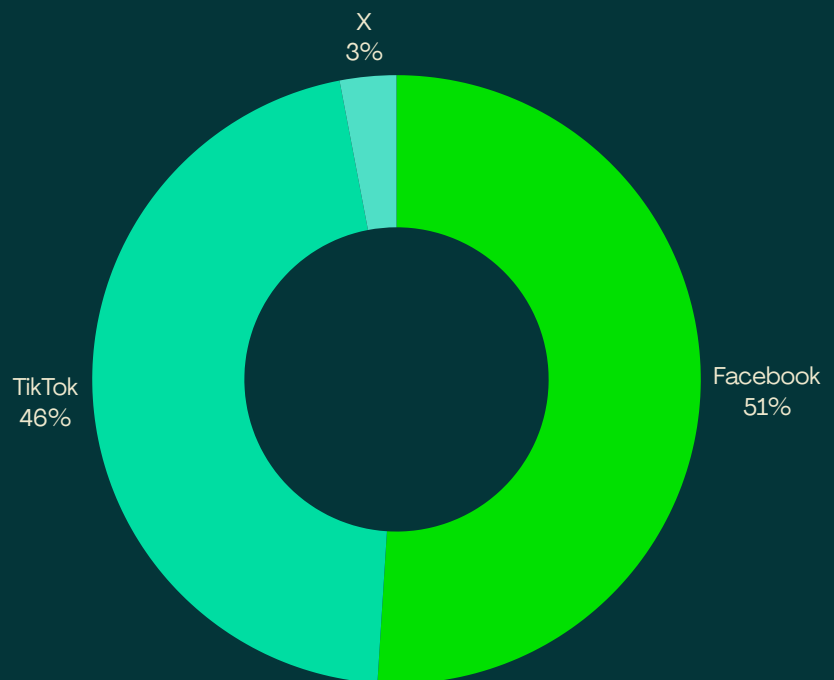
In this section, only disinformation articles published and disseminated on social media are analyzed, excluding publications in other media outlets (mainstream media and dubious portals).

Based on the monitoring conducted during June, misinformation content on social media was published on Facebook 51%, on TikTok 46%, followed by X with 3%.

As in previous months (May, April), in the course of this month (June) misinformation contents published on Facebook continue to dominate, although with a slight decrease of 6% (from 57% in May to 51% in June 2024).

Meanwhile, misinformation content identified and analyzed on the social media platform TikTok has marked a significant increase of 13% (from 33% in May 2024 to 46% in June 2024). Additionally, this month, misinformation content was identified on the platform X.

PERCENTAGE OF
PUBLICATIONS ON SOCIAL
MEDIA



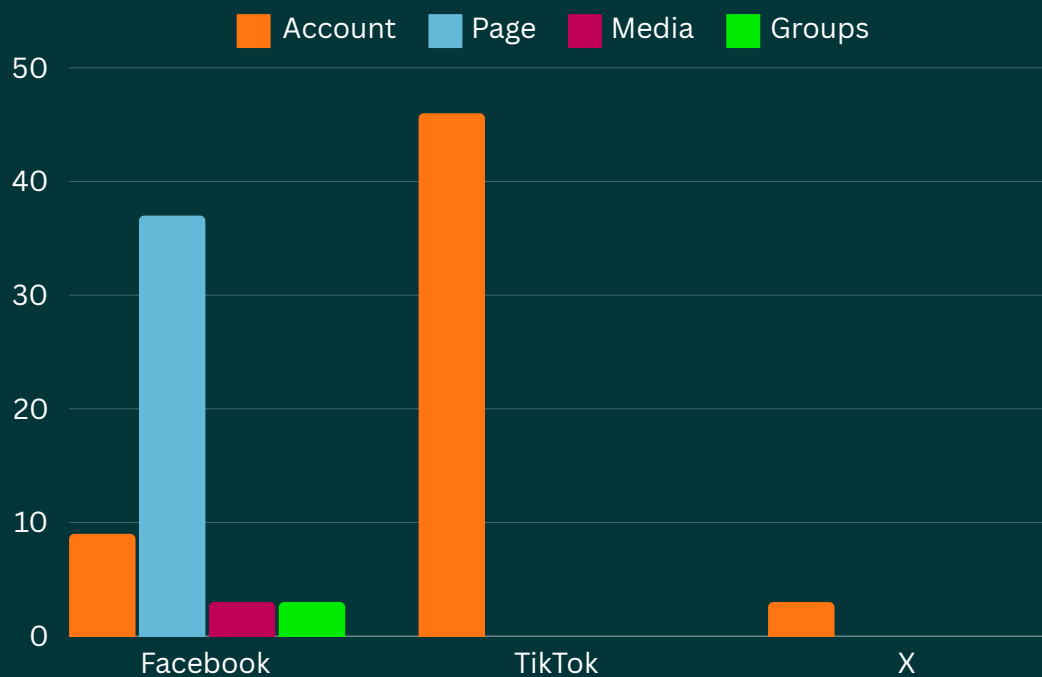
6.1

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 published on social media for June 2024 was mostly published by pages (37%) and accounts (9%) on Facebook, followed by accounts on TikTok (46%). In May, 8% of the misinformation was published by media and groups (3%) on Facebook and by accounts (3%) on the platform X.

PERCENTAGE OF TYPES OF PUBLISHERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA



6.2

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 contents (23%), disinformation (11%) and fake news (9%) are the three primary categories of misinformation published on Facebook. Social issues (23%) and sports (14%) are the two main domains on which misinformation was spread on Facebook during June. The main topics most of the misinformation on Facebook was about are Euro 2024 and hoax publications about healing products and loan provision.

02. TikTok

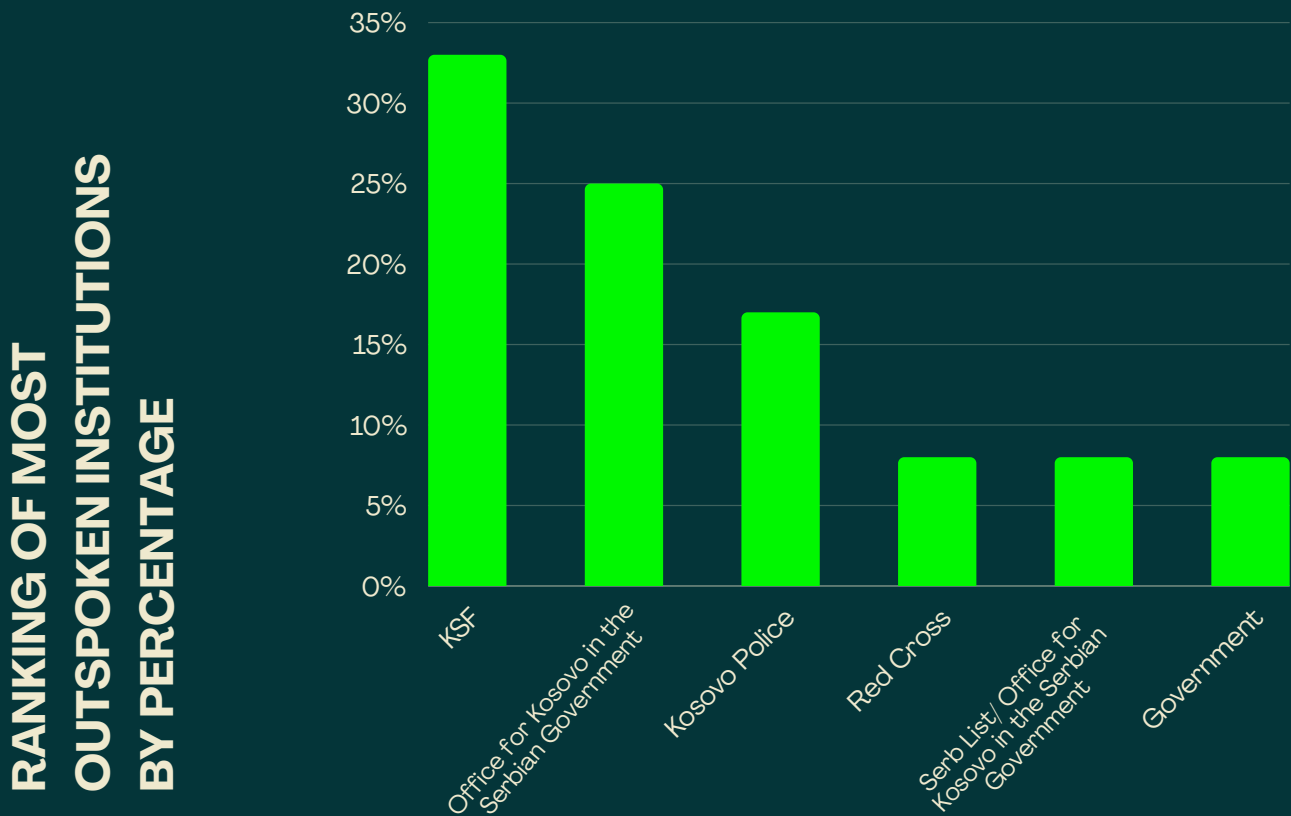
Fake news (26%), disinformation (6%), unverified content (6%) and hoax content (6%) are the categories that have dominated the rating of misinformation content. With regard to the domains, politics (17%) and security (14%) are the two domains most often was misinformed about on the platform TikTok. The arming of the KSF and Euro 2024 are the two topics with the most misinformation on TikTok.

03. x

On the platform X, a piece of disinformation was published in which an official from the Ministry of Sports in Serbia misinformed on the arrest of Albanians at Euro 2024.

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.



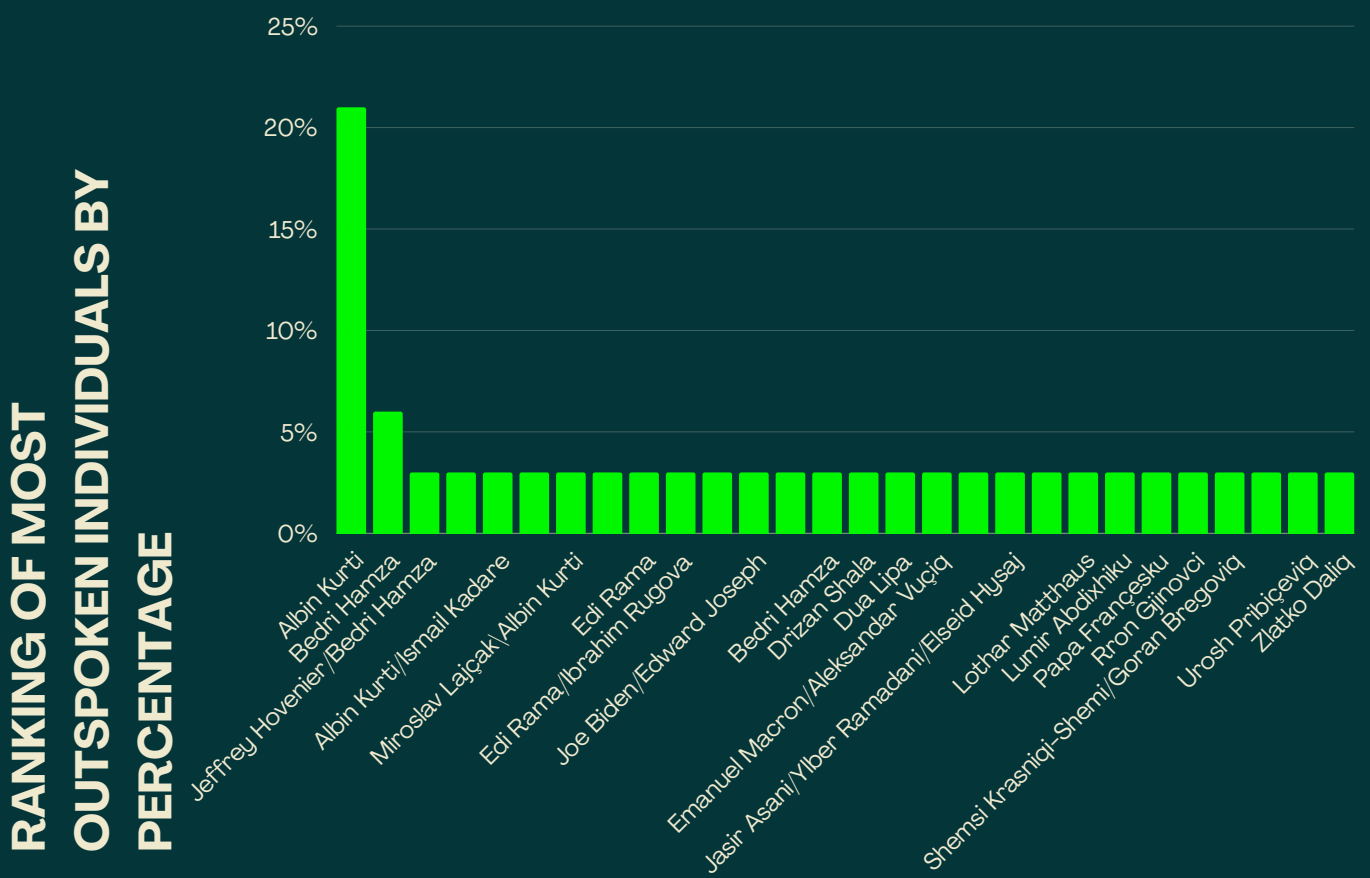
Based on the 65 misinformation contents identified and processed in May 2024, it results that in 13 of them were mentioned 9 different institutions. Among these mentioned institutions, the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) and the Office for Kosovo in the Government of Serbia were the most dominant.

Kosovo Security Force was mentioned in four misinformation contents, specifically on fake news and disinformation published on social media. This institution was mentioned in false claims regarding the supply of this institution with heavy military artillery.

The Office for Kosovo in the Government of Serbia was mentioned in two misinformation contents published in June. This Office was mentioned in conspiracy theories published by media in the Serbian language, which, referring to statements from this Office, interpreted some developments in the settlements of Serbian majority and in the north in Kosovo as ethnically motivated.

All other institutions were mentioned once in the identified and analyzed misinformation contents. The European Union (EU) was mentioned in an unfounded claim about the publication of a report blaming Serbia for the attack in Banjskë. The

American organization, The National Democratic Institute (NDI), was mentioned in a false news article published in Albanian-language media, claiming the publication of a pre-election survey. The government was mentioned in hoax content published on social media, falsely claiming it would offer free English courses. The High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program, also known as HAARP, was mentioned in a conspiracy theory published on social media, claiming it changes the climate, creates storms, earthquakes and volcanoes and causes soil drought. LDK/PDK were mentioned in a piece of misinformation published on social media, falsely claiming that LDK is considering a coalition with PDK. The Ministry of Finance was mentioned in a hoax post on social media, claiming that the Ministry offers interest-free loans for people over 35 years old.



The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, is the most frequently mentioned figure (11 instances of misinformation) among other personalities in 33 instances of misinformation where personalities were mentioned. Kurti was mentioned in conspiracy theories published by media in the Serbian language, with claims that Kurti is seeking war, preparing children for war, arresting Serbs in Kosovo to incite tensions and "ethnic cleansing" and working for "Greater Albania." He was also mentioned in a fake news published on social media, claiming he stated that Kosovo and Turkey had signed an agreement for the Kizilelma combat drone and in a clickbait article published in media in the Albanian language linked to the Kusari-Radoičić recordings.

Kurti was also mentioned in the context of other personalities. He was mentioned with the Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama, and the President of LDK, Lumir Abdixhiku, in a clickbait article published in media claiming that Prime Minister Rama is using President of LDK, Lumir Abdixhiku as a tool to attack Prime Minister Kurti. He was mentioned in a false claim published on social media that Ismail Kadare described Kurti as "the killer of hope in Kosovo". Kurti was also mentioned in a clickbait article published in the media, claiming on the headline that an agreement had been concluded with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for the supply of weapons. The Prime Minister was also mentioned in disinformation published in the media in the context with the EU Envoy, Miroslav Lajčák, with the claim that Lajčák stated, "Kurti accepts the draft statute of the Association".

The second most frequently mentioned personality is the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) candidate for Prime Minister, Bedri Hamza. He was mentioned in fake news published on social media, with false claims that Hamza promised to increase pensions for war veterans up to 1500 euros and that he opposed the idea of opening the Iber river Bridge. Hamza was mentioned in the context with the US Ambassador, Jeffrey Hovenier, in a fake news published on social media, falsely claiming that Hovenier supports Bedri Hamza for Prime Minister.

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 June 2024, having processed 65 misleading contents.

Conclusions

This short monitoring report provides a snapshot of the one month state of play of information (misinformation) during June 2024, based on the data from the fact-checking platform – hibrid.info.

In the course of June 2024, fake news dominated the main categories of misinformation with 20%, followed by hoax content with 17%, clickbait with 15%, conspiracy theories with 12% and disinformation with 11%. Compared to May, fake news increased from 10% to 20%, while hoax content decreased from 19% to 17%. Clickbait and conspiracy theories marked an increase, while disinformation experienced a significant decline from 19% to 11%.

Euro 2024 and the participation of the Albanian national team led to an increase in various information, including unfounded claims about the team, players and fans, making this the dominant topic for misinformation during June. Speculations about the armament supply to the KSF, including heavy artillery, also ranked high among the most misinformed topics. Additionally, incidents in settlements of Serb-majority in Kosovo were used by certain channels to create conspiracy theories without providing any concrete evidence.

During June, politics ranked first with 34% of misinformation, mainly involving fake news, clickbait, conspiracy theories and manipulation of facts, including topics such as elections and the Association of Serb-Majority Municipalities. Security, which was first in May with 29%, fell to 18% in June, with content primarily about the armament of the KSF and threats of war. Due to Euro 2024, misinformation in the sports domain increased from 8% in May to 18% in June, mainly involving unverified content and disinformation.

Based on findings and analyses of misinformation content, content from pages and accounts on social media continued to dominate in June as well, although they suffered a 13% decrease compared to May (from 67% to 54%). Misinformation published in mainstream media, such as news portals, marked a 13% increase (from 32% in May to 45% in June), mainly due to clickbait articles and conspiracy theories. In June, misinformation on social media was primarily published on Facebook (51%), TikTok (46%), and X (3%).

Based on the 65 misinformation contents identified and analyzed during June 2024, it resulted that in 13 of them 9 different institutions were mentioned, with the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) and the Office for Kosovo in the Government of Serbia being the most frequently mentioned. The KSF was mentioned in four misinformation contents, including fake news and disinformation about its armament, while the Office for Kosovo in the Government of Serbia was mentioned in two contents, primarily in conspiracy theories published by Serbian media that interpreted developments in settlements of Serb-majority and in the north of Kosovo as ethnically motivated.

The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, is the most frequently mentioned figure in 33 misinformation pieces related to personalities, in 11 instances. He is mentioned in conspiracy theories published by Serbian media, including claims that he seeks war, arrests Serbs to incite tensions and works for a "Greater Albania." Kurti is also mentioned in fake news and clickbait articles, including claims about a military agreement with Turkey and political manipulations with other figures, such as Edi Rama and Lumir Abdixhiku. The second most mentioned personality is the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) candidate for Prime Minister, Bedri Hamza. He is mentioned in fake news on social media, with claims that he promised to increase pensions for war veterans and opposed the opening of the Iber river Bridge. Hamza is also mentioned in the context of a fake news story where it was claimed that he had the support of the American ambassador Jeffrey Hovenier to become prime minister.

HIBRIDO.INFO