

Impact of events in Europe and information disorders in the news in Kosovo



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Pristina, October 2022

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Executive Summary

For one year, D4D Institute has been monitoring online portals and social networks in Kosovo, as part of the project: “Combating misinformation and restoring citizens' trust in the media”, supported by NDI Kosovo and USAID Kosovo. In this case, six reports were developed in one year. In the past year 2021, the D4D Institute launched the first report on monitoring of the election campaign for local elections, which were held on October 17, 2021, as well as the period of the election campaign for the second round during the runoff, which took place between 8 and 12 November. Meanwhile, the monitoring of online portals and social networks continued throughout October - November and December 2021, and that report was launched in January 2022. Meanwhile, for the present year of 2022, the monitoring of online portals and social networks continued quarterly, with news monitoring between January-February-March, and a report was launched in March. The D4D Institute has continued to monitor news between April - May - June, while in an intermediate period, a report on Misogyny and online violence against women in politics was launched, and the last published report includes the monitoring of news articles for the period of July – August – September. Each report includes six news categories of monitoring: political divisions and harsh language, external influence, special court, Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, misogyny and online violence against women, and Covid-19. In each report, these news categories were analyzed in two languages, Albanian and Serbian. The purpose of each report developed by the D4D Institute has permanently been to identify news that contain information disorders which, intentionally or not, led to misinformation of citizens, incitement of hatred against individuals or different groups, as well as the awareness raising of the public when it comes to the presence of information disorders and the ability to validate such news.

Monitoring of portals and social networks took place by using two platforms, *MediaToolkit* and *Crowdtangel*. The monitoring was conducted in parallel in the Albanian and Serbian language samples, whereby the Albanian language sample included 76 online portals, 203 sites and 10 groups on the Facebook social network, and 32 accounts on Twitter. On the other hand, the Serbian language sample included 55 online portals, 16 sites and 1 Facebook group, and 18 accounts on Twitter. During the monitoring year, the three latest reports are characterized by the highest number of items containing information disorders, and on the basis of the analysis and monitoring done, D4D Institute has identified that this increase in news with information disorders began immediately after the start of Ukraine-Russia conflict. Though monitoring included both samples, the increase in the volume of news produced on this situation was only reported in the Albanian language sample. In the Albanian language sample, in the reporting period of April - May - June, news covering the Ukraine-Russia war increased by 162 percent, compared to January - February - March report. This indicates an increased focus on the war between Ukraine and Russia by online portals and social networks in the Albanian language sample. Therefore, based on such a high number of news reports on the Ukraine-Russia war, the D4D Institute went out into the field and collected citizens' opinions about the issue of the Ukraine-Russia war, the results of which are analyzed below.

Introduction

The start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 initiated a new spiral of spreading false, fabricated news or disinformation online. The Internet is filled with information from two different extremes, which initially provided completely opposite versions of the root causes of the conflict itself. Although the Russia-Ukraine hybrid war takes place mostly in those countries themselves, and in platforms less used in Kosovo, such as Telegram, Kosovo social media space is also flooded with false information about the armed conflict. Furthermore, in a survey with 1065 respondents Kosovo-wide, in an Omnibus format, conducted by a credible company in the country, D4D asked citizens of several ethnicities and of different ages and professions about some of the fake, semi-accurate or disputable news that have circulated online during 2022.

In none of the 7 questions posed is there a majority that says they believe in the specific contested issue. The major difference prevails on ethnic basis, with respondents from the Albanian majority having completely different attitudes from members of the Serb minority in Kosovo, especially when it comes to the Russia-Ukraine war. Employees in the public sector are more vulnerable to believing fake or distorted news. An interesting finding of the questionnaire is that people over the age of 65, who are believed to be more exposed to fake news, trust them much less than people aged 25-34. The responses show that a high number of those who stated to have a master's degree or PhD tend to believe in disinformation, more than those with a college or high school degree.

Detailed Analysis

Methodology

This is the annual monitoring report of online portals and social networks. The annual report summarizes the main findings from the one-year monitoring of online portals and social media (Facebook and Twitter). So, this includes: a) the first report (Q1) covering the period October - December 2021, b) the second report (Q2) covering the monitoring January-March 2022, the third report (Q3) covering the monitoring April-June 2022 as well as the fourth report (Q4) covering the period July-September 2022. The nine reports do not include the findings of the monitoring report of the race for local elections and the run-off race, except for some findings of the report on misogyny and online violence against women which has a part of the election campaign period and run-off contest.

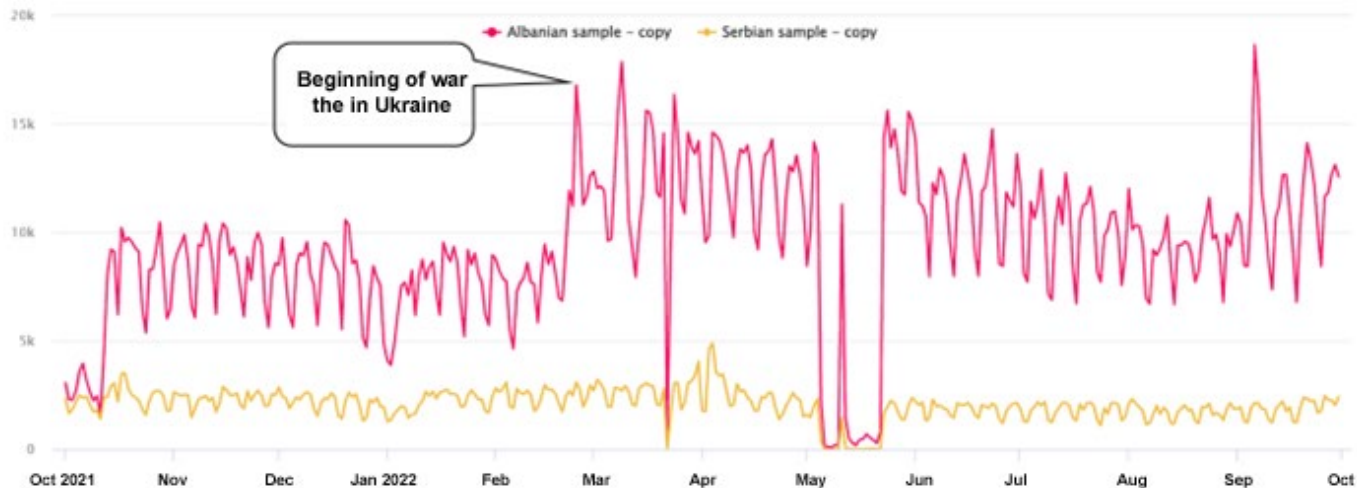
The annual report, like the periodic reports, is divided into two samples: One focuses on the Albanian language, and the other on the Serbian language. The collection of articles was done using two online media monitoring platforms, Crowdtangle: this platform collects the articles that are posted on the Facebook social network enabling the collection of Facebook interaction data (likes, comments, shares, and other reactions) and Mediatoolkit collects the articles of the portals where the potential readership was measured through it. From one platform the data of Online Profiles and Twitter have been collected, while the other platform has enabled the collection of data from Facebook (from groups and pages).

		Facebook		Online Portals	Twitter accounts
		Pages	Groups		
Sample	ALB	203	10	76	32
	SRB	16	1	55	18
Total		411			

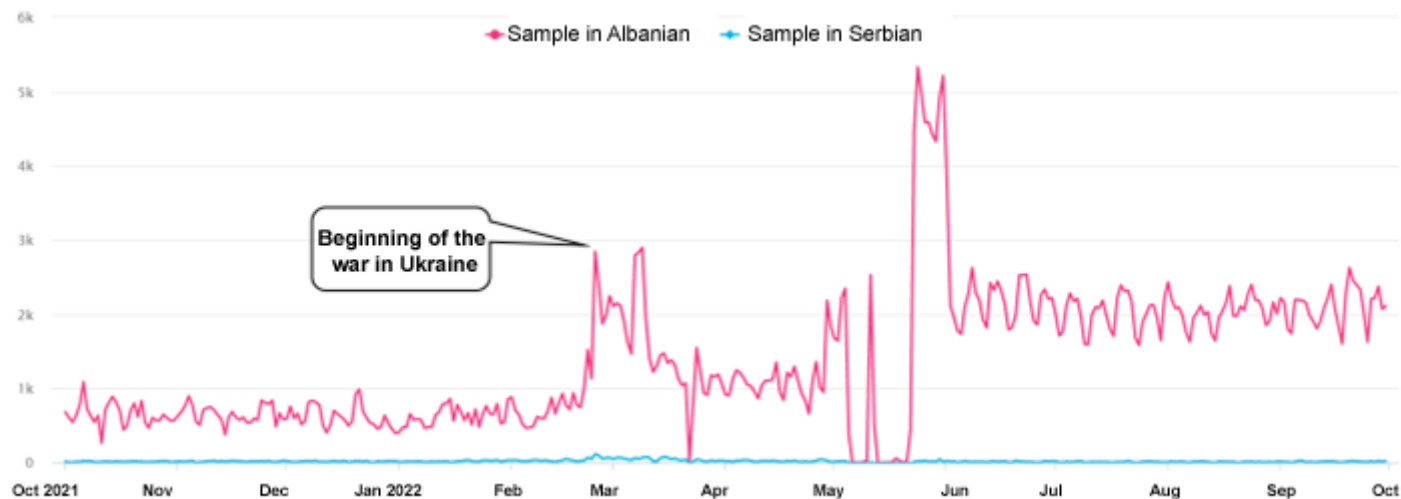
Main findings

According to the data from mediatoolkit for the one-year monitoring period, illustrated in graph 1. it is observed that the number of use of the mentioned keywords has risen significantly at the end of February 2022. More precisely, the peak was reached on February 24 - this date corresponds to the beginning of the war in Ukraine. However, there is a difference between the two samples. While online portals in the Albanian language have more media coverage of the war in Ukraine, the opposite has happened in the sample in the Serbian language. To verify the correlation between the number of uses of keywords related to Ukraine, D4D has also monitored movements in the external influence category. Thus, for the same period, the war in Ukraine has a similar trend with the movement of the number of keywords compared to all other categories (see Graph 2). Therefore, having such a large number of news about the Ukraine-Russia war, the flow of all monitoring has been directed around this event, in which case the whole event has also affected the life and politics of Kosovo, and the impact that this news has had can be seen also based on the questionnaire that was carried out on the basis of this project, the results, and processing of this questionnaire can also be seen through the infographics carried out below.

Graph 1. Number of keywords used throughout the one-year monitoring period by sample. Source: Mediatoolkit



Graph 2. Number of keywords used throughout the one-year monitoring period by sample and category. Source: Mediatoolkit



The omnibus

Based on the messages of the narratives that had untrue content, D4D has built several statements similar to these narratives to test them in public opinion in Kosovo. Here are the positions/statements that have proven to be the most widespread or that have had the most penetration based on the number of potential readers of these narratives. Most of these questions come from the category of external influence due to the volume and great impact of these articles. Thus, in order to understand how these narratives have influenced public opinion, D4D has organized a questionnaire with around 1,065 respondents (omnibus) asking for their opinion on whether they believe that certain narratives are true or not. In the questionnaire there were seven attitudes that were related to untrue narratives in some of the monitoring categories. There were three options for these attitudes: True, false, I don't know/refuse, which are elaborated on below and the results from the field are presented.

Foreign Influence

At the heart of the first report in the external impact ,category were several key narratives. In the Albanian-language sample, the unverified narrative that the US Envoy for the Grenell dialogue is being paid by Serbia to lobby for it dominated, while in the Serbian-language sample, untrue and biased narratives such as denigrating the West, mainly the US, dominated and their foreign policy, as well as a distorted reflection of the actions of the Kosovo police in the north of the country. In the second report, the presence of news with influence from abroad was much greater than in previous times due to political developments around the world - especially the war in Ukraine. If we compare the peak of news in January with the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the number of articles published on online portals increased

by 273% (see graph 2 above). In this period, more news and posts have been published pie charts networks that have multiplied the narrative of the official Moscow regarding the denazification of Ukraine. Moreover, with the beginning of the war in Ukraine, unilateral and unverified statements by Russian officials began that Albanian mercenaries fighting on the side of Ukraine are participating in the war in Ukraine, and these have continued to be present for a while long. These news published in the TASS news agency in Russia have been distributed not only in online portals in Kosovo and Albania, but also in other countries of the region such as Serbia. Videos of imams where they called the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy with the term "tyrant" and attributed unknown attributes to him have circulated widely on social networks in the countries of the region (Kosovo, Albania, and North Macedonia). In this video, NATO's failure to stop Israel's "genocide" in the Middle East is also mentioned - taking the Ukrainian war out of context.

In the third report, distorted and untrue statements made by the mayor of Kiev, Ukraine, were published, as if he had said that he thanks Kosovo and the Albanians for their military and humanitarian contribution to the ongoing war in Ukraine. In the sample in the Serbian language, there were quite a few false narratives, but it is worth noting that Great Britain had sent missiles to the Kosovo army similar to those it had sent to Ukraine. While in the fourth quarter report, this category of news is considered more of the news with distortion of information and exaggerated headline.

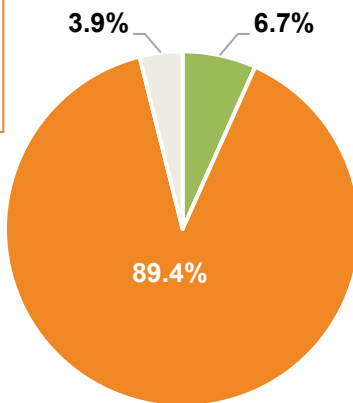
“Russia’s intervention in Ukraine was done to free Russian citizens from the oppression imposed by the Ukrainian government”

The first question in the questionnaire relates to the invasion that Russia launched on February 24 against Ukraine. The false narrative that Russia pushed through its propaganda, from the onset, has been that Russians, and Russian-speaking Ukrainians, have been permanently oppressed by the central government in Kyiv, especially in the two eastern regions of the country, which were occupied earlier by Russia.

However, according to the findings from the survey, the absolute majority do not believe this motivated the conflict. 89.4% responded this was “Not true”, while only 6.7% believed this to be true, while 3.9% of respondents refused to answer. Of the 6.7% of those who believe the Russian version of the start of the war, 76.7% are Serbs, and only 3.7% are Albanians.

“Russia’s intervention in Ukraine was done to free Russian citizens from the oppression imposed by the Ukrainian government”

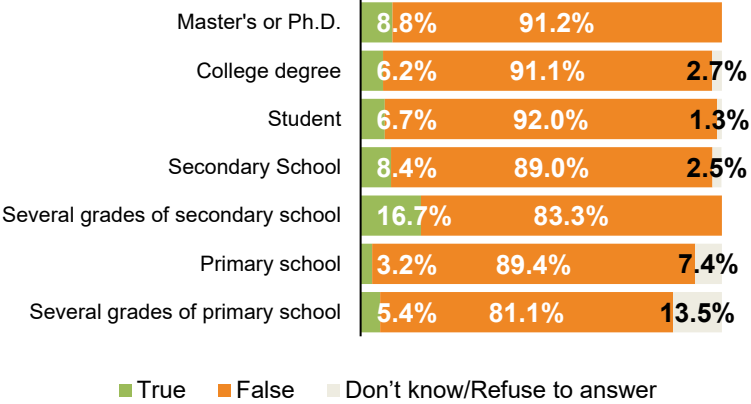
- True
- False
- Don’t know/Refuse to answer



When it comes to professions, amongst those who do not believe this to be true are students with 94.3%, while the most

of those believing this are employed in the public sector, with 11.4%. All surveyed employees who generate an income above 900 Euros said that this was not true, while the highest figure of those who said the statement was true (14.3 %), make between 751 and 900 Euros monthly.

"Russia's intervention in Ukraine was done to free Russian citizens from the oppression imposed by the Ukrainian government"



A similar trend for the first question can again be found in terms of family incomes, while in terms of place of residence, the number of those who believe the statement to be true is slightly higher in urban areas than in rural ones (8.6% versus 5.4%). 93.7% of those who do not trust this motive are in the 18-24 age group, while the highest number of those who believe the statement to be true are in the 25-34 age group (9.2%). People over 65 believe it the least if at all, with a percentage of only 3.7%.

“NATO failed to stop genocide in the Middle East (Israel-Palestine War)”

The second question of the survey highlights an old topic about the influence of the North Atlantic Treaty, NATO or lack thereof, in the age-old conflict between Israel and Palestine. This question attracts the highest percentage of those who trust the statement to be true, 38.1%. However, the majority, 53.7%, reject any potential liability of NATO, while 8.1% refuse to answer. Here, too, there are differences between the Albanian and Serbian communities, but the difference is obviously small.

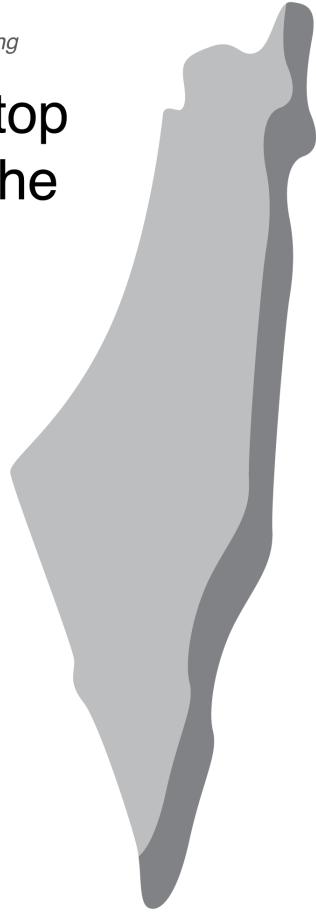
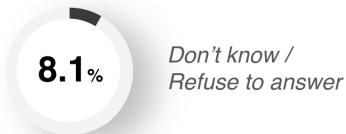
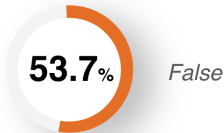
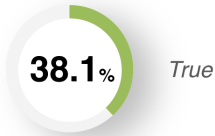
37.9% of Albanians surveyed think that this is true, while the percentage among Serbs reaches 54.8%. In other communities, this figure reaches 27.9%. The highest number of those who believe the statement to be true are employed in the public sector with 48.8%, while 64.3% of the unemployed and those who are not seeking for employment, do not believe the statement. People aged 25-34 make 45.1% of those who believe that NATO has failed to stop the genocide, while the highest number of those who do not believe the statement to be true reaches 52.8% (35-44 years old).



According to you, is the following statement true or false:

NATO failed to stop the genocide in the Middle East

(Israel-Palestine war)



“Grenell is paid 100 thousand dollars by Serbia for lobbying”

A few months ago, a statement by a respected Serbian analyst from Belgrade, Dusan Janjic, filled the headlines for several days in Kosovo and Serbia. Without providing any facts, Janjic claimed that the former envoy of the Trump Administration for Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, Richard Grenell, was paid 100,000 dollars per month to lobby for Serbia. Grenell himself categorically denied the statement, but this did not prevent him from being commented on in the media and social networks as a Serbian lobbyist.

However, according to the survey responses, 52.1% believe that the news is false, while 27.9% believe that Grenell is a Serbian lobbyist. A large number of respondents, 20.0%, refused to answer or said they didn't know. That statement of Grenell working for Serbia is trusted more by Kosovo Serbs (37.2%, versus 27.8% of Albanians), while most Albanians do not trust such news (51.9% in relation to 48.8% of Serbs).

The youngest age group, that of 18-24 years old, bears the highest percentage of those who believe that Grenell might be working for Serbia, while the interviewed persons aged 35-44 years trust this news the least.

Those who have completed only a few grades of high school, 42.9%, trust the statements about Grenell's lobbying for Serbia, while 62.5% are those who have completed only primary school and who consider the most the news to be false.



According to you, is the following statement true or false:

Grenell is paid 100 thousand dollars by Serbia for lobbying

Albanians



27.8% — True
51.9% — False
20.2% — Don't know /
Refuse to answer

Serbs

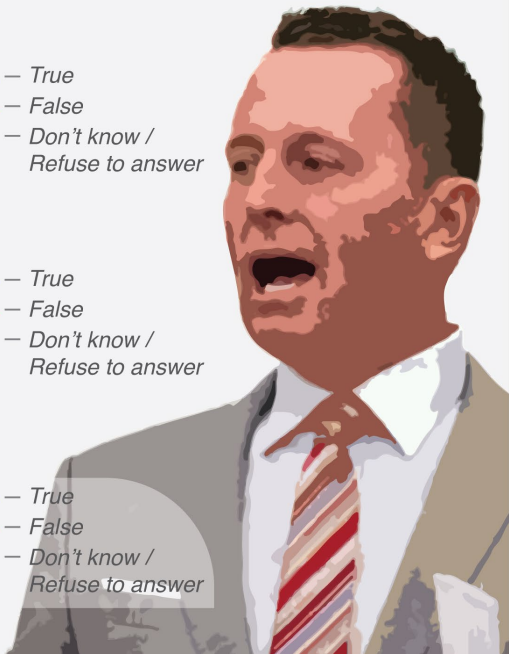


37.2% — True
48.8% — False
14.0% — Don't know /
Refuse to answer

Others



20.9% — True
58.1% — False
20.9% — Don't know /
Refuse to answer



“Great Britain supplied missiles to Kosovo”

The news that Great Britain is supplying Kosovo with missiles came from the Serbian media, and false statements by politicians in Belgrade. The news item was alarming in Serbia, but brought enthusiasm in Kosovo, despite the fact that there was no such shipment from London for law enforcement in Kosovo.

An overwhelming majority of respondents claimed that this was a fake news, 63.0% compared to 19.3% who believed it. Amongst those who believed the statement, most were Serbs, or 66.7 %, unlike 17.3%. of Albanians, who trusted the statement on missile shipments. 65.2% of Albanians surveyed said that this news was not true, as did 62.8% of other communities. The disbelief on the news item was expressed by 71.8% of respondents having completed primary school, while people with several grades of secondary school believed it the most.



According to you, is the following statement true or false:

Great Britain supplied missiles to Kosovo

Albanians



17.3% — True
65.2% — False
17.6% — Don't know /
Refuse to answer

Serbs

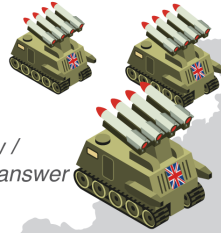


66.7% — True
16.7% — False
16.7% — Don't know /
Refuse to answer

Others



18.6% — True
62.8% — False
18.6% — Don't know /
Refuse to answer



“Albanians from Kosovo and Albania have gone as mercenaries to fight for Ukraine”

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia constantly propagates that fighters from many countries of the West are being paid to fight on the side of Ukraine. Kosovo and Albania are also on the list of countries that Russia claims have sent people to fight for pay (mercenaries). The authorities in Prishtina and Tirana have denied the involvement of the citizens of these two countries in the conflict that began in February.

According to the D4D survey, an extremely high number of respondents do not trust such a statement, or to the extent of 72.4%. 12.7% refused to answer, while 14.9% trusted it. The absolute majority of those who believe it are Serbs, or 67.4%, in contrast to Albanians, among which this percentage reaches only 12.7%. Pensioners believed such news the least - 75.0%, while the students/pupils (22.9%) believed it the most (25.0%), with others to follow.

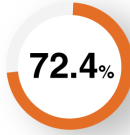


According to you, is the following statement true or false:

Albanians from Kosovo and Albania have gone as mercenaries to fight for Ukraine



True



False



*Don't know /
Refuse to answer*



Special court

In the first report, in the Albanian language sample there were articles which were biased and exaggerated. Some of them were statements by lawyers or journalists, and some of them by the politicians themselves. Among the main narratives in the sample in the Albanian language was the news that the government of Kosovo is not taking care of the accused from the special court. Meanwhile, in the Serbian language sample, there were narratives with offensive and biased content about the arrested, calling them terrorists and war criminals. In the second quarter, there were mostly exaggerated narratives with untrue content in the Serbian language sample. These were related not only to the Special Court but also to the consequences of the last war in Kosovo. More specifically, online portals in Serbia published false news that KLA commanders had beheaded babies, or called Prime Minister Kurti's statements about victims of sexual violence as fabrications. There were also articles where an Albanian policeman, former police chief in the Gjakova region, denied the police's crimes against Albanian civilians.

In the third quarter, similar narratives continued, and the overwhelming majority of them were in the Serbian language sample. The false headline was about the author of the Report that led to the establishment of the Special Court - Dick Marty. There was a lot of news that the Albanian services wanted to kill Dick Martyn and blame his murder on the Serbian services. This news was untrue because the Swiss Police were protecting him from threats that it was the Serbian services that wanted to liquidate him. More profound were the claims in some online portals taken from a televised debate where, citing Dick Marty's report, it was claimed that the KLA was financed through the sale of organs of ethnic Serbs in the "yellow house". While in the fourth quarter, news with exaggerated headlines and distortion of information dominated more in this category of monitoring.

“The Government of Kosovo pays no attention to the defendants of the Specialist Chambers”

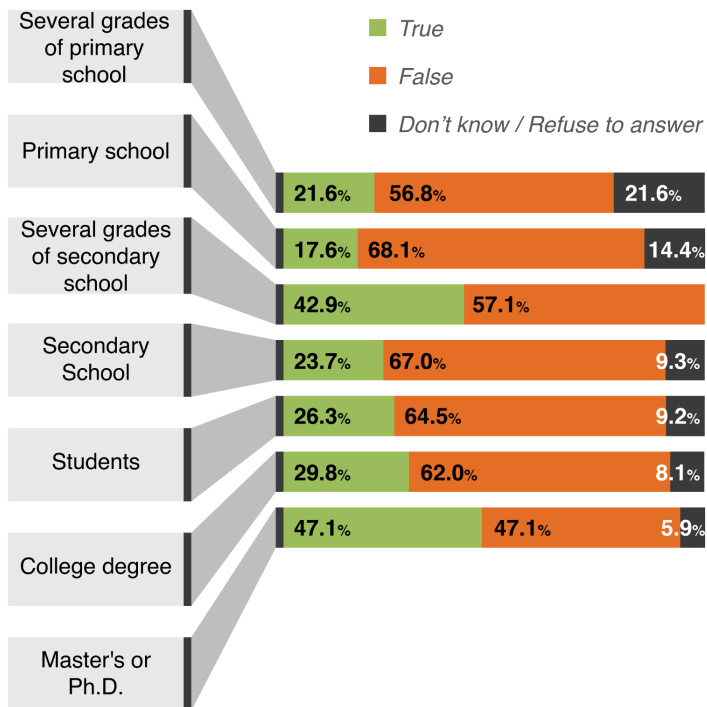
Since the surrender of the former president, Hashim Thaçi and others in the Hague on November 5, 2020, there has been a continuous discussion in Kosovo on what the Kosovo state institutions can do to help their defense before the Specialist Chambers in the Hague. Although there was no specific news item that would have raised such a theory, televised debates in studios have often led to assume that, due to political rivalry, the government led by Vetëvendosje does not care about the defendants in the Hague.

However, only 24.9% of the respondents trusted that it does not take care, while the majority, 64.8%, consider this statement to be untrue. A high number of Serbs, 28.6%, refused to answer this question, while those with a master degree or Ph.D, 47.1%, believed this statement the most. Those aged 25-34 trusted the statement to be false the most.



According to you, is the following statement true or false:

The Government of Kosovo pays no attention to the defendants of the Specialist Chambers



Dialogue Kosovo - Serbia

Unfounded and unverified claims by Serbia for withdrawing recognition of Kosovo have continued for a long time, being repeated through online portals in the Serbian language sample. Meanwhile, in the sample in the Albanian language, the main issue was that of license plates - therefore, establishing reciprocity in the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. The narratives about the dialogue had one-sided content and also caused political divisions between the parties in Kosovo. In an article published on an online portal (then distributed on other portals) citing an analyst, it is estimated that PDK is on the same side as Serbia because it wants to divide Kosovo.

“Kosovo's application to the Council of Europe violates the Washington Agreement”

On September 4, 2020, two months before the US presidential elections, the then Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti and the Serbian President, Aleksandar Vučić signed, separately an agreement on “normalization of economic relations”, in the White House, and in the presence of President Donald Trump. One of the items of such agreement stated that for 1 year, Kosovo would refrain from attempts to obtain membership in international organizations, while Serbia would cease its campaign to get countries to derecognize Kosovo, as it calls it. When Kosovo applied for membership in the Council of Europe, in May 2022, there were discussions whether this constituted a violation of commitments toward Washington D.C.

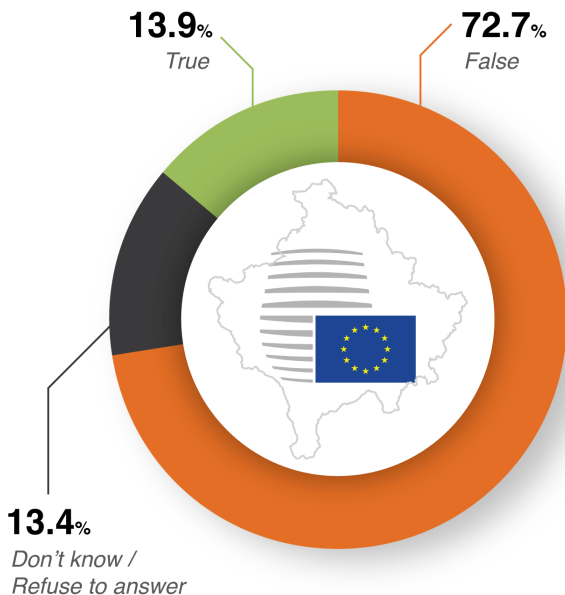
According to the responses to the D4D survey, 72.7% of respondents do not believe that such application violates the Washington Agreement, while only 13.9% think otherwise. 62.8% of Serbs belong to the latter. With the rate of 77.3%, pensioners make the group with the highest percentage of those who think that there is no violation by such application

by Kosovo. As for the gender distribution, the ratio in almost every question of those who trust the fake news is almost 50% for men and women. A greater number of women did not trust the news item that Britain supplied Kosovo with missiles (66.8% compared to 59.5% of men). That was similar to the claim that NATO failed to stop the genocide in the Middle East. While 41.2% of male respondents took such statement to be true, only 34.9% of women believed it to be true.



According to you, is the following statement true or false:

Kosovo's application to the Council of Europe violates the Washington Agreement



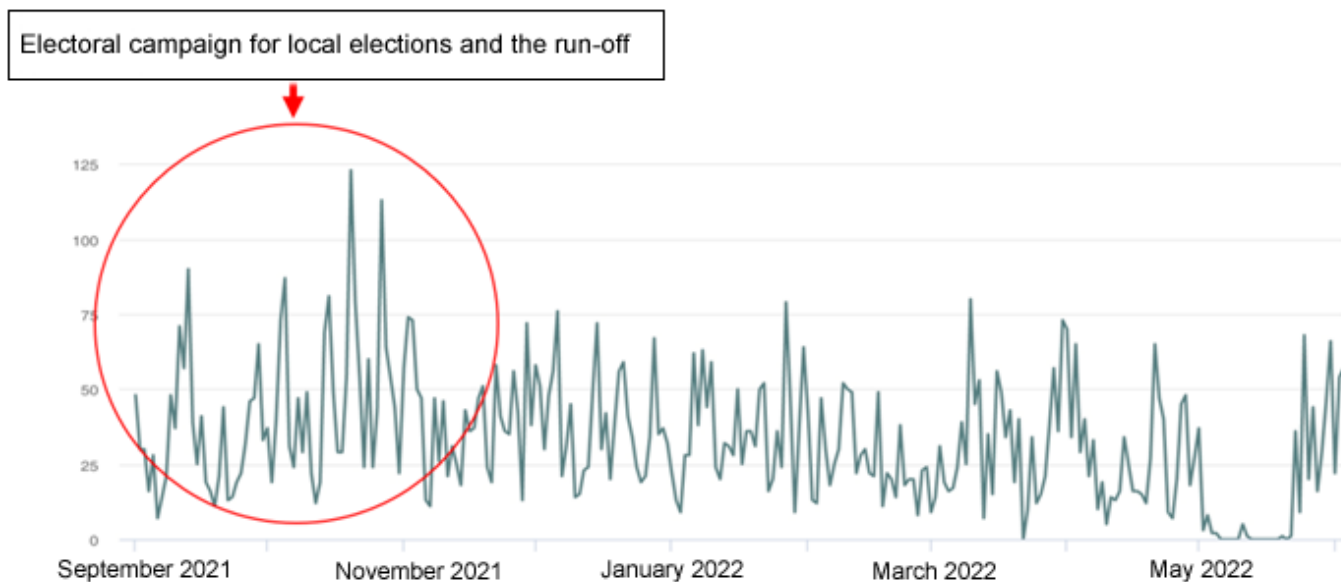
Misogyny/Sexist language and online violence against women in politics

During the periodic monitoring, D4D has found that in the periodic reports, and the report on online misogyny and violence against women in politics, there have been several narratives that have attacked women online. D4D has also launched a special report on this issue, which addresses not only the posts and articles on online portals, but also measured the sentiment of citizens towards women in politics by analyzing their comments on Facebook. Women in politics have been the target of misogynistic language, especially during the election campaign. Women candidates have faced not only articles and posts on social networks, but have been the target of attacks through "MEME"¹ which had derogatory content or ridicule about their electoral promises or their political career (See graph 3 below). The findings of [the report on Misogyny and online violence against women in politics](#) (published in September of this year) reveal some issues about this phenomenon in the political culture in Kosovo and also give some recommendations on how to improve the approach to some of them. This report, which has monitored the period from September to August 2022, also makes some findings regarding the language used by commentators on social networks in relation to women candidates for mayor of municipalities or candidates for assembly. Also, this includes articles and posts about women who have decision-making positions, such as MPs or ministers. The report focuses on two periods. The first one focuses on the race for the local elections, and the second period focuses on other periods of periodic monitoring reports including the Q1, Q2 and Q3 reports (this should also include the Q4 report - more precisely the narratives that

¹ According to Merriam-webster, an entertaining article (e.g. an image or video with title) or a genre of articles that are widely spread online, especially through social media.

were present in Q4). In the period of the election campaign for the local elections and the run-off race, D4D analyzed a total of 1,556 Facebook comments for 11 women candidates. The findings of this analysis show that 40 percent of the comments were negative, and 29 percent contained misogynistic language. Only 31 percent were positive comments. Meanwhile, for the period after the elections (Q1, Q2 and Q3), in the analysis of 729 comments on Facebook, most of them are positive - or in other words 74 percent of them. However, negative comments based mainly on political criticism were about 11 percent, while 15 percent were gender-based insults. It is worth emphasizing another finding regarding the gender structure of commentators and their approach to women in politics in social networks. Of the 177 negative and misogynistic comments, about 43 percent or nearly half of such comments come from women (see graph 3 below)

Graph 3. The trend of the use of key words related to the category of misogyny for the sample in the Albanian language in online portals and posts in social networks. Source: Mediatoolkit, 2022



Covid-19

During a year of monitoring social networks and online portals, a special focus is also behind the COVID-19 pandemic, where the reports and news that have been produced the most were during the three-month period at the end of 2021 of analyzing the articles, but that it is worth noting that there was information disorder only in the sample in the Albanian language, including news that are not true. The articles that had untrue content are the ones that reported about the measures taken by the Government of Kosovo, where many portals did not report the truth in a fair way.

Recommendations

It is important that media inform fairly and contribute to the integrity of the elections but also to the political situation in the country overall. On the other hand, political parties and their representatives should also choose the language of communication and avoid using offensive terms.

Recommendations to media

- ~ Verify all facts before publishing the news - especially those that are republished and those related to the news coming from foreign news agencies;
- ~ Do not promote political divisions and hate speech
- ~ Report carefully and responsibly on misogyny;
- ~ Implement the practice of gender sensitive reporting;
- ~ When reporting on sexist language and hate speech, disclose them as such
- ~ Filter comments on social media, removing those that contain hate speech and sexist language
- ~ Refrain from using exaggerated headlines aimed at serving as clickbaits
- ~ All articles sponsored in the print media should contain a note that they are sponsored by a political entity or the candidate of the political entity
- ~ The media should make it clear and condemn any offensive language against women in politics;
- ~ News portals should verify the facts and not fall prey to deceptions of foreign media - especially those coming from Russia and its allies;

- ~ News portals should engage in quoting the reports of the special court and not create exaggerated headlines;
- ~ Online portals as well as other types of media (TV, newspapers, radio), should use ways to filter comments in the news they share on their social media accounts, that contain hate speech, sexist and offensive language,
- ~ Put the name of the author/journalist who wrote the news, if not possible, then at least the initials of the author/journalist, in order to identify the portal that copies the news from non-quoted sources.

Recommendations to Political Entities

- ~ Do not promote political divisions, which incite hatred among citizens
- ~ Do not use sexist language against women
- ~ Political parties and political leaders must refrain from harsh, hate and misogynistic language
- ~ Political parties and political leaders should not be involved in disinformation campaigns
- ~ Political parties must disclose campaign expenditures publicly on social media
- ~ Political parties should draft internal regulations on cases in which disciplinary measures should be taken against its members involved in disinformation campaigns"

Recommendations to citizens

- ~ Check and verify, the source of information, author, date of publication and portal link
- ~ Verify the veracity of the news before sharing it on social

media

- ~ Read the articles in their entirety and do not distribute information based solely on the headlines of the articles
- ~ Refrain from hate speech and sexist language in comments on social networks
- ~ Persons affected by defamation and insults of various natures should report them to Kosovo Press Council;

Conclusions

Through this survey, D4D aimed to view on the ground, the level of (dis)trust of disinformation or fake or manipulated news, and how they are perceived by the general public. Not surprisingly, the answers depict a deep ethnic divide between the two major communities in the country, the Albanians and Serbs, and this is most reflected in the question about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Both communities tend to believe dubious news, when they believe they are in favor of their own people, as is the case with Kosovo's application for membership in the Council of Europe, or the possibility of missiles supplied from Great Britain.

Most of the news items or information was distributed through various unverified portals and sites in social networks, or came as part of TV debates, without the possibility of real-time fact-checking. However, in what may be seen to be higher awareness among people, none of these 7 fake news stories attracted a majority who trusted them to be true, but in each one, there is still a worrisome percentage of those who, in one form or another, trusted such broadcasted news items. The age group with the highest likelihood to trust such fake news are those between 25-34 years, and those with higher academic training.

Most of these news items appear before the public through the links of various portals or other Facebook pages. One may see that there are sites and portals with names similar to already established media, which increases the possibility of readers clicking on such sites and trusting that what is written inside may be true. A new method observed lately are infographics, with quotes of public figures, without checking their authenticity.

Annex

Term	Definition
Information disorders	Information disorders are intentional or unintentional dissemination and publication of untrue, manipulated, exaggerated information or information containing harsh, sexist and hate speech.
Potential reach	Potential reach means how many people have potentially read the article from articles on online portals. The data for each item were generated from the platforms with which we did the monitoring.
Interactions	Interactions involve all the actions of readers in relation to a post on Facebook or Twitter, which includes likes, comments, article sharing or other reactions like happy, sad, nervous and surprised.
Disinformation	Unverifiable, false or misleading information, created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to mislead the public internationally, which may cause public harm, threats to democratic political and policy-making processes, and the public

good.

Hate speech

Abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice against a particular group

Misogyny

Hatred, disgust or prejudice against women

Online violence

Use of digital devices or services online to engage in activities that result in physical, psychological, or emotional self-harm or harm to another person.

List of publications

Policy briefs and research

- #1 Valëza Zogjani, Gentiola Madhi and Boris Žerjav, November 2018. Connectivity for Development: Taking the Highway for Economic Growth
- #2 Visar Xhabazi. December 2019. EU Initiatives Signal No Breakthrough in Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue.
- #3 Valëza Zogjani, Ana Nenezić, and Nirvana Deliu. Edited by: Shpend Emmini. January 2020. Evolving or revolving: Institutional reforms and democratic legitimacy in Kosovo, Albania, and Montenegro.
- #4 Valëza Zogjani. March 2020. Potential gender implications of COVID-19 in Kosovo.
- #5 Gersi Gashi. June 2020. Labor mobility: A bottom-up approach.
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- #14 Valëza Zogjani. September 2021. The Cost of inequality: Funding for election campaigns of women candidates.
- #15 Charles King. November 2021. U.S. Foreign Policy in Kosovo: A Brief Introduction from Bush to Biden.
- #16 D4D Institute. March 2022. News Portals and Social Media Under Scrutiny.

*The series of endorsements and recommendations can also be found on our web-site **www.d4d-ks.org**.*

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The Democracy for Development (D4D) Institute was established in April 2010 by a group of analysts who were increasingly worried that the state-building exercise had neglected democracy. D4D's vision is to promote an active and educated citizenry that participates fully in the public space and utilizes the public arena of representation and decision-making to deliberate and build consensus over resource allocation that is efficient, smart, long-term, and that brings about equitable development. D4D influences specific policy, promotes a cross-sectorial approach to problem solving, and tackles the institutional routine of decision making by recommending incremental improvements and operates with maximum effectiveness in order to fully promote Kosovo's stabilization and democratic development.

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