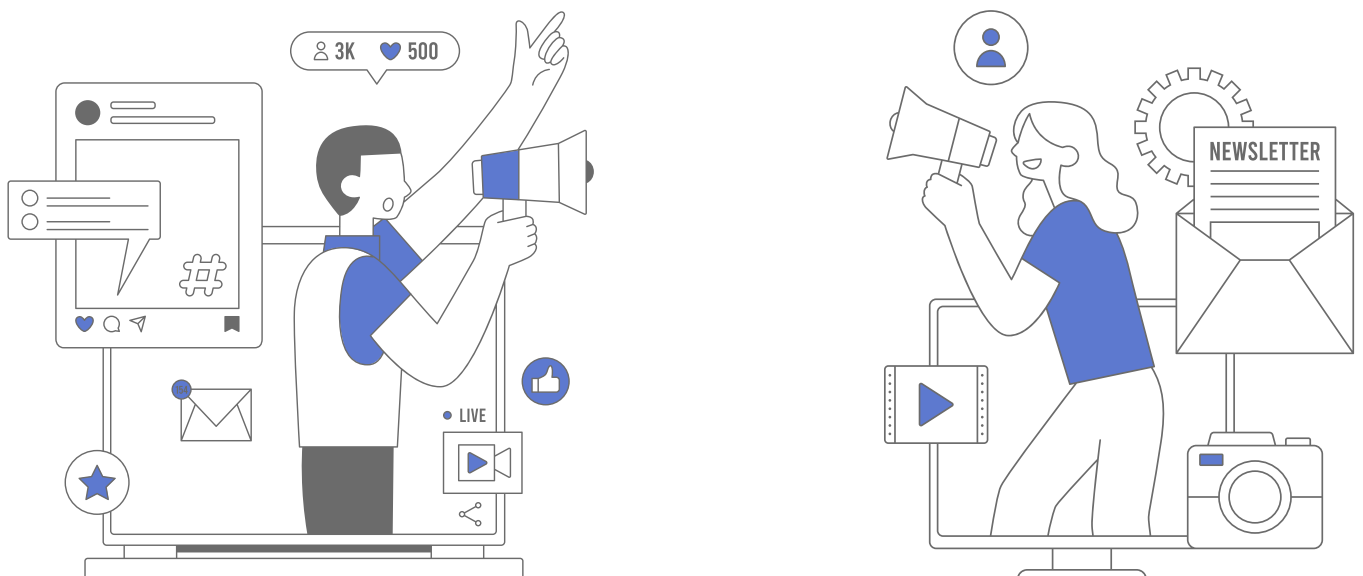




Democracy for Development  
Demokraci për zhvillim  
Demokratija za razvoj

# MEDIA MONITORING DURING OCTOBER

October, 2023



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# MEDIA MONITORING DURING OCTOBER

## 1 Monitoring time

1 – 31 October 2023

## 2 Scope of action

Information disorders on the Internet and social media Websites, online news portals, Facebook, Youtube, TikTok, and Instagram.

## 3 Sample

In Albanian and Serbian language

## 4 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to monitor the disorders in online and social media in Albanian and Serbian languages, about developments/events that occurred during October in Kosovo.

*This report was drafted by the Democracy for Development Institute (D4D) as part of the “Comprehensibility and Understandability of Information Disorder in Kosovo,” Project, supported by NDI and USAID in Kosovo. The content and views expressed in this document are the responsibility of the Democracy for Development Institute and do not necessarily reflect the position of NDI Kosovo*

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the Democracy for Development Institute (D4D) is to detect and counteract the proliferation of news characterized by information disorder, an escalating trend in the dissemination of distorted information.

The D4D Institute actively monitors online and social media platforms to identify news articles exhibiting information disorders. This is achieved through a dedicated monitoring platform that classifies articles into distinct categories, including developments in the north, Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, hate speech, online violence against women, political divisions, and international influence. Over 100 local, regional, and international online media outlets have been carefully selected for monitoring through this platform. The monitoring and analysis of articles with information disorder are carried out simultaneously in two language samples: Albanian and Serbian.

Examples from both language samples were meticulously chosen based on the content of the articles, covering a wide range of issues such as disinformation, manipulation of facts, unverified content, false news, conspiracy theories, clickbait, hate speech, offensive language, threatening language, incitement, articles with tendentious titles, and one-sided reporting. The dominant categories in the Albanian language sample include developments in the north, Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, and political polarization. In the Serbian language sample, the prevailing categories are the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue and developments in the north. In both language samples, unverified and unfounded narratives came to the forefront after the attack in Banjska on September 24.

During this timeframe, approximately 1000 Albanian articles were scrutinized, revealing around 100 instances of information disorder. Simultaneously, in the Serbian language sample, about 800 articles underwent analysis, with 123 identified as disseminating information disorder.

### 3. KEY FINDINGS

- During the analysis of news in the Albanian language sample, conspiratorial narratives emerged from online portals, particularly regarding tensions in Banjska and potential events following the September disturbances. These conspiratorial claims often carry negative content, fostering a sense of insecurity among readers.
- Additionally, unverified narratives surfaced on online portals throughout October. In a concerning instance, a Deepfake video circulated on TikTok, depicting Prime Minister Albin Kurti speaking Arabic during an interview.
- Misinterpretation of information, such as the speech of President Emmanuel Macron of France, became a prominent topic in October. Due to a translation error, Kosovo and Albanian media incorrectly reported that visa liberalization for Kosovo was “suspended.” This misinformation spread through 38 local media outlets and 2 Serbian media.
- In the Serbian language sample, false narratives persist against political figures in Kosovo, propagated by official figures in the political sphere of Serbia.
- The most prevalent narrative remains the assertion of Kurti engaging in a “regime and ethnic cleansing” against Serbs in the north. These assumptions create a distorted impression of the situation in Kosovo, constructing an alternate reality for citizens in Serbia and readers of Serbian media.
- The summit in Spain garnered significant attention in Serbian media, with leaders from European countries, including Kosovo and Serbia, invited. President Osmani’s statement that she would not meet with President Vucic unless the EU imposed sanctions for the September 24 attack was labeled as hypocrisy by Serbian media. They pointed out that she traveled to Spain with a Serbian passport without issues or conditions. Such information misinforms Serbian readers about Kosovo.

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*[[1] A video, that has been digitally manipulated to replace one person's likeness convincingly with that of another, often used maliciously to show someone doing something that he or she did not do.*

*Source: Oxford dictionary*

## 4. EXAMPLES IN ALBANIAN LANGUAGE

Konspiracionisti kosovar: Një luftë e ashpër Kosovë – Serbi do të ndodhë në nëntor dhe dhjetor



Aranit Sllamniku, një studiues i teorieve konspirative dhe një parashikim të frikshëm mbi atë se çfarë po ndodh në veriun e Kosovës.

The news portal Lajmi.net has published an article titled: **“Kosovan conspirator: A fierce war Kosovo-Serbia will happen in December.”** This piece contains conspiratorial content predicting a war between Kosovo and Serbia from the middle of November to December 2023 without factual arguments, classifying it as false news that could induce insecurity among citizens. The article received 96 interactions, including 67 likes, 23 comments, and 6 shares.

The Albanian post portal has published an article titled: **“Special Intervention Unit (SIU, FIT) is considering leaving the ranks of the police, dissatisfaction with the Government of Kosovo.”** In the article, it claims the news is sourced from “inside the unit,” but lacks a clear explanation or verification from the Kosovo Police or the Government of Kosovo. D4D conducted research to find any official statements from the Kosovo Police regarding this news but found none, from Kosovo Police nor Kosovo Government.

Three portals reported this news, with two potentially sourcing it from Albanian Post as they were published later on the same day. In total, this news garnered 753 interactions, including 554 likes, 180 comments, and 19 shares.





A TikTok account named ‘Kanalistat e Kosovës’ shared a video showing Prime Minister Kurti speaking in Arabic during an interview. This viral video, attracting high viewership, is a Deepfake product of artificial intelligence that generates untrue content. This is classified as Deepfake, as Prime Minister Kurti, in reality, was giving an interview in English to a foreign media outlet. The video received 5,625 likes, 483 comments, 2,183 shares, and was saved as a video by 1,574 TikTok users.



During a speech by French President Emmanuel Macron at a press conference in Tirana, discussing tensions in the north and visa liberalization for Kosovo. The Albanian translation of President Macron’s speech was inaccurate, leading to media reporting the wrong translation of his words. The official translation on the Prime Minister of Albania’s website stated:

*“I clearly say we have trusted you for visas; the issue is **suspended** by France because it has to do with respect for the given word, and the word is not being kept. I expect the parties to commit to moving forward, and it is a condition of peace in the whole area.”*

This official translation is published on the Prime Minister of Albania’s official website. In reference to recent events in the north, Macron emphasized that the commitment given by the two countries to stabilize the situation in the north is not being honored. However, he did not mention the suspension of visas consequently.

Nevertheless, various media outlets in Kosovo and Albania, including social networks and online portals, disseminated the news that France was suspending visas for Kosovo. Some outlets later corrected the news, while others continued to spread incorrect information. This case illustrates the impact of information disorder, with public figures in Kosovo reacting angrily against the government for the alleged “suspension of visas.”

## 6. EXAMPLES IN SERBIAN LANGUAGE

The Serbian portal Novosti published an article with the title:

**“SHE CALLS FOR SANCTIONS ON SERBIA BUT ENTERED SPAIN WITH A SERBIAN PASSPORT: The false president showed once again how hypocritical she is.”**

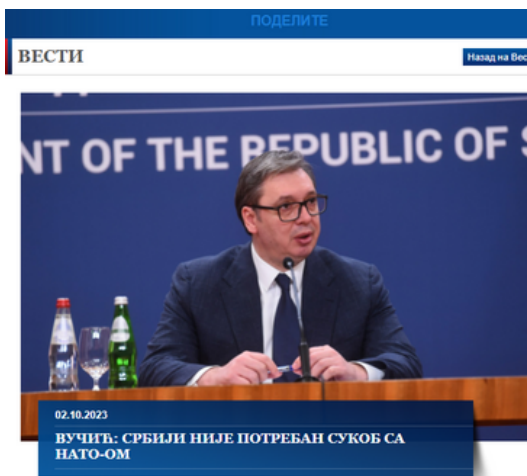
The article discussed how the President of Kosovo called for sanctions against Serbia before meeting with Serbian President Vucic in Grenada of Spain where both leaders were invited. It labeled President Osmani as hypocritical, asserting that she traveled with a Serbian passport because Spain did not recognize Kosovo’s independence, implying the non-recognition of the passport. However, President Osmani’s adviser clarified that she traveled with a passport of the Republic of Kosovo.

The screenshot shows a news article from the Serbian portal Novosti. The main headline reads: "TRAŽI SANKCIJE ZA SRBIJU, A U ŠPANIJU UŠLA SA SRPSKIM PASOŠEM: Lažna predsednica još jednom pokazala koliko je licemerna". Below the headline, there is a sub-headline: "TAKOZVANA 'kosovska predsednica' Vjosa Osmani tražila je danas u Granadi, gde se održava samit Evropske političke zajednice, da Evropska unija uvede sankcije Srbiji, a u Španiju je, prema svemu sudeći, ušla sa srpskim pasošem, s obzirom na to da zvanični Madrid ne priznaje putne isprave lažne države." To the right of the text is a photograph of Vjosa Osmani. On the far right, there is a sidebar with social media sharing icons and a list of other news items under the heading "NAJNOVIJE NAJČITANJE".

**“President Osmani has traveled with a passport of the Republic of Kosovo and does not have any other passport. With a visa issued by the Spanish embassy in Skopje, and the trip via Vienna. All with a passport of the Republic of Kosovo. This is not the first time that this procedure is followed by citizens of RKS.”**

Below, this article wrote that other political figures in Kosovo such as Albin Kurti, Hashim Thaçi, and Kadri Veseli also had Serbian passports. “This statement, however, did not stop her from entering Spain with a Serbian passport, where, as the media reports, also Albin Kurti, Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli and many other politicians from Prishtina possess Serbian passport.” This article had information disorder, because it spread false information about President Osmani. This news was false and misled Serbian citizens in Serbia that public figures in Kosovo needed Serbian passports to travel to countries like Spain, which did not recognize Kosovo as an independent country. This article received 134 interactions.





The Serbian medium 'Naslovina' published an article titled: **“VUČIĆ FOR CNN: We don’t need a conflict with NATO, we are only interested in the security of the Serbs - Kurti wants to continue ethnic cleansing.”**

The article reported the interview of the President of Serbia Vučić for CNN, where he repeated the narrative that Prime Minister Kurti is doing “ethnic cleansing” against the Serbs in northern Kosovo, and blamed Western countries for supporting Kurti.

*“They are performing gradual ethnic cleansing. Since Kurti came to power, there are 10 percent less Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, there have been over 420 attacks on our people in northern Kosovo and Metohija,”* Vučić told CNN.

President Vučić kept accusing Prime Minister Kurti through Serbian and international media. Meanwhile, Serbian media kept spreading the same stories as President Vučić, stirring up inter-ethnic conflicts and showing Albanians as attackers against minority groups, especially the Serbian community in Kosovo. These reports are deemed false and biased, lacking factual basis. This article received 353 interactions, including 38 likes, 133 comments, and 182 shares.

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. For more information about D4D's activities please visit our website: [www.d4d-ks.org](http://www.d4d-ks.org)

Mbështetur nga:

