![Democracy for Development logo - d4d-ks.org - Democracy for Development / Demokraci për zhvillim / Demokratija za razvoj]
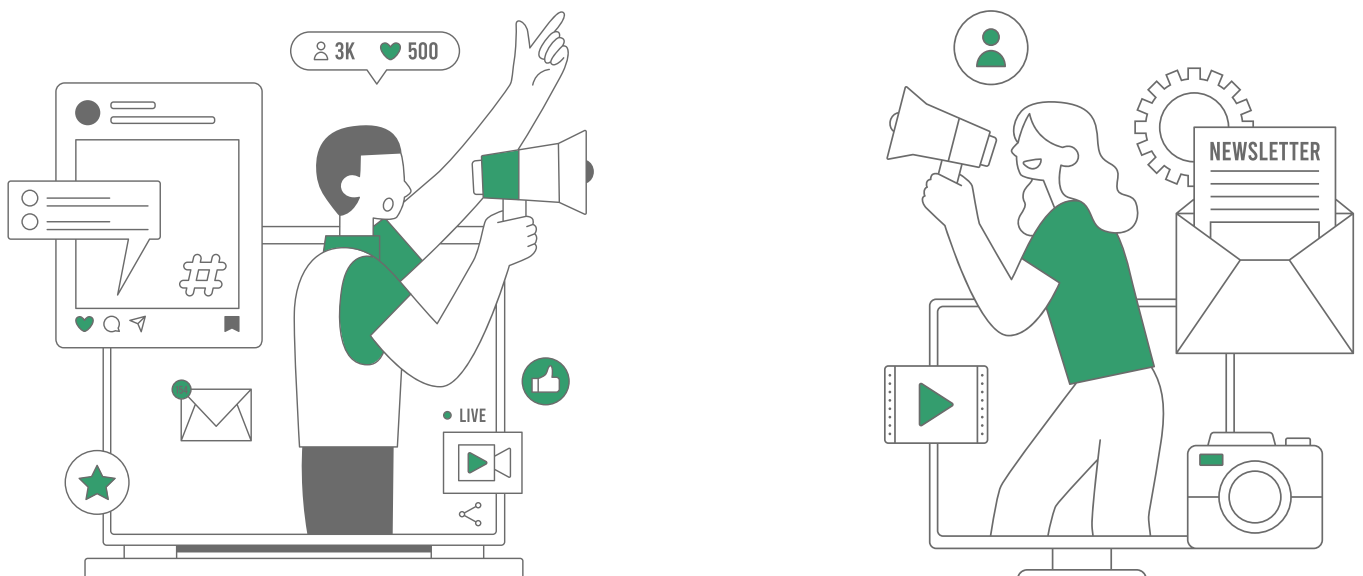
MEDIA MONITORING DURING SEPTEMBER

September, 2023

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1-30 September.

2 Scope of Action

Information disorders on the online media and social media Websites, online newsportals, 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 September in 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 selected based on the content of the articles, covering 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 most prominent category in both languages is "developments in the north." Within the Albanian language sample, the dominance of news related to the events of October 24, linked to developments in the north, is clearly evident in the chart. While television media exercised caution in their reporting during the Banjska operation, online media and various portals witnessed a surge in the distribution of photos assumed to be taken during the attacks in the north. Out of approximately 1,000 monitored news articles in the Albanian language, 90 articles resulted in information disorder. In the Serbian language sample, out of around 500 monitored articles, approximately 60 of them exhibited information disorder.

3. KEY FINDINGS

● Throughout the monitoring of news in the Serbian language sample, a notable surge in articles occurred on October 14 during the Brussels meeting between Kosovo and Serbia. The content mainly comprised press statements post-meetings, wherein the Prime Minister of Kosovo was accused of the dialogue's failure.

● September 24 witnessed a higher occurrence of content with information disorder, where some articles were falsified or misinterpreted by Serbian political figures.

● Artificial Intelligence was employed to manipulate audio recordings, presenting them as authentic. The audio, initially disseminated by the President of Serbia and later by other media, was misinterpreted. Extracted from the radio of the Kosovo police, translated into Serbian, and supplemented with additional words, this distorted audio content contributed to the dissemination of disinformation and incitement of inter-ethnic tensions, aiming to destabilize the country.

● Notably, the Serbian language sample revealed the propagation of conspiracy theories, primarily by political figures. These theories portrayed the situation as an uprising of the Serbian community against the regime of Kurti.

● In the context of the events in Banjska, the Albanian language sample highlighted a dominance of articles and reports on the attack. While television media exhibited caution in reporting and information dissemination, online media circulated unverified information and disseminated disinformation. Online platforms primarily shared photos and videos from previous incidents, falsely attributing them to the events of September 24 in Banjska.

● Hate speech remains a persistent issue in the speeches and comments of public figures, particularly on social networks, where political opponents are targeted with inflammatory language.

4. EXAMPLES IN ALBANIAN LANGUAGE

'Gazeta Aktuale' shared photos on Facebook depicting bodies of killed soldiers with captions like "**The Serbian terrorist lying on the Dardanian land**" and "**Exclusive photo: another Serbian terrorist killed in the north, their two bodies are found.**" D4D verification revealed that these photos are not related to the Banjska attack; one is an illustration from the Russia-Ukraine war, and the other is of a soldier killed in Nagorno-Karabakh. These images, taken from different contexts, are more convincing and attention-grabbing when used during times of tension.
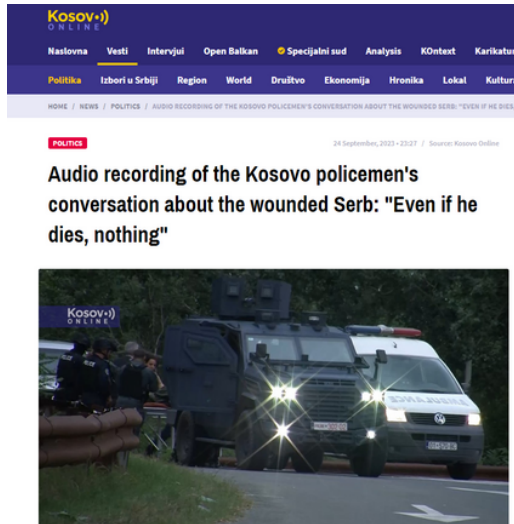

'Drenica News' shared a video of police officers escorting an arrested person, captioned "**Scene from the terrorist caught by the Kosovo Police.**" Verification revealed the police emblem does not belong to the Kosovo Police but rather to the Bulgarian Police. However, after a Google search, it turns out that the logo in which the silhouette of a lion is seen, belongs to the Bulgarian Police. This post by 'Drenica News' disseminates disinformation, contributing to information disorder during tensions in Kosovo. The post in Facebook gathered 862 interactions, with 652 likes, 37 comments, and 173 shares.

Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo, Emilija Redžepi, posted a photo of the illuminated municipality building in Sarajevo with the Kosovo flag. D4D confirmed the photo is edited, falling into the category of misinformation. This photo has gone viral on all social networks, being distributed by the users of these networks. The photo in question, shared by the Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo, Redžepi, falls into the category of misinformation, where the contents of the photos are distributed without prior verification.

Viral on social networks, the post received 232 interactions, including 215likes, 10 comments, and 7 shares..

6. EXAMPLES IN SERBIAN LANGUAGE

The article on Kosovo Online features an audio recording from the Kosovo police radio, claiming it includes the translation, "...even if he dies, it doesn't matter." Upon verification, it was found that the translation is distorted, and the audio is short and words by the Kosovo policeman were not heard. The added sentence was distributed by the Serbian President, contributing to information disorder by spreading unverified and false information with the intention of inciting ethnic divisions.

The article has attracted 1235 readers on the web site.
https://www.kosovo-online.com/en/news/politics/audio-recording-kosovo-policemens-conversation-about-wounded-serb-even-if-he-dies

The Progressive Party of Serbia published an article on their website titled "Darko Glišić: **KURTI is the only culprit for the events in Kosovo and Metohija."** This article summarizes the interview that the Chairman of the Executive Board of the Progressive Party of Serbia, Darko Glisic, gave to the television 'Happy TV' where he talked about the event of September 24 in the village of Banjska in the north of Kosovo. The article further emphasizes the words of Glisic

"The tragedy that happened in our country is great, innocent Serbs lost their lives by taking their land and houses from the cruel invaders who terrorize Serbs every year in the north of Kosovo and Metohija."

The statements given by Glisic, which became news in Serbia, are considered as disinformation or unverified content, because the Serbian official Glisic has given information that is not based on facts, in which the attackers are victimized, and the attention is shifted to a narrative that portrays the Government of Kosovo as an invader. Considering that the attack took place in Kosovo, this news claims that the attack happened because of "the oppression of the Serbian community in the north, by the regime of Kurti". The article in question has spread disinformation and is informing the Serbian citizens in Serbia in a wrong way. The article has gathered 1383 interactions, including 1331 likes, 11 comments, and 41 shares. The interview on Happy TV received 2928 clicks on Youtube.

https://youtu.be/5dLQ7Z1UZzc

The Democracy for Development (D4D) Institute was established in April 2010 by a group of analysts 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**

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