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Overview of Information Disorder in Kosovo

June 2024



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Introduction

The media landscape, especially on social networks, has evolved, allowing portals to operate not only on their websites but also on social platforms that are now used as sources of information. Distinguishing between accurate information and information disorder is crucial in a democratic society and for maintaining a country's stability. Since July 2023, the Institute for Democracy for Development (D4D) has been monitoring online media and social networks in Albanian and Serbian, focusing on specific categories including: Developments in Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo; The dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia International influence; Hate speech and misogyny. The project's aim is to understand and combat all forms of disinformation, such as fake news, biased reporting, clickbait, sensational headlines, information manipulation, and conspiracy theories.

Throughout the monitoring period, D4D identified and documented information disorders across all monitored thematic categories. From subtle changes in political rhetoric to the spread of hate speech and disinformation campaigns, the findings of this initiative shed light on the multifaceted dynamics shaping the online sphere. The monitoring also includes news analysis, providing explanations of the given examples to simplify the understanding of disinformation forms. The analysis and monitoring were conducted in both Albanian and Serbian, focusing on the aforementioned categories. During different months, various forms of information disorder were observed, such as sensational headlines, hate speech, incitement against marginalized groups, unverified news, and conspiracy theories.

Methodology

D4D monitored online and social media platforms to identify news articles exhibiting information disorders. This is achieved through a digital 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 foreign undemocratic 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 monitoring period spans from July 2023 to May 2024, conducted through the digital monitoring platform Pikasa and manually covering approximately 17,250 articles. Of these, 4,217 were found to exhibit information disorder, representing about 20%. Regarding interactions from the analyzed articles on social media, there were over 4 million (4,343,653) interactions, while the number of visitors on online sites exceeded 14 million (14,118,874).

Summary

Monthly monitoring from July 2023 to the present has identified various forms of information disorder. These range from unverified news, manipulated information, and sensational or conspiratorial headlines to content generated by artificial intelligence, all prevalent in Kosovo's media landscape.

In July, articles with information disorders that incited political tensions and inter-ethnic conflict between Kosovo and Serbia were prominent. Following the inauguration of four mayors in northern Kosovo municipalities, numerous politicians, journalists, and opinion leaders from Kosovo and Serbia spread nationalist and divisive narratives that fueled inter-ethnic hatred. During the elections in the four northern municipalities, many online portals and social media accounts in both Serbian and Albanian languages disseminated unverified information amid the tense situation, contributing to deeper inter-ethnic divisions, increased hate speech, and insecurity among citizens.

In the Albanian-language sample, articles and reports about the attack in Banjska dominated. While television media generally exercised caution in reporting and publishing information, online media published unverified information and spread disinformation. Online platforms primarily shared photos and videos from previous incidents, falsely attributing them to the events of September 24 in Banjska. Online portals published images of soldiers from Ukraine and Azerbaijan. Conspiratorial narratives emerged from online portals, regarding tensions in Banjska and potential events following the September tensions. Most conspiratorial insinuations had negative content that could spread insecurity among readers, based on subjective opinions cited in the

titles and content.

The most prevalent narrative in the Serbian-language sample during the year-long monitoring was about "Kurti's regime" and "ethnic cleansing" against Serbs in northern Kosovo. These assumptions create a distorted impression of the situation in Kosovo, constructing an alternate reality for citizens in Serbia and readers of Serbian media.

Kosovan politicians, especially women in politics, were targets of online violence and misogynistic comments through memes and articles containing inciting language. Female politicians were particularly targeted with "deepfakes," disinformation, and misogynistic language. They also faced physical threats for their political views during live broadcasts. Misinterpretation of information, such as the speech by French President Emmanuel Macron, was also among the most viewed news in October. Due to a translation error, Kosovo and Albanian media incorrectly reported that visa liberalization for Kosovo was "suspended."

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 Vučić unless the EU imposed sanctions for the September 24 attack was labeled as hypocrisy by Serbian media. Serbian media considered President Osmani's statement hypocritical, claiming she traveled to Spain with a Serbian passport without issues or conditions. Such information misinforms Serbian readers about the political situation in Kosovo.

1 Korshunov, P., & Marcel, S. (2018). Deepfakes: a new threat to face recognition? assessment and detection. arXiv:1812.08685.

Key Findings

The peak of posts occurred on September 24, 2023, driven by the attack in Banjska. On that day, media in Kosovo published 3,360 news articles, which garnered 161,807 interactions. In the analysis of hate speech in Kosovo based on provided keywords, the peak of news articles coincided with the period of the attack in Banjska, primarily due to the word "terrorist" used in Kosovan media. However, overall, the word "theft" had 8,313 mentions, followed by "terrorists" with 5,830 mentions, "defamation" with 3,048 mentions, "provokes" with 1,426 mentions, and "homosexual" with 1,110 mentions.

The day of violence in the Assembly of Kosovo, during which Prime Minister Kurti was attacked, marked the most active day for Kosovan media. On this day, 3,826 news articles were produced on this topic, generating 125,055 engagements. The key findings from the monitoring are presented based on the following categories:

- > **Misogyny and Incitement of Hate Speech Against Women in Kosovo** - the monitoring of news in the Albanian-language sample, revealed headlines with offensive and inciting language towards women in politics, using exaggerated titles containing derogatory terms. Biased and offensive reporting incites citizens to reinforce hate speech against women in politics, limiting their participation in decision-making.
- > **Political Polarization/Offensive Language** - exaggerated and offensive headlines targeting political figures in Kosovo aimed to create political polarization. Hate speech narratives in political communication further deepen the divisions among followers on social media, inciting hate speech among social media followers, contributing to deeper political polarization.

- > **Lack of Reliable Sources and Information** - articles often lack reliable sources or essential information to support their sensational headlines, leading to disinformation. The phenomenon of sensational headlines not matching the content of articles or lacking factual information is a concerning trend in online media. Online media practice creating titles to draw readers' attention regardless of the accuracy or importance of the content. The problem with sensational headlines is their inconsistency with the article's content, often including bold statements without sufficient and credible arguments or facts. Such articles can have serious impacts on sensitive and serious situations, such as Kosovo-Serbia relations. Disinformation through sensational headlines brings division and polarization within society. Moreover, attention is diverted from important and complex issues to sensational headlines that constitute disinformation.

- > **Speculative Elements** - headlines using speculative language about potential conflicts in Kosovo incites aggressive inter-ethnic language, increasing the risk of conflict escalation and undermining Kosovo and Serbia's diplomatic efforts to promote peace and stability. Speculation occurs when claims or conclusions are made based on incomplete information or unverified sources. While some level of speculation is natural in predicting or analyzing future events, baseless speculation can challenge the media's credibility and the accuracy of information presented to the public. The main issue with speculation is its potential to misinform readers.

- **Selective Use of Facts and Quotes** - Unverified narratives are created using facts and quotes selectively, often taken out of context to fit the prepared news, thus distorting public perception. In the Serbian-language sample, instances have been observed where statistics collected by the European Stability Initiative (ESI) were used in an article on the reliability of facts and statistics provided by Serbian political figures, which are referenced in the report. In the Serbian-language sample, cases were observed where statistics collected by the European Stability Initiative (ESI) were selectively cited to fit the news, out of the context of the ESI report.
- **Propaganda and unverified information** - In the Serbian language sample, the persistence of false narratives against political figures in Kosovo continues. These narratives are disseminated by official figures in the political sphere of Serbia and by the media. Within the context of Kosovo-Serbia relations, the Serbian media places Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti as the primary cause of tensions between the two countries.
- **Unverified Articles on Ethnic Cleansing of the Serb Community in Kosovo** - Continuous spread of unverified narratives, such as the ethnic cleansing of Serbs in Kosovo and threats from the Kosovan government against the Serb community, incite fear and division, serving political purposes rather than the truth.
- **Sensational Headlines** - sensational headlines use provocative language to capture readers' attention and influence public emotions on sensitive issues like security. Words like "border games" and "midnight bell wakes Joe Biden" aim to spark reader interest or cause concern. However, without confirmed sources to support these claims, they are misleading and constitute information disorder.
- **Divisive Language** - Serbian-language headlines about Kosovo encourage divisive language, questioning the role and authority of the EU, and hindering efforts to normalize relations between the two countries. Furthermore, this incites suspicion and dissatisfaction against the EU among Kosovan and Serbian readers.

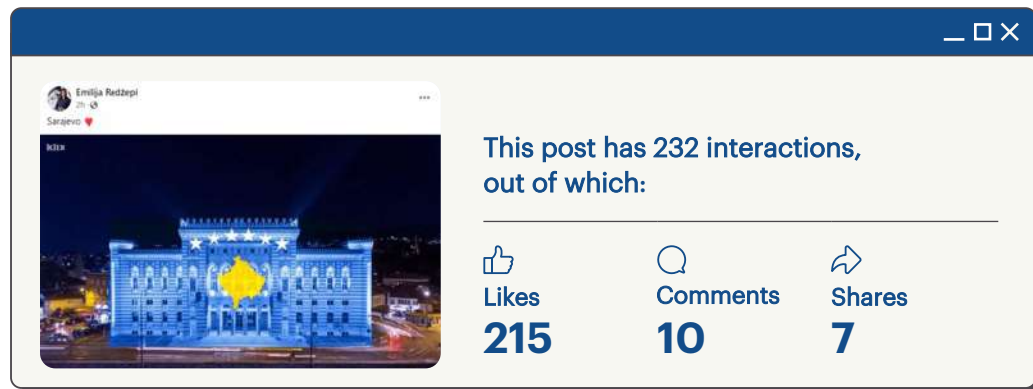
Developments in the north of Kosovo

The selected articles below, using the methodology employed in this report, highlight information disorder during reporting on events in northern Kosovo. The focus is on the period before and after the terrorist attack that occurred in the village of Banjska, carried out by an armed Serbian group against the Kosovo Police. The report identifies widespread dissemination of disordered information during that period. Tactics used include conspiracy theories, the use of images from other armed conflicts worldwide, image manipulation, and audio recordings. False information has been spread, creating panic and uncertainty. Some narratives even suggest an imminent armed conflict between Kosovo and Serbia that could involve the entire Western Balkans. In Serbian-language media, there has been a tendency to portray the terrorist attack as a local Serbian population uprising against the "repressive regime" of Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti. According to these narratives, Kurti allegedly has plans for ethnic cleansing of Serbs in northern Kosovo, coordinated with international actors. On the other hand, Serbian media has depicted the Serbian President as a "savior" defending the Serbian population in Kosovo.

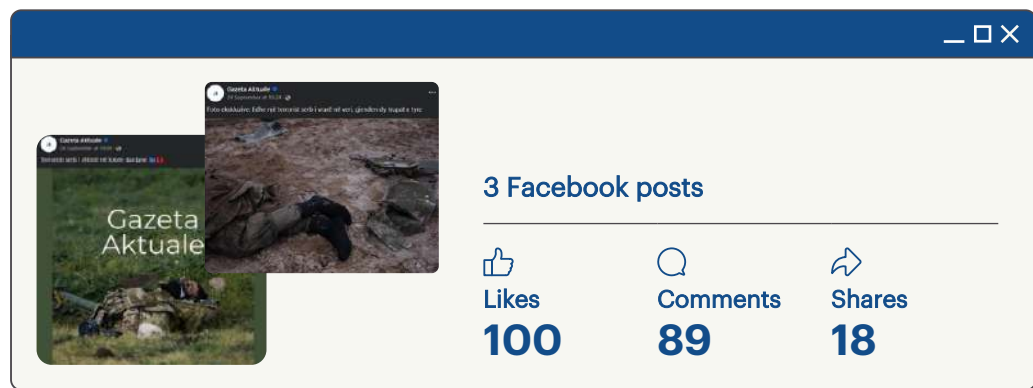
The news portal Klan Kosova has published an article titled: "No more Police without KFOR and EULEX (VIDEO)." This article has false content in the title. According to the title of the article, there will be no police presence in the north of Kosovo. However, the official press release of the Kosovo Government is found under the title, clearly speaking about a reduction in the presence of the Kosovo Police, not its complete absence. This statement is based on an official release from the Government of Kosovo following a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister Besnik Bislimi and EU High Representative Miroslav Lajčák on July 10. This news portal did not accurately interpret the press release from the Government of Kosovo. The release says, "The Kosovo Police, along with EULEX and KFOR, will assess the security situation as needed, particularly to consider the possibility of further reducing the police presence in and around municipal buildings."



Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo, Emilija Redžepi, posted a photo of the illuminated municipality building in Sarajevo with the Kosovo flag. After verification by D4D, it has been confirmed that this is not true and that the photograph has been manipulated. 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.



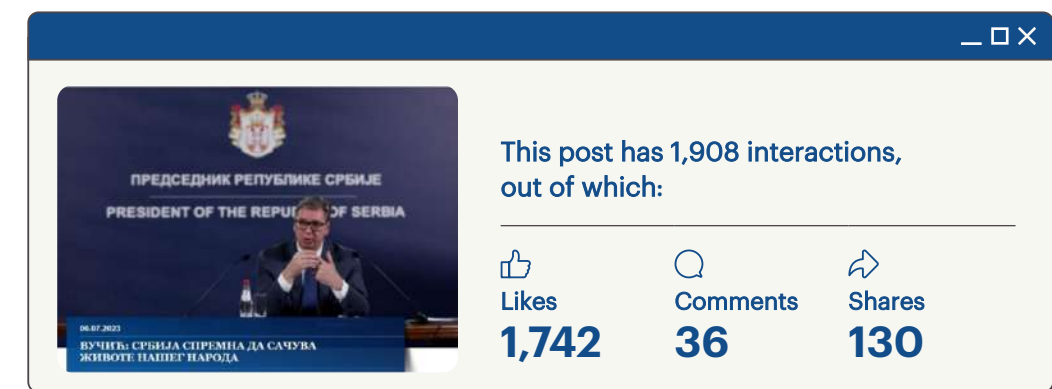
'Gazeta Aktuale' shared photos on Facebook depicting bodies of killed soldiers with captions like "The Serbian terrorist lying on the Dardanian land" and another with: "Exclusive photo: another Serbian terrorist killed in the north, their two bodies are found." Following the verification process by D4D, it has been confirmed that the photos depicting two deceased bodies are not related to the attack in Banjska. Instead, one of the illustrations originates from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, while the other image portrays a fallen soldier in Nagorno-Karabakh. These images, taken from different contexts, are more convincing and attention-grabbing when used during times of tension.



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. This post contains information disorder spreading unverified and false information with the intention of inciting ethnic divisions.



This article has attracted 1,235 readers. The political party portal "SNS" has published an article titled: "Vučić: Serbia Ready to Protect Our People's Lives." The article refers to events in northern Kosovo and attempts to escalate the situation. Throughout July, such news dominated the Serbian media landscape. The focus was on events in the four northern municipalities of Kosovo, protests, and the presence of the Kosovo Police near these municipalities. Disseminating fear among citizens that armed conflict might erupt there has been a recurring theme. President Vučić's statements about the situation have fueled uncertainty and fear. Vučić commented on the tense situation in the majority-Serb municipalities, leaving room for interpretation, suggesting that Serbia might intervene militarily in Kosovo to protect the Serbian population.



The 'Politika' portal published an article titled: "The West Supports Kurti's Apartheid and Persecution of Serbs," which further expresses the opinion of the Vice President of the Serbian Radical Party, Aleksandar Sesel, stating that: "Our country must oppose Albanian separatists in all possible ways and lead a policy of protecting our people." This news contains false information, as Albin Kurti has not undertaken any initiatives that indicate intentions of unification with Albania or separatism among ethnic communities within Kosovo. Furthermore, there are no current actions by the Government of Kosovo that would substantiate this assumption.

Zapad podržava Kurtijev aparthejd i progon Srba

Naša zemlja mora da se suprotstavi albanskim secesionistima na sve načine i da vodi politiku zaštite našeg naroda.

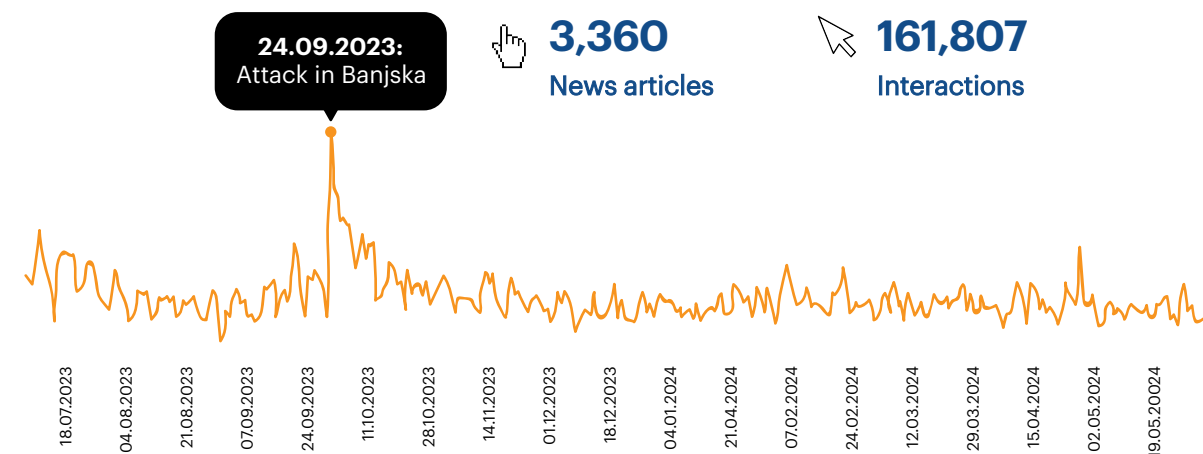
This article had a total of **356 interactions**, out of which:

- Likes: **305**
- Comments: **9**
- Shares: **42**

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 on the interview of the President of Serbia Vučić for CNN, where he repeated the narrative that Prime Minister Kurti is conducting "ethnic cleansing" against the Serbs in northern Kosovo, and blamed Western countries for supporting Kurti. "They are conducting 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 had a total of **353 interactions**, out of which:

- Likes: **38**
- Comments: **133**
- Shares: **182**



Volume of articles published in media in one day:

The peak of posts occurred on September 24, 2023, driven by the attack in Banjska. On that day, media in Kosovo published **3,360 news articles**, which garnered **161,807 interactions**.

GENERAL STATISTICS:	
News articles on media	241,014
Interactions on Facebook	4,541,728
Interactions on posts	19
No. of media	114
Social media posts	13,926
Interactions	2,047,611
Interactions in posts	147

Kosovo-Serbia dialogue

The selected article below, analyzed using the methodology employed in this report, aims to shed light on events related to the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia regarding the normalization of relations facilitated by the EU. During the reporting on this process, there has been dissemination of disordered information, often based on false information. Throughout the dialogue reporting, media narratives have falsely suggested that Kosovo and Serbia are on the brink of war, potentially undermining citizens' trust in the dialogue process.

The Serbian portal 'Novosti' published an article with the title: "She Calls for Sanctions Against Serbia and Travels with a Serbian Passport to Spain: 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 the adviser to President Osmani stated that President traveled with a new passport issued by the Republic of Kosovo, with a visa granted by the Spanish Embassy in Skopje. As seen below, this article wrote that other political figures in Kosovo such as Albin Kurti, Hashim Thaçi, and Kadri Veseli also had Serbian passports. The article contains information disorder and disseminates false information. This news item is fake and misinforms Serbian citizens by implying that Kosovo's political leaders need Serbian passports to travel to countries that do not recognize Kosovo's independence.



Headlines are powerful tools for shaping public perception and understanding of events. In the following two headlines: "Border games, land exchange with Serbia agreed" and "Movement at the Serbia border/Midnight bell wakes Joe Biden," there appears to be a deliberate attempt to incite urgency and panic about border movements between Kosovo and Serbia. Both headlines suggest significant activity or decisions regarding the Kosovo-Serbia border. However, a deeper analysis reveals that the headlines are misleading and constitute disinformation. Neither headline includes specific information about the supposed border movements or decisions. The lack of accurate reporting makes it difficult for readers to identify the events or decisions being discussed. Both headlines use sensational language to attract attention and induce uncertainty. Phrases like "border games" and "midnight bell wakes Joe Biden" aim to capture readers' interest or cause concern. However, without confirmed sources to support these claims, they are misleading and contribute to information disorder. Despite the dramatic language used in the news headlines, the stories do not provide any evidence or verification of the stated claims. Instead, they rely on vague implications and assumptions, effectively spreading speculation rather than conveying actual facts. Given the sensitive nature of Kosovo-Serbia relations, spreading false information about border issues can have negative effects. There is potential for escalating tensions, inciting dissatisfaction, and undermining efforts for peace and security in the region.



The headline “NATO mobilizes warplanes, Shea gives major news” is not immediately clear and conveys a sense of urgency and fear, suggesting that NATO planes are preparing for a possible bombing. However, the article reveals that there is no imminent threat of war. Instead, it emphasizes Jimmy Shea’s remarks recalling NATO’s 1999 bombing mission, which ended 25 years ago and has no connection to NATO’s current military activity in Kosovo. The headline is misleading because it leads readers to believe that a war is about to start, while in reality, the article is historical and unrelated to current events. This type of writing emotionally manipulates readers to attract clicks.

NEWS ARTICLE:

- Likes: 1
- Comments: 0
- Shares: 0

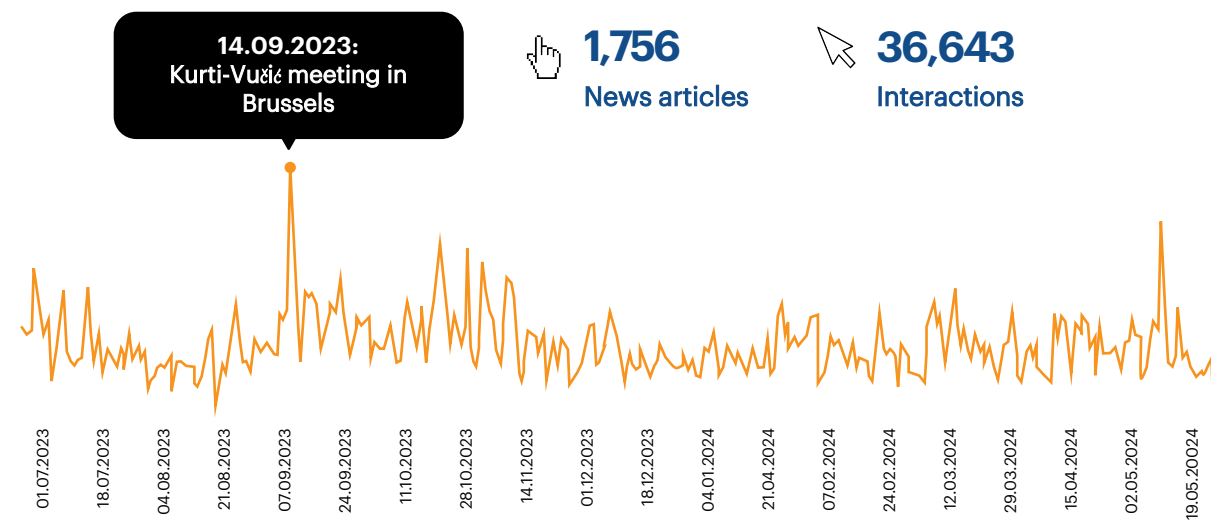
YOUTUBE:

- Likes: 9
- Comments: 2
- Views: 1,302

1 news article on media
1 Youtube videos

GENERAL STATISTICS:	
News articles in media	148,213
Interactions on Facebook	2,500,756
Interactions on articles	17
No. of media	109
Social media posts	4,878
Interactions	573,759
Interactions on posts	118

Volume of articles published in media in one day:



The peak of posts occurred on September 14, 2023, during the Kurti-Vučić meeting in Brussels. On this day, the media in Kosovo published **1,756 news articles**, which garnered **36,643 interactions**.

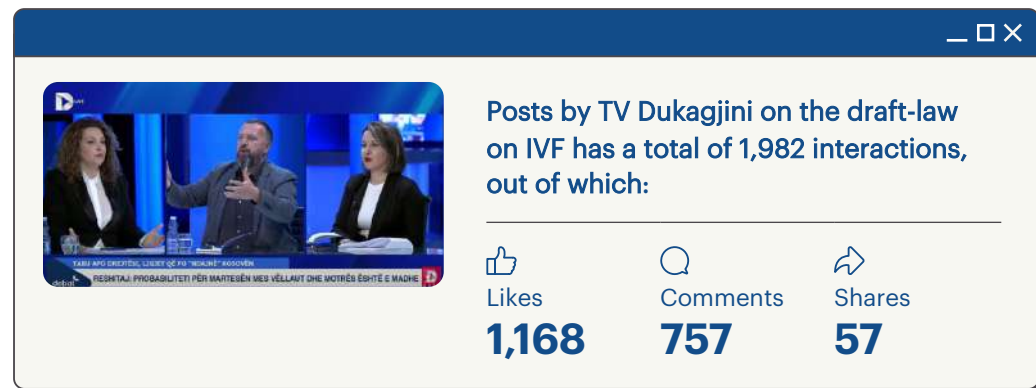
Political Divisions

The selected articles below, identified using the methodology of this report, aim to highlight events that have created significant political divisions due to information disorder. These methods include "deepfake" content involving political leaders and representatives of the diplomatic corps in Kosovo, false news claiming Kosovo is losing NATO support due to Prime Minister Kurti's policies, and the contentious debate over the IVF draft law.

The Reproductive Health and Assisted Fertilization draft law has sparked considerable debate and controversy within the country. Supporters argue that the legislation represents a step forward in reproductive rights and medical advancements, while opponents express concerns about potential social implications, including the risk of incest, uncertainties regarding the nationality of donors, and the spread of hate speech targeting women seeking IVF treatment. More than 20 media outlets have reported on this issue, with TV Dukagjini particularly emphasizing the aforementioned narratives. Incest, intra-family marriages, and the mixing of nationalities from foreign donors are among the arguments that have elicited public reactions, inciting comments with hate speech.

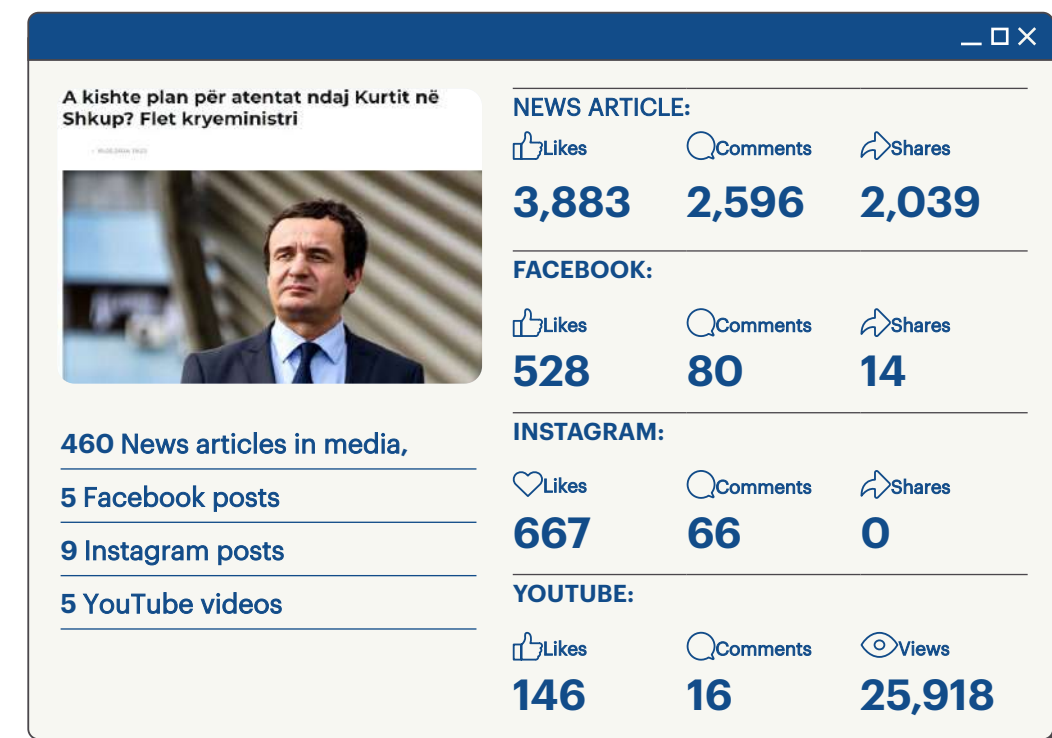
One of the main objections raised against the new IVF law is the fear of potential incest cases or marriages between siblings. Lawmakers argue that the anonymity of donor information could lead to unknowingly related individuals entering relationships, presenting ethical and legal dilemmas for those involved. Another point of contention regarding the IVF law is the uncertainty surrounding the nationality of donors contributing genetic material for the procedure. It is argued that this lack of transparency could create confusion and legal complexities, especially concerning citizenship issues.

A particularly concerning consequence of the IVF law debate in Kosovo is the emergence of hate speech targeting women seeking IVF treatment. The mentioned narratives have contributed to the spread of derogatory stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes toward these individuals. Moreover, such rhetoric risks perpetuating misunderstandings and misinformation about IVF procedures, undermining public understanding and exacerbating social divisions, as evidenced by comments on social media.



Konferenca me temë "Politikat progresive – përgjigje ndaj sfidave të vendeve të Ballkanit Perëndimor" me datë 9 shkurt, në Maqedoninë e Veriut kishte të ftuar edhe Kryeministrin Kurti. Nga Radio Televizioni i Kosovës (RTK) u publikua lajmi me titull "Detaje të planit serb për atentat ndaj Kurtit në Shkup", duke u bazuar në burime të veta. Pas publikimit në RTK, mediat online kanë publikuar lajmin se ka pasur atentat ndaj kryeministrit të Kosovës. Një mangësi e dukshme në narrativën e komplotit të supozuar të atentatit është mungesa e burimeve të besueshme. Artikulli fillestar dhe riprodhimet e mëvonshme nuk citojnë ndonjë burim të besueshëm për të vërtetuar pretendimet e tyre. Në vend të kësaj, mbështeten në pohime të paqarta dhe tituj të bujshëm për të tërhequr vëmendjen. Mungesa e provave apo dëshmive konkrete nga autoritetet e besueshme vë në dyshim vërtetësinë e të gjithë rrëfimit.

Për më tepër, Qeveria e Maqedonisë së Veriut menjëherë i hodhi poshtë pretendimet, duke deklaruar se nuk ka pasur tentativë për atentat ndaj kryeministrit Kurti gjatë vizitës së tij në Shkup. Ky mohim zyrtar minon besueshmërinë e raporteve të lajmeve dhe thekson rëndësinë e verifikimit të informacionit edhe kur ato publikohen nga transmetues publik, siç është RTK. Pavarësisht rrëzimit të pretendimeve nga Qeveria e Maqedonisë së Veriut, rreth 25 media i dhanë zë lajmit për atentat, duke vazhduar ciklin e dezinformatave. Duke pasur parasysh mungesën e provave të vërtetuara dhe mohimin zyrtarë, këto raporte klasifikohen si lajme të paverifikuara dhe dezinformata. Përhapja e informatave të tilla jo vetëm që dëmton reputacionin e individëve dhe transmetuesve publik, por gjithashtu minimizon besimin e publikut në media. Për më tepër, përhapja e narrativave të paverifikuara mund të ketë pasoja të gjëra, duke përkeqësuar tensionet midis vendeve fqinje dhe duke intensifikuar mosmarrëveshjet brenda komuniteteve.



On June 26, 2023, a false 'deepfake' audio recording was published on the platform X, depicting a conversation between Prime Minister Kurti and the U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Jeffrey M. Hovenier. The audio recording focused on discussions regarding the arrest of Serbs in Kosovo. Such a conversation never took place between Prime Minister Kurti and Ambassador Hovenier. The original post has now garnered more than 150,000 views. The post's title reads: "Must listen! KURTI is recorded in a conversation with the so-called American ambassador in Prishtina, Hovenier: 'We will arrest Serbs in the north regardless of whether they are criminals or responsible for violence or not, we will continue to arrest them...'"

The post has 140 shares and 245 likes, most of which come from anonymous and impersonating accounts on "X".

Likes	245	Shares	140
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The news portal Kanal10 has published an article titled: "Matoshi lashes out at Kurti: Unscrupulous, liar, fool, and idiot." The use of offensive language against Prime Minister Albin Kurti resulted from the events in the four northern municipalities of Kosovo and the measures imposed on Kosovo by the European Union.

This article has 1,034 interactions, including:

Likes	385	Comments	642	Shares	7
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The news portal Klan Kosova published a statement by Hysni Klinaku, acting chairman of the Organization of KLA War Veterans, with the headline: "Klinaku of KLA WVO: I would rather kill Albin Kurti than flee from Kosovo." This statement was made by Klinaku through a post on his social media account, Facebook. The language used by Klinaku is threatening and inciting violence against Prime Minister Albin Kurti. This statement from the leader of the Organization of KLA War Veterans contributes to further political polarization. In the same article shared on Klan Kosova's official Facebook page, various commenters reacted with harsh and offensive tones directed at Mr. Klinaku.

NEWS ARTICLE:

Likes	4,774	Comments	7,229	Shares	1,242
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FACEBOOK:

Likes	39	Comments	48	Views	1
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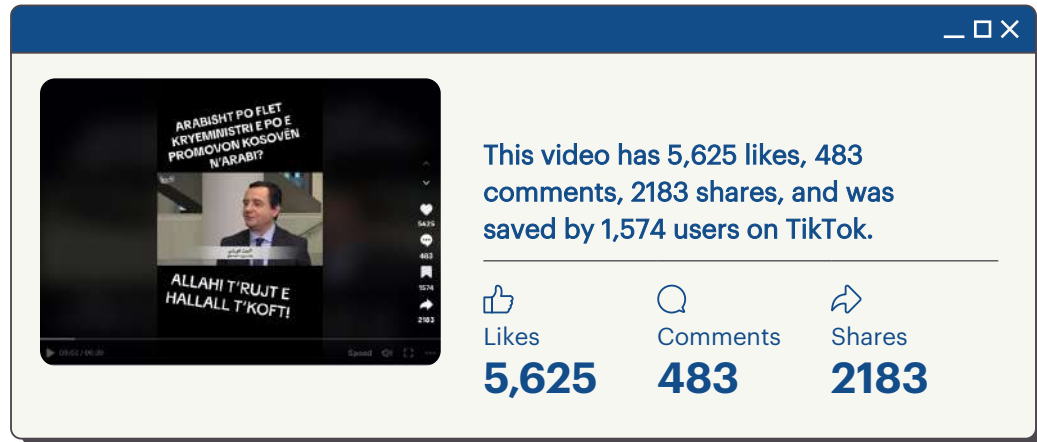
255 news articles on media
8 Facebook posts

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.

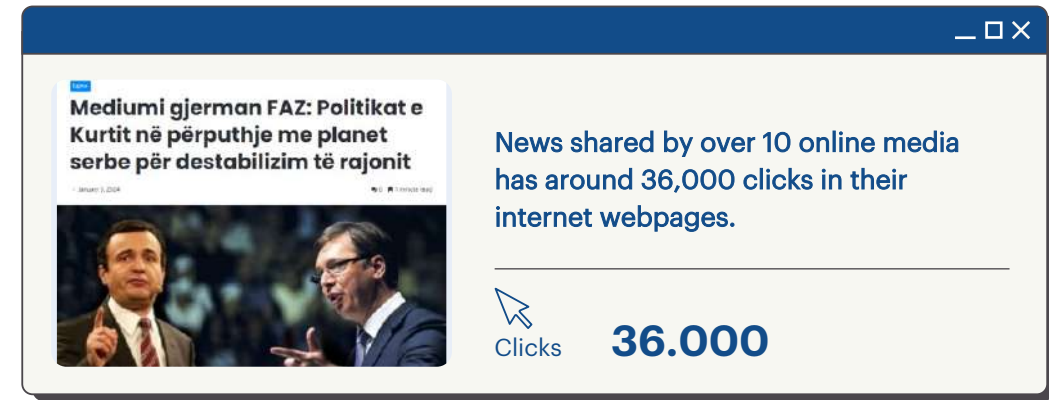
This article has 753 interactions, out of which:

Likes	554	Comments	180	Shares	19
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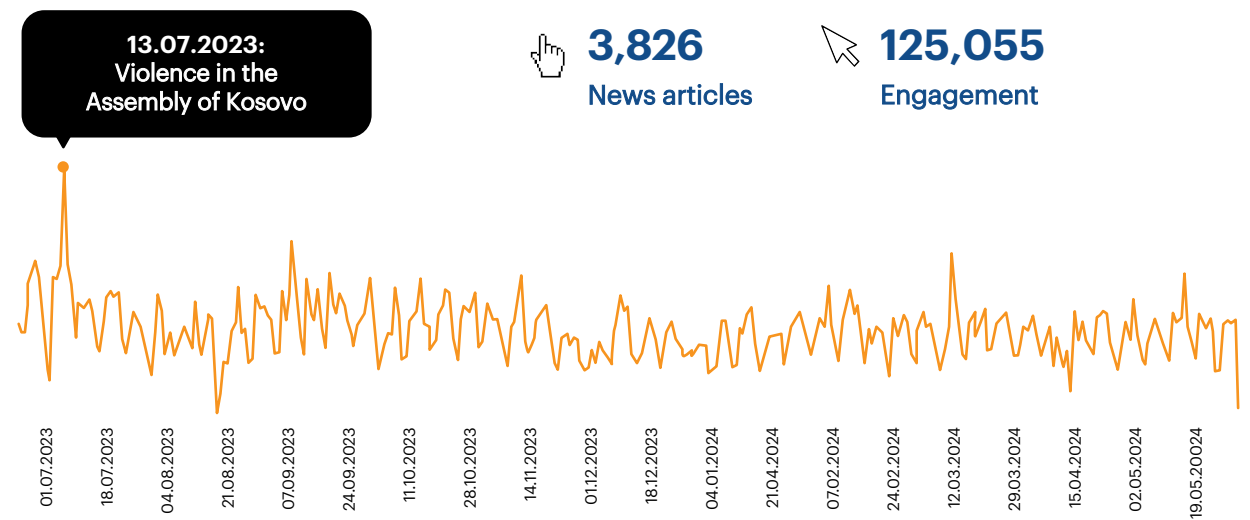
A TikTok account named 'Kanalstatat e Kosovës' shared a video showing Prime Minister Kurti speaking in Arabic during an interview. This viral video, attracting high viewership, is a Deepfake product of artificial intelligence that generates untrue content. This is classified as Deepfake, in the real case Prime Minister Kurti was giving an interview for a foreign media in English.



The portal 'Epilogu' posted an article titled: German Media FAZ: Kurti's Policies Align with Serbian Plans to Destabilize the Region. An article by Epilogu mentions that today (January 3, 2024), the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) published an article. However, D4D found that the news in German was originally published in June 2023. The language used in the headline "Kurti's policies align with Serbian plans for destabilization in the region" contains elements of misinterpretation. The headline could be interpreted to mean that "Kurti's policies are intentionally aligned with Serbian plans." However, German journalist Michael Martens writes that Kurti's decisions are making it easier for Vučić to destabilize the region. Furthermore, Epilogu mentions an earlier interview that journalist Martens conducted with Prime Minister Kurti, noting that the journalist removes some "important" parts from the interview, leaving room for scandal creation. "He removed the most important words from Kurti in a November interview, where the Prime Minister acknowledged that the American ambassador knew more about the situation in the north, which had pushed him to back down on the issue of illegal license plates," writes Epilogu. In 2022, when this interview was conducted, the German journalist explained that all removed parts were approved by Prime Minister Kurti's team, but he did not consider them important to keep in the final draft. On the X platform, he clarified that the omitted part was not significant for German readers and thus some sections were removed to shorten the interview. The news shared by over 10 online media outlets has garnered around 36,000 clicks on their websites.



Volume of articles published in media in one day:

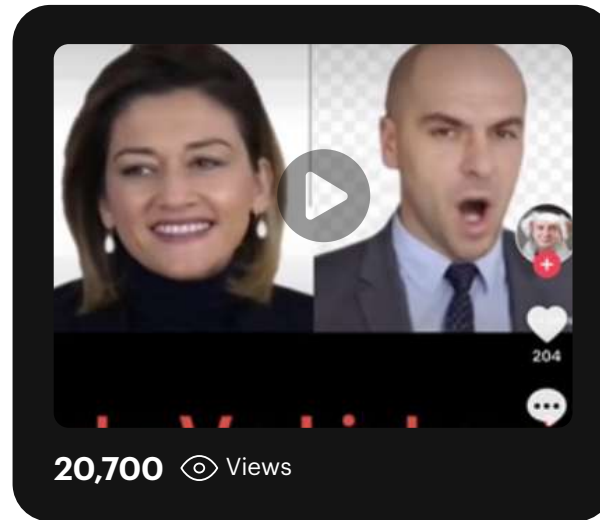


The day of violence in the Assembly of Kosovo, during which Prime Minister Kurti was attacked, marked the most active day for Kosovan media. On this day, 3,826 news articles were produced on this topic, generating 125,055 engagements.

GENERAL STATISTICS:	Value
News articles in media	439,197
Interactions on Facebook	7,876,136
Interactions on articles	18
No. of media	116
Social media posts	28,996
Interactions	4,092,406
Interactions on posts	141

Hate Speech and Misogyny Online

The selected articles below, identified using the methodology of this report, aim to highlight the presence of hate speech and misogyny in online media. The report demonstrates how these issues manifest in gender-based attacks against women in politics and in the language used by social media users. Deepfake videos have also been shared on other social media platforms such as Facebook and TikTok. One manipulated and false video appeared on TikTok, depicting MP Mimoza Kusari-Lila, head of the LVV caucus, and Slavko Simić, a member of the Serbian List presidency, singing together in Serbian. This video, which now has over 20,700 views, was shared during a period when the Assembly of Kosovo was engaged in discussions related to some recordings between Kusari and Simić that the media had made public. The video has since been deleted and is no longer available.



The news portal Gazeta Express has published an article titled: “Krasniqi: Senior government officials within VV have impregnated women, stolen donations.” Former MP Florin Krasniqi, in a television show, stated: “Senior government officials within VV have committed low moral acts, impregnated women, and stolen donation cars.” Through this statement, the former MP makes serious accusations of abuse of office while also using misogynistic language. Krasniqi’s accusations are baseless, as D4D’s verification within 2023 found no such reports as claimed by the former MP.

Krasniqi: Zyrtarë të lartë të Qeverisë brenda VV-së kanë lënë gra shtatzënë, kanë vjedhur donacione ...

This article had 292 interactions:

Likes	Comments	Shares
114	162	16

Another article from ‘Epilogu’ bears the title: “Kimete Berisha: Donika Gërvalla is the ugliest thief, Kurti seems like a lion to this fool,” Notably, this title, enclosed in quotes, lacks informative content and presents a subjective opinion. Such titles contribute to the normalization of misogynistic and offensive language in the media, employing derogatory adjectives while potentially inciting online attacks against women.

Kimete Berisha: Donika Gërvalla është hajnesha më e shëmtuar, Kurti i duket luan budallicës

Facebook post has 304 interactions, out of which:

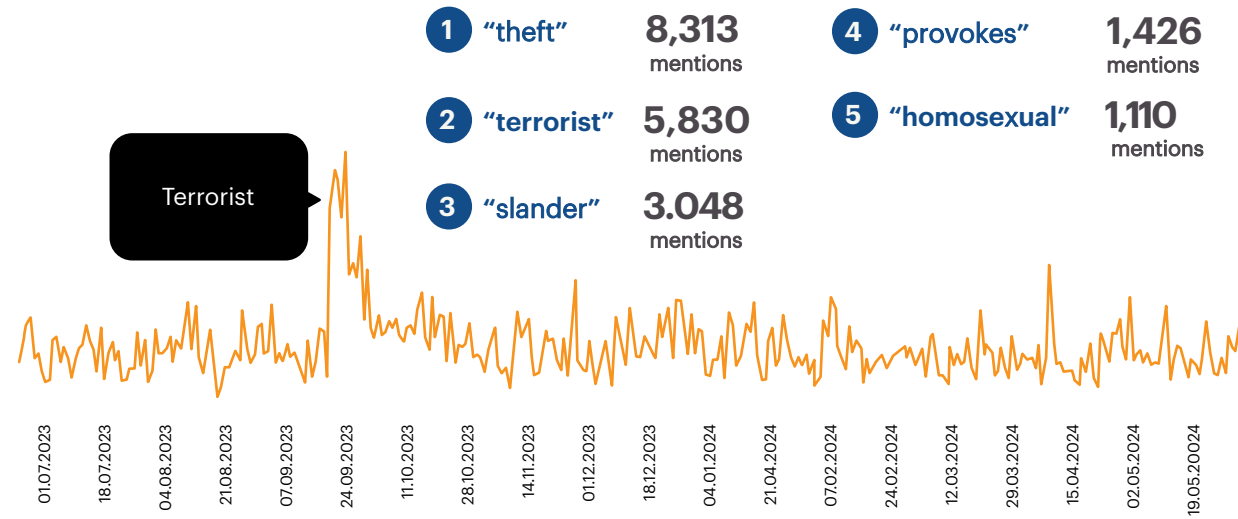
Likes	Comments	Shares
170	120	5

Gazeta Demos published a video on Instagram titled: “Judge 'bangs' the table at lawyer Hajdar Beqa's attorney.” The video shows scenes from the trial of MPs who had a physical altercation in the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo. In the posted video, lawyer Besiana Ismajli is seen arguing until interrupted by the judge because she had not been given the floor. The reporting by Demos uses language with misogynistic elements, which does not contribute to informing citizens about the case but instead focuses on a technical moment irrelevant to the case's further developments. The expression “bangs the table” does not justify the choice of words against lawyer Ms. Ismajli, even when placed in quotes. Furthermore, Ms. Ismajli is not Mr. Beqa's lawyer but Mr. Lushtaku's, misleading the citizens. As a result of the expression used in the post's title, offensive language was incited not only against Ms. Ismajli but also against Judge Eroll Gashi.

Video posted on Instagram has:

Likes	Comments	Shares
219	23	84

Volume of articles published in media in one day:



In the analysis of hate speech in Kosovo based on the provided keywords, the highest peak of news articles coincided with the Banjska attack period, primarily due to the word "terrorist" used in Kosovan media.

However, in total mentions, the word "theft" appeared **8,313 times**, followed by "terrorist" with **5,830 mentions**, "slander" with **3,048 mentions**, "provokes" with **1,426 mentions**, and "homosexual" with **1,110 mentions**.

GENERAL STATISTICS:	
News articles in media	26,509
Interactions on Facebook	465,443
Interactions on articles	18
No. of media	106
Social media posts	1,585
Interactions	253,778
Interactions on posts	118

Foreign Un-Democratic Influence

The selected articles below, identified using the methodology of this report, aim to highlight external influence. This category features the effect caused by a translation error of President Macron's speech, leading to a misconception that France is suspending visas for Kosovo in response to tensions in the north. This error sparked intense media debates against the Kosovo government, which was blamed for this "failure" in visa liberalization, as well as an increase in hate speech towards France and President Macron.

During a press conference in Tirana, where he was on an official visit, French President Emmanuel Macron spoke about tensions in the north and visa liberalization for Kosovo. The translation of President Macron's speech into Albanian was inaccurate, as the media extensively reported on the misinterpretation of his words. The translation was as follows: "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 of Kosovo, 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 as a consequence.

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."

Macron: Franca ka pezulluar liberalizimin e vizave për Kosovën



40 media
4239 Interactions

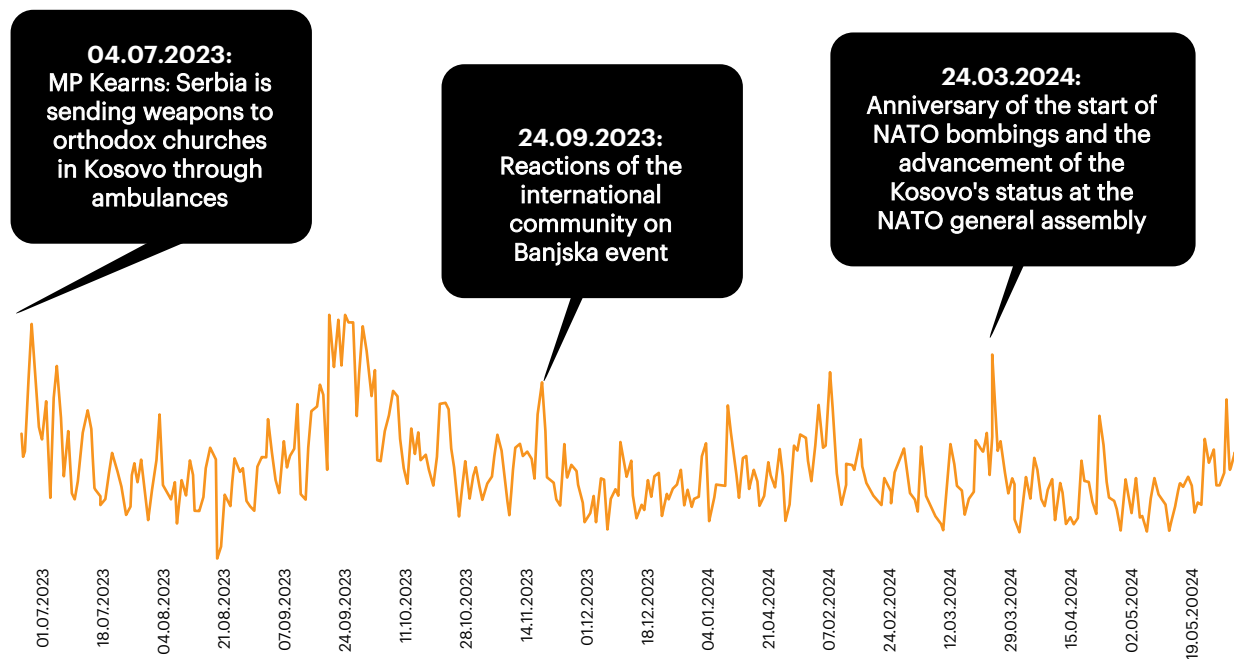
👍 Likes **2,816**
💬 Comments **1,279**
🔗 Shares **244**

The news portal AlfaPlam published an article titled: "The ideas of Kurti are catastrophic and genocidal." These claims have come from Milan Vučević, leader of the Serbian Progressive Party. This is in response to a statement by UK Parliament member Alicia Kearns, who presented evidence regarding the involvement of the Serbian Orthodox Church in arms trafficking in Kosovo. Additionally, the statement raised the hypothesis that an Albanian in Štrpce/Shtërpçë has evidence on how Serbs will be arrested, claiming that these assertions have led to over 20 Serbian families leaving Kosovo. All of this is attributed to the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, suggesting that he is behind these 'catastrophic' and 'genocidal' ideas.

This news has 1,762 interactions, out of which:

- Likes: 1,607
- Comments: 19
- Shares: 136

Volume of articles published in media in one day:



There have been several peak moments in Kosovo that have sparked reactions from the international community. It began with the statement from British MP Kearns, which led to about 1,500 news articles being published that day. Following this, during the week of the situation in Banjska, Kosovo, more than 1,400 news articles were published daily. Additionally, on the anniversary of the start of NATO bombings, over 1,200 news articles were published.

In terms of interactions, the Banjska event (on the day of the attack and the following 10 days) accounted for 10% of the total interactions during the entire monitoring period (335 days).

GENERAL STATISTICS:	
News articles in media	188,717
Interactions on Facebook	3,490,307
Interactions on articles	18
No. of media	114
Social media posts	7,623
Interactions	1,653,803
Interactions on posts	217

