



Ukraine War Disinfo Working Group

SUMMARY REPORT

October 3 – 9, 2022

This report collates insight drawn from the monitoring of narratives trending across pro-Kremlin sites and social media across fourteen countries in Central and Eastern Europe, as they relate to Russia's war in Ukraine. The data is collected and analysed by a number of NGOs, think tanks and researchers, and collated by the Open Information Partnership (OIP), to promote knowledge sharing across the OIP network and the broader region. The analysis contained in this report is the result of each group's monitoring, it is not authored by and does not represent the view of OIP, the FCDO or Zinc Network.



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Notes on terminology

The following overview summarises developing disinformation narratives by country, including new or shifting narratives and key cases. These development and insights primarily relate to narratives about the following themes:

- Events related to the Russia-Ukraine War
- (Negative) Economic Consequences of Sanctions
- Refugees
- Conditions of Russians and Russian-speaking Minorities
- Military Threats to Eastern Europe/Risk of War Expanding Beyond Ukraine
- Military Aid to Ukraine

This monitoring takes two forms:

1. **Monitoring of Hostile State-Aligned Media:** Using NewsWhip to collate all articles on the primary narratives listed above from outlets deemed to be funded by, formally or informally affiliated with, or reliably sympathetic to Hostile States.
2. **Social Media Monitoring:** Using open-source data collection tools and methods to monitor and analyse social media conversations about the primary narratives for disinformation, summarising prominent and emerging themes.

Note: “Interactions” refers to each time that a post was actively engaged with or responded to on a particular platform. For example, Facebook interactions encompass comments, shares, likes, and other reactions, and Twitter interactions encompass likes and re-tweets. The figures quoted in this report are the sum total of interactions across Twitter and Facebook unless otherwise specified. “Articles” as stated below refers to the number of published articles and social media posts featuring the narrative in question combined.

BALTICS (RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE)

Civic Resilience Initiative

- Similarly to the previous weeks, the most widespread and prevalent narrative (with 10 posts, 34768 interactions) concerned the Baltic region's alleged Russophobia, focusing on i) the injustice that Russians allegedly face in the Baltic region; ii) the "excessive" costs of Soviet monument removal; and iii) the victimization of Russians and their portrayal as the "Jews of 21st century".
- The narrative that Ukraine is targeting innocent civilians (6 posts, 27436 interactions) rose in popularity this week. It focused on the attack on the Crimean bridge and tried to prove that it was a terrorist act organised by the Ukrainian government.
- The previously popular narratives that Russia is liberating Ukraine and that sanctions hurt the West more than Russia were not observed this week.
- This week Baltnews' Telegram page gathered the most interactions, averaging around 3,300 interactions per post. However, two of the most popular propaganda posts came from Tribaltic Extinctions (Трибалтийские Вымираты) Telegram page.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Russian-language Baltic news portals this week received 1,600 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukraine is committing terrorist attacks against Russian civilians

Articles:

6

Interactions:

27,436

Many posts this week focused on the Crimean bridge explosion and tried to prove that it was a terrorist act organised by the Ukrainian government.

Nuclear war is imminent

Articles:

4

Interactions:

7,631

One post tried to accuse the government of Lithuania of possibly staging a nuclear provocation and engaging in fearmongering. Another post accused President Zelensky of demanding that NATO launch a preventive nuclear strike against Russia. (President Zelensky has indeed called for a "preventive strike" in a recent address but was later forced to clarify that he was talking about sanctions, not nuclear weapons.)

Ukraine is losing the war

Articles:

8

Interactions:

6,365

Posts focused on how Russians allegedly destroyed key Ukrainian military equipment.

Articles:

Ukrainians are Nazis

3

Interactions:
5,575

Stories tried to prove that Zelensky is a Nazi because he supports the Azov battalion, which (in their view) is heavily linked to Nazism.

**NATO/The West
will attack Russia**

Articles:

3

Interactions:
4,497

Stories emphasized that NATO has started to invest even more money into their military equipment and how they are making exercises on the border of the Kaliningrad region more often. These are portrayed by disinformation actors as signs that NATO wants to attack Russia.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing sub-narratives:

**Europe is threatened by
an energy crisis**

Articles:

5

Interactions:
14,584

Articles tried to highlight that some European institutions or businesses will have to drastically cut their energy consumption in order to survive (i.e., power plants in the UK, Polish universities, cultural institutions in Riga).

**Sanctions hurt the West
more than Russia**

Articles:

2

Interactions:
1,438

Posts focused on increased prices in Latvia, claiming that it would not have happened if it weren't for the sanctions.

CONDITIONS OF RUSSIANS AND RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITIES

Continuing sub-narratives:

**X country is Russophobic /
Russian culture is
being attacked**

Articles:

10

Interactions:
34,768

Posts mainly focused on (a) the injustice that Russians deported from the Baltic region face; (b) the excessive cost of Soviet monument removal; and (c) the victimisation of Russians and their portrayal as "Jews of the 21st century" due to the constant Russophobia they experience.

MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE

Continuing sub-narratives:

Western military aid is useless

Articles:
1
Interactions:
3,600

Post tried to suggest that the small warship that was recently supplied to Ukraine and launched in Turkey will not help the AFU whatsoever.

Western military aid is being misused/stolen

Articles:
1
Interactions:
3,100

Posts tried to prove that, increasingly, attempts are being made to bring smuggled weapons back into the EU, which were previously supplied to the Kyiv regime.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing sub-narratives:

The Baltic governments are fascist

Articles:
2
Interactions:
5,400

Posts emphasized that (a) Lithuanian authorities doom refugees to cold death by keeping them at the border; and (b) Estonians handed over the drones that the trucker Shilov bought for the Russian army to Ukraine.

Russian soldiers have huge popular support

Articles:
1
Interactions:
3,900

Post tried to show that the inhabitants of the Eastern part of Germany support Russia in the conflict with Ukraine.

The EU leadership is incompetent

Articles:
1
Interactions:
3,300

Post tried to mock Lithuania's President Gitanas Nausėda, saying sarcastically that he made a "brilliant" proposal to build a system of intimidation for Russia in Europe.

Belarus

Press Club Belarus

Note: Press Club Belarus' contribution exclusively features content from Belarusian Telegram channels.

- Elon Musk's tweets generated some of the most popular messages among Belarusian pro-state Telegram channels. They promoted his proposals as the only way to resolve the war and suggested that the world's "elites" support Russia.
- Belarus' role within the Russia-Ukraine war was another key topic for pro-Russian disinformation actors this week. The demonization of the West as a hostile force that is orchestrating the war and plotting an attack on Belarus remains to be a core narrative. The West is claimed to be undermining peace-building efforts, blamed for any escalation, and accused of threatening Belarusian security. Such disinformation is used to justify Minsk's increasingly more extensive military cooperation with Russia. Quite expectedly, the West is also blamed for destroying the Nord Stream pipes.
- "Pul Pervogo" and other propagandist media quoted Lukashenka's speech, as well as the speech of the KGB chairman, both of whom claimed that the Belarusian mercenaries of the Kalinovsky regiment (who are currently fighting in Ukraine) want to seize power in Belarus by force of arms. Their goal is allegedly to destabilize the situation in Belarus through sabotage and subversive activities, and then initiate a war with the participation of NATO.
- Another strongly emphasized narrative (supported by "BELTA" and other pro-government channels) is that Belarus is not participating in the war in Ukraine. The channels quote Lukashenka, who stated that there is no war on the territory of Belarus and thus no need to declare mobilization.
- Three more new narratives have emerged: i) Belarus is prepared for mobilization in the event of war; ii) Russia's losses in the war are small; and iii) Kazakhstan is helping the West provide Kyiv with military assistance.
- Overtly pro-Russian propaganda is typical for Belarus. This week, one such narrative was that Russia enjoys the world's trust and support.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

New narratives:

Belarus is not participating in the war in Ukraine

Articles:

21

Views:

244,240

"BELTA" and other pro-government channels quote Lukashenka who said that there is no war on the territory of Belarus and there is no need to announce mobilization, however, "as long as I serve as President, I prepare for war."

Belarus is prepared for mobilization in case of war

Articles:

8

Views:

38,580

"ATN_NEWS" quotes Marat Markov, chairman of the board of the Second National TV Channel, who said that "the situation in Russia with the mobilization has shown that this process must be prepared in advance - what to wear, what to put on, what to arm." The channel ambiguously states that fools learn from their mistakes, smart ones learn from the mistakes of others, indirectly criticizing Russia and praising Belarus.

Articles:

"Zheltie Slivy Premium" promotes the narrative that the explosion and collapse of the Crimean bridge is

**Russia's losses in the war
are small**

3

Views:
22,722

not a big deal and does not incur great losses for Russia.

Continuing narratives:

**NATO/The West will
attack Belarus**

Articles:
12

Views:
314,899

"Pool Pervogo" quotes Lukashenka, as well as the speech of the chairman of the KGB, who said that Belarusian mercenaries of the Kalinovsky regiment, fighting in Ukraine, want to seize power in Belarus by force of arms. The goal is to destabilize the situation in Belarus through sabotage and subversive activities and, then, a war with the participation of NATO.

"Minskaya pravda" quotes Chairman of the State Security Committee Ivan Tertel who considers that the fugitive Belarusian military in Ukraine are being trained for military operations and organizing terrorist attacks in Belarus.

**The West is undermining
peace negotiation efforts**

Articles:
14

Views:
150,045

"Pool Pervogo" and "BELTA" quote Alexander Lukashenka who accuses the West for the lack of a desire to negotiate peacefully. He says that the position of the Russian Federation is absolutely clear and understandable – Putin has stated many times that even tomorrow they would be ready to negotiate based on the situation.

"Zheltie Slivy Premium" quotes pro-government historian and political scientist Vadim Gigin on the plans of the Western countries not to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, but, on the contrary, to escalate it. "NATO has prepared another extremely dangerous direction in Ukraine, in which forces are now building up, this is the western and northwestern. NATO is now trying to fully involve Russia in the fighting in Ukraine. And at this time, open a new [Belarusian] flank."

**Belarus is being forced
into complying with allied
agreements with Russia**

Articles:
10

Views:
94,177

"BELTA" quotes Lukashenka, speaking about the participation of Belarus in the war in Ukraine: "As for our participation in a special military operation in Ukraine, we are participating there. We do not hide it. But we do not kill anyone. We do not send our military anywhere. We do not violate our obligations".

The West/US is responsible for the sabotage of Nord Stream

Articles:
9
Views:
56,800

"Minskaya pravda" and "Zheltie Slivy Premium" refers to the American economist, doctor Jeffrey Sachs, who said that the United States blew up Nord Stream. The channel puts forward a narrative that the media is hiding the truth, but in this case, Sachs' statement was broadcast live on Bloomberg, so no one could stop him.

"Zheltie Slivy Premium" refers to a Chinese diplomat who made fun of the statement that nobody knows who destroyed pipelines in spite of the fact that USA hates Russian pipelines, tried to prevent their construction, said they would destroy them, and benefits from their destruction.

Ukraine caused the war

Articles:
7
Views:
41,333

"BELTA" quotes Lukashenka, who repeats that Ukraine is afraid that Belarus might enter the war, but constantly stages provocations at the border. According to the President, Ukraine has pulled up a group of up to 15 thousand military personnel to the Belarusian border, is providing engineering equipment for checkpoints and firing positions, and has set up roadblocks.

Ukrainians are targeting civilians and commit other war crimes

Articles:
4
Views:
38,838

"Belorussian silovik" reports that the Ukrainian military spoke about receiving an order from their leadership to kill civilians.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing narratives:

Russia is unaffected by sanctions

Articles:
8
Views:
98,314

"Pool Pervogo" quotes Lukashenka, who said that Belarus retained the production of microelectronics. Lukashenka spoke about the need to use Belarusian microelectronics in Russia to replace imported microelectronics in rockets and precision weapons. Lukashenka quoted Putin's words: "We are ready to pay any money for a microelectronics product."

Sanctions hurt the West more than Russia

Articles:
6
Views:
36,899

"Zheltie Slivy Premium" reports that the Minsk Tractor Plant announced an increase in salaries for employees, despite the sanctions, everything is growing - production, sales and exports -- while European manufacturers, who have proudly stopped sales on the Russian market, are regretting their decisions.

MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE

New narratives:

Kazakhstan helps West to provide military assistance to Kyiv

Articles:
2

Views:
25,916

"Belorussian silovik" and "Minskaya pravda" are indirectly trying to accuse Kazakhstan of helping London to provide military assistance to Kyiv by quoting defence Minister Ben Wallace -- "There are a number of countries that secretly help Ukraine. Russia will be extremely displeased to find out that some of the countries it trusts have provided this assistance". The channel claims that he is talking about Kazakhstan.

Continuing narratives:

Military aid is weakening/jeopardizing the countries that provide it

Articles:
12

Views:
132,371

"BELTA", "Pool Pervogo" and other pro-government channels quote Lukashenko, who accused the West of not paying attention to the needs of the Western population in times of crisis. The West allegedly increases the military budget and limits social benefits. Under the guise of helping Kyiv, Western countries are rearming and modernizing with new weapons, getting rid of the old ones in Ukraine.

MILITARY THREAT TO EASTERN EUROPE / RISK OF THE WAR EXPANDING BEYOND UA

Continuing narratives:

Russia is losing the war and will use nuclear weapons

Articles:
4

Interactions:
65,366

"Zheltie Slivy Premium" quoted Deputy Head of the Russian Security Council Medvedev, who said that "If they hit Crimea, then Judgment Day will come for them. Very fast and heavy".

"Belorussian silovik" quotes the head of Wagner PMC Prigozhin: "I would like to note that I and Kadyrov, we belong to the party 'War to the end at any cost, so as not to shame Great Russia'".

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Continuing narratives:

Ukrainian refugees are no longer welcome

Articles:
2

Views:
18,695

"BELTA" reported on a decision of the Polish authorities, intended to require Ukrainian refugees to partially pay for housing that was previously provided for free. This is interpreted as a sign that Ukrainian refugees are becoming increasingly unwelcome.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing narratives:

Russia has the world's support

Articles:
28
Views:
230,057

"MIRBY" and many other pro-government channels quoted Elon Musk's tweet, promoting his opinion as the right way to resolve the war.

Ukrainian media is lying

Articles:
5
Views:
137,359

"Zheltie Slivy Premium" refers to the Ukrainian media, which broadcast the news that in English pubs people rejoice at the terrorist attack on the Kerch Bridge, changing the song "Free from Desire" to "Kerch Bridge on Fire". However, these videos were posted on YouTube on May 2016.

"Zheltie Slivy Premium" claims that after Musk's tweet, Ukrainian bots disappeared in Russian and Belarusian chats, as Ukraine set them on Elon Musk.

Western media is lying

Articles:
6
Views:
113,808

"Pool Pervogo" references a recent order made by Lukashenka to inform the population of the vision of the country's leadership on the military situation in and around the country and the measures taken by Belarus in order to protect from the incorrect information provided by external media, and to avoid the lack of information from the Belarusian media.

The EU and/or NATO and/or the West are weak and will break apart

Articles:
5
Views:
44,612

"Belorussian silovik" quotes the opinion of retired US Armed Forces Colonel Douglas McGregor, who believes that if NATO continues to move towards war with Russia, the alliance may fall apart. "No one wants to fight Russia, except for the Poles and a small number of people in Washington."

Western society does not support Ukraine

Articles:
2
Views:
24,985

According to the post, Switzerland does not support Zelensky's idea of transferring frozen Russian assets to Ukraine, the Swiss Ministry of Economic Development told RIA Novosti.

BULGARIA

Center for the Study of Democracy

- This week, the most prevalent topic in the pro-Kremlin disinformation environment was the events of the Russia-Ukraine war. As usual, the topic is presented in the context of anti-Western sentiment; the key narratives remain: i) the West is using Ukraine to wage war against Russia; ii) the West/USA directly participates in the war; iii) the West wants to bring the hostilities to Russian territory; iv) the West was, is, and will remain racist; and v) Russia's military strikes on Ukraine are advantageous to globalists.
- The messages that the staged "referendums" are legitimate, and Ukraine is losing the war remained widespread this week. *Pogled.info* and *svobodnoslovo.eu* were, once again, the main distributors of such disinformation.
- Propagandists continued to accuse the West, particularly the US, of being behind the destruction of the Nord Stream pipes.
- Several messages about the inevitability of nuclear catastrophe were also detected.
- The attack on the Kerch bridge was covered, but without any specific manipulations on the issue. Expectedly, the Ukrainians were claimed to be responsible for it.
- Previously observed narratives about the US using Ukraine to destroy Europe or the eventual reincarnation of the Soviet Union were not observed in Bulgaria this week.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Bulgarian news portals this week received 5,500 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukraine should not/will not become a NATO member

Articles:

3

Interactions:

6,545

Article talks about how NATO uses Ukraine as a "mistress" but will never accept it into the Alliance.

NATO/the US/the West is or will be directly involved in the war

Articles:

7

Interactions:

2,842

One article suggests that the US blew up the Crimean Bridge and that, if they hit Crimea, the US will have to face doomsday.

Reports of Russian war crimes are exaggerated/ fake news

Articles:

1

Interactions:

1,500

Article alleges that Ukraine's former ombudsman admits to fabricating fake stories of Russian atrocities to win EU support.

The West is also responsible for Ukraine's crimes against civilians

Articles:
2
Interactions:
1,212

Articles supporting Putin's claims about Ukrainian crimes against civilians and how the West is responsible for them as well.

Ukraine "referendums" are legitimate

Articles:
3
Interactions:
1,124

Articles about Donbas, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson being "welcomed on the Red Square".

Nuclear disaster/war is imminent

Articles:
3
Interactions:
1,042

Article suggests that nuclear war is inevitable: "The beginning of the end: the nuclear train has left the station, the blackest scenario becomes reality".

Ukraine is losing the war

Articles:
2
Interactions:
628

Article claims that it "foresees" the imminent collapse of the "Ukrreich".

Russia is not fighting at full capacity

Articles:
1
Interactions:
617

Article claiming that Russia has the military capacity to take back Eastern Ukraine but chooses not to do so.

The West/US is responsible for the sabotage of Nord Stream

Articles:
3
Interactions:
498

Article claiming that the US allowed Kyiv to humiliate Europe by blowing up the Nord Stream pipelines

Ukrainians are targeting civilians and commit other war crimes

Articles:
1
Interactions:
113

Article claiming that Ukrainian militants confessed to mass killings of civilians.

REFUGEES

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukrainian refugees are no longer welcome

Articles:

1

Interactions:

107

A story about protests in the Czech Republic is used to portray opposition to helping Ukrainian refugees as a widespread phenomenon.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing sub-narratives:

Western citizens do not support sanctions against Russia

Articles:

3

Interactions:

2,943

Articles about 40,000 Austrians who have drawn up a collective letter and sent it to the country's chancellor. They demanded that their government ends its support of Ukraine, as well as called for neutrality and the lifting of sanctions against Russia. These articles are meant to exaggerate Western opposition to sanctions.

Sanctions hurt the West more than Russia

Articles:

3

Interactions:

890

Articles about the hardships that Europeans face because of sanctions. For example, one article suggests that millions of Europeans will soon be without hot water, no bathing or washing, no street lighting, out in the cold, with bankrupt businesses and sky-rocketing prices.

MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE

Continuing sub-narratives:

Military aid prolongs the war

Articles:

1

Interactions:

887

Articles suggesting that no more weapons should be sent to Ukraine.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing sub-narratives:

Bulgaria should be neutral to prevent being dragged into war

Articles:

1

Interactions:

460

The article calls for Bulgaria's neutrality in the war but also adds that neutrality is impossible while Bulgaria continues to be a NATO member. The author suggests that Bulgaria should leave NATO to protect itself.

**The EU and/or NATO
and/or the West are weak
and will break apart**

Articles:

1

Interactions:

453

The article claims that the willingness of Poland and some of America's elites to go to war with Russia will lead to NATO's collapse and that no NATO member (except Poland) is interested in such a war.

CZECHIA

Prague Security Studies Initiative

- In the week under review, no single theme dominated pro-Russian disinformation in Czechia. (Last week, the damage to the Nord Stream pipelines was addressed in a very strong and coordinated manner.)
- The attack on the Kerch bridge was not used for propaganda or manipulations.
- Surprisingly, the narrative that received the most interactions this week was the bizarre claim that Western leaders are members of a Satanic sect and Putin has publicly exposed them. The QAnon conspiracy was also referenced.
- Discussing events on the frontlines, disinformation actors have continued to focus on small, local incidents to describe real or exaggerated Russian successes. They also claimed that the Ukrainian army is failing because it is not liberating territory as quickly as President Zelensky has promised. This is persistently connected to the sub-narrative that Russia is not fighting at its full capacity (including nuclear forces).
- The topic of nuclear weapons has continued to appear. Due to Russia's substantial conventional losses, we have observed constant claims that Russia will have no choice but to use nuclear weapons. Some articles suggest that Ukraine is already considering the option of a nuclear attack, and even wants to acquire nuclear weapons itself with the help of the US.
- Narratives suggesting that the US and/or NATO will be or are already directly involved in the war were observed once again. Several posts incorporated an ethnic angle, claiming that the West is trying to destroy the Slavic peoples or using anti-Semitic messaging.
- The energy crisis remains a major issue and continues to be discussed in domestic politics. Surprisingly, disinformation actors draw a direct line between the energy crisis and the war in Ukraine only rarely. We suspect that pro-Russian voices are focused on blaming the "incompetent" government, rather than the war.
- The messaging that military supplies to Ukraine only prolong bloodshed continues to be notorious. This week, it was reinforced with statements that Europe is weakening itself by supporting Ukraine.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Bulgarian news portals this week received 13,400 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

New sub-narrative:

Ukraine is preparing a nuclear attack

Articles:

8

Interactions:

334

The nuclear topic focuses on Ukraine supposedly preparing a nuclear attack. Disinformation actors place a particular emphasis on Ukraine's alleged cooperation with US in this regard, which also connects with the narratives of Ukraine being controlled by the West and West using Ukraine to wage the war against Russia.

NATO/The West is trying to divide Slavs/Orthodox Christians

Articles:
5

Interactions:
183

A new ethnic theme is emerging, both in the form of references to the West trying to destroy the Slavic peoples and in the form of anti-Semitic articles and comments in articles. This is a phenomenon that has appeared little in previous weeks.

Continuing sub-narratives:

Russia is not fighting at full capacity

Articles:
8

Interactions:
471

The theme of Russia not fighting with its full force is increasingly linked to the nuclear issue, likely because it cannot be said that Russia has substantial conventional forces in reserve.

Ukraine is losing the war

Articles:
12

Interactions:
378

A permanent and constant sub-narrative is the message that Ukraine is losing. What is interesting is the relatively new motif that has emerged: the fact that they are not liberating the occupied territories as quickly and as extensively as some Ukrainian officials have previously announced is interpreted as a failure of the Ukrainian army.

The West is undermining peace negotiation efforts

Articles:
4

Interactions:
191

The West is accused of not allowing peace talks to take place because it benefits from the war or otherwise wants to see the war continue.

Ukraine's leadership does not care about its people

Articles:
2

Interactions:
160

Disinformation actors claim that the Ukrainian leadership does not prioritize its own people and simply obeys commands from abroad.

The West is using Ukraine to wage war against Russia

Articles:
6

Interactions:
149

Some disinformation actors claim that Ukraine is a puppet and is being used by the West to undermine Russia, while others claim that the West is directly involved in the war but uses the protection of Ukraine as a pretext to defend its own interests.

The US is directly involved in the war

Articles:
10

Interactions:
140

In general, it seems that narratives about the US being directly involved in the war are more popular than narratives that talk about NATO involvement as a whole.

Ukraine is committing terrorist attacks against Russian civilians

Articles:
7
Interactions:
70

The topic of Ukraine committing terrorist acts against Russian civilians this week was, surprisingly, still primarily connected with the Dugina case.

Ukrainians refuse to fight

Articles:
4
Interactions:
69

A new narrative is emerging about the Ukrainians' efforts to avoid deployment to the frontlines. Apparently, this type of narrative makes use of similar messages that are being spread about Russia. At the same time, it has an anti-Semitic component, as it is being spread mainly about Jews.

The West knows that Russia is winning the war

Articles:
6
Interactions:
65

The narratives that Ukraine is losing / Russia is winning are practically undistinguishable from the narrative "the West knows that Russia is winning". It is related to some extent to the topic of Russia not fighting to the full extent of its capabilities. It presents the West as irresponsibly "poking the bear", even when knowing what the "bear" is capable of.

The West is profiting on the war in Ukraine

Articles:
3
Interactions:
64

Accusations that the West is profiting from the war in Ukraine are primarily used to claim that the West is interested in the war continuing, rather than peace.

NATO is/will be directly involved in the war

Articles:
3
Interactions:
20

The narrative of greater Western involvement in the war in Ukraine focuses mainly on the issue of command and control and is linked to the long-standing narrative that Ukraine as a state and its armed forces are, in fact, covertly controlled by NATO.

Ukrainians are welcoming Russian "saviours"

Articles:
1
Interactions:
6

The narrative about Ukrainians welcoming the "Russian liberators" was minor this week and primarily focused on the referendums, the result of which the population is supposedly celebrating and welcoming.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

New sub-narratives:

The complete shutdown of Russian gas will destroy Germany

Articles:
2
Interactions:
13

Interestingly, much of the sanctions-related disinformation in Czechia deals with neighbouring Germany, rather than Czechia itself.

Continuing sub-narratives:

Russia is unaffected by sanctions

Articles:
2
Interactions:
50

Claims about Russia's supposedly excellent grain harvest, which is said to improve the current economic situation, appeared this week.

The inflation and energy crises are caused by the West's misguided political approach

Articles:
3
Interactions:
43

The economic and energy issue remains at the forefront of pro-Russian disinformation in Czechia.

Sanctions hurt the West more than Russia

Articles:
4
Interactions:
38

Claims about Western suffering and Russian well-being as a result of sanctions continue to appear but yield very little new material. The same claims are consistently repeated but without any new or concrete data to back them up.

CONDITIONS OF RUSSIANS AND RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITIES

Continuing sub-narratives:

Czechia is Russophobic/Russian culture is being attacked

Articles:
2
Interactions:
5

Some minor claims about the Czech society's alleged Russophobia appeared this week, but the topic continues to be rather unpopular.

MILITARY THREATS TO EASTERN EUROPE/RISK OF WAR EXPANDING BEYOND UKRAINE

New sub-narratives:

The West will sacrifice Eastern Europe if war spills over

Articles:

1

Interactions:

102

In the context of the threat of escalation (including a nuclear one), there is a theme that Eastern and Central Europe are territories that can be sacrificed, from the point of view of NATO and Western states. There is an obvious attempt to stir up anti-NATO sentiment in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Continuing sub-narratives:

The West is escalating the war

Articles:

1

Interactions:

30

Only episodically does the theme of the Western population calling for an escalation of the conflict and direct involvement in the struggle come up. These views are presented as an irresponsible attitude that could lead to the destruction of the entire world by nuclear catastrophe.

The West will fall

Articles:

1

Interactions:

3

This narrative assumes that the West (the US and Europe) is increasingly engaged in Ukraine -- directly or indirectly -- and given that Russia is expected to win, this will inevitably lead to the downfall of the entire West.

MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE

New sub-narratives:

The US is using Ukraine to promote its military-industrial complex

Articles:

6

Interactions:

821

There is a prominent conspiracy theory that the US intention with the war in Ukraine is not only to destroy or weaken Russia, but also to weaken Europe so that it cannot be an economic competitor to the US.

Continuing sub-narratives:

Military aid prolongs the war

Articles:

6

Interactions:

537

The constant theme that arms supplies prolong the duration of the war is strongly present. This narrative does not change over time, it merely adapts to the specific arms supplies that are being discussed in the current moment.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing sub-narratives:

NATO is a Satanist organisation

Articles:
8
Interactions:
3,673

A set of bizarre narratives, which are themselves quite isolated, appear every once in a while. They accuse Europe of being linked to Satanic, Masonic, or Illuminati circles. This type of narrative appears on sites that were previously engaging in publishing conspiracy theories about COVID-19. Due to their wide readership, this ridiculous claim became the most interacted with sub-narrative this week.

The EU and/or NATO and/or the West are weak and will break apart

Articles:
7
Interactions:
543

The narrative that expects NATO to fall apart is very closely related to narratives that assume that the war in Ukraine is a US-led effort to weaken Europe. Disinformation narratives predict that, when Europe realizes that USA is plotting to destroy it, the West will break apart.

Biological weapons labs in Ukraine

Articles:
1
Interactions:
283

The topic of biological laboratories in Ukraine continues to appear, but in a relatively minor way. This week, it merely republished the statements of the Russian authorities about their investigations of these alleged laboratories.

Jews are behind the war in Ukraine

Articles:
8
Interactions:
133

The previously established narratives about the incompetence of the Ukrainian leadership and its dependence on Western masters now takes on a new, anti-Semitic angle. Disinformation actors suggest that the war is the result of a Jewish-led conspiracy, which, of course, refers to the Jewish origins of President Zelensky.

The Ukrainian leadership is corrupt and/or incompetent

Articles:
1
Interactions:
48

As mentioned above, narratives about the incompetence of the Ukrainian leadership continue to appear in Czech disinformation media.

The EU/US leadership is incompetent

Articles:
3
Interactions:
18

Disinformation actors claim that European leaders are incompetent and are mismanaging their countries.

The only way to end the war is to negotiate with Russia

Articles:
1
Interactions:
15

N/A

ESTONIA

DebunkEU.org

- The Nord Stream pipeline explosions were once again blamed on the West this week. Sources such as Douglas Macgregor were used to make unsubstantiated claims, including that the Biden administration ordered the sabotage to be carried out.
- EKRE has engaged in fear-mongering tactics this week, claiming that the national song festival will be abolished as a far-right tradition or abandoned when the Estonian language is overtaken by foreign languages. A recent poll shows growing support for EKRE.
- Far-right sources maintain the following series of claims about Ukrainian refugees: a) they are ethnic Russians; b) they are actually migrant workers, not refugees; c) they undermine Estonia's stability and traditions by Russifying schools and forcing true Estonians to move abroad. Disinformation actors easily alternate between the contradictory claims that refugees seek conflicts with local Russians but also support Putin and Russia.
- The energy crisis is also discussed in contradictory terms: the same publications have claimed that the crisis was caused by various political circumstances while also blaming it solely on Europe's green policies.
- A new narrative that Ukraine is preparing a nuclear attack was observed this week.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Estonian news portals this week received 2,100 interactions.

EVENTS OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing sub-narratives:

The West/US is responsible for the sabotage of Nord Stream

Articles:

2

Interactions:

708

Article quoted that, according to Douglas Macgregor, the US and the UK are most likely behind the Nord Stream pipeline explosions, and the attack was carried out to prevent Germany from withdrawing from the war in Ukraine.

Ukraine is preparing a nuclear attack

Articles:

1

Interactions:

160

Article quoted that, according to Chris Menahan of Information Liberation, Zelensky has made a lot of insane statements and has repeatedly tried to trick NATO into starting World War III and may have suggested actor Sean Penn lobby for a nuclear strike against Russia.

REFUGEES

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukrainian refugees undermine host countries' internal stability

Articles:

4

Interactions:

845

The author stated that preparations are being made for the total Russification of Estonians, as one hundred thousand Slavic-language refugees have been admitted to Estonia, of whom Ukrainians make up perhaps one fifth, while the rest are Russian-speaking comfort migrants with Ukrainian passports. Other articles claim that the current ruling elite is trying to repopulate Estonia with "so-called Ukrainians".

Ukrainian refugees are prioritized over the host country citizens/inhabitants

Articles:

4

Interactions:

338

Article suggested that the children of Ukrainian refugees in the Estonian school system put an extra burden on the schooling system and force teachers to neglect Estonian children.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing sub-narratives:

The inflation and the energy crises are caused by the false political approach of Europe and the US

Articles:

3

Interactions:

1,150

According to EKRE, the claim that the war in Ukraine is to blame for the high energy prices is an outright lie, as the price of electricity started skyrocketing as early as the autumn of 2021, and the green policies, not Vladimir Putin, are to blame.

Sanctions hurt the West more than Russia

Articles:

1

Interactions:

656

According to Viktor Orbán, Europeans are paying much more for energy than usual because of the sanctions, adding to uncertainty about the future.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing sub-narratives:

**The EU and/or NATO
and/or the West are weak
and will break apart**

Articles:

2

Interactions:

80

The author alleges that, in the event of a full-scale war between Russia and NATO, Article 5 may not be applied as promised.

GEORGIA

GRASS

- The message that the West is trying to drag Georgia into the war with Russia and open a second front was once again the top disinformation narrative, both in terms of the number of interactions and the number of articles.
- Events of the Russia-Ukraine war remained in the spotlight this week, as propagandists are trying to cover up battlefield losses by claiming that: i) Russia is up against the entirety of the West; ii) that the West instigated the conflict; and iii) Ukraine is losing the war and Russia will inevitably achieve victory.
- Calls for abandoning pro-Western foreign policy in favour of alignment with Russia continue to be observed.
- Disinformation messages concerning military aid remain out of focus; the topic of economic sanctions has also somewhat slipped from the radar of pro-Russian propaganda in Georgia.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Georgian news portals this week received 1,100 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing narratives:

Ukraine is losing the war

Articles:

8

Interactions:

2,101

Anti-Western "expert" Demur Giorkhelidze published a Facebook post in which he responded to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the statement of Elon Musk about the Russia-Ukraine war. According to Giorkhelidze, Elon Musk is the face of America's powerful elite, which understands the danger of further escalation. According to him, anyone who closely observes the main media outlets of the US will notice that the defeat of Ukraine is approaching.

The West is using Ukraine to wage war against Russia

Articles:

2

Interactions:

1,103

The host Matsasto Gakhokidze on the air of pro-Russian Alt-info parroted the message that the war in Ukraine is not between the Russian Federation and Ukraine but between the US and Russia. She claimed that the whole of Europe is following the USA's lead and confronting Russia.

The US provoked the conflict between Ukraine and Russia

Articles:

1

Interactions:

461

The head of one of the regional offices of the pro-Russian political party Conservative Movement, Giorgi Kiknadze, reinforced the message that the West initiated the Russia-Ukraine war. According to Kiknadze, it is effortless for Russia to win a war against Ukraine. However, Volodymyr Zelensky would not end this war because then the intention and goals of the US would be destroyed. According to Kiknadze, the purpose of the US is to weaken and destroy Europe and reduce its economic and military potential, and the US is using its bribed governments to fulfil the goal. Giorgi Kiknadze tried to downplay Ukraine's counterattack and said that the territories that Ukrainians regained cost many human losses.

According to him, Russia will take back these territories in a short time.

Ukrainians do not support Zelensky

Articles:
1
Interactions:
156

Pro-Russian outlet Alt-Info published a video showing people blocking the driveway, claiming that the footage is from the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, where people are blocking roads after the local Ukrainian authorities banned them from crossing the border and going to Russia.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing narratives:

Europe is threatened by an energy crisis

Articles:
1
Views:
834

Anti-Western political expert Demur Giorkhelidze has lambasted the European leaders for refusing to import Russian natural gas. According to Giorkhelidze, Russian natural gas cannot be replaced, and without it, European countries would soon de-industrialise.

Sanctions hurt the West more than Russia

Articles:
1
Views:
461

The head of one of the regional offices of the pro-Russian political party Conservative Movement, Giorgi Kiknadze, reiterated that the Western-imposed sanctions did not hurt the Kremlin as the Russian economy benefited from the increased energy carriers. Kiknadze further conveyed the message that with winter approaching, Europe is suffering from the countereffects of the sanctions, which, according to him, would give Putin more leverage to put pressure on Europe.

MILITARY THREAT TO EASTERN EUROPE / RISK OF THE WAR EXPANDING BEYOND UA

Continuing narratives:

The West/Georgian opposition parties seek to open a second front against Russia in Georgia

Articles:
28
Interactions:
21,165

The openly pro-Russian journalist and activist Irakli Jankarashvili accused certain powers of wanting Georgia to share the same fate as Kharkiv, which was bombed by Russian guided missiles that destroyed critical infrastructure.

Visiting Moscow and conducting meetings with the Kremlin and Eurasian Union officials, leader of the pro-Russian political party Conservative Movement, Zurab Makharadze, later claimed while speaking on Russian propagandistic media that [the West] also wanted to use Georgia as firewood in this fire, implying that the West desired to drag Georgia into the war with Russia.

Talking for the Alt-Info TV channel, the group's other leading figure, Shota Martinenko, updated his supporters about their working visit to Moscow.

Martinenko underscored that Alt-Info's Moscow mission was to "establish a communication with the Russian political elite at the moment when the world is in danger of a nuclear war." According to him, considering that the war might be expanded to Georgia as well, it is of utmost importance to talk with the Russians, as this is the only way to avoid catastrophic consequences for the country.

Pro-Russian Facebook user posted that Europe and the US need Georgia to be in war with Russia because the US wants to encircle Russia by hostile states.

MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE

Continuing narratives:

The West will no longer provide Ukraine with military aid

Articles:

1

Views:

834

A pro-Russian Facebook page claimed that the US is in both military and economic crisis – its military supplies are dwindling, and it was forced to refuse Ukraine more weaponry.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing narratives:

The EU is under US influence

Articles:

22

Interactions:

13,485

Former GD member and a controversial politician, Vato Shakarishvili, posted an update on his Facebook page, stating that fulfilling the European Union's 12-point conditions for the country's membership candidacy status is a guaranteed ticket to the war against Russia. Shaqarashvili has also claimed that, in fact, the US was behind these 12-point conditions and that the US ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan, is interfering in the competence of the EU structures by interpreting that 12-point conditions according to her/US interests in Georgia.

Georgia should abandon pro-Western foreign policy & Euro-Atlantic ingegration aspirations and align with Russia

Articles:

1

Interactions:

4,073

Leader of the pro-Russian political party Conservative Movement (established by the Alt-Info group), Zurab Makharadze, claimed on a Russian propagandistic TV channel that the percentage of the Georgian population with pro-Russian sentiment surpasses 50% contrary to the information spread by the Western propaganda in Georgia. He also mentioned that Georgia would never become an EU member state.

HUNGARY

Atlatszo

- The sub-narrative claiming that European politicians do not care about their citizens continued to rise. Disinformation actors used strong language to depict a devastating picture, with the EU allegedly facing widespread “carnage” and “robberies”. The narrative resonates with Viktor Orbán's statements from last week.
- Disinformation actors also focused on the main events of the war, particularly the partial destruction of the Kerch bridge. Hungarian disinformation actors labelled the event to be a “terrorist attack” and blamed it on either Ukraine or the US.
- A new trend this week was the framing of the US as a far more violent great power than Russia. Articles containing this narrative reminded readers of US actions in Iraq and Serbia. One article even tried to create the illusion that the Kosovo genocide was fabricated by the US.
- The number of disinformation articles has continued to decline. However, it is worth noting that, this week, pro-Russian disinformation adopted a stronger, more aggressive tone than in previous weeks.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Hungarian news portals this week received 14,200 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukraine is losing the war

Articles:

1

Interactions:

8,326

A Hungarian TV segment celebrated the 70th birthday of Putin. For the occasion, they prepared a brief list of the main events during Putin's carrier. Concerning the current war in Ukraine, they said that the war will probably go on until Putin decides otherwise (creating the illusion that the Russian army is superior, and Ukraine can't defeat Russia).

NATO/The West will attack Russia

Articles:

2

Interactions:

7,191

This narrative appeared in an article that summarizes a claim of Douglas Macgregor about Poland and a “certain part of the US elite” wanting NATO to go to war against Russia. Another article falsely cited Zelensky, claiming that he said that NATO must conduct a “preventative nuclear strike” against Russia.

Ukraine is committing terrorist attacks against Russian civilians

Articles:

1

Interactions:

6,512

This sub-narrative revolved around the attack against the Crimean bridge this week. It appeared in Facebook posts: one said that the EU should be ashamed, and that NATO is hypocritical for condemning Russian attacks but not the attack against the Crimean bridge.

The West/US is responsible for the sabotage of Nord Stream

Articles:
1
Interactions:
5,895

A Facebook post accused the US of blowing up the Nord Stream pipeline. It drew the conclusion from the claim that the "US is worried about the Belgorod submarine" and that "the one who worries is the one who conducted the sabotage".

Russia only attacked because Ukraine was planning to attack it first

Articles:
1
Interactions:
4,379

This sub-narrative was spread by a Facebook page which shared a long post in the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Putin. It claimed that Putin had to act first to prevent the attack of the Ukrainian Nazis financed by the Anglo-Saxons against Russia.

Russian troops are advancing / achieving success

Articles:
1
Interactions:
3,311

The headline of the article frames the statement of Andrei Marochko, a spokesman for the People's Militia of the LNR, about the Ukrainian troops breaking onto LNR territory but coming under fire and suffering massive casualties as a verified fact.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing sub-narratives:

Western citizens do not support sanction against Russia

Articles:
2
Interactions:
5,830

A *Foreign Policy* article was manipulatively summarised, suggesting that Slovakia and the Czech Republic might revoke their support for Ukraine soon and exaggerated the predictions about the possibility of internal instability in the two countries due to the rising energy costs.

MISCELLANEOUS

New sub-narratives:

NATO has committed far worse crimes than Russia

Articles:
1
Interactions:
3,765

A pro-Kremlin news site wrote about the claim of Alexandr Vucic about the US and the UK asking Hungary (Viktor Orbán) in 1999 to attack Serbia from the north, which he refused to do. The news site tried to create the illusion that the genocide in Kosovo was made up by the US by using quotation marks. The site also creates the perception that the serious effect of the depleted uranium used by NATO against Serbia in 1999 on the health of the Serbian population is a proven fact.

Continuing sub-narratives:

Politicians care about Ukraine at the expense of their own citizens

Articles:

1

Interactions:

5,559

Disinformation actors spreading this sub-narrative stated that the EU leadership should be held accountable for the harm that they caused with the sanctions. They claimed that there will be “carnage” in the EU because of the catastrophic economic impact of the sanctions.

The Ukrainian leadership is corrupt and/or incompetent

Articles:

1

Interactions:

4,830

Pro-Kremlin portal called Zelensky a clown, trying to discredit his statement in which he said that Ukraine always adheres to all international norms.

Russia has the world's support

Articles:

1

Interactions:

4,122

Pro-Kremlin news site omitted important details when it reported on the International Boxing Association bringing back boxers from Russia and Belarus. Specifically, they ignored the fact that the IBA is run by Russian businessman Umar Kremlev, and the International Olympic Committee voiced serious concerns over the IBA's decision.

The EU and/or NATO and/or the West are weak and will break apart

Articles:

1

Interactions:

3,600

A Facebook post shared an “open letter” to the new US Ambassador to Hungary. The author of the letter, Zoltán Felföldi, claimed that the EU is just an arm of the US empire that will collapse, but Hungary will remain in its place.

- This week, pro-Kremlin voices in Latvia primarily focused on discussing the situation on the frontlines. These were primarily continuing narratives claiming that i) the US is directly involved in the war; ii) Ukraine is a Nazi state; iii) Ukraine is preparing a nuclear attack. The attack on the Kerch bridge did not become a source of disinformation.
- The economic messaging that was in focus over the previous several weeks was not observed during this monitoring period. However, this may constitute a sporadic fluctuation, rather than a long-term trend.
- The process of creating a new government after the Parliamentary election of Latvia has begun. At the moment, it seems like the previous Prime minister of Latvia, Krišjānis Kariņš, will continue to occupy this role. This news has affected some of the disinformation content analyzed this week.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Latvian news portals this week received 2,100 interactions.

EVENTS OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing sub-narratives:

The West is using Ukraine to wage war against Russia

Articles:

1

Interactions:

939

A Facebook post claimed that Zelensky is a puppet controlled by the US and Joe Biden. The author uses a FOX news story as a source for this claim.

NATO aspirations provoked the conflict between Ukraine and Russia

Articles:

1

Interactions:

673

A Facebook post argued that the war in Ukraine is the fault of the US and NATO, since they did not keep the promise given to the Soviet Union about NATO not expanding into Eastern Europe.

Ukrainians are Nazis

Articles:

1

Interactions:

36

A social media post is calling Ukrainians Nazis, and claims that they mercilessly kill pro-Russian Ukrainians.

Ukraine is preparing a nuclear attack

Articles:

1

Interactions:

N/A

A Facebook page claimed that Zelensky wants to start a nuclear war based on a statement taken out of context.

MISCELLANEOUS

New sub-narratives:

**The war in Ukraine is part
of a global conspiracy**

Articles:

1

Interactions:

6,028

A TikTok post claims that Latvian politicians are controlled by globalists and that they are causing higher inflation levels than ever before.

Continuing sub-narratives:

**Russia and its allies are
strong**

Articles:

1

Interactions:

87

A disinformation page argues that Russia is militarily strong and is currently planning a large-scale counter-offensive in Ukraine.

LITHUANIA

DebunkEU.org

- Traditional messages about the developments of the Russia-Ukraine war were the most prevalent this week. These narratives are sometimes contradictory, for example the claim that the West abandoned Ukraine and asked it to surrender has been presented alongside the accusation that the West is undermining peace negotiation efforts.
- The recent destruction of the Kerch bridge generated only one piece of disinformation content, which depicted the explosions as an act of terrorism committed by Ukraine with the help of its rulers (US, UK, NATO).
- The inflation and energy crises were once again blamed on the West's false political approach. A Facebook user claimed that there is no objective reason for gas prices to be this high and that the actual reason is the "satanic plans" of Biden and Schwab, who are supposedly lying about the war.
- Narratives about the war expanding beyond Ukraine focused on two sub-narratives, including one new one. The new sub-narrative is that Russia is losing the war and will use nuclear weapons. Disinformation actors also claimed that Zelensky is escalating the war to a global conflict by demanding that the West launch "preventive strikes" on Russia. Zelensky was also called a "small, crazy fuhrer" who may attempt to use a dirty bomb against Russia.
- Pro-Russian disinformation actors also claimed that governments are using the war in Ukraine to limit the freedoms of their citizens and that those who support Ukraine are ridiculous. This accusation was based on the announcement of a new rally by the controversial Lithuanian Family Movement, which seeks to protest Lithuania's "dictatorial" policies. It is worth noting that this misleading and fearmongering announcement was actively shared on Facebook. A Lithuanian MEP also shared similar claims.
- The statements made by Elon Musk were picked up and reported. Sporadic anti-Western messaging and anti-government messaging was also present.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Lithuanian news portals this week received 8,500 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukraine is losing the war

Articles:

1

Interactions:

2,057

MP Puidokas implied that Elon Musk's tweet about peace in Ukraine must be seriously evaluated because he is supposedly a prominent supporter of Ukraine and his "cosmic surveillance systems" might give him more information than we know.

Ukraine caused the war

Articles:

1

Interactions:

89

Disinformation portal shared an extract from the Moldovan President's speech where she accidentally said that Ukraine started the war.

Ukrainians are committing terrorist attacks against Russian civilians

Articles:
1
Interactions:
134

Facebook disinformation page claimed that the recent explosion of Crimean bridge is an act of terrorism committed by Ukraine with the help of its rulers (US, UK, NATO) and that the “Kyiv regime is marionette, irresponsible, anti-people, criminal”.

The West is undermining peace negotiation efforts

Articles:
1
Interactions:
68

Facebook disinformation page claimed that criticism of Elon Musk’s recent tweets is baseless, as well as that the US-NATO colonizers and their vassal, Ukraine, don’t care about peace.

The West is using Ukraine to wage war against Russia

Articles:
1
Interactions:
40

Facebook user implied that Ukraine is fighting for the US because the land where battles are happening is supposedly sold to Americans.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing sub-narratives:

The inflation and the energy crises are caused by the false political approach of Europe & US

Articles:
1
Interactions:
413

Facebook user claimed that there is no objective reason for gas prices to be this high and the actual reason for them is the “satanic plans” of Biden and Schwab, who are lying about the war.

MILITARY THREATS TO EASTERN EUROPE/RISK OF WAR EXPANDING BEYOND UKRAINE

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukraine is escalating the war to a global conflict

Articles:
1
Interactions:
171

Facebook disinformation page claimed that Zelensky wants the West to make “preventive strikes” on Russia (misinterpretation due to the use of an interpreter when Zelensky was speaking).

Russia is losing the war and will use nuclear weapons

Articles:
1
Interactions:
2

Facebook user shared a video with antisemitic watermarks, which “explains” that Putin will use nuclear weapons in response to the Crimean bridge blasts.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukraine's supporters are ridiculous	Article: <u>5</u> Interactions: 11,984	4 of the cases mocking Ukraine's supporters focused on their criticism of Elon Musk's controversial tweets about the Ukraine peace deal. At least three of these cases attacked Lithuanian MP's joking response to Elon Musk's tweet.
Governments are using the war in Ukraine to limit the freedoms of their citizens	Article: <u>2</u> Interactions: 1,530	The Lithuanian Family Movement announced a protest on October 22nd using heavily dramatized and misleading claims that the Lithuanian government is using war in Ukraine to limit the freedoms of its citizens, essentially having established a dictatorship.
Politicians care about Ukraine at the expense of their own citizens	Article: <u>2</u> Interactions: 496	A Facebook disinformation page claimed that Lithuania's decision to use frozen funds dedicated for Afghanistan to help Ukraine and the collection of such funds in the first place shows that Lithuania is wasting money on all US-NATO international affairs and military aggressions instead of supporting its citizens.
Ukraine is controlled by the West	Article: <u>2</u> Interactions: 259	Facebook disinformation page shared an extract of Tucker Carlson's show, where he claimed that Zelensky is not an independent leader of Ukraine but rather a client of Biden's administration which wants regime-changing war against Russia.
Western media is lying	Article: <u>1</u> Interactions: 104	A Facebook disinformation page shared an extract of a recent Roger Waters' interview, where he claimed that Waters is on the "Ukrainian kill list" and that mass media is preventing people from creating an objective picture of war in Ukraine.
The war in Ukraine is part of a global conspiracy	Article: <u>1</u> Interactions: 53	A Facebook user claimed that the war might have been caused by the degradation of morality, and that war cleanses souls - it reminds people of the most important values.

NORTH MACEDONIA

MOST

- Narratives related to the events of the Russia-Ukraine war prevailed this week in terms of the number of interactions. The narrative that the recent “referenda” are legitimate continued to appear and was promoted through an announcement from the Russian MFA, as well as Putin’s decree that put Zaporizhzhia NPP on the list of Russia’s federal assets. In addition, these messages equated Donbas to Kosovo, which has been a common distortion throughout the entire monitoring period.
- The narrative that the West/US is responsible for the sabotage of Nord Stream also continued. Local channels echoed the propaganda of Kremlin officials and rebroadcast their accusations against the US and West.
- Maria Zakharova was again broadcast, this time in an effort to push the narrative that Ukraine is committing terrorist attacks against Russian civilians.
- With respect to sanctions, Hungarian PM Orbán and the Deputy Head of Russia’s Security Council Dmitry Medvedev continued to promote the Russian narrative that sanctions hurt the West more than Russia. Such claims are regularly broadcast in the Macedonian online space and used by pro-Russian voices to aggrandize Russia and incite sanctions-related polarization within the Western societies.
- Ramzan Kadyrov remains a popular figure for pro-Kremlin channels in Macedonia; his aggressive statements are frequently quoted.
- The features of the old-new Russian [wunderwaffe](#) (the laser *Peresvet*) were discussed in the Macedonian disinformation landscape. Pro-Russian voice Sašo Tasevski also aggrandized Putin’s “wisdom”, publishing a rather vulgar-toned message that the Government should turn to Putin for help in order to secure gas and energy for the upcoming winter.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across North Macedonian news portals this week received 1,100 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing narratives:

Ukraine ‘referenda’ are legitimate

Articles:
24

Interactions:
3,263

This narrative was promoted through the announcement of the Russian MFA that the referendums were legal, as well as through Putin’s decree that put Zaporizhzhia NPP on the list of Russia’s federal assets. This narrative attempts to justify the invasion, by claiming that the citizens in the disputed regions want to become part of Russia, thereby claiming that Donbas is Russian. Furthermore, the narrative that Donbas equals Kosovo continued to be promoted, despite the fact that the two cases (Kosovo and Donbas) cannot be compared.

**Ukraine is committing
terrorist attacks against
Russian civilians**

Articles:

4

Interactions:

87

This narrative was employed by Russian MFA spokeswoman Zakharova, as a reaction to the destruction of the Crimean Bridge. She commented that the reaction of the Kyiv authorities to the destruction of civilian infrastructure revealed its terrorist nature. The narrative attempts to portray Russia as a victim as a pretext for potential escalation of the war. This is another distortion that aims to create the perception that (a) Crimea is Russian, therefore Ukraine performs terrorist attacks on Russian soil; and (b) Russia is a victim, regardless of the undisputable facts that it invaded a sovereign country and carried a number of alleged war crimes (under investigation).

**The West/US is
responsible for the
sabotage of Nord Stream**

Articles:

7

Interactions:

74

This narrative was promoted through the statements of two Russian officials. Head of Russia's Security Council Nikolai Patrushev implied that the US were behind the sabotage of Nord Stream, while Russian MFA spokeswoman Zakharova said that not inviting Russia to take part in the investigation into the Nord Stream leak was proof that the West was hiding something. This represents a distortion, since Russia may make an attempt to investigate as well. An additional distortion is the aim to mislead the public that Russia is being excluded from "the investigation", which creates a perception that there is a joint investigation taking place (conducted by Sweden and Denmark). However, the fact is that there is no joint investigation, but Sweden and Denmark are investigating separately, each in its own exclusive economic zone. Furthermore, the findings from the preliminary investigation were officially submitted to the UN Security Council, where Russia is a permanent member.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing narratives:

**Sanctions hurt the West
more than Russia**

Articles:

10

Interactions:

621

Hungarian PM Orban continued to promote the narrative that sanctions hurt the West more than Russia, saying that sanctions did not affect the latter, while Europe was "bleeding". Orban appears as the main Russian voice within the EU, loudly advocating for the lifting of sanctions. The Deputy Head of Russia's Security Council Dmitry Medvedev commented on the high inflation in some EU countries, presenting the situation there as "catastrophic". This is an attempt to show that sanctions hurt Europe more than Russia, while the facts are showing the opposite, namely, that the Russian economy has taken some serious blows, thus these distortions by Medvedev may have a short-term impact amid the failure of the Russian army. It appears that in the recent months both Orban and Medvedev gave coordinated statements regarding the sanctions. In almost all the cases, they purposely

omit several important factors which indicate that the Russian economy is seriously hurt, as well as the time required for such sanctions to give results.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing narratives:

Russia and its allies are strong

Articles:

49

Interactions:

1,733

This narrative was promoted through the information that Kadyrov will send his three teenage sons to war, published by a recently launched anonymous outlet that promotes Russian narratives and anti-Western sentiment. The frequent appearance of Kadyrov in the online space in North Macedonia aims at presenting him as “fierce” and a “strong” warrior, as well as a loyal ally to Putin. The information, which cannot be independently verified, that his three teenage sons were sent to war, is just another attempt to maintain Kadyrov’s image and his support to Putin, sending a message that he is ready to sacrifice his own sons for Putin and Russia. The narrative continued to be promoted with the old/new Russian wunderwaffe – the laser weapon *Peresvet*, that could allegedly bring down satellites. The article was published by another recently launched anonymous outlet. However, the weapon has been already promoted in 2018. In addition, the same weapon was one of the most promoted features on the Victory Day parade in 2019, as reported in the Macedonian online space. This continues the trend of Russian propaganda to announce the same weapons several times, thereby keeping the narrative alive, while in reality Russian weapons in Ukraine were described as “ineffective”, “obsolete” and “not meeting modern requirements”. From the local actors, Macedonian pro-Russian voice Sašo Tasevski continued to promote this narrative, saying that the country should turn to Russia and Putin and abandon its longstanding strategic goal, present since it gained its independence – the Euro-Atlantic integration.

POLAND

Fakenews.pl

- This week, pro-Kremlin voices in Poland focused on the developments of the Russia-Ukraine war. They repeated the old narratives about the West/US being directly engaged in the war, Russia's successful mobilization, and the legitimacy of the recent annexations.
- Several new disinformation narratives were detected this week: i) Russia has new, secret weapon; and ii) US troops are addicted to alcohol and drugs.
- Some unusual activity was observed around the messaging that Russia has its *wunderwaffe*. However, considering that the message was not observed in other countries, we take it to be a one-off anomaly.
- Anti-refugee messaging, led by *Federacja Korony Polskiej* and their "Stop Ukrainization of Poland" campaign, remains to be notorious in Poland. The share of distorted historical narratives remains high.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Polish news portals this week received 7,600 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukraine is committing terrorist attacks against Russian civilians

Articles:

4

Interactions:

11,153

Articles suggest that Ukrainian troops are responsible for terrorist attacks against civilians.

Ukraine is losing the war

Articles:

2

Interactions:

11,033

A person claiming to be a former candidate for the mayor of Kharkiv claimed that the war will end with Ukraine's total annihilation within three days, and if Poland joins this war, Belarus will use nuclear weapons.

NATO/the US/the West is/will be directly involved in the war

Articles:

3

Interactions:

9,820

Article suggests that NATO soldiers are currently fighting on Ukrainian territory.

Mobilization in Russia is very successful

Articles: 3
Interactions: 6,634

Articles about the successes of mobilization efforts, including materials showing positive social reactions to the announced mobilization.

Ukrainians refuse to fight

Articles: 1
Interactions: 1,815

Article shows that, in the Odesa Oblast, Ukrainians were massively buying false documents to prove that they were unfit for military service. The article insinuates that it was a widespread practice.

Ukraine should not/will not become a NATO member

Articles: 1
Interactions: 1,798

Article shows recordings of impromptu interviews of passer-by's, in which many Poles claimed that they are opposed to Ukraine's NATO membership.

Ukrainians are Nazis

Articles: 1
Interactions: 1,778

A pro-Kremlin channel published the cover of the newspaper with the opinion that the crimes of Ukrainians against Jews cannot be erased.

Poland will annex Ukraine

Articles: 1
Interactions: 1,488

Article suggests that Polish citizens are preparing to annex Ukraine.

Ukraine "referendums" are legitimate

Articles: 4
Interactions: 1,278

Several articles about referendum legitimacy, including a video showing happy citizens after Donetsk annexation.

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukrainian refugees undermine host countries' internal stability

Articles: 2
Interactions: 3,523

Author claims that Ukrainians extort social benefits and then return to Ukraine, thus engaging in "benefit tourism".

Ukrainian refugees are being prioritized over the host country citizens/inhabitants

Articles:
5
Interactions:
6,109

Stories about protests against the “Ukrainization” of Poland try to suggest that Polish people are tired of Ukrainians taking over their country.

Ukrainian refugees are spoiled/ungrateful

Articles:
1
Interactions:
1,617

The recording describes instances of inappropriate behaviour by Ukrainian refugees.

MILITARY THREAT TO EASTERN EUROPE/WAR EXPANDING BEYOND UKRAINE

Continuing sub-narratives:

The West is escalating the war

Articles:
1
Interactions:
2,041

The post claims that the West is escalating the war and endangering the world.

CONDITION OF RUSSIAN AND RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITIES

Continuing sub-narratives:

X country is Russophobic / Russian culture is being attacked

Articles:
1
Interactions:
2,183

A post which describes instances where Russian citizens were denied the ability to open accounts in Polish banks. These situations are presented as evidence of widespread discrimination.

MISCELLANEOUS

New sub-narratives:

Russia has a new secret weapon

Articles:
2
Interactions:
12,989

The posts claimed that Russia used its newest secret weapon for the first time, resulting in weather changes.

Nuclear bomb does not exist

Articles:
1
Interactions:
5,182

This post originated in a Telegram channel that publishes various conspiracy theories and denies the existence of nuclear weapons.

Continuing sub-narratives:

Politicians care about Ukraine at the expense of their own citizens

Articles:
2
Interactions:
11,386

One post refers to the financial aid that the Polish government has received from the EU - which is not disinformation. However, it was emphasized in bold type that this money will also be used to integrate refugees from Ukraine, rather than spent on Polish citizens.

The EU and/or NATO and/or the West are weak and will break apart

Articles:
1
Interactions:
4,519

An analysis that claims (quoting "experts") that NATO is falling apart.

Poland should not help Ukraine due to their past historical conflicts

Articles:
3
Interactions:
4,492

One post referred to a draft law from 2018, which was supposed to concern historical policy towards Ukraine. The opinion was that Ukrainian nationalists collaborated with the Third Reich.

Activity in Ukraine's skies could be UFOs

Articles:
1
Interactions:
1,491

Post suggests that activity in Ukraine's skies could be explained by UFO presence.

ROMANIA

GlobalFocus Center

- The bombing of the Kerch strait bridge created some interest within the Romanian population. However, pro-Kremlin actors largely ignored the issue. They focused on covering the events of the war, although the majority of the messaging repeated old claims about: a) the recent referendums being legitimate; b) the West provoking Ukraine into attacking Russia; c) negotiations with Russia being the only way to resolve the war.
- Anti-Western messaging was notorious this week. Western leaders and businesses were portrayed as hungry for war and solely interested in profits (for example, from receiving huge plots of land in Ukraine).
- Some strange conspiracy theories were also detected. The most unique one claims that present-day Ukraine was, in fact, inhabited by Romanians during the Middle Ages. This is based on letters from contemporary travelers who may have found "Romanians" (Vlachs) escaping from their lords (boyars).
- 4media.info, a media outlet close to the far-right, and the cautiously pro-Kremlin AUR party ramped up the number of articles about Ukraine and Volodymyr Zelensky personally. The rhetoric was unusually neutral: only some of the articles contained dis- or misinformation. This may be an attempt to distance themselves from Kremlin propaganda due to Russia's growing losses and nuclear rhetoric.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Romanian news portals this week received 11,600 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continued narratives:

**The West is undermining
peace negotiation efforts**

Articles:
2

Interactions:
3,051

Roger Waters accused the United States of committing crimes, election meddling, and propaganda. Waters called the events in Ukraine a consequence of Western countries' inability to negotiate.

Radical Politician Liviu Plesoianu quotes Defence Minister Vasile Dîncu saying that negotiations are the only chance for peace and says any other opinion is madness.

**The West is using Ukraine
to wage war against
Russia**

Articles:
3

Interactions:
2,977

Various posts from different authors and no obvious common thread: (1) random protester claims that the US is behind the war in Ukraine; (2) a media site close to the far-right AUR party claims Ursula von der Leyen wants war; (3) conspiracy theory website claims that Russia is opposed by the "collective west" in Ukraine; (4) an influencer claims that the global elites use the war in Ukraine to eliminate surplus population.

Ukraine is committing terrorist attacks against Russian civilians

Articles:

2

Interactions:

2,014

Pro-Kremlin Media personality Cozmin Gușă claims that the US accuses the Ukrainian government of committing the Dugina assassination.

Western politicians are blackmailed to support Ukraine

Articles:

1

Interactions:

1,171

Conspiracy theory website claims that French President Macron has switched to full NATO and Ukraine support because he is being blackmailed with his background as a Rothschild banker.

The West is losing interest in helping Ukraine

Articles:

1

Interactions:

951

The US intimidated Germany into supporting Ukraine but, in the end, Germany will abandon the country, claims a conspiracy theory website.

Ukraine "referendums" are legitimate

Articles:

1

Interactions:

792

The Russian Embassy claims that the referendums in Ukraine are perfectly legitimate according to international law.

Ukraine is losing the war

Articles:

1

Interactions:

503

A conspiracy theory website claims that Russia is faking its defeat in Ukraine to help the Democrats win the next US elections.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing narratives:

The Ukrainian leadership is corrupt and/or incompetent

Articles:

2

Views:

2,311

Zelensky is sick with power and cannot think straight, claims pro Kremlin Media personality Cozmin Gușă.

Far-right AUR MP claims that the war in Ukraine could have been avoided and Ukraine would have remained whole, implying that Zelensky is to blame for the war.

**The US are a major
landowner in Ukraine**

Articles:

1

Views:

691

A website close to the far-right party AUR claims that millions of hectares of Ukrainian land are owned by American giant corporations.

SERBIA

European Western Balkans

- No new narratives were observed this week. The major focus of the Serbian media on the situation in Ukraine shifted to the position of Serbia related to the sanctions against Russia.
- On October 5, the EU decided not to exempt Serbia from sanctions on the import of Russian oil. A large number of articles have been published on the subject. The main narrative is that the West is pressuring Serbia to impose sanctions on Russia against its will. [Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić stated](#) that the EU did not impose sanctions on Russia, but on Serbia.
- [Interior Minister Aleksandar Vulin said on October 4](#) that Russia will not change its position on Kosovo. It is a continuation of the narrative in Serbia that Russia is the only country that defends the interests of Serbia in the matter of Kosovo.
- The most prevalent narratives observed from this period were linked with events of Russia-Ukraine war. These narratives were observed on Facebook and web domains. The most popular topic were linked with narratives that nuclear disaster is imminent.
- The continuing narratives mentioned in this period are; i) NATO will be directly involved in the war; ii) the West stands behind the sabotage of Nord Stream; iii) the West forced Russia to attack Ukraine. The attack on the Kerch bridge was not covered sufficiently.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Serbian news portals this week received 74 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing narratives:

The West forced Russia to attack Ukraine

Articles:
5

Interactions:
4,800

A post was published on the Facebook page of [Sputnik.rs](#). They reported the statement of former US President Donald Trump said that the USA is responsible for the start of the conflict in Ukraine. The "stupid rhetoric" of USA President Joe Biden forced Putin to send troops to Ukraine.

NATO is/will be directly involved in the war

Articles:
5

Interactions:
2,523

A post was published on a pro-government portal [Srbijadanas.rs](#). Portal reported the statement of Belarus's Defense Minister, who claims that NATO is directly engaged in the war in Ukraine.

The West/US is responsible for the sabotage of Nord Stream

Articles:

4

Views:

2,300

A post was published on a pro-Russian portal [Standard.rs](#) and on several pro-government portals in Serbia. They reported the statement of American economists that the USA and Poland stay behind the sabotage of the North Stream. He claims that there is evidence that USA helicopters were circling over the Nord Stream.

Nuclear disaster is imminent

Articles:

2

Interactions:

997

A post was published on a pro-Russian portal [Pravda.rs](#) and Facebook page. The West and NATO are afraid of the Russian Poseidon system for fighting under the land. The report of the intelligence services of NATO refers to the movements of the multi-purpose nuclear submarine Belgorod in the Kara Sea, where a nuclear drone could allegedly be launched.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing sub-narratives:

Sanctions hurt the West more than Russia

Articles:

1

Interactions:

1,200

A post was published on a Facebook page of [Sputnik.rs](#). They reported the statement of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán who said that the European Union's sanctions policy towards Russia should be changed since the expected effect was not achieved. The economies of the European Union are bleeding, while Russia is getting stronger.

Russia is unaffected by sanctions

Articles:

1

Interactions:

168

The post was published on a pro-Russian portal [webtribune.rs](#). The OPEC+ countries have agreed that the oil production agreement will be extended until 31 December 2023. The West, led by USA, practically made a decision on the prices of Russian oil, which has the task of hitting Russia's income, by setting price limits. With this, decision of OPEC, all the intentions of the West towards Russia fall into the water.

The inflation and energy crises are caused by the false approach of the West

Articles:

1

Interactions:

126

A post was published on a pro-Russian portal [webtribune.rs](#). The EU imposed sanctions to Russia, but failed to secure sufficient quantities of energy for the winter. EU citizens are dissatisfied with the policy of Brussels and refuse to use a smaller amount of gas for the household and the economy. Germany consumes more gas than last year.

MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE

Continuing sub-narratives:

The West will no longer provide Ukraine with military aid

Articles:

2

Interactions:

728

The article was published on a pro-Russian portal [Pravda.rs](#). The USA will soon be unable to supply some types of weapons to Ukraine. Ukraine is spending weapons faster than the US can supply them. The West has exhausted its stockpile of weapons.

MISCELLANEOUS

Third World countries are choosing Russia over the West

Articles:

1

Interactions:

102

The post was published on a pro-Russian portal [srbin.info](#). The West continues its centuries-old practice of predatory colonialism and racism. The war in Ukraine is a war for the freedom of the entire world, of all third world nations that have been occupied by the globalist West. Putin has the support of the third countries.

SLOVAKIA

Infosecurity.sk

- Pro-Kremlin voices in Slovakia remain very much focused on anti-Western messaging. They continue to: a) claim that their country is controlled by the US; b) discredit EU institutions and leadership; c) accuse Western media of manipulations and lies. The Slovak government is claimed to be incompetent, with the President allegedly dragging Slovakia into war.
- Individual articles about the attack on the Kerch bridge were detected. According to disinformation actors, this was a terrorist attack committed by the Ukrainians. The assassination of Darya Dugina was also revived and brought into this context.
- The attack on Nord Stream continued to be discussed; the key narrative is that the sabotage was committed by the U.S.
- The topic of economic sanctions harming the West was not observed in the local pro-Kremlin discourse this week. However, we assume that this is a spontaneous fluctuation rather than a long-term trend.

For comparison, the most interacted with individual Ukraine-related article across Slovak news portals this week received 9,600 interactions.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

New sub-narratives:

Ukraine does not want peace

Articles:

1

Interactions:

2,233

One post claimed that Ukraine does not want peace because Zelensky refused the plan which Elon Musk proposed.

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukraine is committing terrorist attacks against Russian civilians

Articles:

3

Interactions:

21,684

Two posts claimed that Ukraine carries out terrorist attacks regarding the attacks on the Crimean bridge.

The West/US is responsible for the sabotage of Nord Stream

Articles:

2

Interactions:

3,033

Article suggested that the United States or the United Kingdom could have sabotaged Nord Stream.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing sub-narratives:

Sanctions are being imposed on innocent people

Articles:
2
Interactions:
7,304

Article suggests that the energy crisis in Europe means that people plan to get rich on the war and people's misfortune.

The inflation and the energy crises are caused by the false political approach of Europe and the US

Articles:
1
Interactions:
2,611

An opposition politician claimed that the European politicians are destroying Europe's economy.

MILITARY THREATS TO EASTERN EUROPE/RISK OF WAR EXPANDING BEYOND UKRAINE

Continuing sub-narrative:

WW3 is imminent

Articles:
9
Interactions:
18,816

After the Slovak president supported Ukraine joining NATO, posts claimed that she is dragging Slovakia into WW3. Other posts claimed that Ukraine directly demanded the beginning of WW3. One post claimed that anyone who refuses to negotiate with Russia will be responsible for World War III.

MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE

Continuing sub-narrative:

Military aid prolongs the war

Articles:
1
Interactions:
10,726

Posts suggesting that Slovakia should stop providing military aid to Ukraine.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing sub-narratives:

Ukraine is not democratic

Articles:
1
Interactions:
10,686

Eduard Chmelár suggests that Ukraine is not a democratic state.

The EU/US leadership is incompetent

Articles:
2
Interactions:
12,536

Articles suggesting that the leaders of Europe as vicious and stupid people.

Slovakia and Ukraine are controlled by the West

Articles:
3
Interactions:
14,016

Article suggesting that the Slovak prime minister is not independent in her decisions. Another article quotes Tucker Carlson, who says that Zelensky is not an independent leader of a democratic state. Zelensky is allegedly a client of the Biden administration, which runs his country.

Western media is lying

Articles:
3
Interactions:
11,490

Articles about Western media distorting reality. For example, one author argues that Russia can't have been losing for 7 months straight - as Western media suggests - because then the Ukrainian should have been near Vladivostok, but they are still near the Dnieper River.

The West is hypocritical

Articles:
1
Interactions:
4,997

Articles quotes the Serbian Minister of the Interior who said: "I don't remember that in 1999, during the bombing of Yugoslavia, you asked for sanctions for the aggressors."

Western society does not support Ukraine

Articles:
2
Interactions:
4,516

Articles about German and Austrian protests intended to suggest that the West is becoming tired of Ukraine.

The Ukrainian leadership is corrupt and/or incompetent

Articles:
1
Interactions:
2,238

Articles suggest that up to a third of the current Ukrainian state budget is paid by Western states, and "this most corrupt state in Europe is just a bottomless black hole for EU money".

UKRAINE

Detector Media

Note: Detector Media's contribution exclusively features content from Ukrainian Russian-language Telegram channels.

- This week, the majority of Russian propaganda was devoted to the narrative that the Ukrainian leadership is corrupt and incompetent. Disinformation actors wrote that: i) the Ukrainian government does not care about Ukrainian soldiers; and ii) the Ukrainian military is collapsing due to poor leadership. This newfound focus on the Armed Forces is likely intended to undermine soldiers' morale and inhibit the progress of the Ukrainian Army in its Eastern and Southern flanks.
- The destruction of the Kerch bridge received substantial attention. Even before the official statements from the Kremlin were issued, pro-Russian voices in Ukraine blamed the attack on Ukrainians and demanded a brutal blow as a response.
- Propagandists also attempted to undermine morale by claiming that the West does not care about Ukraine and that the world is tired of the war.
- Once again, propagandists claim that the West has run out of weapons and will cease its supplies to Ukraine.
- Pro-Kremlin voices repeatedly blamed Ukraine for terrorist attacks on Russian territory and civilians. They also alleged that Ukraine is preparing a nuclear attack.

EVENTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Continuing narratives:

Ukraine is committing terrorist attacks against Russian civilians

Articles:
8
Views:
4,543,018

According to the post, blowing up the Crimean bridge was an attempt to raise panic in Russia, point out the weakness of the authorities, and destroy Putin's image. The Ukrainian government has raised the stakes, and ordinary people will suffer because Russia will start hitting infrastructure in response.

Other posts claimed that Ukrainian military sabotage groups are working within Russia.

Ukraine is preparing a nuclear attack

Articles:
3
Views:
1,503,200

According to the post, Ukraine had an agreement with Boris Johnson about the transfer of nuclear weapons to deter Russia. However, when Truss became the Prime Minister, these negotiations were delayed. Therefore, now Ukraine is trying to create a dirty nuclear bomb itself. They also put forward the theory that the negotiation process regarding the transfer of the atomic bomb to Ukraine has stopped due to the pressure of the US State Department on Great Britain.

Russia only attacked because Ukraine was planning to attack it first

Articles:
1
Views:
1,174,387

Pro-Russian propagandist claims that Russian shellings are legitimate acts of revenge and that Ukraine provoked Russia to act in this way.

Russia is not fighting at full capacity

Articles:
1
Views:
1,000,000

According to the post, Ukraine should not provoke Russia. They claim that because of the terrorist attack on the Crimean bridge, Russia may start a real war.

Ukrainians are Nazis

Articles:
1
Views:
923,742

Propagandists claim that the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian army wears a bracelet with Nazi symbols.

Ukraine is blackmailing politicians to force them to be on their side

Articles:
2
Views:
867,700

According to the post, in order not to lose the support of the West, the Armed Forces of Ukraine are obliged to constantly advance and show success at the front. If they don't, then the authorities may arrange "a tragedy or global catastrophe" to maintain the support of the West. Zelensky is also allegedly trying to drag NATO into direct conflict with Russia.

The Azov battalion is a terrorist organization

Articles:
2
Views:
563,300

According to the post, Azov allegedly tortures and kills Ukrainians who cooperated with the Russian military during the occupation.

Ukraine's informational space is controlled by the state authorities

Articles:
1
Views:
439,900

According to the post, the Ukrainian authorities do not care about the death of their soldiers, for them it's statistics. The main thing is that society does not find out about the losses, because then panic will begin. That is why the government forbids Ukrainians to publish photos and videos with the consequences of Russian strikes on Ukraine. They want to continue to lie to society and create false illusions.

Nuclear disaster is imminent

Articles:
1
Views:
85,200

Propagandists say that Russia will use nuclear weapons

The West is using Ukraine to wage war against Russia

Articles:

1

Views:

77,600

Propagandists claim that the West is not interested in Ukraine and they are simply using it as a tool to destroy Russia.

Ukraine is losing the war

Articles:

1

Views:

13,563

The post claims that the Ukrainian counter-offensive is not real and is just a way to anger Putin.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

Continuing narratives:

Sanctions hurt the West more than Russia

Articles:

4

Views:

1,237,023

According to the post, the West is ignoring all requests from the President's Office to transfer the frozen funds of the Russian Central Bank to Ukraine. The reason they claim is that the West wants to divide this money among themselves and give only part of it to Ukraine. This is due to the fact that the EU has been hit hard by sanctions.

The West is abandoning Ukraine, despite its dependence on Western financing

Articles:

2

Views:

819,000

The theory that the West has given Ukraine only half as much as they promised is part of the message about the tensions between the Ukrainian authorities and Western partners.

Ukraine is bankrupt

Articles:

2

Views:

218,900

According to the posts, Ukraine cannot survive without European subsidies. That is why the President's Office is thinking about how to make Europe pay Ukraine. This is part of the message about blackmailing Western partners by Ukrainian authorities.

Sanctions hurt Ukraine more than Russia

Articles:

2

Views:

179,500

A pro-Russian Telegram channel claims that the prices have risen because Ukraine no longer receives financial aid from the West.

CONDITION OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITIES

Continuing narratives:

Ukraine is Russophobic

Articles:

2

Views:

933,261

Pro-Russian propagandists claimed that Ukrainian public servants called for the killings of Russians.

MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE

Continuing narratives:

Ukraine will use Western weapons to kill Russians/attack Russian territory

Articles:

1

Views:

832732

Pro-Russian propagandists claimed that Ukraine uses suicide bombers for terrorist acts in Russia.

The West will no longer provide Ukraine with military aid

Articles:

1

Views:

105,500

Propagandists claim that the West has run out of weapons and will stop supplying Ukraine with military aid.

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing narratives:

Western society does not support Ukraine

Articles:

8

Views:

4,587,500

The post claims that the West does not care about Ukraine and would benefit from a nuclear strike on Ukraine by Russia.

The Ukrainian leadership is corrupt and/or incompetent

Articles:

14

Views:

2,920,524

According to the post, the Ukrainian government doesn't care about Ukrainian soldiers. The Ukrainian military is being destroyed because of bad leadership.

The West wants to get rid of Zelensky

Articles:

4

Views:

1,345,000

Propagandist claim that the West puts pressure on the Ukrainian authorities and forces them to follow their orders. One of these tools of pressure is the article that Kyiv is behind the terrorist attack in Moscow. Allegedly, if the President's Office does not comply with the West's order, it will change the attitude of foreign media towards Zelensky.

The EU and/or NATO and/or the West are weak and will break apart

Articles:

1

Views:

438,100

According to the post, the EU is on the verge of the major crisis that could lead to overthrow of current governments and can be the beginning of a process of disintegration that will result in the collapse of many states.

The EU/US leadership is incompetent

Articles:

1

Views:

391,800

The authors claim that the US will impose sanctions on Iran because they are powerless and cannot otherwise help Ukraine.

Ukrainian volunteers are corrupt

Articles:

1

Views:

14,752

According to the post, the Ukrainian NGO that received Nobel Prize is a no-name entity and so this victory is suspicious.

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

Working Definitions:

Disinformation

1. False or misleading information spread **deliberately via Kremlin-backed or Kremlin-aligned outlets.**
2. Not-attributable false or misleading information which **fits with existing HS narratives, aims or activities.**
3. Content based on verifiable information which is unbalanced or skewed, amplifies, or exaggerates certain elements for effect, or uses emotive or inflammatory language **to achieve affects which fit within existing Kremlin narratives, aims, or activities.**
4. For the purposes of this report, disinformation also can be spread either organically through human ignorance and uncertainty or through poor journalistic standards, as long as the narrative in question verifiably originates with Kremlin-backed or Kremlin-aligned sources.

Please note that the sub-narrative headings listed in red are the new sub-narratives identified during the week in question.

List of Narrative and Sub-Narrative Headings:

1. EVENTS OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

- 1a. Ukraine is losing the war
- 1b. Russia only attacked because Ukraine was planning to attack it first
- 1c. Ukraine is causing the global food crisis
- 1d. Ukrainians are Nazis
- 1e. Russia is not fighting at full capacity
- 1f. The West forced Russia to attack Ukraine
- 1g. Ukrainians are targeting civilians and commit other war crimes
- 1h. Ukrainians are welcoming Russian "saviours"
- 1i. Poland will annex Ukraine
- 1j. Reports of Russian war crimes are exaggerated/fake news
- 1k. The West is using Ukraine to wage war against Russia
- 1l. Foreign mercenaries are fighting for Ukraine
- 1m. There are tensions between the West and Ukraine
- 1n. The West is losing interest in helping Ukraine
- 1o. The West wants Ukraine to surrender
- 1p. Russian troops are advancing / achieving success
- 1q. The US provoked the conflict between Ukraine and Russia
- 1r. Ukraine is committing terrorist attacks against Russian civilians
- 1s. Ukrainians refuse to fight
- 1t. Russia's invasion is justified and legitimate
- 1u. NATO/The West will attack Russia
- 1v. NATO/The West is trying to divide Slavs/Orthodox Christians
- 1w. Ukraine organizes protests/riots financed by the West
- 1x. National minorities refuse to fight for Ukraine
- 1y. Ukrainian civil society wants to make concessions to Russia
- 1z. Ukrainians are collecting money for a nuclear weapon
- 1aa. The inflation & energy crises are caused by the West's misguided political approach
- 1ab. Russia will stop all gas deliveries to Europe

- 1ac. The West knows that Russia is winning the war
- 1ad. Bulgaria is dependent on Russia
- 1ae. The West is causing the global food crisis
- 1af. Ukraine's informational space is controlled by the state authorities
- 1ag. NATO aspirations provoked the conflict between Ukraine and Russia
- 1ah. If Ukraine is dismembered, the countries on its Western border will receive new territories
- 1ai. Ukraine is blackmailing politicians to force them to be on their side
- 1aj. Ukrainian troops kill their own soldiers
- 1ak. Russia is liberating Ukraine
- 1al. The West is also responsible for Ukraine's crimes against civilians
- 1am. Ukrainians do not support Zelensky
- 1an. North Macedonia has become a legitimate target for Russia
- 1ap. The Azov battalion is a terrorist organization
- 1aq. Ukraine wants to annex territories from neighboring countries
- 1ar. Ukraine hurt Slovakia by stopping oil transport
- 1as. Recognizing Russia as a terrorist state will not help Ukraine
- 1at. Ukraine is preparing a nuclear attack
- 1au. Nuclear disaster is imminent
- 1av. Ukraine's leadership does not care about its people
- 1aw. North Korea will join Russia in the fight against Ukraine
- 1ax. NATO/the US/the West is or will be directly involved in the war
- 1ay. The West is undermining peace negotiation efforts
- 1az. The West is profiting on the war in Ukraine
- 1ba. Ukraine wants to demilitarise Russia
- 1bb. Ukraine is profiting from the war in Ukraine
- 1bc. War in Ukraine has made Russia stronger
- 1bd. Belarus is being forced into complying with allied agreements with Russia
- 1be. NATO/The West will attack Belarus
- 1bf. Mobilization in Russia is very successful
- 1bg. Ukraine "referendums" are legitimate
- 1bh. USA is using Ukraine to destroy Europe
- 1bi. China is sending soldiers to Ukraine
- 1bj. Nobody can win in Ukraine
- 1bk. Russia may attack Romania
- 1bl. The West/US is responsible for the sabotage of Nord Stream
- 1bm. Ukraine should not/will not become a NATO member
- 1bn. Ukraine tried to falsify the referendum results
- 1bo. Belarus is not participating in the war in Ukraine
- 1bp. Belarus is prepared for mobilization in the event of war
- 1bq. Russia's losses in the war are small
- 1br. Ukraine does not want peace

2. UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

- 2a. Ukrainian refugees undermine host countries' internal stability
- 2b. Ukrainian refugees are spoiled/ungrateful
- 2c. Ukrainian refugees are prioritized over the host country citizens/inhabitants
- 2d. Ukrainian refugees are no longer welcome
- 2e. X country should restrict the activities of Ukrainian refugees
- 2f. Ukrainians are willingly coming back to settle in territories recently occupied by Russia

3. ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SANCTIONS

- 3a. Russia is unaffected by sanctions
- 3b. Sanctions hurt the West more than Russia
- 3c. The West is secretly trading with Russia
- 3d. The inflation and the energy crises are caused by the false political approach of Europe and the US
- 3e. Russia will stop all gas deliveries for Europe
- 3f. Economic sanctions on Russia caused the war
- 3g. Sanctions hurt Ukraine more than Russia
- 3h. Europe is threatened by an energy crisis
- 3i. The West punishes Georgia for not imposing sanctions on Russia
- 3j. Sanctions are making Russia stronger
- 3k. The West is abandoning Ukraine, despite its dependence on Western financing
- 3l. Ukraine is bankrupt
- 3m. Georgia should help Russia bypass sanctions
- 3n. Western citizens do not support sanctions against Russia
- 3o. Sanctions are being imposed on innocent people
- 3p. The complete shutdown of Russian gas will destroy Germany

4. CONDITIONS OF RUSSIANS AND RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITIES

- 4a. Ukrainians discriminate against/terrorize Russian speakers
- 4b. X country is Russophobic / Russian culture is being attacked
- 4c. Russian citizens are being attacked in X country
- 4d. The West and its proxies are inciting Russophobia

5. MILITARY THREATS TO EASTERN EUROPE/THREAT OF WAR EXPANDING BEYOND UKRAINE

- 5a. There will be a second front against Russia in Georgia
- 5b. Poland is escalating the war
- 5c. Putin will wipe out Europe with the Sarmat
- 5d. The West will sacrifice Eastern Europe if war spills over
- 5e. Russia is losing the war and will use nuclear weapons
- 5f. Germany is going to attack Crimea
- 5g. There will be a new Soviet Union
- 5h. The West will fall
- 5i. Poland will be the next target of attack
- 5j. Poland wants to overthrow the EU leadership
- 5k. Ukraine will attack the EU after winning the war
- 5l. WW3 is imminent
- 5m. The West wants Ukraine to occupy Russia

6. MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE

- 6a. Western military aid is being misused/stolen
- 6b. Ukraine will use Western weapons to kill Russians/attack Russian territory
- 6c. Military aid prolongs the war
- 6d. Military aid is weakening/jeopardizing the countries that provide it
- 6e. Ukraine will use military aid against the West
- 6f. The majority financial aid for Ukraine is being stolen by the country's official
- 6g. Donating for military aid is immoral
- 6h. The West is to blame for future Ukrainian losses because it does not provide enough aid
- 6i. The West will no longer provide Ukraine with military aid
- 6j. Western military aid is useless

- 6k. Military aid forces Russia to expand its actions beyond Donbas
- 6l. The Office of the President is covering up weapons smuggling
- 6m. Ukraine does not appreciate the aid being provided
- 6n. The US is using Ukraine to promote its military-industrial complex
- 6o. Ukraine is taking aid away from other countries in need

7. MISCELLANEOUS / OTHER

- 7a. Biological weapons labs in Ukraine
- 7b. X country should be neutral to prevent being dragged into war
- 7c. The Ukrainian leadership is corrupt and/or incompetent
- 7d. The EU and/or NATO and/or the West are weak and will break apart
- 7e. X country should not help Ukraine due to their past historical conflicts
- 7f. The EU can't help Ukraine
- 7g. Russian soldiers have huge popular support
- 7h. Russia's diplomats excel over their Western counterparts
- 7i. Western media is lying
- 7j. The West is hypocritical for caring about Ukraine so much
- 7k. Ukraine is not a sovereign state
- 7l. Third World countries are choosing Russia over the West
- 7m. The Ukrainian leadership is pretentious/demanding
- 7n. Politicians care about Ukraine at the expense of their own citizens
- 7o. Ukraine was given EU candidate status in exchange for concessions to Russia
- 7p. X country is controlled by the West
- 7q. Certain powers benefit from the war
- 7r. Ukrainian volunteers are corrupt
- 7s. The EU is under US influence
- 7t. Russia has the world's support
- 7u. The Bulgarian army is preparing to enter the war
- 7v. The EU/US leadership is incompetent
- 7w. The war in Ukraine is part of a global conspiracy
- 7x. Governments are using the war in Ukraine to limit the freedoms of their citizens
- 7y. Moldova is putting political pressure on Russia
- 7z. Russia and its allies are strong
- 7aa. The war in Ukraine is not real/staged
- 7ab. The only way to end the war is to negotiate with Russia
- 7ac. NATO is a Satanist organization
- 7ad. Life under Russian occupation is better than under Ukrainian rule
- 7ae. Western society does not support Ukraine
- 7af. Ukrainians want to blackmail Europe with gas
- 7ag. Ukrainian soldiers are cannibals
- 7ah. Russia plans to increase its presence and influence in the Balkans
- 7ai. Poland should not help Ukraine because it does not owe it anything
- 7aj. The West wants to get rid of Zelensky
- 7ak. The destruction of Ukrainian statehood is inevitable
- 7al. Most Slovaks support Russia
- 7am. The EU is under Ukraine's influence
- 7an. Ukrainians engage in organ trafficking
- 7ao. There are tensions among Ukraine's leadership
- 7ap. EU politicians are Nazis
- 7aq. The war in Ukraine was started so that energy companies could take over Russian profits

- 7ar. The West wants to make us poor
- 7as. X government/country is fascist
- 7at. Gorbachev was an American agent
- 7au. Ukraine forces people to leave Donbas by cutting off gas and water
- 7av. The US are a major landowner in Ukraine
- 7aw. The US is systematically lying to their people
- 7ax. Russia is not violating international law
- 7ay. The world is controlled by globalists
- 7az. Polish Government representatives sympathize with or support the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army)
- 7ba. Ukraine exports poisonous grain to Bulgaria
- 7bb. Zelensky is gay
- 7bc. Activity in Ukraine's skies could be UFOs
- 7bd. Ukrainian pedophiles collected materials about raped Russian children
- 7bf. The EU is a dictatorship
- 7bg. The EU wants to destroy Europe
- 7bh. Ukrainian media is lying
- 7bi. Some politicians supporting Ukraine are Russian agents
- 7bj. NATO has committed far worse crimes than Russia
- 7bk. Russia has a new secret weapon
- 7bl. Nuclear weapons do not exist