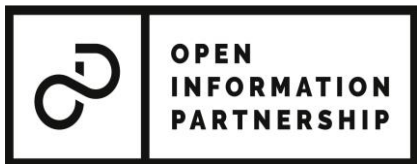




BASIC INFO:

Disinformation Observer – Serbian and Russian Media Monitoring is a quarterly analytical report on the news related to disinformation and misinformation targeting Kosovo, published by media originating in Serbia and Russia.

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DISCLAIMER:

The views presented in this publication are solely those of the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED).

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KOSOVO DISINFORMATION OBSERVER

SERBIAN AND RUSSIAN MEDIA

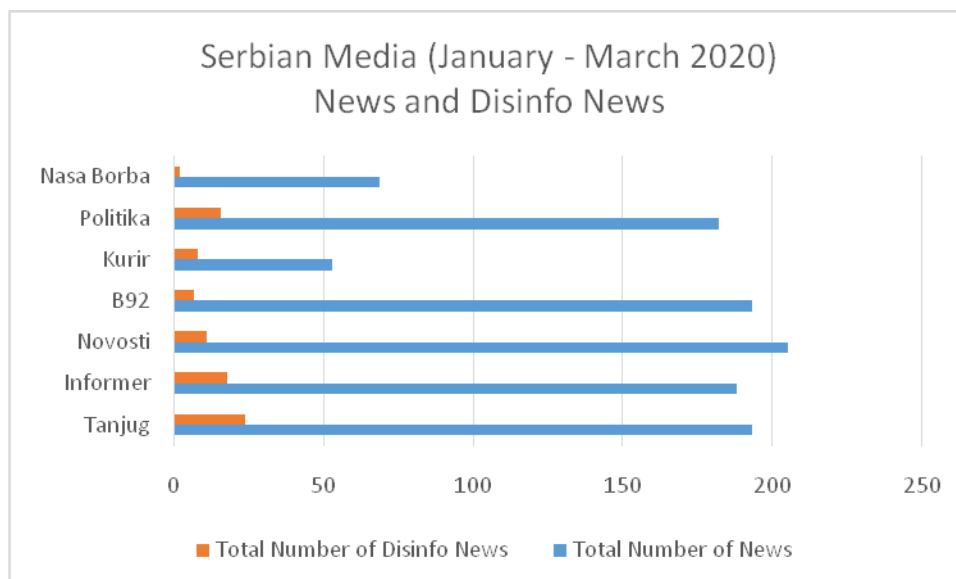
January – March 2020

Executive Summary

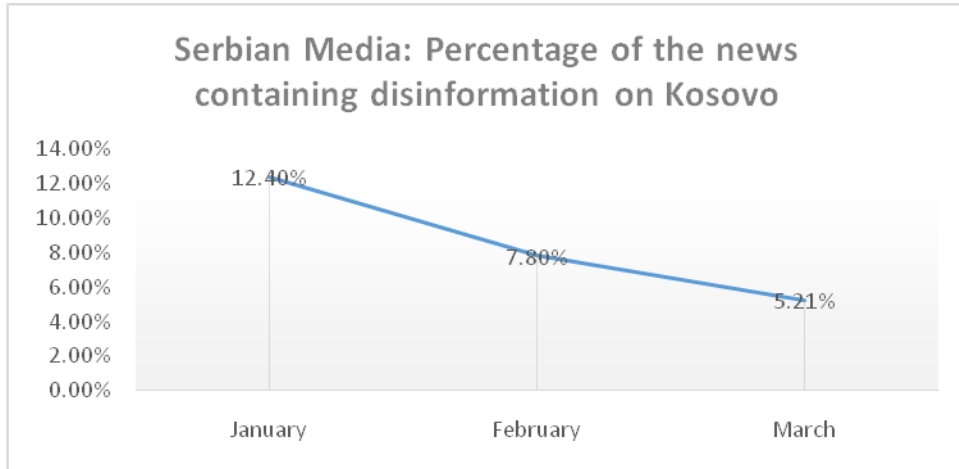
Kosovo Disinformation Observer: Serbian and Russian Media Monitoring is a quarterly report that aims to analyse the disinformation trends of news published by the preselected media outlets originating in Serbia and Russia in English and Serbian language targeting Kosovo.

The preselected media originating in Serbia, that are known for publishing news with disinformation content, are Tanjug, Informer, Novosti, Kurir, B92, Politika and Naša Borba, whereas the respective preselected media originating in Russia are Russia Today, Sputnik International, Sputnik Serbia, Meduza, Russia Insider, TASS, The Moscow Times, Newsfront, Unz, The Duran and Pravda Report, as well as documents and statements related to Kosovo, published by Kremlin and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

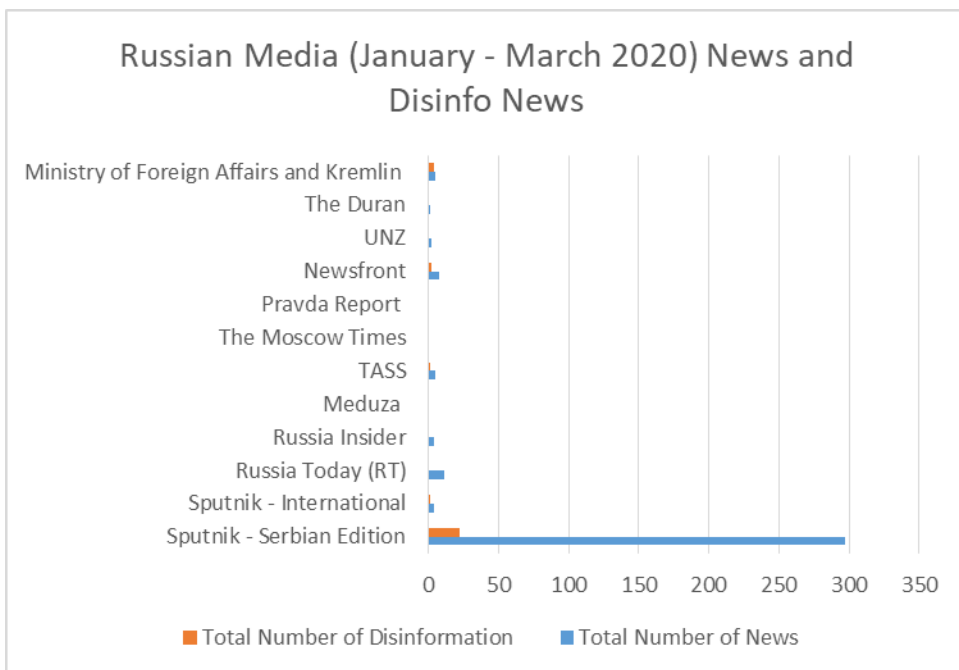
The monitoring of data shows that from January 1st to March 31st, 2020 media outlets originating in Serbia have published 1,083 news that were related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. Tanjug has published 193, Informer 188, Novosti 205, B92 193, Kurir 53, Politika 182 and Naša Borba 69 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo.



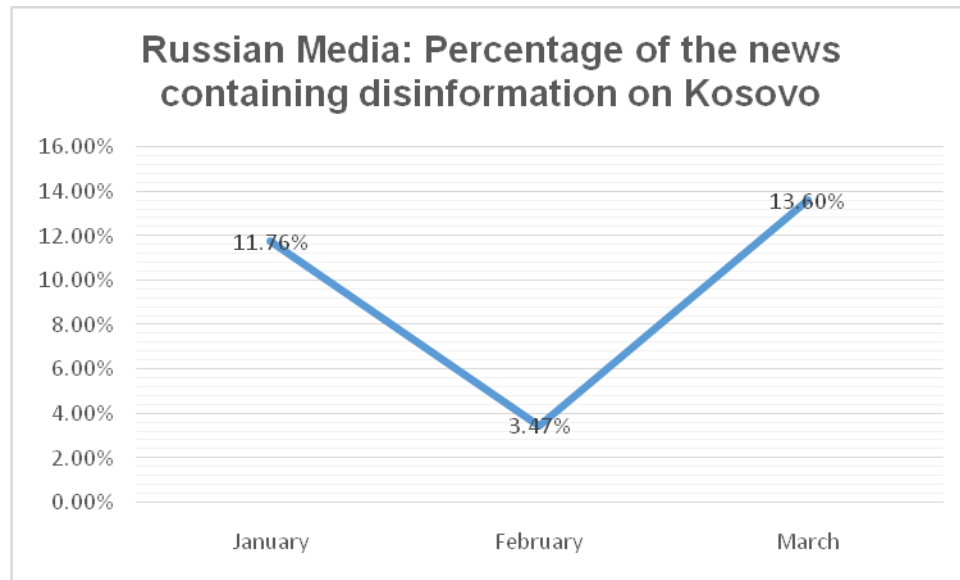
The disinformation trends of the Serbian media show that the highest percentage value of the news/disinformation ratio was in January 2020, 12.40%, followed by 7.80% in February, and 5.21% in March 2020.



The monitoring of data shows that from January 1st to March 31st, 2020, media outlets originating in Russia have published 337 news related directly and indirectly to Kosovo. Sputnik – Serbian Edition has published 297, Sputnik International 4, Russia Today 11, Russia Insider 4, Meduza none, TASS 5, Moscow Times none, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 8, UNZ 2, Duran 1 and the Foreign Ministry of Russian Federation 5 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo.



The disinformation trends of the Russian media show that the highest percentage value of the news/disinformation ratio was in March 2020, 12.40%, followed by 11.76% in January, whereas the lowest percentage value of this ratio was in February 2020, 3.47%.



The deconstruction of the news originating in Serbia containing the most blatant disinformation (19 news) published by the mentioned preselected media during this period¹, indicates that the disinformation was focused on undermining the legality and legitimacy Kosovo's statehood by:

- Projecting Kosovo as a rogue state and discrediting NATO by accusing it for commitment of terrible crimes against Serbia.
- Portraying Kosovo as a state that oppresses its minority ethnic communities, and miscalculating the number of Serbian refugees who left Kosovo after the war,
- Denying war crimes committed in Kosovo by the Serbian armed forces during the 1998-1999 conflict, and
- Discrediting the leadership and security institutions of Kosovo as well as the provided Western assistance.

¹ KIPRED, Kosovo Disinformation Alerts: Serbian Media, January – March 2020, <http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Serbian Media - January 2020 559714.pdf>, <http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert Serbian Media - February 2020.docx 781033.pdf>, <http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert Serbian Media - March 2020-Eng.docx 864184.pdf>

On the other side, the deconstruction of the news originating in Russia containing the most blatant disinformation (10 news) published by the mentioned preselected media during this period² indicates that the disinformation was focused on undermining legitimacy and legality of the statehood of Kosovo, by:

- Presenting Kosovo as a threat to international and regional security,
- Presenting Kosovo as a state creature that was created through a “genocide” supported by Western countries against its Serbian population,
- Accusing Kosovo and NATO for war crimes against Serbian population, and exaggerating the number of Serb casualties during the Kosovo War.
- Displaying Kosovo as a state that oppresses minority communities and with high potential for eruption of ethnic violence,
- Denying war crimes committed by Serbia in Kosovo,
- Making improper comparisons of Kosovo’s statehood with the annexation of Crimea by Russia,

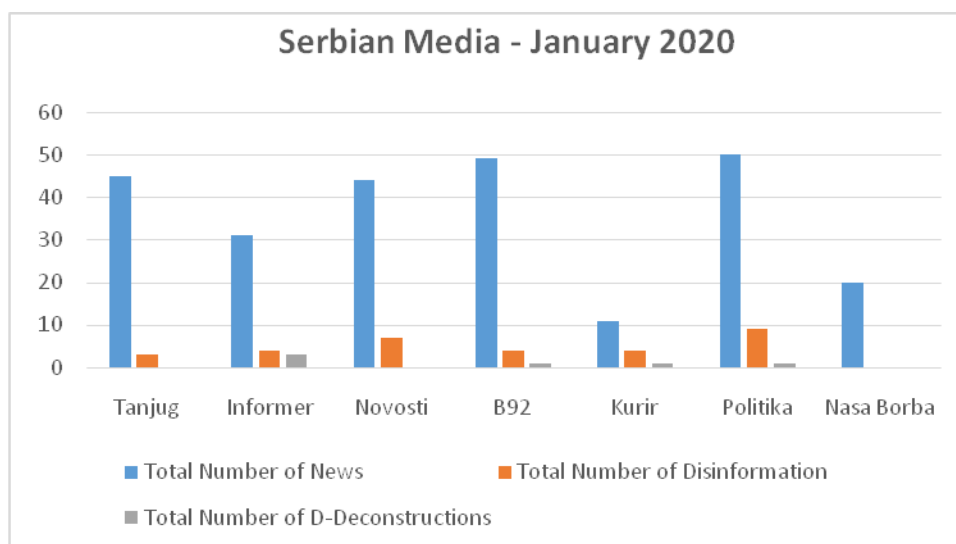
Therefore, it can be concluded that the news with the disinformation content related to Kosovo published by media originating in Serbia and Russia were very similar, if not the same. Both aimed at undermining the legitimacy and legality of the statehood of Kosovo, with a slight difference that in addition to Serbian media, Russian media are comparing Kosovo’s statehood with annexation of Crimea.

The following analyses will present the monthly statistical data on the news/disinformation ratios for the preselected media outlets originating in Serbia and Russia, and they will provide a short analyses as well, on the focus and aims of the published disinformation based on the disinformation analyses of the January, February and March editions of the Kosovo Disinformation Alerts for Serbian and Russian Media.

² Kosovo Disinformation Alert: Russian Media, January – March 2020 Editions, http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - January 2020.docx_381824.pdf, http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - February 2020.docx_463885.pdf, and http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - March 2020 Eng_568615.pdf

News and Disinformation January 2020

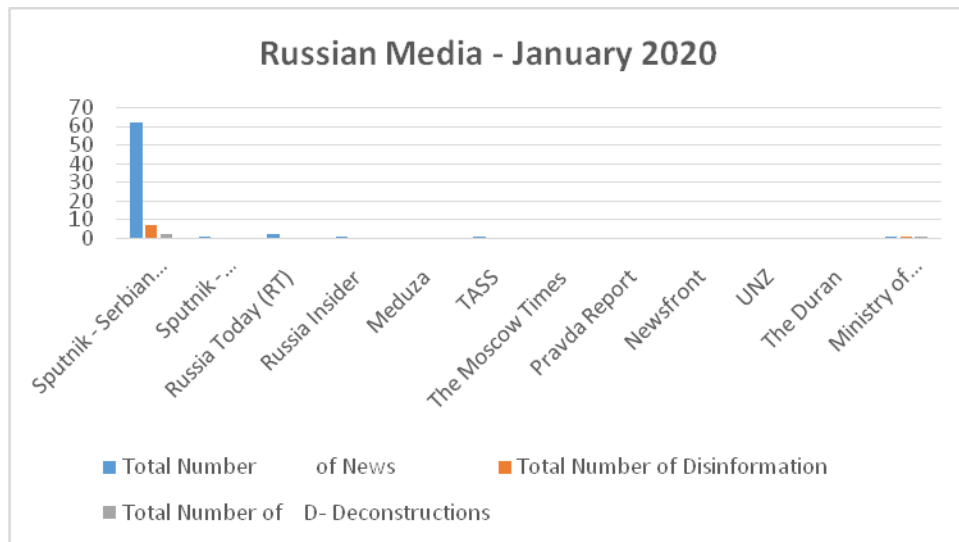
The monitoring of data on the Serbian media shows that from January 1st to 31st, 2020, Tanjug has published 45, Informer 31, Novosti 44, B92 49, Kurir 11, Politika 50 and Naša Borba 20 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 31 out of the 250 news published by these media outlets, had disinformation content.



The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (6 news) published in January 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on denying war crimes committed by Serbian armed forces in Kosovo during the 1998-1999 conflict, on discrediting the leadership and security institutions of Kosovo, as well as the provided Western assistance, on projecting Kosovo and Montenegro as rogue states, and on presenting the EU supported regional cross-border cooperation between Kosovo, Montenegro and Albania, as a support provided by Montenegro for the creation of a phantom “Greater Albania”³.

³ Kosovo Disinformation Alert: Serbian Media, January Edition, KIPRED 2020, <http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Serbian Media - January 2020 559714.pdf>

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from January 1st to 31st, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 62, Sputnik International 1, Russia Today 2, Russia Insider 1, Meduza none, TASS 1, The Moscow Time none, Pravda Report none, Newsfront none, UNZ none, The Duran none, and the Russian Foreign Ministry 1 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 8 out of the 68 news published by these media outlets, had disinformation content.

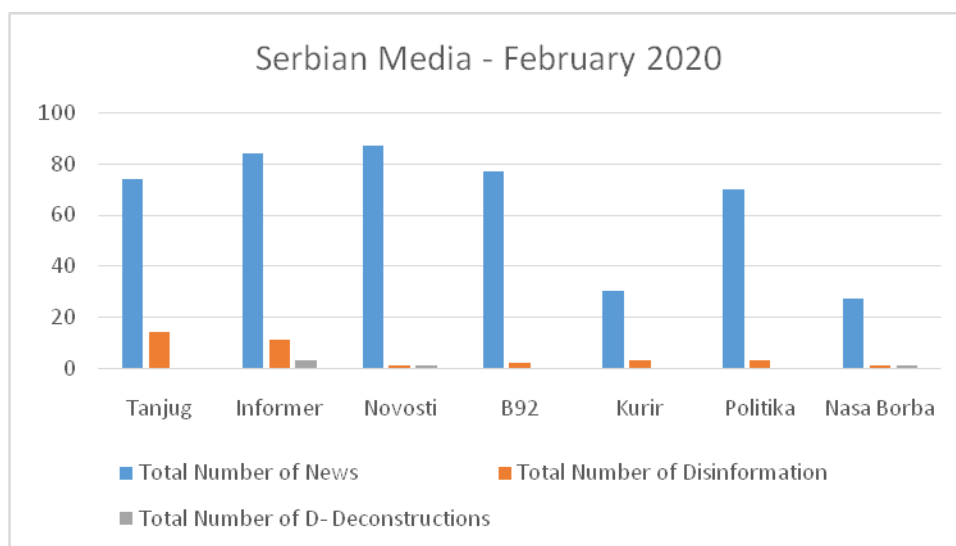


The deconstruction of disinformation news produced in January 2020 by the preselected Russian media and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in relation to Kosovo, indicates their focus on undermining the legitimacy and legality of the statehood of Kosovo and of the support of Western countries. This is done by presenting Kosovo as a state creature which was created through a “genocide” against its Serbian population supported by Western countries, by the denial of war crimes committed by Serbia in Kosovo, by drawing improper comparisons of Kosovo’s statehood with the annexation of Crimea by Russia, and by presenting Kosovo as a threat to regional security⁴.

⁴ Kosovo Disinformation Alert: Russian Media, January Edition, KIPRED 2020, http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - January 2020.docx_381824.pdf

News and Disinformation February 2020

The monitoring of data on the Serbian media shows that from February 1st to 29th, 2020, Tanjug has published 74, Informer 84, Novosti 87, B92 77, Kurir 30, Politika 70 and Naša Borba 27 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 35 out of the 449 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.

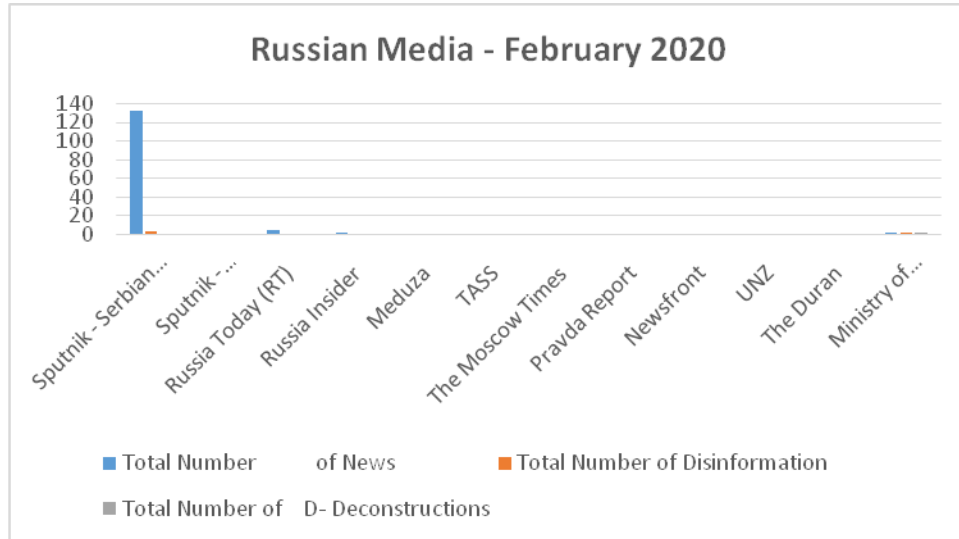


The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (5 news) published in February 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on denying war crimes committed by Serbian armed forces during the 1998-1999 conflict, on miscalculating the number of Serbian refugees who left Kosovo after the war, discrediting the leadership and security institutions of Kosovo, as well as the provided Western assistance, and on projecting Kosovo and Montenegro as rogue states⁵.

On the other hand, the monitoring of data of the Russian media shows that from February 1st to 29th, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 132, Sputnik International 1, Russia Today 5, Russia Insider 2, Meduza none, TASS 1, The Moscow Time none, Pravda Report none, Newsfront none,

⁵ Kosovo Disinformation Alert: Serbian Media, February Edition, KIPRED 2020, <http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert Serbian Media - February 2020.docx 781033.pdf>

UNZ none, The Duran none, and Kremlin and the Russian Foreign Ministry 3 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 5 out of the 144 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.

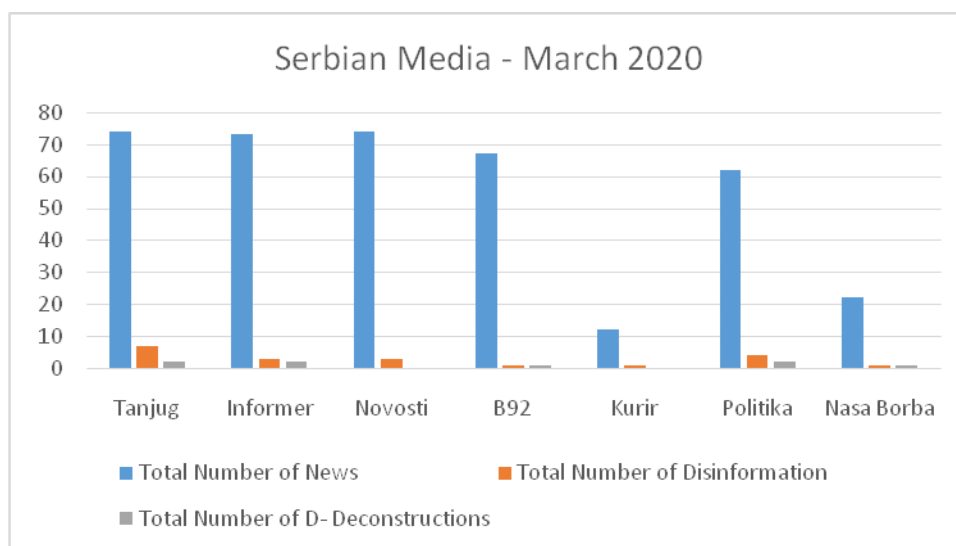


The disinformation published by the Russian news sources, including the Russian Ministry for Foreign Relations, aims at presenting an obscure picture of the position of the Serbian Community and of inter-ethnic situation in Kosovo. This is done in order to display Kosovo as a state which oppresses minority communities, with high potential for eruption of ethnic violence, as well as to undermine both, the legitimacy and legality of Kosovar statehood, and of the support of the West to it.⁶

⁶ Kosovo Disinformation Alert: Russian Media, February Edition, KIPRED 2020, <http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - February 2020.docx> 463885.pdf

News and Disinformation March 2020

The monitoring of data on the Serbian media shows that from March 1st to 31st, 2020, Tanjug has published 74, Informer 73, Novosti 74, B92 67, Kurir 12, Politika 62, and Naša Borba 22 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 20 out of the 384 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.

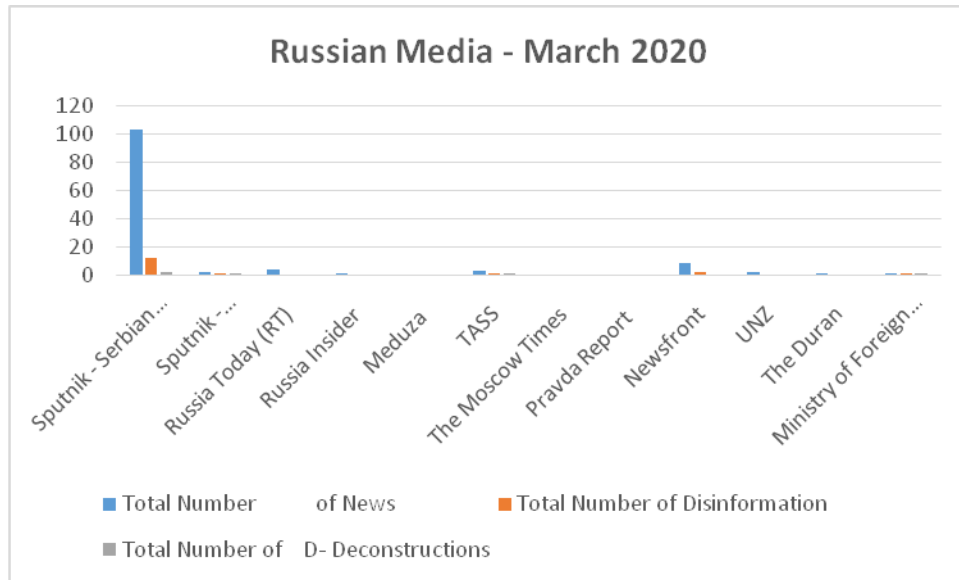


The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (8 news) published in March 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on undermining the legitimacy and legality of the statehood of Kosovo and of its sovereignty, by discrediting its leadership and security institutions, as well as by portraying Kosovo as a state that oppresses its ethnic minorities. The preselected articles are also trying to undermine the support of the West to Kosovo, and to discredit NATO, by accusing it for commitment of terrible crimes against Serbia.⁷

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from March 1st to 31st, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 103, Sputnik International 2, Russia Today 4, Russia Insider 1, Meduza none, TASS 3, The Moscow Time none, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 8, UNZ

⁷ Kosovo Disinformation Alert: Serbian Media, March Edition, KIPRED 2020, http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert_Serbian_Media - March_2020-Eng.docx_864184.pdf

2, The Duran 1, and Kremlin and the Russian Foreign Ministry 1 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 17 out of the 125 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.



The disinformation generated during this period by the preselected Russian media in relation to Kosovo, are focused on undermining the legitimacy and legality of the statehood of Kosovo and on discrediting the credibility of NATO alliance. In doing so, these media deny the war crimes committed by Serbia in Kosovo, they accuse Kosovo and NATO for war crimes against the Serbian population, and exaggerate the number of Serbian casualties.⁸

⁸ Kosovo Disinformation Alert: Russian Media, March Edition, KIPRED 2020, <http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - March 2020 Eng 568615.pdf>