



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:

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KOSOVO DISINFORMATION OBSERVER

SERBIAN AND RUSSIAN MEDIA

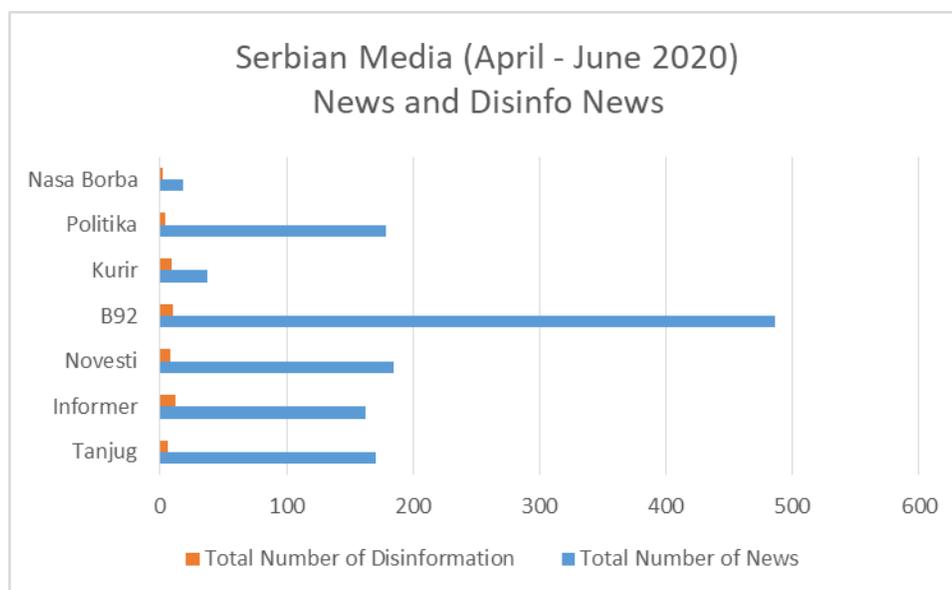
April – June 2020

Executive Summary

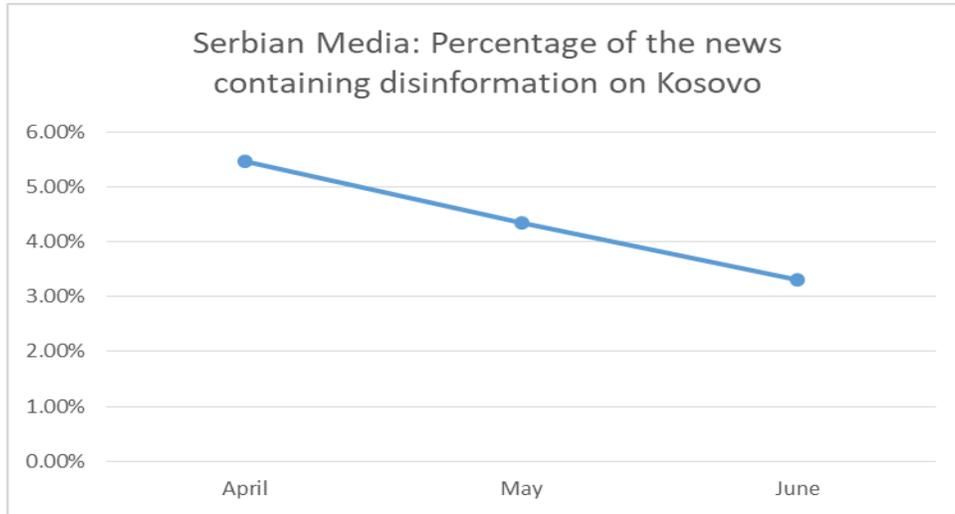
Kosovo Disinformation Observer: Serbian and Russian Media Monitoring is a quarterly report that aims to analyse the disinformation trends of news published by the preselected media outlets originating in Serbia and Russia in English and Serbian language targeting Kosovo.

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, and this Kosovo Disinformation Observer also analyses documents and statements related to Kosovo, published by Kremlin and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

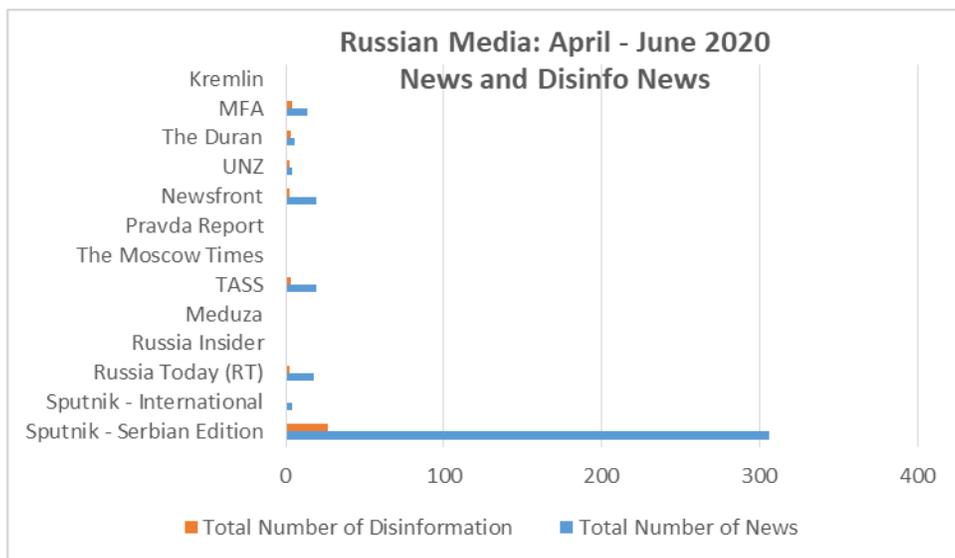
The monitoring of data shows that from April 1st to June 30th, 2020, the media outlets originating in Serbia have published 1,238 news that were related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. Tanjug has published 171, Informer 162, Novosti 185, B92 486, Kurir 37, Politika 179 and Naša Borba 18 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo.



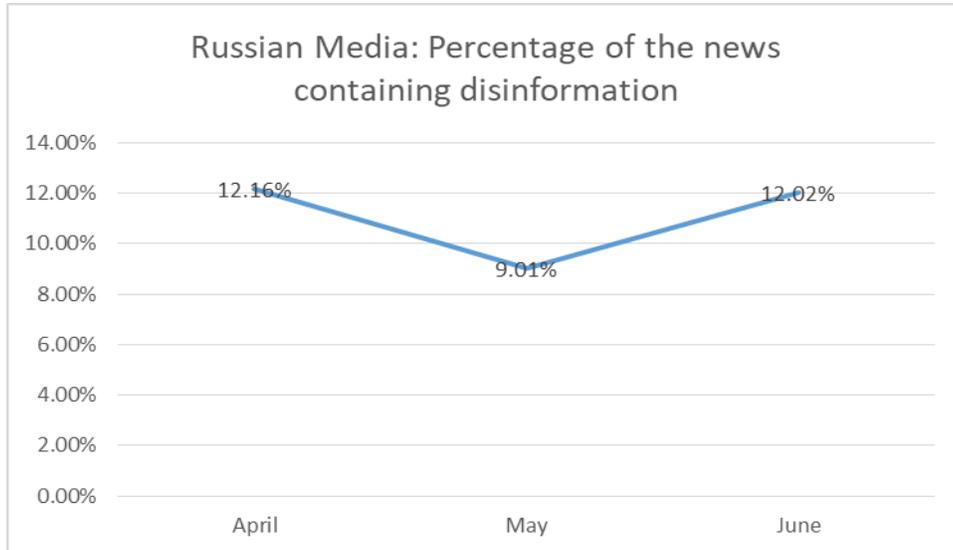
The disinformation trends of the Serbian media show that the highest percentage value of the news/disinformation ratio was in April 2020, 5.47%, followed by 4.35% in May, and 3.32% in June 2020.



The monitoring of data shows that from April 1st to June 30th, 2020, media outlets originating in Russia have published 393 news related directly and indirectly to Kosovo. Sputnik – Serbian Edition has published 306, Sputnik International 4, Russia Today 18, Russia Insider 1, Meduza none, TASS 19, Moscow Times 1, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 19, UNZ 4, Duran 6, Kremlin 1, and the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation 14 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 April 2020, 12.16%, followed by 12.02% in June, whereas the lowest percentage value of this ratio was in May 2020, 9.01%.



The deconstruction of the news originating in Serbia containing the most blatant disinformation (17 news) published by the mentioned preselected media during this period, indicates that the disinformation was focused on undermining the legality and legitimacy of Kosovo’s statehood by:

- Portraying the war for independence in Kosovo as a religious one and KLA as an Islamist military formation.
- Questioning the Kosovo’s right to exercise its sovereignty, projecting it as a failed state, as a state that oppresses and does not protect its non-majority Serbian Community, as a “nest” of organized crime and trafficking, and as a centre for recruiting radical Islamists.
- Denying war crimes committed in Kosovo by the Serbian armed forces during the 1998-1999 conflict, and;
- Discrediting the role of the West in the state-building of Kosovo.

On the other hand, the deconstruction of the news originating in Russia containing the most blatant disinformation (13 news) published by the mentioned preselected media during this period indicates that the disinformation was focused on undermining legitimacy and legality of the statehood of Kosovo, by:

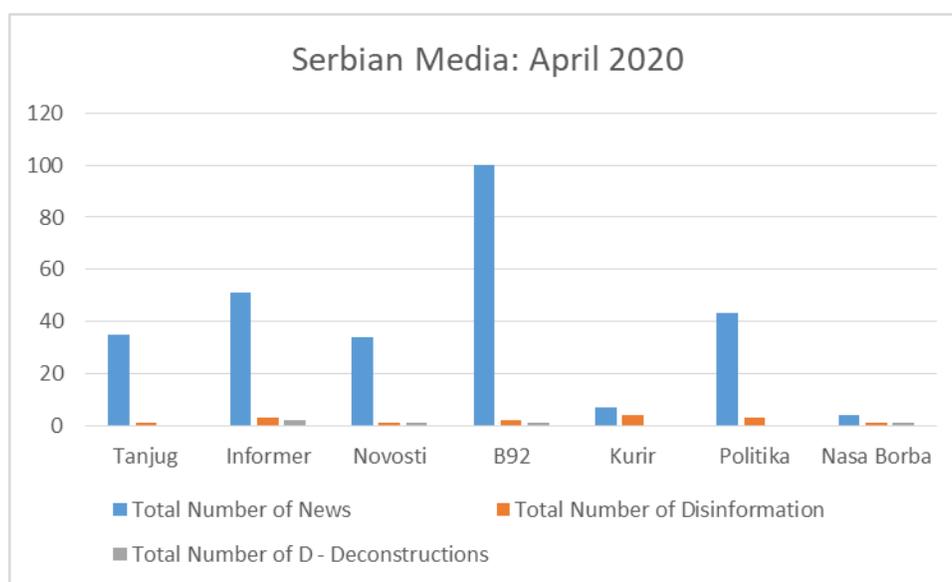
- Questioning Kosovo's right to exercise its sovereignty and portraying its statehood as illegal and in violation of international law.
- Degrading the international intervention and support in Kosovo and presenting it as a criminal state, including the efforts for transitional justice in Kosovo.
- Questioning and changing of the narratives on the war in former Yugoslavia and denying war crimes of Serbia, and;
- Displaying Kosovo as a state that oppresses Serbian Community and other non-majority communities.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, in terms of their focus, the news with disinformation content related to Kosovo, published by media originating in Serbia and Russia during this period were very similar, if not the same. Their major aim was focused on undermining the legitimacy and legality of the statehood of Kosovo and portraying it as a failed and "rogue" state.

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 focuses and aims of the published disinformation, based on the disinformation analyses of the April, May and June 2020 editions of the Kosovo Disinformation Alerts for Serbian and Russian Media.

News and Disinformation April 2020

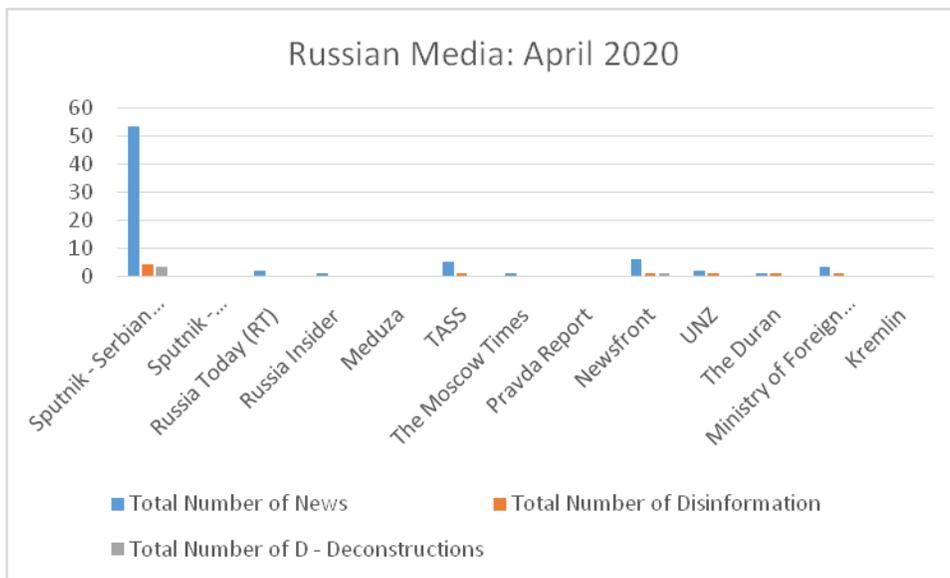
The monitoring of data on Serbian media shows that from April 1st to 30th, 2020, Tanjug has published 35, Informer 51, Novosti 34, B92 100, Kurir 7, Politika 43, and Naša Borba 4 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 15 out of the 274 news published by these media outlets, had disinformation content.



The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (5 news) published in April 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on undermining the legitimacy of Kosovo's statehood by portraying the war for independence as a religious one, and KLA as an Islamist military formation, discrediting the state of Kosovo and its leadership, as well as its security institutions and its citizens, undermining the support of the West by trying to discredit the EU and its position towards Kosovo. Most of the articles use denigrating and derogatory language when referring to Albanians and Kosovo's political elites.¹

¹ Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Serbian Media: April 2020, KIPRED, 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert Serbian Media - April 2020 \(1\) 357827.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert Serbian Media - April 2020 (1) 357827.pdf)

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from April 1st to 30th, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 53, Sputnik International none, Russia Today 2, Russia Insider 1, Meduza none, TASS 5, The Moscow Time 1, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 6, UNZ 2, The Duran 1, Kremlin none and the Russian Foreign Ministry 3 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 9 out of the 74 news published by these media outlets, had disinformation content.

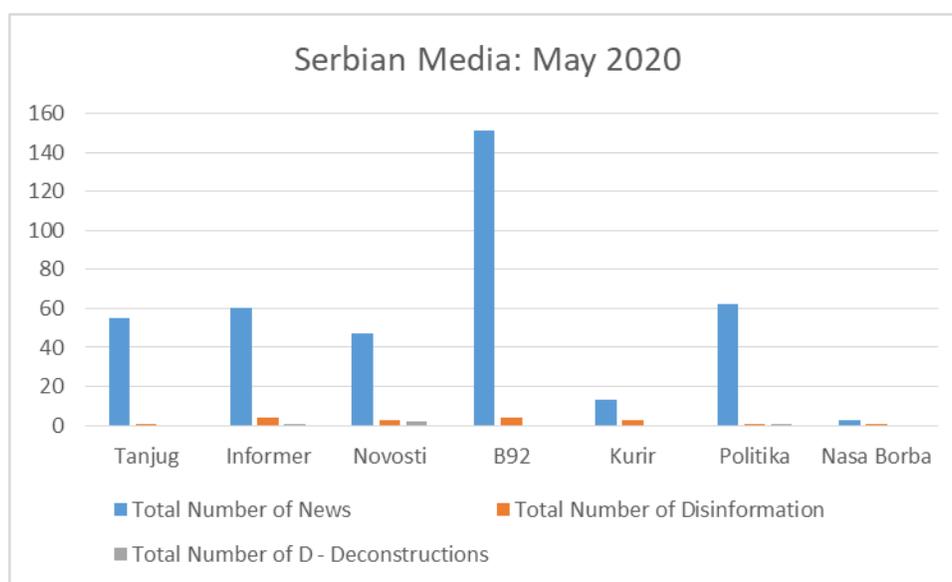


The deconstruction of disinformation news produced in April 2020 by the preselected Russian media and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in relation to Kosovo, indicates their focus on projecting the energy independence of Kosovo as an illegal act, Kosovo’s statehood as illegal and in violation of international law, on degrading the international intervention and support in Kosovo, and claiming falsely that in the times of COVID-19 pandemic, EU considers Kosovo as a part of Serbia.²

² Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Russian Media: April 2020, KIPRED, 2020, http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - April 2020_536416.pdf

News and Disinformation May 2020

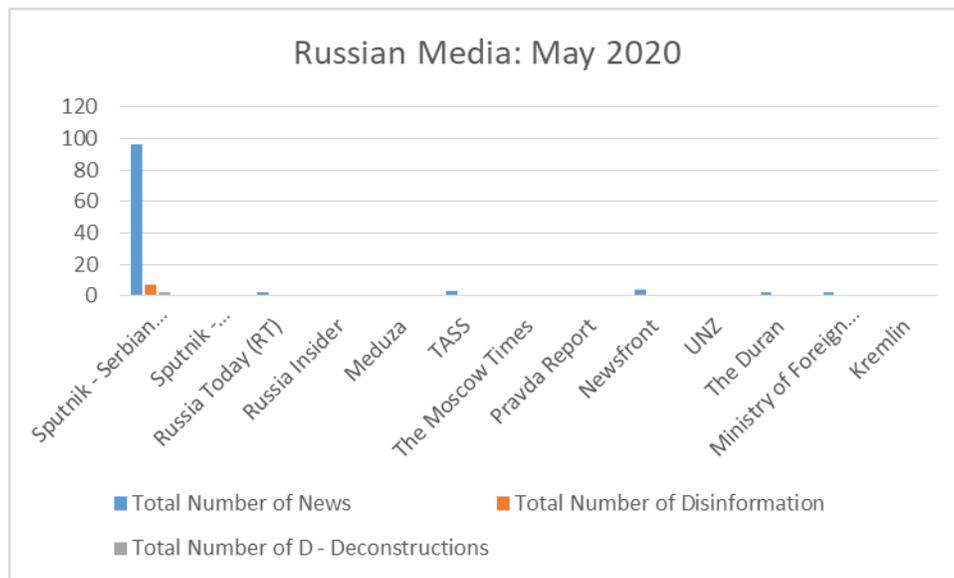
The monitoring of data on Serbian media shows that from May 1st to 31st, 2020, Tanjug has published 55, Informer 60, Novosti 47, B92 151, Kurir 13, Politika 62 and Naša Borba 3 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 17 out of the 391 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.



The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (4 news) published in May 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on undermining the legitimacy of Kosovo’s statehood by trying to delegitimise the intervention of NATO and the support of the Western countries, by questioning the legality of its independence, by portraying it as a country that violates the rights of non-majority communities and as a “nest” of organized crime and trafficking.³

³ Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Serbian Media: May 2020, KIPRED, 2020, <http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert Serbian Media - May 2020 36944.pdf>

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from May 1st to 31st, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 96, Sputnik International 1, Russia Today 2, Russia Insider none, Meduza none, TASS 3, The Moscow Time none, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 4, UNZ 1, The Duran 2, Kremlin none and the Russian Foreign Ministry 2 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 10 out of the 144 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.

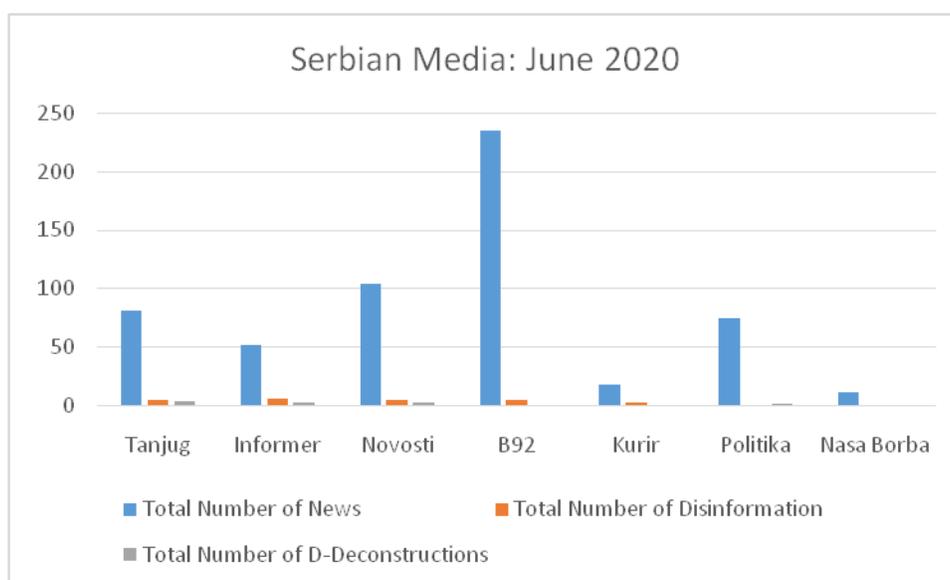


The disinformation published by the Russian news sources, including the Russian Ministry of Foreign Relations, aims at presenting Kosovo Serbs as victims of a “terror” exercised over them, questioning and changing of the narratives on the war in former Yugoslavia and denying war crimes of Serbia, questioning the efforts of transitional justice in Kosovo, questioning the legality of independence of Kosovo, presenting Kosovo as a criminal state, and questioning the role of KFOR and EU in Kosovo.⁴

⁴ Kosovo Disinformation Alert: Russian Media: May 2020, KIPRED, 2020
[http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - May 2020 \(2\) 119310.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - May 2020 (2) 119310.pdf)

News and Disinformation June 2020

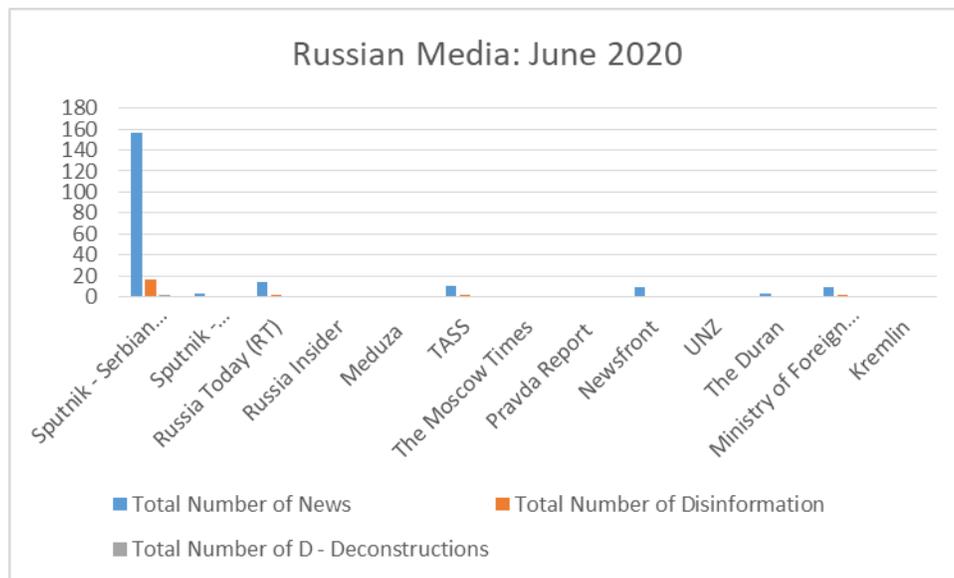
The monitoring of data on the Serbian media shows that from June 1st to 30th, 2020, Tanjug has published 81, Informer 51, Novosti 104, B92 235, Kurir 17, Politika 74, and Naša Borba 11 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 19 out of the 573 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.



The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (8 news) published in June 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on discrediting the legitimacy of Kosovo's statehood, portraying it as a state that oppresses and does not protect its Serbian and other non-majority communities, as a recruiting center for radical Islamists, and denying Serbian war crimes committed in Kosovo.⁵

⁵ Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Serbian Media: June 2020, KIPRED 2020, http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert Serbian Media - June 2020_656805.pdf

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from June 1st to 30th, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 157, Sputnik International 3, Russia Today 14, Russia Insider none, Meduza none, TASS 11, The Moscow Time none, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 9, UNZ 1, The Duran 3, Kremlin 1 and the Russian Foreign Ministry 9 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 25 out of the 208 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.



The disinformation generated during this period by the preselected Russian media in relation to Kosovo, was focused on undermining the legality of Kosovo's statehood and efforts of NATO and the West for peace and stability in Kosovo and its state-building, projecting Kosovo as a failed state that also undertakes discriminatory acts against Kosovo Serbian community, obscuring the past by de-facto denying crimes and atrocities of Serbia in Kosovo during the 90's, and undermining the role of the US and EU in establishing the Specialized Chambers of Kosovo.⁶

⁶ Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Russian Media: June 2020, KIPRED 2020, <http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - June 2020 98629.pdf>