



**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.

**SUPPORTED BY:**



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**DISCLAIMER:**

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

**CONTACT:**

Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED)

Str. Major Mehmet Bushi, H.III/1

10 000 Prishtina, Kosovo

Tel: +383 (0)38 542 778



# KOSOVO DISINFORMATION OBSERVER

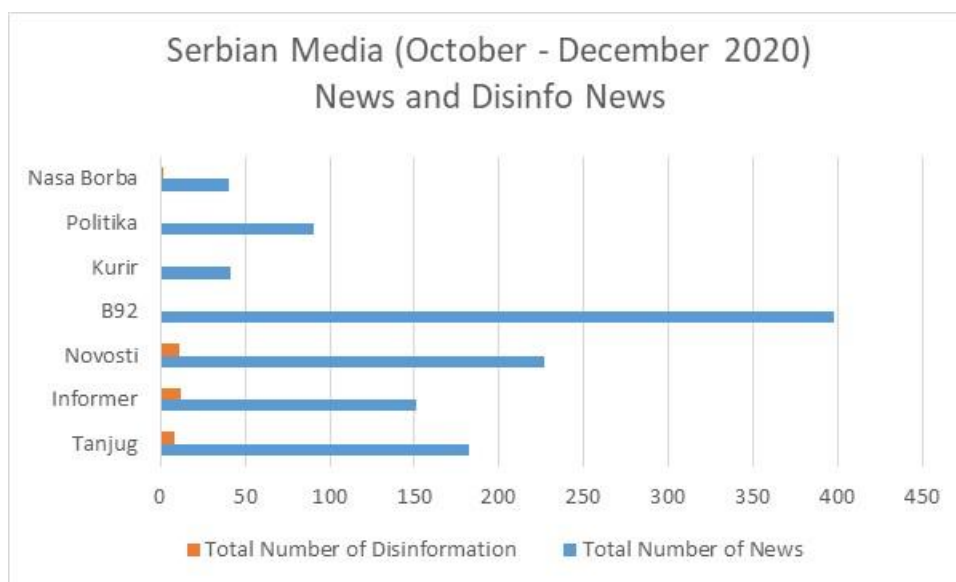
**SERBIAN AND RUSSIAN MEDIA**  
October – December 2020

## Executive Summary

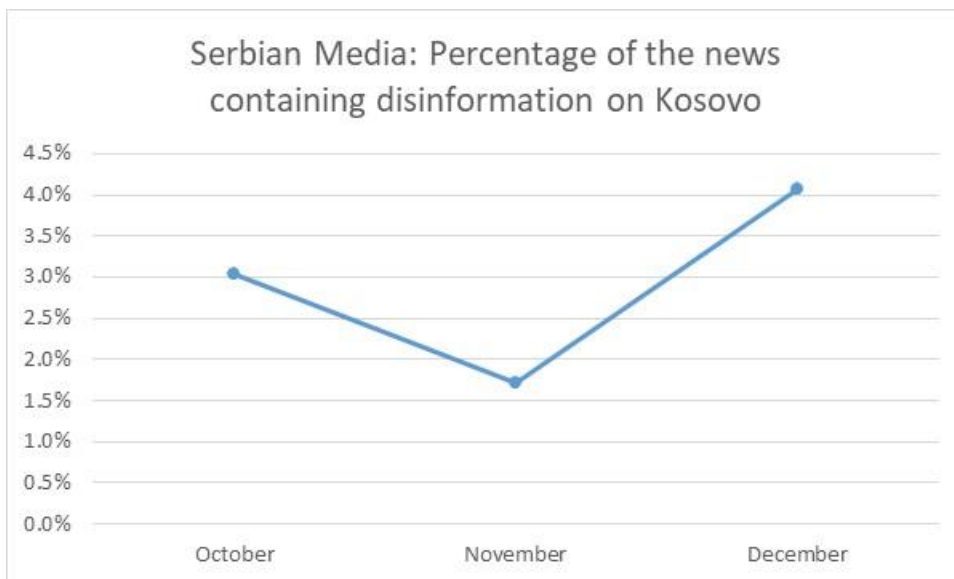
**Kosovo Disinformation Observer: Serbian and Russian Media Monitoring** is a quarterly report that aims to analyse the disinformation trends of news published by the preselected media outlets originating in Serbia and Russia in English and Serbian language targeting Kosovo.

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.

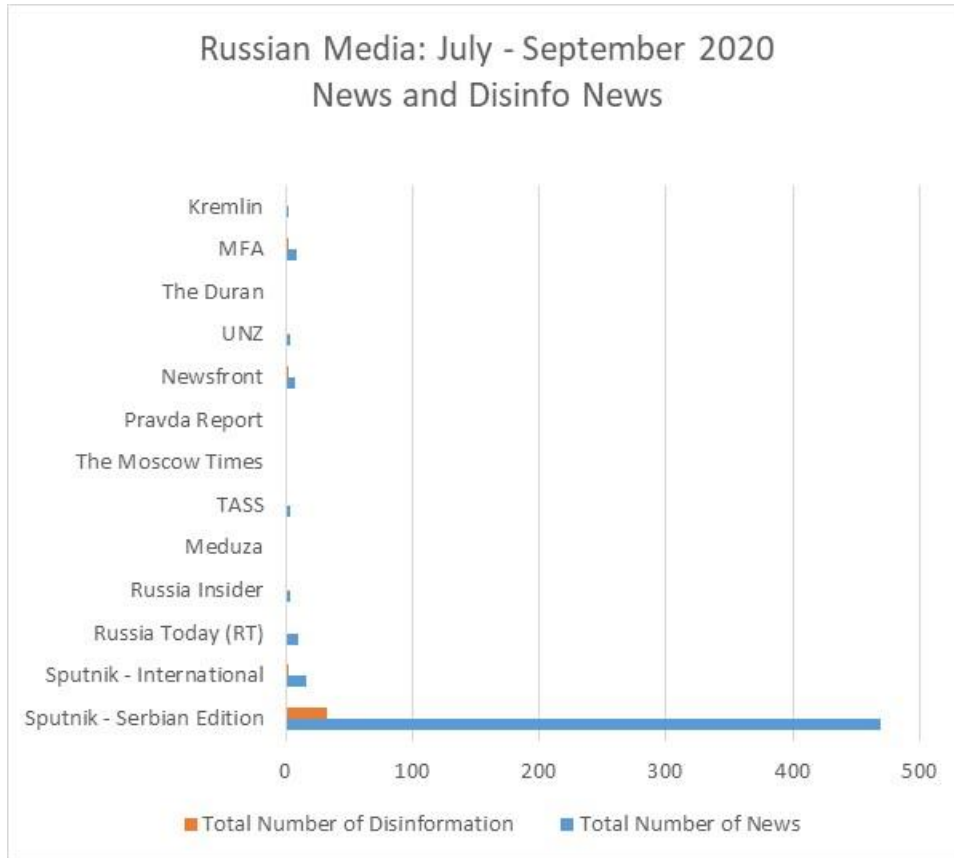
The monitoring of data shows that from October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, the media outlets originating in Serbia have published 1,130 news that were related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. Tanjug has published 182, Informer 151, Novosti 227, B92 398, Kurir 41, Politika 91 and Naša Borba 40 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo.



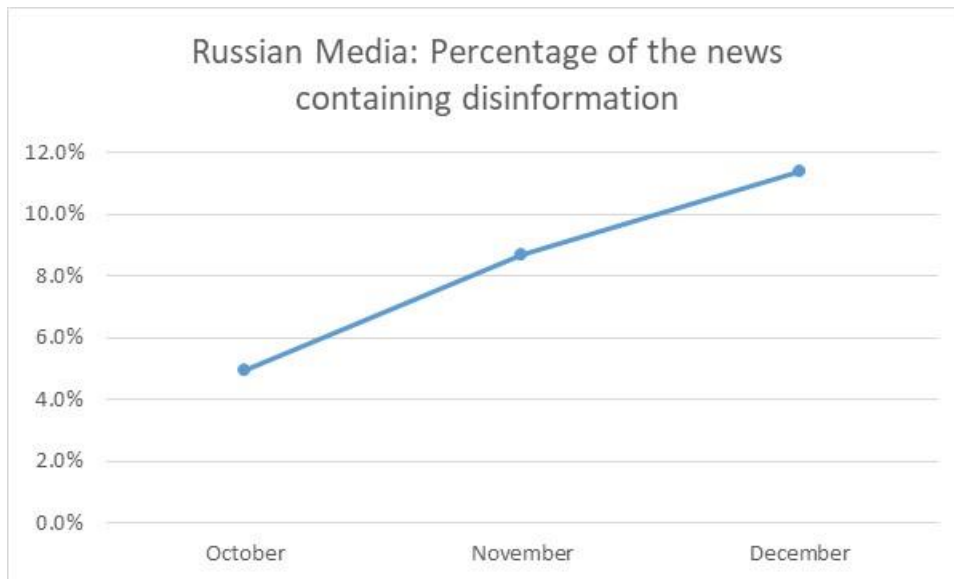
The disinformation trends of the Serbian media show that the highest percentage value of the news/disinformation ratio was in December 2020, 4.1. %, followed by 3.0 % in October, and 1,7 % in November 2020.



The monitoring of data shows that from October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, media outlets originating in Russia have published 524 news related directly and indirectly to Kosovo. Sputnik – Serbian Edition has published 469, Sputnik International 16, Russia Today 10, Russia Insider 3, Meduza 1, TASS 3, The Moscow Times 1, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 7, UNZ 3, Duran 8, Kremlin 2, and the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation 9 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 December 2020, 11.4%, followed by 8.7 % in November, whereas the lowest percentage value of this ratio was in October 2020, 5.0 %.



The deconstruction of the news originating in Serbia containing the most blatant disinformation (15 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:

- Undermining the legality of Kosovo and discrediting its leadership and institutions
- Portraying Kosovo as a "mafia" state that violates human rights and oppresses Serbian Community and that is planning to expel the remaining Serbs living in Kosovo through secrete military operation.
- Denying war crimes committed in Kosovo by the Serbian armed forces during the 1998-1999 conflict.
- Changing narratives of the 1998-1999 conflict by presenting Serbs as victims and NATO as an aggressor that committed war crimes, and exaggerating the number of Serb casualties.
- Accusing Kosovo for violating and sabotaging the agreements reached in Brussels

On the other hand, the deconstruction of the news originating in Russia containing the most blatant disinformation (17 news) published by the mentioned preselected media during this period indicates that the disinformation was focused on:

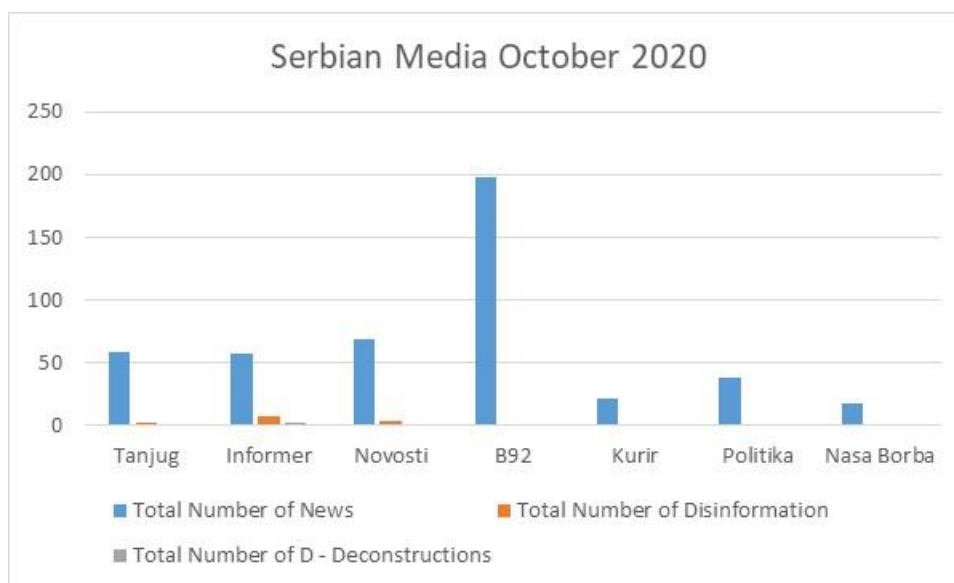
- Undermining the legality of Kosovo's statehood by comparing it with the cases of Crimea and Nagorno-Karabakh.
- Presenting Kosovo as a hotbed of extremism.
- Questioning and changing of the narratives on the war in former Yugoslavia by accusing the US and NATO for war crimes, and denying war crimes of Serbia, and,

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 quite similar in terms of their aims and targets. However, there is a clear indication that Russia is misusing Kosovo case for the annexation of Crimea and other conflicts in its near neighbourhood.

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 October, November and December 2020 editions of the Kosovo Disinformation Alerts for Serbian and Russian Media.

## News and Disinformation October 2020

The monitoring of data on Serbian media shows that from October 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Tanjug has published 59, Informer 57, Novosti 69, B92 198, Kurir 22, Politika 38, and Naša Borba 18 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. In 14 out of the 461 news published by these media outlets, has been detected disinformation content.

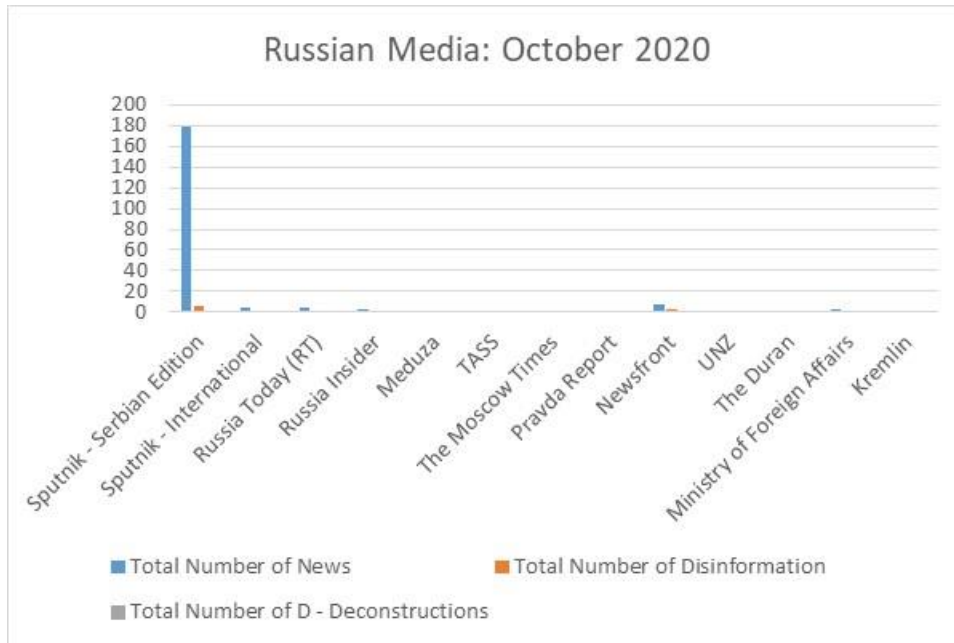


The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (5 news) published in July 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on undermining Kosovo's statehood, discrediting its leadership and rule of law institutions, accusing them for not implementing certain agreements achieved in Brussels, falsely portraying Kosovo as a state that is against the dialogue with Serbia, and that is planning to expel the remaining Serbs living in Kosovo through secrete military operation<sup>1</sup>.

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from October 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 179, Sputnik International 4, Russia Today 4, Russia

<sup>1</sup> Disinformation Alert: Serbian Media, October 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D\\_-\\_Alert\\_-\\_Serbian\\_Media\\_-\\_October\\_2020\\_813404.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D_-_Alert_-_Serbian_Media_-_October_2020_813404.pdf)

Insider 2, Meduza 1, TASS 1, The Moscow Time none, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 7, UNZ none, The Duran 4, Kremlin none and the Russian Foreign Ministry 2 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 10 out of the 202 news related to Kosovo published by these media outlets, had disinformation content.



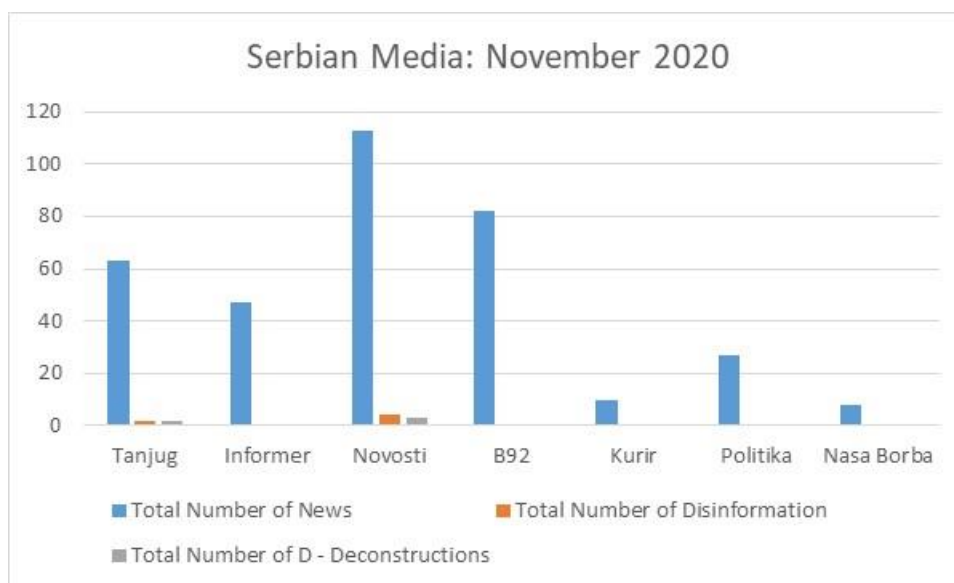
The deconstruction of disinformation news produced in October 2020 by the preselected Russian media and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in relation to Kosovo, indicates that they were focused on undermining the statehood of Kosovo by making improper comparisons of this statehood with the situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh, accusing NATO for war crimes against Serbian population, and exaggerate the number of Serbian casualties of the NATO bombing campaign in 1999<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Disinformation Alert: Russian Media, October 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D\\_-\\_Alert\\_-\\_Russian\\_Media\\_-\\_October\\_2020\\_320568.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D_-_Alert_-_Russian_Media_-_October_2020_320568.pdf)



## News and Disinformation November 2020

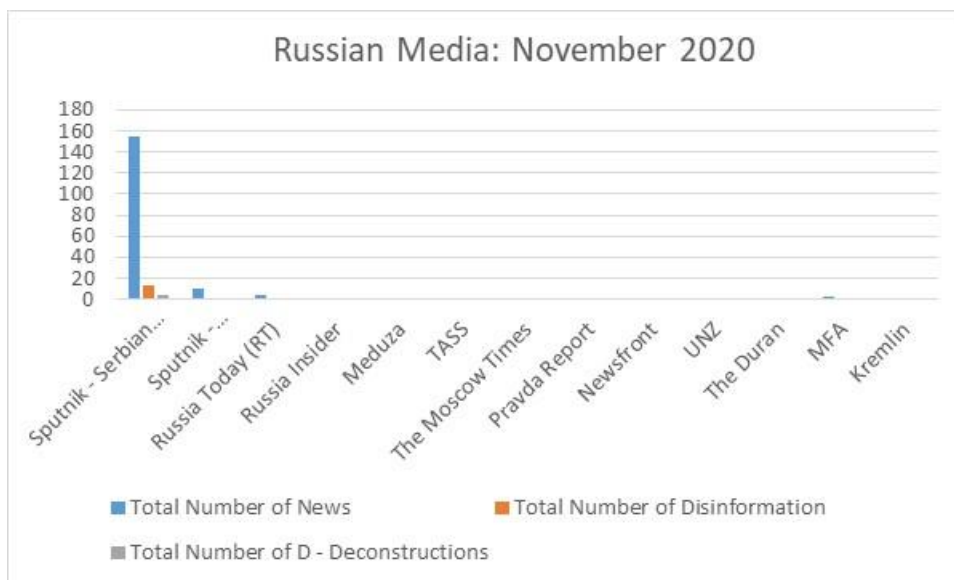
The monitoring of news on Serbian media shows that from November 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Tanjug has published 63, Informer 47, Novosti 113, B92 82, Kurir 10, Politika 27 and Naša Borba 8 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 6 out of the 350 news published by these media outlets have had disinformation content.



The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (5 news) published in November 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on undermining Kosovo's statehood by constantly referring to it as "the province of Kosovo and Metohija," discrediting its leadership and institutions, falsely portraying Kosovo as a state that does not respect human rights of the Serbs, and is planning to expel the remaining Serbs living in Kosovo through attacks on their lives and property, obscuring the past, by denying crimes and atrocities of Serbia in Kosovo during the 1990s, and by exaggerating the number of Serb casualties<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Disinformation Alert: Serbian Media, November 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Disinformation\\_Alert\\_-\\_Serbian\\_Media\\_-\\_November\\_2020\\_16621.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Disinformation_Alert_-_Serbian_Media_-_November_2020_16621.pdf)

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from November 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 155, Sputnik International 10, Russia Today 4, Russia Insider none, Meduza none, TASS 1, The Moscow Time none, Pravda Report none, Newsfront none, UNZ 1, The Duran none, Kremlin none and the Russian Foreign Ministry 2 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 15 out of the 173 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.



The disinformation published by the Russian news outlets in November 2020 were focused undermining the statehood of Kosovo by discrediting its leadership and institutions, presenting it as a hotbed of extremism, changing the historical narratives by denying crimes and atrocities of Serbia in Kosovo and in Bosnia during the 1990s<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Disinformation Alert: Russian Media, November 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Disinformation\\_Alert - Russian Media - November 2020\\_43622.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Disinformation_Alert_-_Russian_Media_-_November_2020_43622.pdf)

## News and Disinformation December 2020

The monitoring of news published by the preselected Serbian media outlets shows that from December 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, Tanjug has published 60, Informer 47, Novosti 45, B92 118, Kurir 9, Politika 26, and Naša Borba 14 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 13 out of the 319 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.

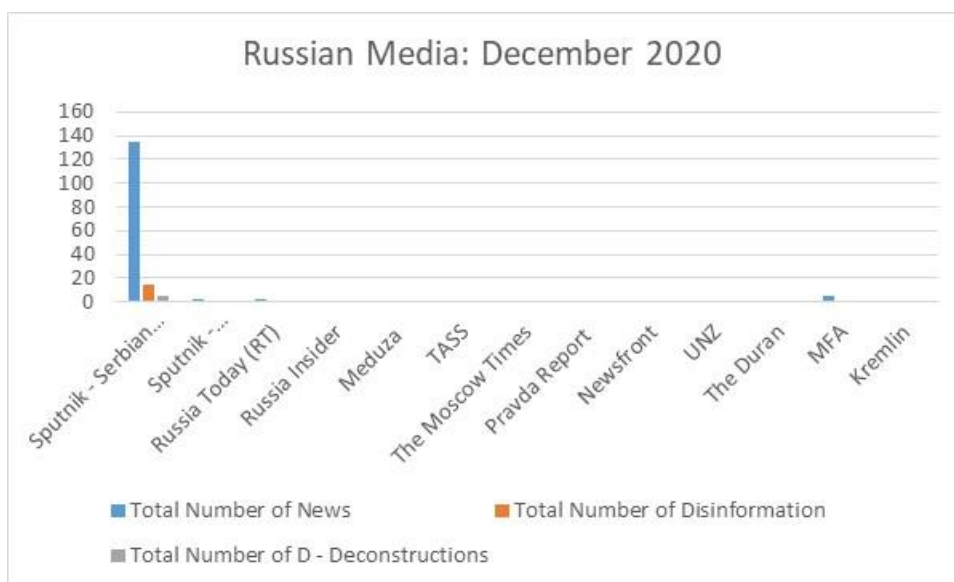


The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (5 news) published December 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on undermining Kosovo's statehood by discrediting its leadership and institutions, falsely portraying Kosovo as a mafia state that does not respect human rights of Serbs, obscuring the narratives of the past by denying crimes and atrocities of Serbia in Kosovo during the 1990s and by exaggerating the number of Serb casualties<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Disinformation Alert: Serbian Media, December 2020

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from December 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 135, Sputnik International 2, Russia Today 2, Russia Insider 1, Meduza none, TASS 1, The Moscow Time 4, Pravda Report none, Newsfront none, UNZ 1, The Duran none, Kremlin 1 and the Russian Foreign Ministry 5 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 17 out of the 149 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 statehood of Kosovo by trying to draw parallels between independence of the Republic of Kosovo and the illegal annexation of Crimea, presenting Kosovo as a state that abolishes basic rights, the rule of law and the functioning of democratic institutions, changing the narratives of the past by denying crimes and atrocities of Serbia in Kosovo and during the 1990s<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Disinformation Alert: Russian Media, December 2020