



**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:**



London, United Kingdom

**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

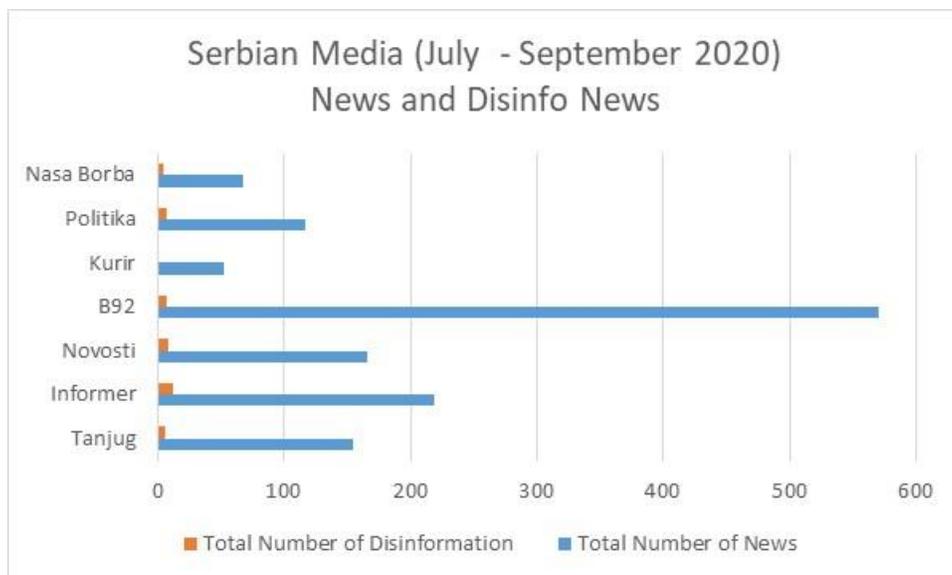
**SERBIAN AND RUSSIAN MEDIA**  
July – September 2020

## Executive Summary

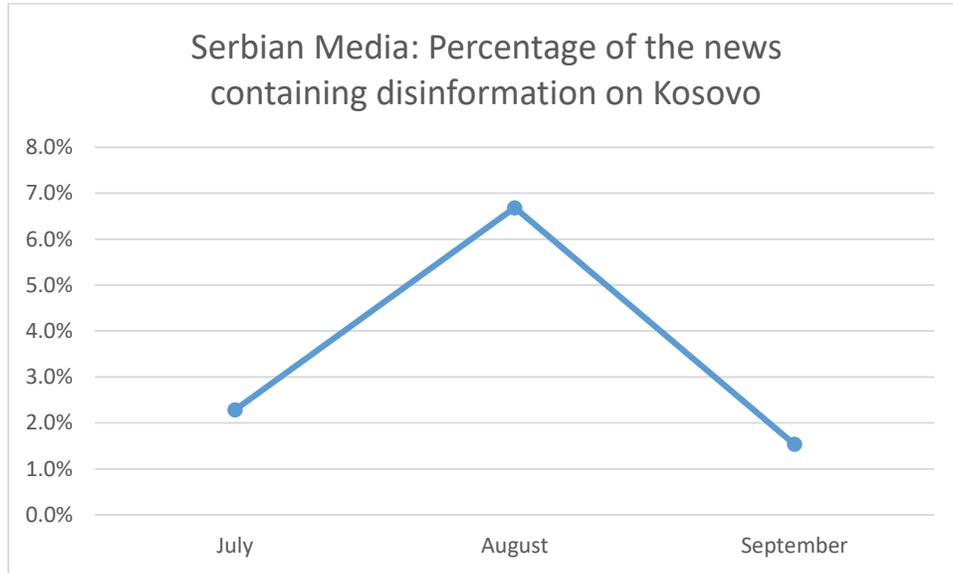
**Kosovo Disinformation Observer: Serbian and Russian Media Monitoring** is a quarterly report that aims to analyse the disinformation trends of news published by the preselected media outlets originating in Serbia and Russia in English and Serbian language targeting Kosovo.

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.

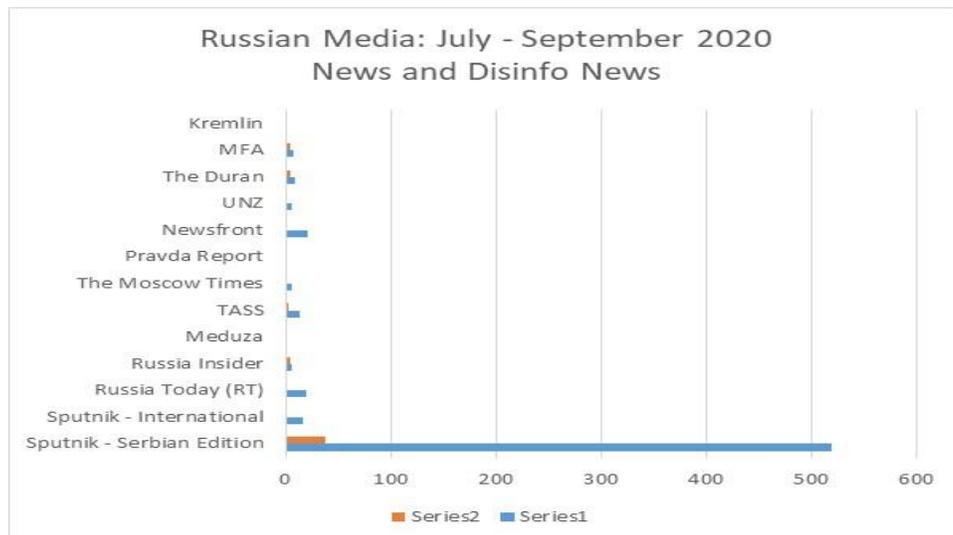
The monitoring of data shows that from July 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the media outlets originating in Serbia have published 1,348 news that were related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. Tanjug has published 155, Informer 219, Novosti 166, B92 571, Kurir 52, Politika 117 and Naša Borba 69 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo.



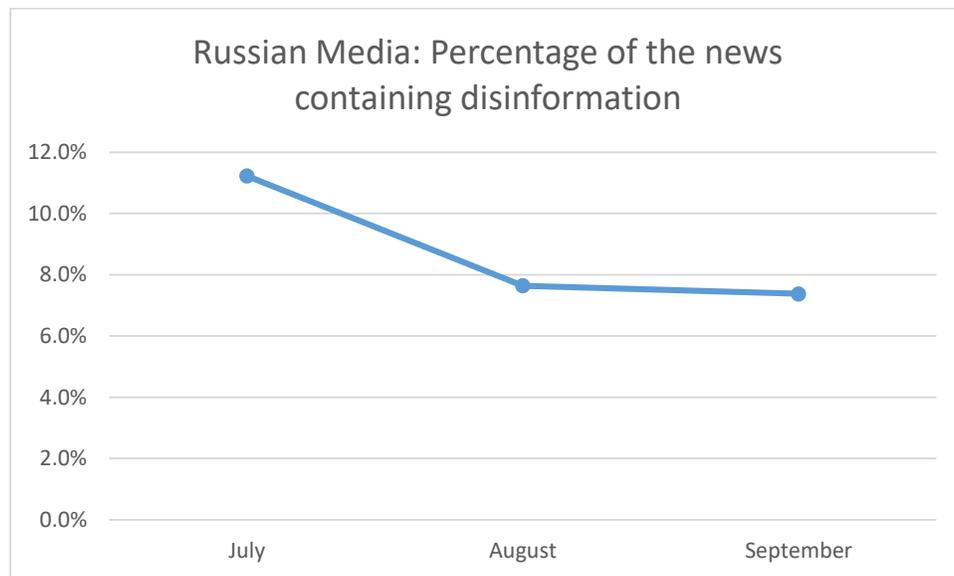
The disinformation trends of the Serbian media show that the highest percentage value of the news/disinformation ratio was in August 2020, 6.7%, followed by 2.3% in July, and 1.5% in September 2020.



The monitoring of data shows that from July 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, media outlets originating in Russia have published 624 news related directly and indirectly to Kosovo. Sputnik – Serbian Edition has published 520, Sputnik International 17, Russia Today 20, Russia Insider 5, Meduza none, TASS 13, The Moscow Times 6, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 21, UNZ 6, Duran 8, Kremlin 1, and the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation 7 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 July 2020, 11.2%, followed by 7.6 % in august, whereas the lowest percentage value of this ratio was in September 2020, 7.4 %.



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:

- Undermining the legality of Kosovo as an independent state and portraying it as a state that endangers the Serbian and Orthodox heritage.
- Denying war crimes committed in Kosovo by the Serbian armed forces during the 1998-1999 conflict.
- Discrediting the treatment of the war crimes in Kosovo by international and national justice.
- Discrediting the role of the West and the Kosovo Security Forces in security matters in Kosovo, and,
- Presenting Belgrade as the sole beneficiary of the Washington Agreement of September 4<sup>th</sup> between Kosovo and Serbia

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:

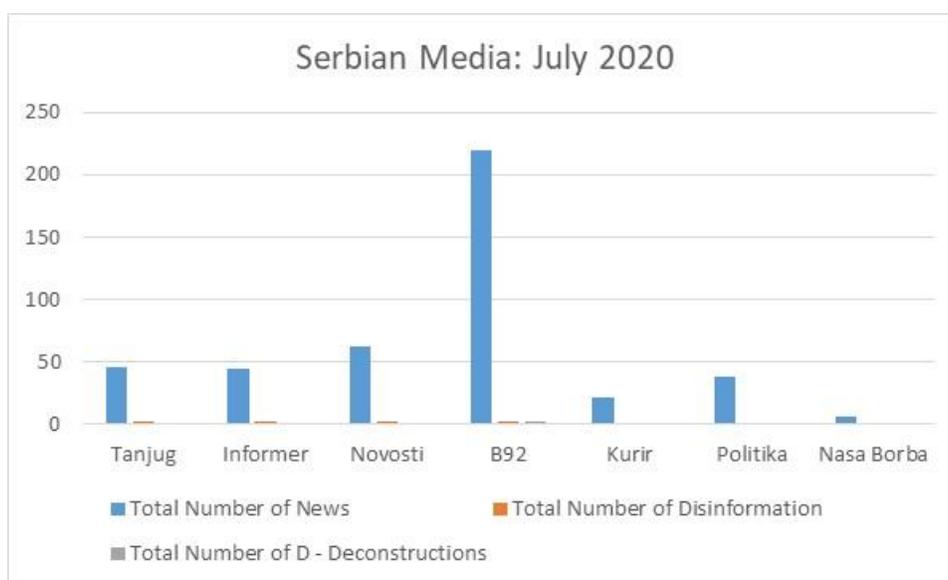
- Undermining the legality of Kosovo's statehood and discrediting its institutions.
- Portraying Kosovo as a state that violates human rights and oppresses Serbian Community and other non-majority communities.
- Questioning and changing of the narratives on the war in former Yugoslavia by accusing the US and NATO for war crimes, and denying war crimes of Serbia, and,
- Accusing Kosovo for violating and sabotaging the institutions reached in Brussels and Washington.

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.

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 July, August and September 2020 editions of the Kosovo Disinformation Alerts for Serbian and Russian Media.

## News and Disinformation July 2020

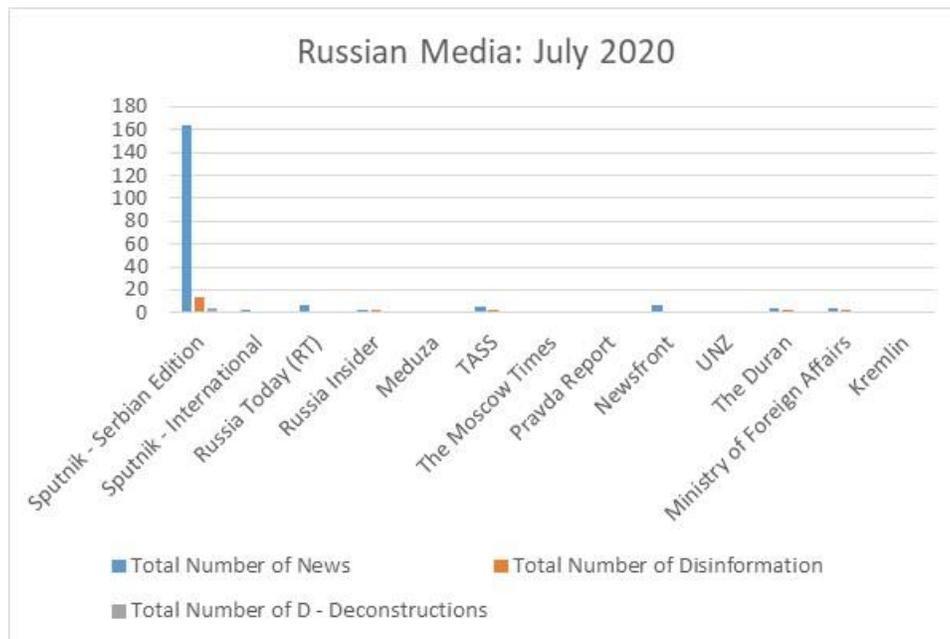
The monitoring of data on Serbian media shows that from July 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Tanjug has published 46, Informer 45, Novosti 62, B92 220, Kurir 21, Politika 38, and Naša Borba 6 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. In 10 out of the 438 news published by these media outlets, has been detected disinformation content.



The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (4 news) published in July 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on the denial of Serbian war crimes and of the victims and missing persons in Kosovo, on the denigration of the NATO intervention and of the Ambassador William Walker, denigration of the treatment of war crimes in Kosovo by domestic and international justice, and on the disparagement of the Kosovo Security Force and of Germany, under the pretension that they have made a secret deal for buying of 'Leopard II' tanks<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Serbian Media, July 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D\\_-\\_Alert\\_Serbian\\_Media\\_-\\_July\\_2020\\_704688.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D_-_Alert_Serbian_Media_-_July_2020_704688.pdf)

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from April 1<sup>st</sup> to 30th, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 164, Sputnik International 3, Russia Today 6, Russia Insider 3, Meduza none, TASS 5, The Moscow Time 1, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 6, UNZ none, The Duran 4, Kremlin none and the Russian Foreign Ministry 4 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 22 out of the 196 news related to Kosovo published by these media outlets, had disinformation content.

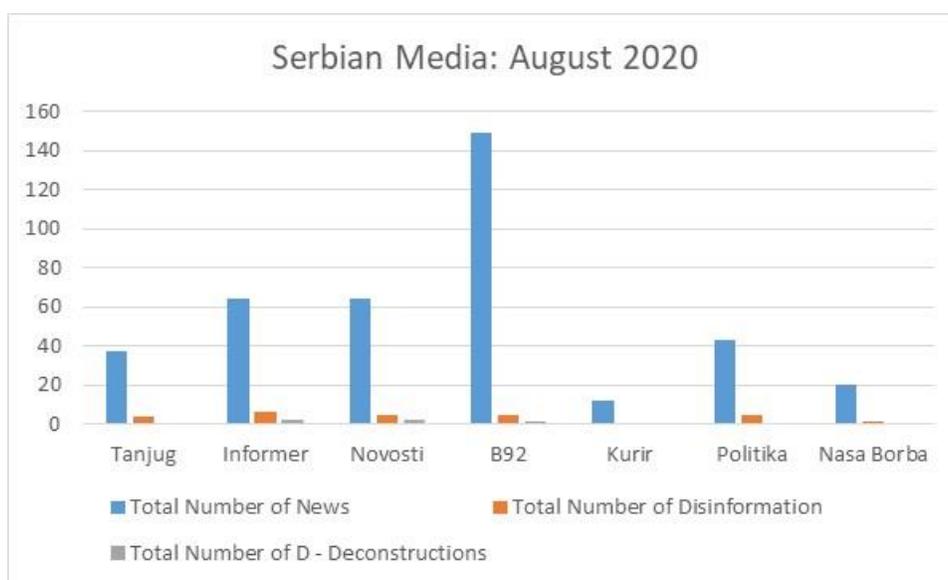


The deconstruction of disinformation news produced in July 2020 by the preselected Russian media and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in relation to Kosovo, indicates that they were focused on the undermining of the legality of Kosovo's statehood, discrediting Kosovo institutions and its leadership, projecting Kosovo as a failed state that does not respect human rights and discriminates Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities, obscuring the past by de-facto denying crimes and atrocities of Serbia in Kosovo during the 90's, and by portraying Serbs as victims during the Kosovo War<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Russian Media, July 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D - Alert - Russian Media - July 2020 402139.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D_-_Alert_-_Russian_Media_-_July_2020_402139.pdf)

## News and Disinformation August 2020

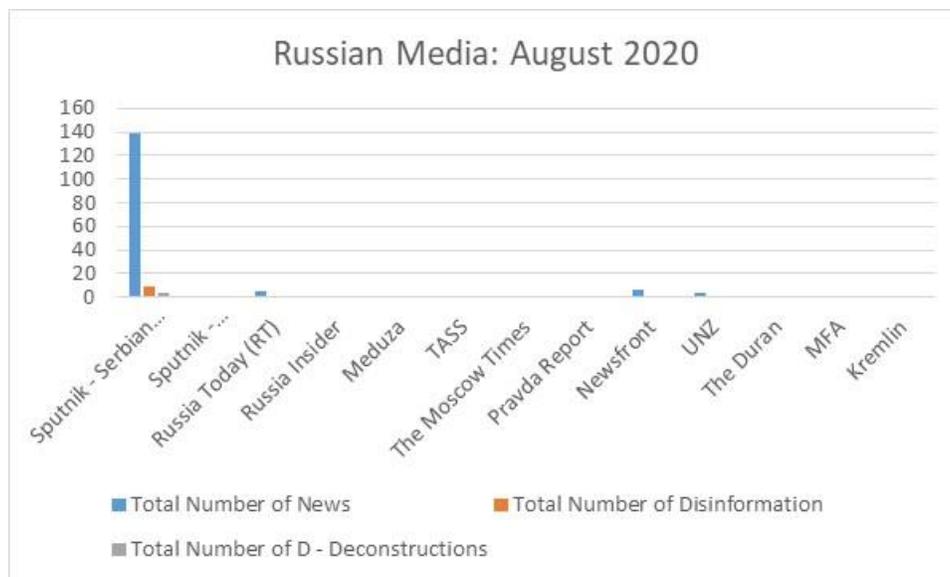
The monitoring of news on Serbian media shows that from August 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, Tanjug has published 37, Informer 64, Novosti 64, B92 149, Kurir 12, Politika 43 and Naša Borba 20 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 26 out of the 389 news published by these media outlets have had disinformation content.



The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (5 news) published in August 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on discrediting the legitimacy of Kosovo's statehood by referring to it as "quasi-" and "fake-" state, portraying Kosovo as a state that endangers the Serbian and Christian spiritual heritage, putting forward several false claims in order to discredit KLA and NATO, by falsely portraying the liberation war of KLA as one of war crimes against humanity, denying the war crimes committed by Serbia during the Kosovo War, and making false claims that American deliveries of weapons and military equipment to the Kosovo authorities is part of the preparations for an open conflict with Serbia<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Serbian Media, August 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D\\_-\\_Alert\\_Serbian\\_Media\\_-\\_Gusht\\_2020\\_AD\\_620224.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D_-_Alert_Serbian_Media_-_Gusht_2020_AD_620224.pdf)

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from August 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 139, Sputnik International none, Russia Today 5, Russia Insider none, Meduza none, TASS 1, The Moscow Time 1, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 6, UNZ 3, The Duran 1, Kremlin none and the Russian Foreign Ministry 1 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 12 out of the 157 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.

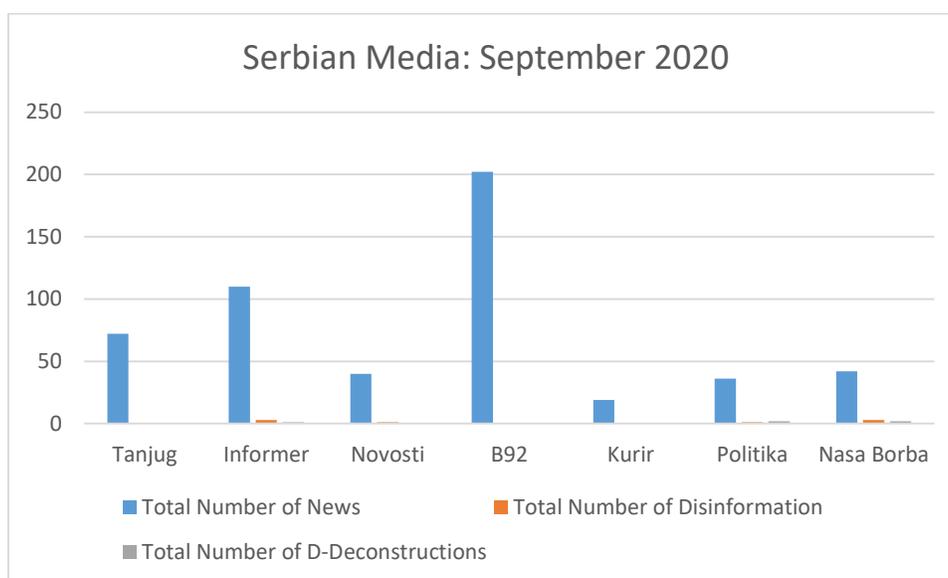


The disinformation published by the Russian news outlets were focused on undermining the legality of Kosovo's independence, drawing unfitting parallels between Kosovo and Republika Srpska, discrediting the international military presence in Kosovo by accusing the West for the annexation of a part of the Serbian territory, and by claiming falsely that there are still 18,000 usurped properties of the Serb community citizens in Kosovo<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Russian Media, August 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D\\_-\\_Alert\\_Serbian\\_Media\\_-\\_Gusht\\_2020\\_AD\\_620224.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/D_-_Alert_Serbian_Media_-_Gusht_2020_AD_620224.pdf)

## News and Disinformation September 2020

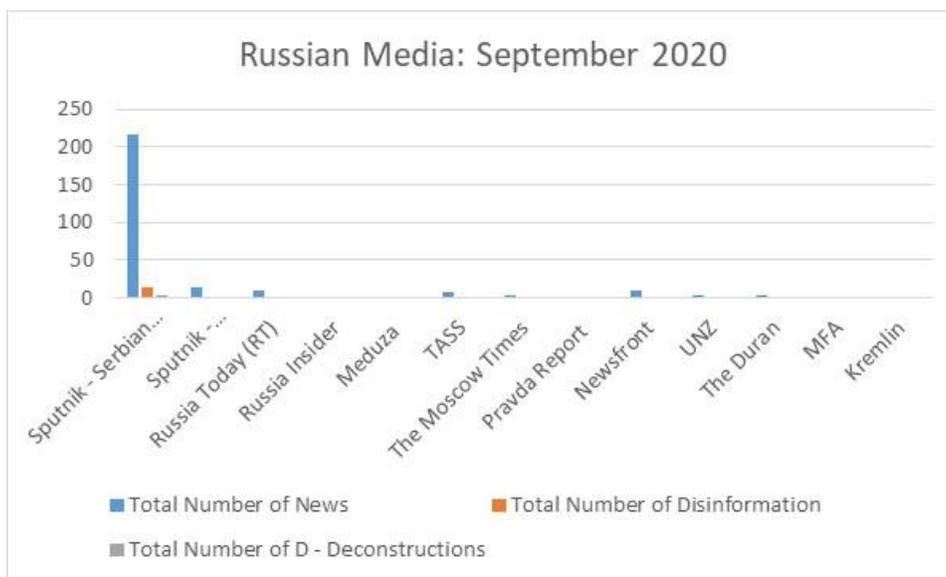
The monitoring of news published by the preselected Serbian media outlets shows that from September 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Tanjug has published 72, Informer 110, Novosti 40, B92 202, Kurir 19, Politika 36, and Naša Borba 42 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 8 out of the 521 news published by these media outlets had disinformation content.



The deconstruction of the news containing the most blatant disinformation (5 news) published in September 2020 indicates that the disinformation was focused on discrediting the legitimacy of Kosovo's statehood, presenting Belgrade as the sole beneficiary of the Washington Agreement between Kosovo and Serbia, discrediting Kosovo leaders, and portraying Kosovo as a state that endangers the Serbian minority and is planning to expel the remaining Serbs living in Kosovo<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Serbian Media, September 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Serbian\\_Media - Alert\\_September\\_fin.docx\\_902025.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Serbian_Media_-_Alert_September_fin.docx_902025.pdf)

On the other hand, the monitoring of data on the Russian media shows that from September 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Sputnik Serbia has published 217, Sputnik International 14, Russia Today 9, Russia Insider 2, Meduza none, TASS 7, The Moscow Time 4, Pravda Report none, Newsfront 9, UNZ 3, The Duran 3, Kremlin 1 and the Russian Foreign Ministry 2 news, related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. 20 out of the 271 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, discrediting the credibility of the US policy, denying war crimes committed by Serbia in Kosovo, accusing the US and NATO for war crimes against Serbian population, exaggerating the number of Serb casualties, accusing the Kosovo institutions for violating and sabotaging agreements reached in Washington and Brussels<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Kosovo Disinformation Alert, Russian Media, September 2020, [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Russian\\_Media - Alter September fin 871089.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Russian_Media_-_Alter_September_fin_871089.pdf)