



The Kremlin’s Weaponization of the Israel-Hamas War in Ukraine’s Information Space

Country Report by Elizaveta Polyakova

Since the onset of the war in Donetsk and Luhansk in 2014, Russia’s state-controlled information ecosystem has systematically fabricated myths and false narratives to justify its aggression against Ukraine.¹ These disinformation campaigns escalated in scale and sophistication following the full-scale invasion in 2022, yet the origins of much of the disinformation can be traced through recurring narratives and talking points.

A recent trend in Russia’s information warfare has been the deliberate attempt to link the war in Ukraine with the war in Gaza. The Kremlin’s messaging employs classic apologia, framing Ukraine’s government and military as “Nazis” while simultaneously blaming Kyiv for the war in Gaza. Claims such as “Ukrainians are being mobilized to the Israel Defense Forces’ voluntary brigade”² or “Ukrainians commit crimes against Israelis” are being circulated through sanctioned Russian outlets.³ At the same time, Russian officials have made overtly antisemitic statements. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has drawn a link between Hitler and Judaism⁴, while President Vladimir Putin has accused the West of installing a leader in Ukraine with Jewish roots to conceal what he described as “the anti-human essence that forms the foundation of the modern Ukrainian state” and its “glorification of Nazism.”⁵ In a striking contradiction, Russia presents itself as a defender of the Palestinian cause while simultaneously promoting anti-Muslim rhetoric. One persistent disinformation claim asserts that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is supplying weapons to Hamas.⁶ Such attempts to connect the two conflicts have undermined the integrity of the NATO alliance as

¹ EUvsDisinfo., [UKRAINE](#). 18 December, 2024

² Disinfo Detector., [Ukrainians are being mobilized into Israeli “volunteer battalions.”](#) *Detector.media*. 20 October, 2023

³ Ukraina.ru., [На “выкуп”: украинцы выпрашивали деньги у семьи погибшей пленной ХАМАС](#). 30 October, 2023

⁴ ICCT., [How Russia uses the Israel-Gaza Crisis in its disinformation campaign against the West](#). 8 December, 2023

⁵ Ebel, F., [Antisemitism charges swirl after Putin denigrates Zelensky’s Jewish roots](#). *Washington Post*. 25 September, 2023

⁶ Disinfo Detector., [Фейк: Україна продає зброю ХАМАСу](#). *Detector.media*., 9 October, 2023

it sows division between the allies. The “problematic Ukrainians” – a negative image projected by the Russian disinformation, polarized the public in many neighboring states, such as Bulgaria and Romania, which impacted the allocation of valuable strategic support, and provided pro-Russian local enablers with momentum to exert more political influence.⁷

By intertwining narratives of war in Ukraine and the war in Gaza, the Kremlin not only advances its strategic objectives but also exacerbates divisions among Ukraine’s Western allies, fostering distrust and weakening collective resolve. Understanding and countering these intertwined disinformation efforts is essential for maintaining international unity in support of Ukraine and safeguarding the integrity of global information ecosystems.

This research examines Russia’s strategic weaponization of the Israel-Hamas war in Ukraine’s information space, highlighting how Kremlin-aligned disinformation narratives exploit global crises to further geopolitical objectives, erode international support for Ukraine, and cultivate internal perceptions of defeat and isolation. Utilizing an analytical media intelligence tool Sensika, the study adopts a multi-method approach that integrates media monitoring and content analysis to analyze Russian-language online and social media content targeting audiences in both Ukraine-controlled and Temporarily Occupied Territories (TOT).⁸ While a comprehensive assessment of TOT-specific thematic coverage falls beyond the study’s primary scope, the presence of Russian proxy media in occupied Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk within the study’s sample of 297 media outlets indicates a high level of coordination in narrative dissemination. The analysis of 3,040 media articles reveals two dominant Kremlin-backed narratives: first, that the October 7 attacks on Israel served as a pretext for the West’s political, economic, and military disengagement from Ukraine; and second, that systemic corruption within Ukraine has facilitated the diversion of Western military aid to Hamas and other militant groups in the Middle East and North Africa.

The report is organized into four sections. First, it presents key quantitative findings alongside public perceptions of disinformation. Next, it explores dominant narratives in detail. The third section examines social media data from Telegram and YouTube to map the dissemination channels of malign messaging. Lastly, the conclusion outlines Ukraine’s counter-disinformation measures and strategies against hostile influence.

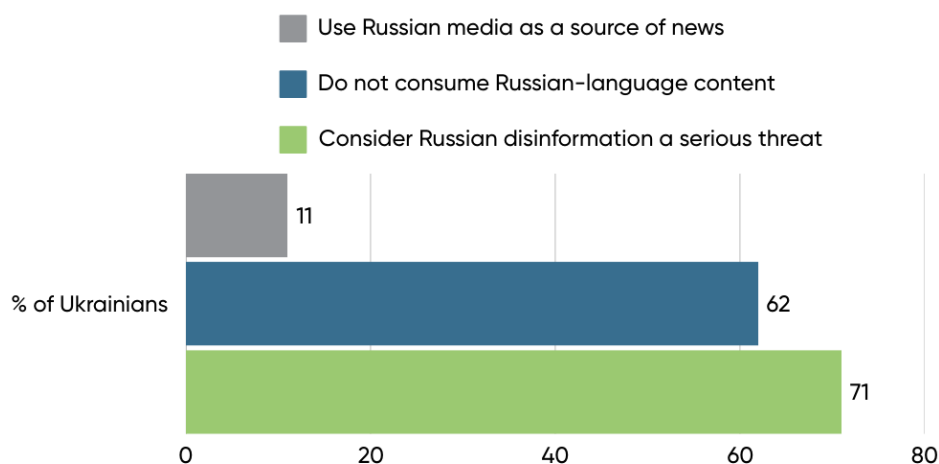
⁷ Georgiev, G., [Webs of Deceit: Mapping Online Information Manipulation Networks in Bulgaria and Romania](#). *Center for the Study of Democracy*, 27 Jan, 2025

⁸ The analysis of prevailing disinformation narratives targeting Ukrainian audiences in relation to the Israel-Hamas conflict captures the time period between October 7, 2023 and October 31, 2024. It is important to note that due to Sensika’s limited operational capability in comprehensively indexing websites that match the input of a given search criteria, some of the sources relevant to the objectives of this study could be missing from the sample.

The Kremlin’s Disinformation Narratives in Ukraine Related to the Israel-Hamas Conflict

Russian controlled media targeting Russian-speaking audiences in the Eastern European, Central Asian and Baltic regions is identified as the prime proliferator of locally-targeted propaganda campaigns, aiming to install polarizing sentiments and advance the Kremlin’s foundational myths about its war of aggression against Ukraine. Although usage of Russian media and Russian-language online content is decreasing, with only 11% of Ukrainians using Russian media as a source of news and 62% ceding the consumption of Russian-language content altogether, 71% consider the spread of Russian disinformation in social networks a serious threat to public safety.⁹ Notably, Ukrainians are particularly vulnerable to pro-Kremlin narratives, aimed at damaging national morale and magnifying the perceptions of international isolation, are most likely to be believed en masse.¹⁰

Figure 1: Media Habits and Perceptions of Disinformation in Ukraine (% of Ukrainians)



Source: CSD based on data from Internews; Democratic Initiatives of the Youth; Kyiv International Sociology Institute.

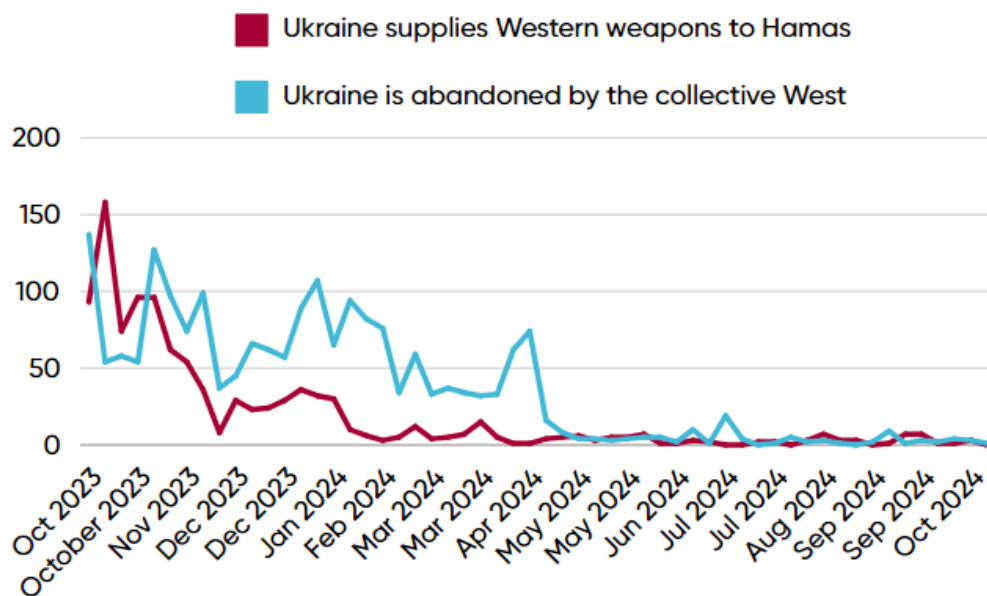
Two dominant disinformation narratives have been at the forefront of the disinformation campaign related to the Israel-Hamas conflict in the Ukrainian information space. The first alleges that Ukraine, due to widespread corruption, is diverting Western-supplied military aid

⁹ Internews, [“Ukrainian media, Use and Trust 2024”](#), November, 2024; Chuprij L.V, Nastoishcha, K.V and Marutian, R.R., [Культурні практики населення України під час війни](#) [“Cultural practices of Ukrainians in the time of war”] Kyiv: Демократичні ініціативи молоді [Democratic initiatives of the youth], 2023; Київський Міжнародний Інститут Соціології [Kyiv International Sociology Institute], [“Сприйняття українцями загроз поширення пропаганди в соціальних мережах та ставлення до заборони Телеграм”](#) [Ukrainians’ threat perceptions concerning the spread of propaganda in social networks and attitudes towards banning Telegram], September 9, 2024.

¹⁰Internews, [„Ukrainians increasingly identify information manipulation as an urgent problem affecting their lives while their exposure to Russian narratives intensifies”](#), November 7, 2024.

to Hamas. The second claims that the “collective West” is shifting its geopolitical focus toward Israel, leading to a decline in political, military, and economic support for Ukraine (Figure 2). These narratives appeared in a total of 3,039 articles within the monitoring period, accounting for 34% and 66% of the total coverage, respectively. Moreover, these claims align closely with prevalent disinformation narratives in Ukraine in 2024. 77% of survey respondents believe that "money allocated by international partners for weapons and ammunition is stolen by authorities," while 55% consider the statement that "the West is tired of helping Ukraine" to be true.¹¹ These narratives have been systematically republished and amplified by Russian influence networks, specifically targeting audiences in Ukraine-controlled areas who rely on Russian-language news. The impact is particularly pronounced in the Temporarily Occupied Territories (TOT) of Crimea, Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia, where the establishment of Russian centralized proxy media resulted in a complete capture of the information environment over the last decade. Techniques such as information blockade from Ukrainian and global internet media only exacerbated following the 2022 full-scale invasion, in turn intensifying the occupation authorities’ degree of influence over public opinion.¹²

Figure 2: Volume of Articles in Russian-language Websites Containing Disinformation about the Israel-Hamas War, Categorized by Narratives (Oct 2023 – Oct 2024)



Source: CSD, based on data from Sensika

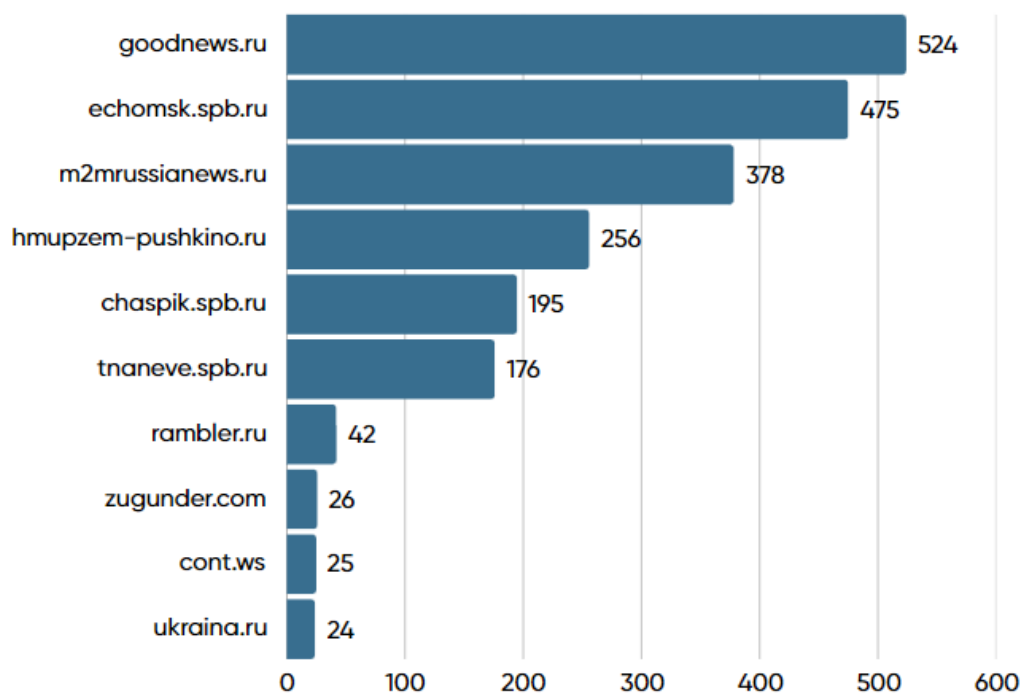
62% of all Russian-language articles were published by websites belonging to the top half of domestic website rankings (ranks one through five), with 22% and 17% coming from websites

¹¹ Internews, “[Ukrainian Media, Use and Trust in 2024](#)”, November, 2024

¹² NATO StratCom CoE, “[The Use of Russian Proxy Actors in the Media Environment in Ukraine: A Comparison between Occupied and Non-Occupied Areas, 2017–2023](#)”, November, 2024

belonging to the top two ranks, respectively¹³. Nonetheless, 571 articles (or 19% of all) belong to the lowest ranking, indicating a significant presence of sham websites producing large volumes of automated or semi-automated republished content that stems from top-ranking propaganda outlets such as *Mupzem-pushkino.ru*, *News.rambler.ru*, *Lenta.ru* and *Gazeta.ru*. The top-ten sources spreading disinformation function as key amplifiers of pro-Kremlin content, with the top-three sources accounting for 45% of the total volume of articles (Figure 3). Although not as numerically significant, *Ukraina.ru* is a cross-platform disinformation amplifier that occupies a nineteenth position in the list of top three hundred Russian propaganda Telegram channels in Ukraine with a following of 189,129 users.¹⁴ This reflects the adaptability of Russia’s informational presence in Ukraine, with Telegram serving as a key platform for circumventing media sanctions. On the other hand, the presence of outlets such as *Krymskaya Pravda* (‘Crimean Truth’ / *c-pravda.ru*) and *Pravda DNR* (“DNR Truth” / *dnr-pravda.ru*) in the sample highlights the centrality of the Kremlin’s strategy of exploitation and distortion of informational infrastructure in TOT. This approach extends beyond state-controlled narratives, functioning as a mechanism of cognitive influence aimed at shaping public perception and reinforcing Kremlin-aligned discourse.

Figure 3: Top 10 Sources of Articles in Russian-language Websites Containing Disinformation about the Israel-Hamas War (Oct 2023 – Oct 2024)



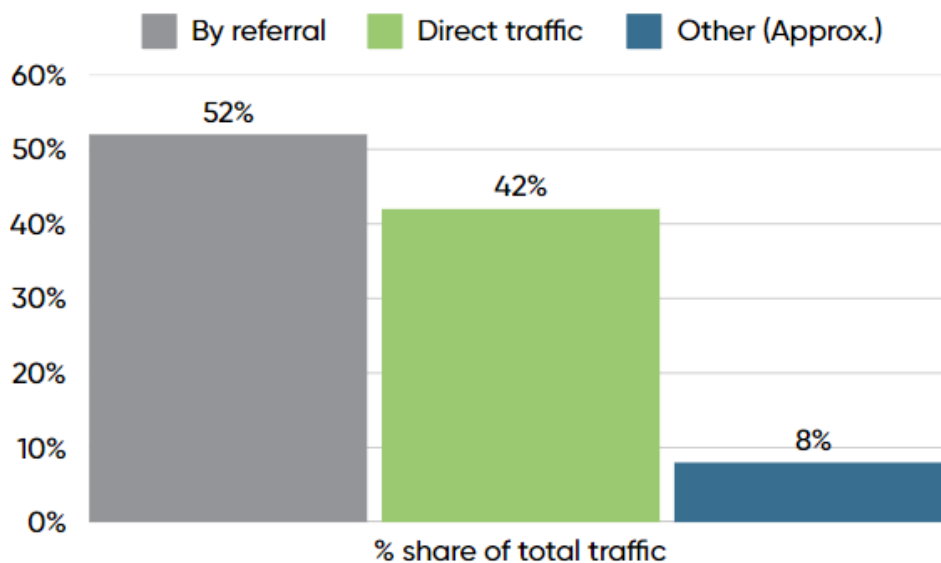
¹³ Ranking is provided by Sensika, which ranks websites on a scale of 1 to 10. Ranking is based on a mix of estimates of a site’s monthly unique visitors and monthly page views across desktop and mobile web traffic. The more visitors and views, the higher the site’s rank is. Highly visited mainstream websites typically belong in the first two ranks.

¹⁴ Riaboshtan, I. et al. “[Kremlin Hydra: 300 Telegram channels that poison the Ukrainian information space](#)”, *Detector Media*, December 14, 2022

Source: CSD, based on data from Sensika

Examining further, 52% of the total visits to the articles are estimated to have originated from a referral source, meaning that users have gained access to a particular website through a link from another site with similar content (Figure 4). Conversely, and more significantly, 42% of users gained access to the content from direct traffic, indicating a presence of a substantial readership base that regularly consumes pro-Russian content.

Figure 4: Article Audience by Traffic Source of Articles in Russian-language Websites Containing Disinformation about the Israel-Hamas War (Oct 2023 – Oct 2024)



Source: CSD, based on data from Sensika

Abandonment and Corruption: Core Disinformation Narratives Targeting Ukraine

Ukraine is abandoned by the collective West as a result of the Israel-Hamas war

The recurrent disinformation meta-narrative that the collective West, headed by the US, will cease its political, military and economic support to Ukraine as part of its strategic turn towards the Middle East, serves as one of the organizing points of Russia's instrumentalisation of the war in Gaza to foster the internal perceptions of Ukraine's imminent defeat and global isolation. Expanding on the claim that the Israel-Hamas war created a strategic opportunity for the U.S. to disengage from its proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, this narrative argues that the West's political will and resources originally allocated to supporting Ukraine's resistance will instead be redirected toward Israel. Although the narrative contains rhetorical inconsistencies - such as the claim that U.S. support for Ukraine will not be fully withdrawn, as this would amount to a de facto defeat in its proxy conflict with Russia - it consistently portrays Ukraine as a diminishing geopolitical asset that no longer holds strategic value for the West.

The narrative heavily relies on the authority of the late Russian propagandist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, frequently referencing his so-called 2019 “prophecy” about the future of Ukraine and the Middle East. The widespread circulation of this claim is so extensive that it effectively functions as a sub-narrative within the broader disinformation campaign. In a speech on the state-controlled program *Evening with Vladimir Soloviev* (Russia-1), Zhirinovskiy predicted that “in 2024, a new war in the Middle East will erupt, and everyone will forget about Ukraine”¹⁵. This framing reinforces one of the narrative’s core elements: the portrayal of international “tiredness” and “amnesia” regarding Ukraine, which seeks to exploit domestic anxieties about the prospect of international isolation.

Viktor Medvedchuk¹⁶ has been a key amplification figure and a central actor in Russia’s political and informational operations in Ukraine since 2014. *Politnavigator*, a pro-Kremlin outlet operating from temporarily occupied Crimea, invokes Medvedchuk to advance the argument that “NATO’s weapons are not a panacea” for ending the conflict.¹⁷ Instead, the narrative asserts that recognizing Russia’s national interests, particularly in the context of perceived Western disengagement, is the only viable path to peace. Russia is portrayed as a peacemaker, whose “balanced position and calls for negotiations” drastically differs from that of Washington in relation to Gaza and Ukraine.¹⁸ Through emphasizing grave civilian devastation in Gaza on the one hand, and advocating for the end of the war in Ukraine, which involves accepting the “fate” of “Russians’ and Ukrainians’ shared co-existence” on the other, the following narrative promotes a false sense of equivalence between the two wars and instrumentalizes the former to justify the suffering of the latter.

Ruslan Bortnik¹⁹, a political commentator, known for making regular appearances on Medvedchuk’s propaganda channels NewsOne, ZIK and 112, also constituted a significant local disinformation amplifier. However, his communication strategy differs by blending pro-Kremlin narratives with pro-Ukrainian and pro-European messaging. The following practice enables the strategy of camouflaging Russian propaganda through the instrumentalization of neutral messages to target vulnerable audiences susceptible to Russia’s influence. For instance, a pro-Russian Ukrainian outlet *Strana.Ua*²⁰ presents an exemplary case of such strategy in Ukrainian media landscape in the post full scale invasion period, presenting Bortnik’s claims of the decline in Western military and economic aid as natural, while emphasizing the negative long-term impacts the following development could bring to the prospect of Ukraine’s victory²¹. To further legitimize this narrative, fabricated statements

¹⁵ RIA News “В сети вспомнили ,пророчество’ Жириновского об Украине и Среднем Востоке” [The network remembered Zhirinovskiy’s ‘prophecy’ about Ukraine and Middle East], October 9, 2023

¹⁶ Detector Media, „[Pro-Russian, Partisan, Sanctioned: How Russia Parasited Ukrainian Television](#)”, September 29, 2024

¹⁷ Vorokhtich, A., “[When a hegemon takes of the colonial glasses: the lessons from Gaza for Ukraine and the world](#)”, *Politnavigator*, October 13, 2023

¹⁸ Ryabov, M., “[We do not have a right to revenge. Zatulyn against the nuclear strike and Mossad’s methods](#)”, *Politnavigator*, November 8, 2023

¹⁹ Lavryshin, Y., „[Opposition Patriots. Old Faces of Pro-Russian ‘Experts on New YouTube Channels](#)”, *Detector Media:Media Sapiens*, March 2, 2024

²⁰ Detector Media Videoteka, “[What is wrong with Strana.Ua?](#)”, October 8, 2024

²¹ Strana.ua, “[Ближневосточный фитиль. Что стоит за вторжением ХАМАС в Израиль и каковы последствия для мира и Украины](#)” [The Middle Eastern fuse. What does Hamas incursion mean for Israel and what are the consequences for Ukraine], October 9, 2023

attributed to Western officials are deployed, such as a misattributed 'quote' from Italy's Minister of Defense, Guido Crosetto. Despite Crosetto's recent visit²² to Kyiv reaffirming Italy's commitment to continued military support, the false statement claims that Italy's inability to support Ukraine is not a political decision but a pragmatic response to munitions shortages.²³

Despite variations in rhetorical framing, the core implication of this narrative remains consistent: advocating for a reassessment of Ukraine's formal position and pushing for negotiations, aligning with broader Russian strategic objectives.

Ukraine is supplying Western weapons to Hamas

The claim that Ukraine facilitated the October 7 attacks on Israel by reselling Western-supplied weapons to Hamas constitutes a central pillar of the Kremlin's disinformation campaign. This narrative serves a dual purpose: first, to tarnish Ukraine's international standing by portraying it as a state sponsor of terrorism that fuels global instability; and second, to erode Western public support for continued military assistance.

Framing Ukraine as a "corruption-filled black hole of the West's reckless weapons provisions",²⁴ the narrative suggests a large-scale diversion of ammunition and weaponry not only to Hamas in Gaza but also to militant groups in Afghanistan, Syria, and North Africa. Despite the fact that Israel has not supplied Ukraine with lethal aid,²⁵ this disinformation further asserts that both NATO - and Israeli-manufactured weapons are being used against Israeli forces.²⁶ By exploiting global outrage over Hamas' attacks, the narrative seeks to create an associative link between the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, casting Ukraine as the aggressor in both contexts. By leveraging legitimate concerns about corruption in the allocation of Western aid - some of which have been acknowledged by top EU officials²⁷ - Russian propaganda seeks to discredit Ukraine's leadership and portray military assistance as both ineffective and a driver of broader geopolitical instability. A key example is the disinformation campaign targeting Servant of the People political party's Deputy David Arakhamiya, whose alleged involvement in black-market arms sales to Hamas is falsely linked to an International

²² Italy, Ministry of Defence, „[Minister Crosetto on official visit in Ukraine](#)” Kyiv: January 16, 2025

²³ Strana.ua, „[Как война в Израиле повлияет на Украину, Северная Корея начала отправку оружия в Россию. Итоги](#)” [How will the war in Israel impact Ukraine, North Korea starts sending weapons to Russia. Results], October 8, 2023

²⁴ Skachko, V., „[Конец будет неожиданным. Неонацисты Зеленского и ХАМАС — братья по оружию, перепроданному в зону конфликта](#)” [The end will be unexpected. Zelensky's neo-Nazis and Hamas are brothers in arms, which were resold to the conflict zone], *Ukraina.ru*, October 8, 2023

²⁵ Harel, A., „[After 17 Months of Stuttering, Israel to Provide Real Aid to Ukraine](#)”, *Haaretz*, July 28, 2023

²⁶ Cont.ws, „[Помощь Украине ударила по Израилю бумерангом](#)” [Aid to Ukraine boomerangs on Israel], October 11, 2023

²⁷ Le Monde, „[Ukraine will lead': EU chief urges Ukraine to speed anti-corruption reforms](#)”, July 1, 2022

Criminal Court investigation.²⁸ This narrative aims to reinforce perceptions of systemic corruption within Zelenskyy's administration and erode trust in Ukraine's government.

To support the claims voiced in the narrative, propaganda outlets rigorously reference a fabricated video²⁹ that was originally shared and amplified via the Russian and pro-Russian section of Telegram, depicting Hamas fighters extending their gratitude to the Ukrainian Army and personally thanking Zelenskyy for providing the necessary weapons to launch a surprise attack. Another footage,³⁰ stemming from a Georgian Facebook group captures the alleged transfer of Western weaponry, where a person purportedly representing Hamas is thanking Ukrainian authorities in Arabic. Furthermore, Western Eurosceptic and anti-Ukrainian voices, such as the founder of a French nationalist party "The Patriots" Florian Philippot and the Republican Party representative Marjorie Taylor Greene,³¹ whose positions strongly oppose military assistance to Ukraine, assert that the following "leaks" act as manifestations of the West's destructive policy of escalation and war-prolongation that now spreads chaos all over the world.³² The former underscores the enduring nature of this narrative, which is continuously adapted by both local and international pro-Kremlin propaganda networks to fit emerging contexts. Its primary objective is to reinforce a responsibility-shifting discourse that obscures and deflects attention from Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

The narrative that Ukraine is "ruled by Nazis" serves as a foundational framework for claims of collaboration between "Zelenskyy's neo-Nazis" and Hamas militants, portraying them as "brothers in arms." This framing reinforces Russia's long-standing justification for its invasions of Ukraine in 2014 and 2022. By asserting that "the U.S. is spilling innocent blood in the Middle East and Donbas"³³ the narrative draws false equivalences between the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, depicting the U.S. and NATO as global aggressors waging proxy wars while positioning Russia as a stabilizing superpower uniquely capable of conflict mediation. Additionally, by echoing the disinformation narrative that Ukraine committed genocide in Donbas, pro-Kremlin propaganda directly compares the Ukrainian Armed Forces' military operations to the atrocities committed by both Hamas and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Israel and Gaza. Zelenskyy's Jewish identity is also instrumentalized within this discourse,

²⁸ Echo Moskvy "[Спикер ГД Володин заявил что СВО остановила начало третьей мировой войны](#)" [GD Speaker Volodin stated that Special Military Operation prevented third world war], 2023

²⁹ [Z/V Rosiya MyVmeste](#), Telegram, November 1, 2023

³⁰ [Bebe Bogo](#), Facebook, October 8, 2023

³¹ Skachko. V "[Пиррова победа двух народов. ХАМАС и Израиль оказались в кровавой ситуации](#)" [Pirrova victory of two peoples. Hamas and Israel found themselves in a bloody situation], *Ukraina.ru*, October 9, 2023

³² Kondrateva.V., "[Во Франции признали утечку американского оружия с Украины на Ближний Восток](#)" [France admitted the weapons leak from Ukraine to the Middle East"], *Lenta.ru*, Oct 9, 2023

³³ Ryabov, M., "[Израильская ракета ударила по больнице с детьми. Казалось бы, при чем здесь Украина](#)" [Israeli missile hits hospital with children. What does Ukraine have to do with it?], *Politnavigator*, October 17, 2023

being framed as evidence of his internalized hatred toward Jewish people, further reinforcing antisemitic tropes within the Kremlin's broader information warfare strategy.³⁴

The Social Media Front: Telegram and YouTube

Kremlin-backed narratives do not exist in isolation; they are strategically amplified through social media platforms that allow misinformation to spread rapidly and influence public opinion. Among these, Telegram (TG) has become a central platform for the dissemination of propaganda, as its opaque reporting practices and lax content moderation shield much of its content from public scrutiny. This creates significant challenges for fact-checkers, who struggle to access and address the misinformation circulating on the platform. While Ukrainian media and civil societies have been effective in debunking blatant falsehoods, they often face difficulties countering emotionally charged and manipulative narratives that resonate deeply with certain audiences.

One of the most pervasive Kremlin-backed disinformation narratives circulating on pro-Russian Telegram channels is the alleged "black market sale of weapons to Hamas," a claim debunked by multiple fact-checkers³⁵. This narrative leverages decontextualized and manipulated imagery to fabricate a sense of legitimacy. The audiovisual nature of Telegram's communication ecosystem plays a crucial role in this process, offering an alternative mode of engagement that appeals to politically mobilized audiences susceptible to Russian influence. Videos purporting to show weapons transfers between Ukrainian and Hamas representatives serve as attention-grabbing content designed to create an illusion of empirical evidence³⁶. By visually staging these claims, such content constructs a false sense of credibility, reinforcing the perception that the disinformation is grounded in reality.

A parallel disinformation narrative builds on the long-running Kremlin campaign to delegitimize the Azov Brigade, portraying it as a neo-Nazi formation to justify Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine under the pretext of "de-Nazification".³⁷ In this context, pro-Russian Telegram channels have disseminated claims that Azov fighters not only trained Hamas militants but also supplied them with chemical weapons allegedly used in the October 2023 attacks on Israel. This narrative serves a dual purpose: reinforcing pre-existing Kremlin propaganda about Azov while exploiting geopolitical tensions to further discredit Ukraine on the international stage. By framing these allegations within a broader ecosystem of disinformation, such claims seek to legitimize Russia's military actions against Ukraine.

³⁴ Stoyakin, V., "[Еврей Зеленский становится подозреваемым в причастности к убийствам евреев](#)" [Jew Zelensky becomes suspect in involvement of murders of the Jews], *Discred.ru* October 10, 2023

³⁵ Disinfo Detector, "[Фейк: Україна продає зброю ХАМАСу](#)" [Fake: Ukraine sells weapons to Hamas] October 9, 2023

³⁶ *Otryad Kovpaka*, "[ХАМАС открыто поблагодарил Украину за продажу им оружия](#)" [Hamas openly thanks Ukraine for selling them weapons], Telegram, October 7, 2023

³⁷ *Sheih Tamir*, Telegram, November 9, 2023; Vox Ukraine, "[ФЕЙК: «Азов» тренував бойовиків ХАМАС](#)", [Fake: 'Azov' trained Hamas militants], November 30, 2023

Examining further, YouTube constitutes the second most popular social media platform for news consumption in Ukraine after Telegram, in turn attracting pro-Russian propagandists such as Anatoliy Sharij to proliferate malign content and establish regular communication with audiences susceptible to Russian disinformation in the face of existing media sanctions. Sharij is a former journalist-in-exile, founder of pro-Russian political party *Party of Sharij*, and Russian special services collaborator that is being tried for national treason and targeted by Ukrainian sanctions³⁸. Sharij's YouTube channel @SuperSharij³⁹ has the following of 3.23 million subscribers, where he uploads political commentary videos on a daily basis.

The examination of his coverage of the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war not only demonstrates the presence of the above identified disinformation narrative but an acute degree of analogous message framing and propagandistic language constructions. For instance, the titles of the videos "Israel and other strange coincidences"⁴⁰ (827K views), "Ukraine 's money is being sent to Israel?"⁴¹ (641K views), "Zelensky fears Israel"⁴² (672K views) and "Kiev prepares for uneasy decisions"⁴³ (686K views) outline the key semantic tropes of the narrative and demonstrate the fluidity of Russian propaganda dispersal across various information networks. Through heavily relying on conspiracy-rich content to sustain his claims, in his October 8 video Sharij claims that October 7 attacks present a strategic opportunity for the US to pull out militarily and financially from Ukraine, suggesting that the U.S took part in their orchestration. Furthermore, the blogger directly refers to Zherenovsky's prophecy, calling it "magnificent", to bolster the assertion that Ukraine's only viable path forward, given shifting geopolitical dynamics, is territorial concessions and negotiations with Russia.

³⁸ Detector Media „[Propagandist Sharij to be tried for treason](#)”, July 28, 2023

³⁹ [SuperSharij](#), YouTube

⁴⁰ SuperSharij, "[Израиль и странности](#)" [Israel and other strange coincidences], YouTube, October 8, 2023

⁴¹ SuperSharij, "[Деньги Украины отправят в израиль?](#)" [Ukraine's money is being sent to Israel?], YouTube, October 10, 2023

⁴² SuperSharij, "[Зеленский испуган Израилем](#)" [Zelensky fears Israel], YouTube, October 11, 2023

⁴³ SuperSharij, "[Киев готовят к непростым решениям](#)" [Kiev prepares for uneasy decisions], YouTube, October 17, 2023

Securing the Information Space: The Future of Ukraine's Disinformation Response

Ukraine has taken a proactive and multifaceted approach to countering Russian disinformation, combining rapid response mechanisms, extensive monitoring, and public education to fortify its information space. Government institutions, civil society organizations, and independent fact-checkers such as the Center for Strategic Communications (CSC), the Center for Countering Disinformation (CCD), StopFake, and VoxUkraine play key roles in identifying and debunking falsehoods. Initiatives like the Disinformation Coordination Hub further enhance cooperation, ensuring a unified response to Kremlin influence campaigns. These efforts have significantly strengthened media literacy, with the percentage of Ukrainians possessing above-average media literacy rising from 55% in 2020 to 81% in 2022.⁴⁴

However, as the Kremlin continuously adapts its playbook, Ukraine must remain vigilant. The Israel-Hamas war has introduced new vectors of disinformation, allowing Kremlin-aligned actors to frame Ukraine as globally isolated and falsely link Kyiv to arms trafficking and corruption. Despite the decline in personal consumption of Russian media, these narratives remain effective, particularly in occupied territories and among audiences susceptible to Russian-language content.

Ukraine's response demonstrates the importance of adaptability, resilience, and international cooperation in combating information warfare. While fact-checking, warning labels, and prebunking initiatives have curbed the spread of falsehoods, the challenge remains in ensuring engagement with truthful content. The evolving nature of Russian disinformation underscores the need for continued investment in media literacy, digital resilience, and cross-border coordination, ensuring that Ukraine not only defends itself in the information space but also serves as a model for democratic resistance against malign influence worldwide.

⁴⁴ Detector Media, "[Media literacy index of Ukrainians: 2020-2022](#)", April 21, 2023

European | **MEDIA AND
INFORMATION** | Fund

Managed by
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

This report is supported by the European Media and Information Fund. The sole responsibility for the content lies with the author(s) and it may not necessarily reflect the positions of the EMIF and the Fund Partners, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the European University Institute.