



УКРАЇНА-2050
UKRAINE-2050

Report №2 of the Permanent International Media Monitoring Mission on Disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian Diaspora for the period from 24 August 2021 to 24 February 2022

On 13 December 2016, Garry Kasparov, former world chess champion and well-known Russian political activist, tweeted that: *“The point of modern propaganda isn't only to misinform or push an agenda. It is to exhaust your critical thinking, to annihilate truth.”*

It is therefore crucial to raise awareness among the general population that the Kremlin is effectively weaponizing information and has included disinformation as an integral part of its hybrid aggression against the West.

For Ukraine, this issue is even more important since Putin relies on disinformation to deny the very existence of the Ukrainian people and Ukrainian statehood.

For instance, on 12 July 2021, in an article titled *“On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians,”* Putin wrote:

“[...] when I was asked about Russian-Ukrainian relations, I said that Russians and Ukrainians were one people – a single whole. These words were not driven by some short-term considerations or prompted by the current political context. It is what I have said on numerous occasions and what I firmly believe.”

and, according to Putin’s imperialist revisionist history:

“The name “Ukraine” was used more often in the meaning of the Old Russian word “okraina” (periphery), [...], referring to various border territories. And the word “Ukrainian”, [...], originally referred to frontier guards who protected the external borders” of Russia.

In view of this, Ukraine and its 20 million strong Ukrainian diaspora must make every effort to counter such disinformation and ensure that the international community forms its opinions and makes its decisions about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora on the basis of accurate information.

To help achieve these goals, on 25 January 2021, NGO “Ukraine-2050” launched the Permanent International Media Monitoring Mission on Disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora, which is:

- 1) monitoring the media, social networks and other information resources in various countries in the world for disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora;
- 2) analyzing the findings of this monitoring; and
- 3) taking measures to help counter such disinformation.

Our Mission has 168 members from 56 countries, who are doing media monitoring on a voluntary basis in 42 languages of the world since 4 June 2021.

Since our Mission wishes to sensitize the general public and to raise awareness of disinformation, we conducted three online trainings on disinformation – in Ukrainian on [27 March](#) and [30 October 2021](#) and in English on [15 May 2021](#). These online trainings were recorded and can be viewed on the NGO “Ukraine-2050” YouTube channel.

The first Report of our Mission was officially presented on 31 August 2021 and covered the period from 4 June 2021 – the official start of the work of the Mission – to 24 August 2021 – the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's renewed independence.

Today's Report covers the six-month period from 24 August 2021 to the beginning of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

This Report highlights the information base that was being created by Russian propaganda before Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine.

The Report contains a list of identified disinformation narratives which were grouped into metanarratives to provide a better understanding of the general picture of Russia's information war against Ukraine.

Five disinformation metanarratives are presented, including their purpose and a list of disinformation narratives forming part of them:

I) “Ukraine is a substate” – a disinformation metanarrative of Russian propaganda, which aims to deny the existence of the Ukrainian people as separate from the Russian people and to discredit Ukrainian statehood.

The following disinformation narratives are documented within this metanarrative:

1. Ukrainians and Russians – one people;
2. Historically, Ukraine was the periphery (“okraina”) of the former Russian empire, and Ukrainians were border guards;
3. Ukraine does not have its own history and language;
4. Ukraine arose as a result of the actions of the Bolsheviks of Russia and Lenin;
5. Ukraine steals Cossack traditions from Russia;
6. Ukraine's economic collapse is inevitable.

II) “Ukrainian governing authorities are neo-Nazi, illegitimate and discredited” – a disinformation metanarrative of Russian propaganda, which aims to discredit the Ukrainian governing authorities and divide Ukrainian society.

The following disinformation narratives are documented within this metanarrative:

1. The Ukrainian governing authorities are illegitimate and under the external control of the United States;
2. Neo-Nazis have seized power in Ukraine;
3. The Maidan was an armed coup d'état supported by Western intelligence services that led to the loss of Crimea, the civil war and the deterioration of the quality of life for Ukrainians;
4. The “civil war” in Ukraine since 2014 is not the result of Russia's actions, the aggressor is Ukraine itself, which is waging war against its own people;
5. The war in Ukraine since 2014 is being supported in the interests of the oligarchs and with their assistance;

6. Ukrainians are dissatisfied with their governing authorities, which will cause destabilization, mass protests and early elections;
7. The Crimean platform is a neo-Nazi platform for encroaching on Russia's territorial integrity;
8. Ukraine's gas transportation facilities for the transit of Russian gas to Europe are unreliable, as is Ukraine as a partner for the supply of energy resources, therefore Russia's construction of Nord Stream 2 is fully justified.

III) “The West exploits Ukraine and is a destructive force for the world order” – a disinformation metanarrative of Russian propaganda, which aims to present the West led by the US as an exploiter of Ukraine for its geopolitical interests and a threat to world order, and to sow distrust in Ukrainian society of the West.

The following disinformation narratives are documented within this metanarrative:

1. The United States intimidates with statements about Russian preparations for an attack on Ukraine, but the real motive is to demonize Russia;
2. The West wants to use Ukraine to weaken Russia, encourage Ukraine to go to war but not provide it any assistance in the event of a Russian attack;
3. New strains of the coronavirus are part of a process to modernize biological weapons, which are tested on Ukrainians in secret laboratories in Ukraine under the leadership of the United States;
4. The first meeting of US President Joe Biden with President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy meant nothing to the United States, and will not bring any results for Ukraine since Ukraine is of no serious interest for the United States;
5. Nord Stream 2 does not threaten EU's energy security, but rather strengthens it by increasing gas supply facilities to the EU and reducing its price;
6. Russia has been promised that NATO would not expand into the territory of countries of the former Eastern Bloc.

IV) “The Russian national minority is the object of oppression in Ukraine” – a disinformation metanarrative of Russian propaganda, which aims to form beliefs about the illegal and forcible ousting of “everything Russian” in Ukraine: language, church, history, and culture, the Russian minority, “pro-Russian media” and politicians.

The following disinformation narratives are documented within this metanarrative:

1. Oppression of the Russian language and forced Ukrainization is being realized with the Language Law;
2. Discrimination and humiliation of the Russian national minority is realized through the Law on Indigenous Peoples;
3. Unprecedented neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism are prevalent in Ukraine;
4. Monuments to the “Great Patriotic War” and the USSR are desecrated in Ukraine;
5. The Ecumenical Patriarch divides Orthodoxy;
6. The President of Ukraine is exercising repressive measures against “pro-Russian media”.

V) “There exists an external threat to Russia” – a disinformation metanarrative of Russian propaganda, which aims to intimidate NATO/USA and Ukraine with war, represent them as aggressors, who plan to retake Russian-occupied territories by military means, as well as to justify the need for Russia to resolve the "Ukrainian issue" and the conflict in the Donbas by military means.

The following disinformation narratives are documented within this metanarrative:

1. Russia is a peaceful state and does not threaten anyone;

2. Ukraine is an aggressor and is preparing to reclaim the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts by military means;
3. The United States is an aggressor and will try to resolve the war in the Donbas by using Ukraine;
4. NATO countries have in fact already occupied Ukraine, on whose territory there are thousands of US and NATO troops, as well as NATO military facilities and infrastructure;
5. Ukraine opposes the Minsk Agreements and disrupts the peace process;
6. The Ukrainian military is demoralized and does not want to fight;
7. The Ukrainian military is shelling the population and civilian infrastructure of the LPR/DPR;
8. The Ukrainian military committed genocide in the Donbas;
9. Kyiv's provocations could force Russia to use its armed forces to resolve the conflict in the Donbas;
10. Ukraine will not be able to withstand a war with Russia and will be defeated, according to various estimates within anywhere from a few hours to a few days.

The Mission continues its work by monitoring and analyzing Russian disinformation during Russia's genocidal war against Ukraine, the results of which the Mission will present in the next Report.

In closing, I wish to remind everyone that all relevant information regarding our Mission is available in the “*Media*” section of the web site of NGO “Ukraine 2050”: www.ukraine-2050.org .

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on Disinformation about Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora

The Non-Governmental Organization “Ukraine-2050” is a non-profit organization established to help implement, within one generation – by 2050 – strategies for the sustainable development of Ukraine as a fully independent, territorially integral, democratic, reformed and economically competitive European state.