

DISINFORMATION TRENDS MONITORING SNAPSHOT 4



29 October - 11 November 2024

SUMMARY



DFRLab conducts a **bimonthly analysis** of monitoring periods from a search query including Ukrainian, Russian and English languages to identify when spikes of CBRN disinformation narratives are spreading. This report (29 October - 11 November) saw a **wave of claims by Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD)** that **Ukraine is planning to seize Russian nuclear facilities; allegations of Ukraine's dirty bomb development capacity; unfounded statement of Ukrainian forces using gas against Russian forces; as well as re-emergence of the bioweapon labs narrative.**



CHEMICAL DISINFORMATION:

Allegations about Ukraine's use of chemical weapons and suspicious recruitment messages seeking chemists on temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine



BIOLOGICAL DISINFORMATION:

Re-emergence of claims of the presence of US-funded biolabs in Ukraine



RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR DISINFORMATION:

Unfounded claims of Ukraine's plans to take over nuclear power plants (NPPs) and continued allegations about "dirty bomb" development

EXAMPLES OF DISINFORMATION NARRATIVE TRENDS

CHEMICAL DISINFORMATION

Sources: Telegram; X Twitter/X

- False claims about Ukrainian forces using poisonous gas against Russian soldiers ([link](#))
- Alleged recruitment of chemists in Donetsk with unusual high salary offers through anonymous accounts within local advertising channels

BIOLOGICAL DISINFORMATION

Sources:  *Twitter/X*

- Claims about CIA-founded biolabs in Ukraine
- Russian demands for investigation of alleged Ukrainian bioweapon labs

RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR DISINFORMATION

Sources:  *Telegram*;  *Twitter/X*

- Multiple Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claims about Ukraine planning to seize Russian nuclear facilities (Kursk, Kalinin, Leningrad NPPs) ([link](#))
- Allegations of Ukrainian attempts to attack Zaporizhzhia NPP using HIMARS and drones ([link](#))
- Claims about Ukrainian "nuclear blackmail" tactics ([link](#))
- Assertions about Ukrainian saboteurs targeting Russian nuclear facilities ([link](#))
- Repeated allegations about Ukraine's capability to create a dirty bomb from spent nuclear fuel
- Claims by Russian official Igor Kirillov, Chief of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection Troops of the Russian Armed Forces, about Ukraine's dirty bomb development capacity ([link](#))
- Suggestions that Ukraine's alleged dirty bomb development explains their requests to strike deeper into Russia with Western equipment

Коммерсантъ

Balitsky spoke about the Ukrainian Armed Forces' attempt to seize the Zaporizhzhya NPP

The Russian Armed Forces have thwarted an attempt by Ukrainian troops to seize the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), said Yevhen Balitsky, Governor of the Zaporizhzhya Region. He specified that the enemy planned to use the HIMARS missile system and attack drones.



IDENTIFYING DISINFORMATION TRENDS

The Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP) is committed to strengthening WMD disarmament and nonproliferation efforts. Disinformation campaigns significantly undermine cooperative threat reduction efforts. The GP Counter WMD Disinformation Initiative aims to track ongoing narratives, understand their impacts and counter state-sponsored or state-adjacent disinformation across Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) threats.

Narrative Trend Monitoring: As part of the GP efforts to identify, understand, and mitigate hostile CBRN disinformation, the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab) conducts a bimonthly search query of state-sponsored or state-adjacent disinformation narratives. This real-time detection allows the initiative to swiftly recognize, isolate and respond to disinformation narratives and networks as they occur.

Methodology: This snapshot report is created from a search query that includes content in Ukrainian, Russian, and English languages, providing an extended search base and corpus of analysis and scale. The focus of the query is centered around CBRN-related messages about the Russian War on Ukraine on social media platforms and online news websites. The report provides examples of notable messages that are likely to include disinformation or key discussions that might be used in mis/disinformation in the future.

Disclaimer: Links are provided for published news sources of official state accounts; links to private accounts are excluded for privacy preservation reasons.