

COUNTERING RADIOLOGICAL & NUCLEAR DISINFORMATION:

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY



BRIEFING NOTE | SEPTEMBER 2026

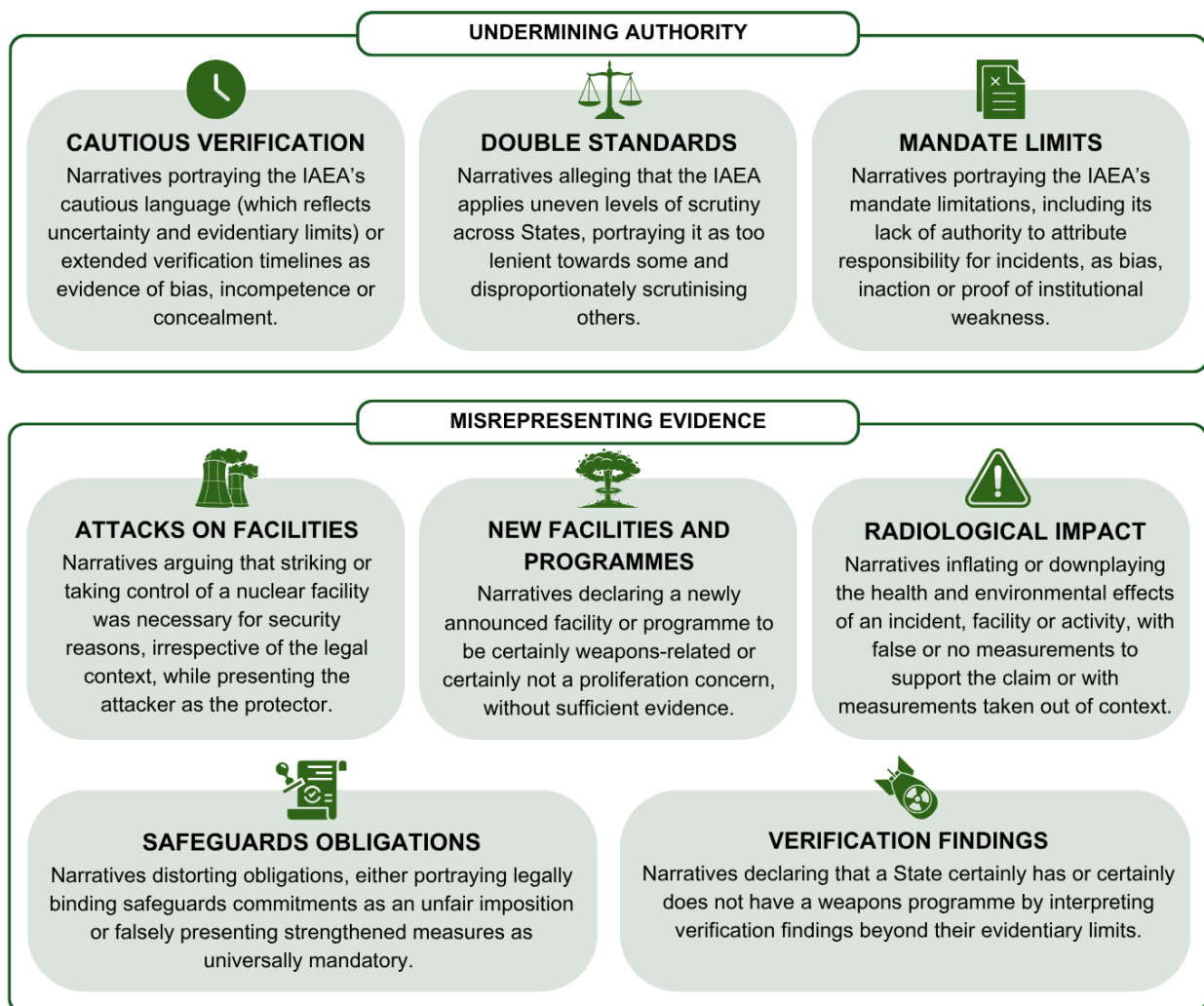
Disinformation by State-sponsored and State-adjacent actors has been observed across multilateral nuclear fora and **will likely feature at the 70th session of the IAEA General Conference (GC)**. Further information can be found at www.GPWMDCounterDisinfo.com.*

WHY IS DISINFORMATION A RISK AT THE IAEA GC?

Radiological and nuclear (RN) disinformation refers to **deliberately false or manipulated information** concerning RN equipment, technologies or materials. Disinformation can target the IAEA by portraying cautious language, extended verification timelines or mandate limitations as bias or failure. It can also target Member States through manipulative representation of IAEA findings and evidence concerning their RN activities. As such, RN disinformation can erode trust in the IAEA's impartiality and technical authority, fuel diplomatic friction among Member States and disrupt GC negotiations. Understanding common disinformation narratives and tactics can better equip delegations to **pre-emptively debunk falsehoods, alert others to recurring patterns and build organisational and state resilience** against the harmful effects of RN disinformation.

WHAT NARRATIVES COULD BE ENCOUNTERED AT THE GC?

The following false or misleading narratives are among those most likely to be encountered at the IAEA GC.



* *Definitively identifying disinformation can be challenging, as intent and attribution are often unclear. For brevity, this note adopts a broad definition of "disinformation" that includes other information operations, as they mislead the audience and shape perception and behaviour.*

WHERE MIGHT RN DISINFORMATION FEATURE AT THE GC?

Each setting below carries a different risk for disinformation spread: the formal record lends more authority to claims, but when encountered in semi-formal and informal settings, disinformation is less likely to be scrutinised or verified in real time and can spread more rapidly.



Plenary & Rights of Reply

Misleading claims may be inserted into official records.



Side Events & Scientific Forum

Expert framing may lend credibility to selective or poorly sourced technical claims.



Exhibition Floor

Printed and displayed material can circulate without independent review.



Corridors & Informal Contact

Claims and materials passed on in conversation propagate without an identifiable source.



Reports from the Press

A false or misleading claim or remark may be reported within minutes, long before it is verified.



Digital Media

Clips and quotes may be stripped of context and amplified far beyond the venue.

HOW SHOULD YOU RESPOND TO DISINFORMATION AT THE GC?



1. Spot & Check

Watch for potentially false narratives and quietly verify with trusted technical experts and sources. Escalate through internal channels to relevant leadership.



2. Select Response

Assess whether the narrative is strategically significant and spreading widely enough to warrant a response (engagement could amplify the falsehood).



3. Coordinate

If deemed significant, coordinate the response with the capital, the IAEA and trusted third parties, including experts and organisations, to keep message consistency.



4. Debunk

Correct the false claim with factual language, clarify the IAEA's mandate and evidentiary limits and support individuals who are personally targeted.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Scan the QR codes below to explore more information on countering RN disinformation:

RN DISINFORMATION IN
DIPLOMATIC
COMMUNICATIONS



EXAMPLE TACTICS AND
NARRATIVES



BEST PRACTICES FOR
COUNTERING RN DISINFO

