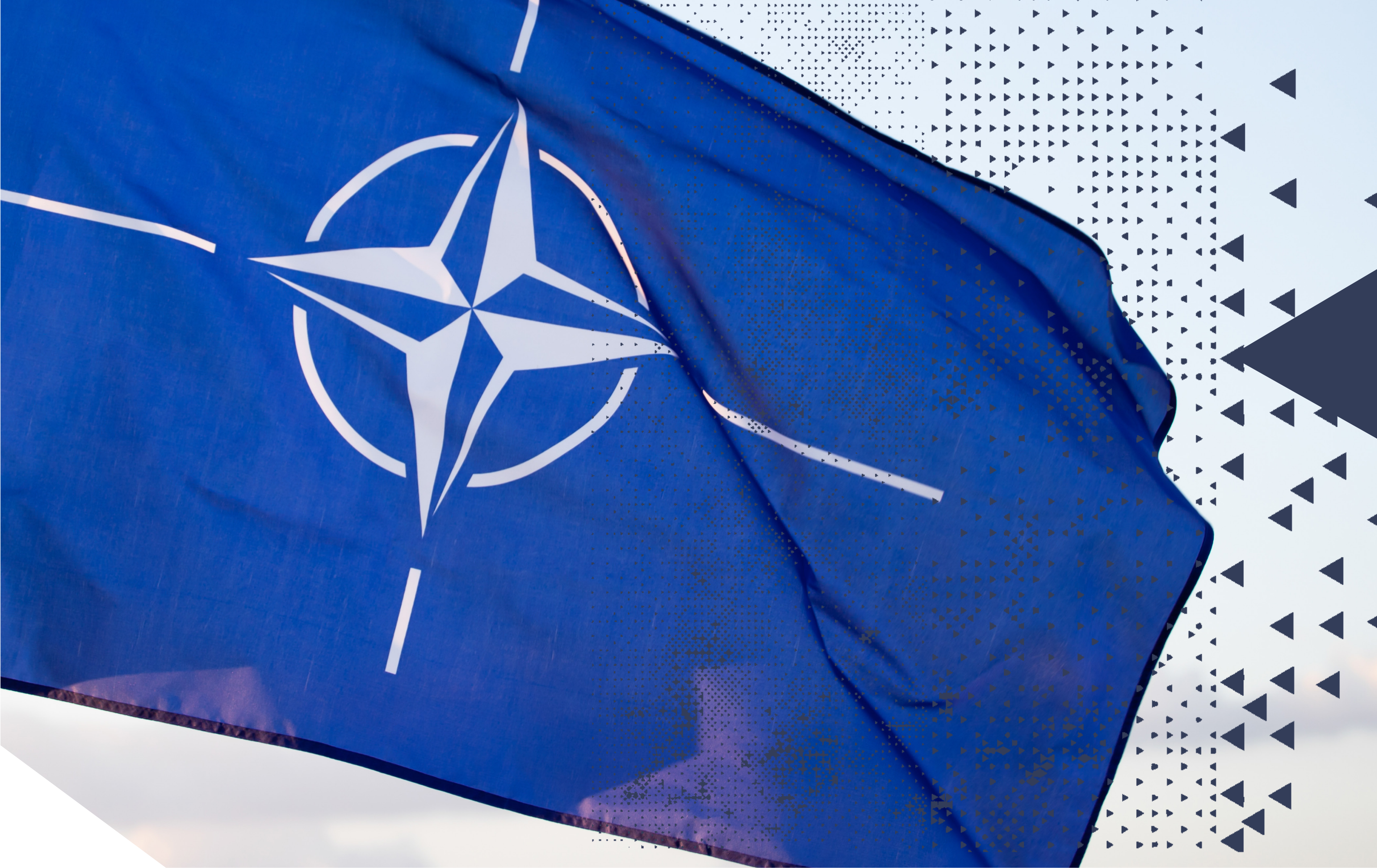
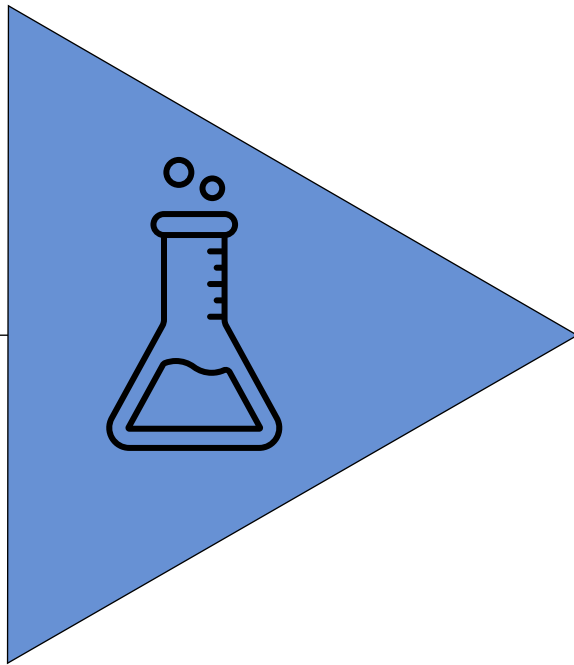




**RUSSIAN
ALLEGATIONS
OF CHEMICAL
& BIOLOGICAL
ACTIVITIES
ON NATO'S
EASTERN FLANK**



0.1



Executive Summary

Since the launch of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, claims of chemical and biological (C/B) activities by the Eastern flank countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), as well as by Georgia and Moldova, have become a consistent element of Kremlin disinformation campaigns.

The primary aims of these narratives are to:

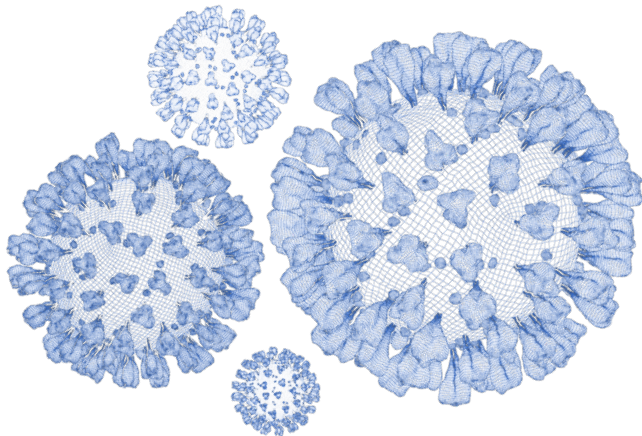
- ◆ Undermine public trust in NATO member countries along Russia’s borders and international treaties and conventions;
- ◆ Build a perception of imminent unconventional threats;
- ◆ Create justification for Russia’s own actions.

This report provides a focused analysis of Russian allegations of C/B activities by and within seven countries on NATO’s eastern flank: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Moldova and Georgia.

Each of these countries has featured in Russian disinformation narratives, either directly or through umbrella references to the “Baltics,” the “Black Sea region,” or “Eastern Europe.” Although these narratives often lack specificity or credible evidence, they are adjusted to local context to maximise impact: high-volume and detailed messaging in Poland and Georgia, persistent corridor/transfer framing in Moldova, and more selective but strategically significant targeting in the Baltic states and Finland.



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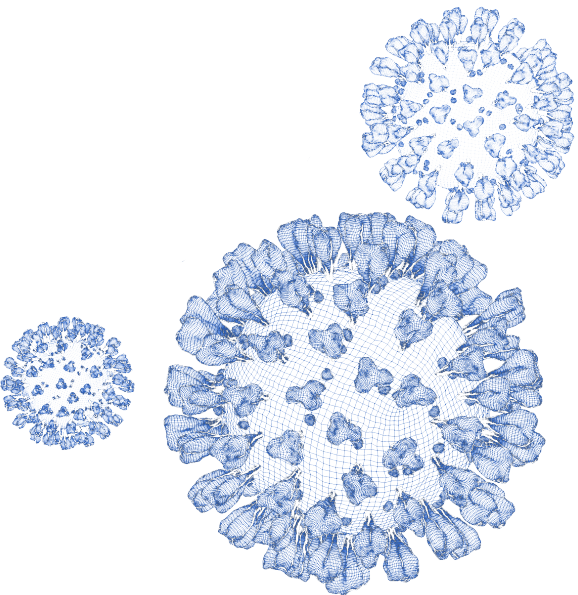
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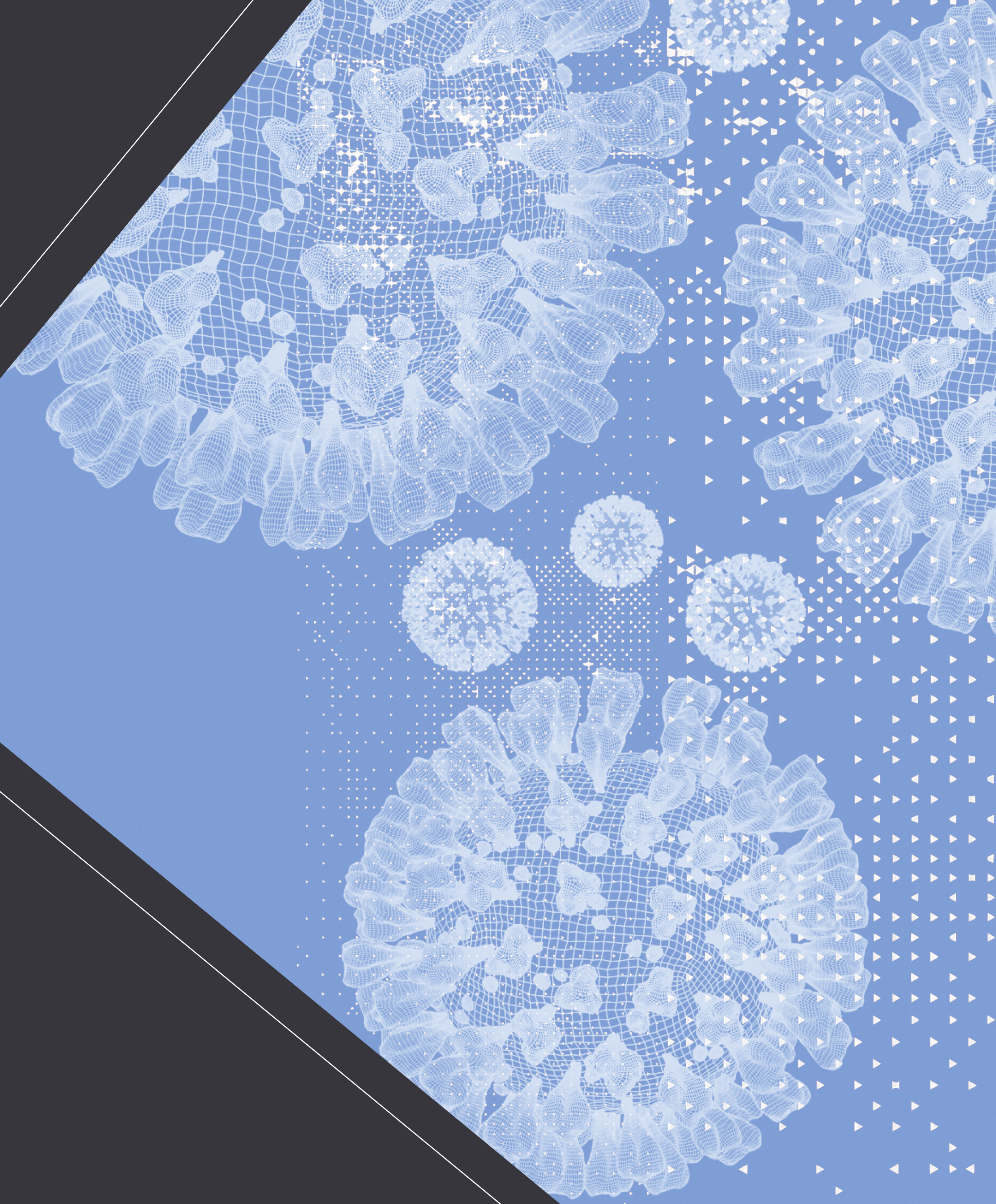
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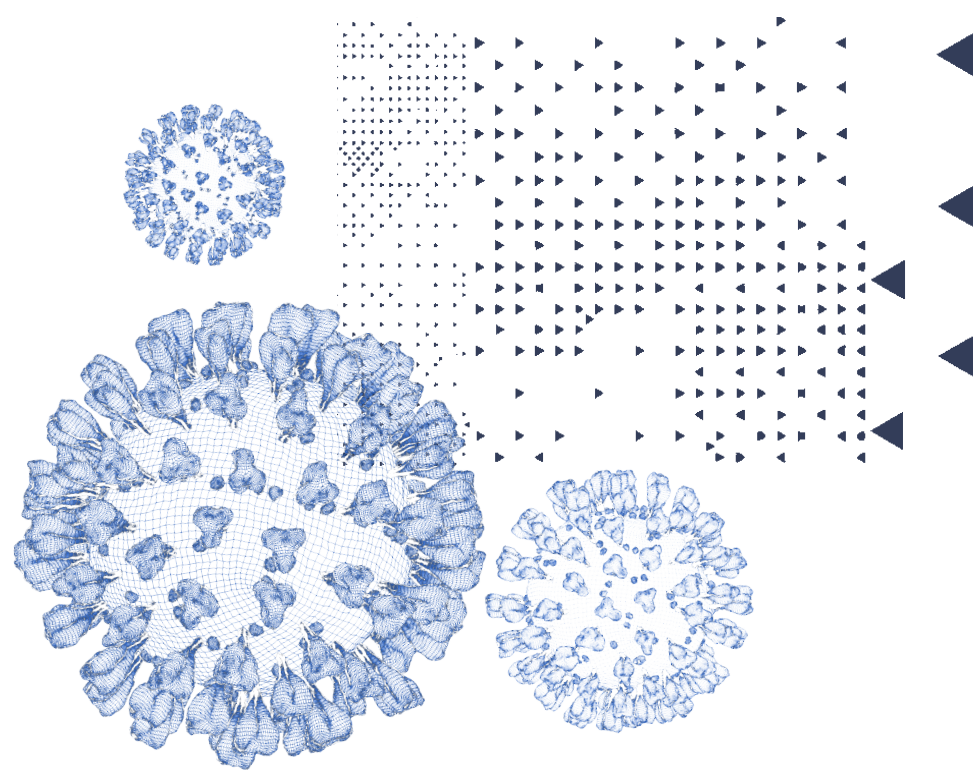
INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Why chemical and
biological disinformation
matters for WMD governance
& report overview



Introduction and objectives: **Why chemical and biological disinformation matters for WMD governance**

Chemical and biological (C/B) disinformation occupies a distinctive place within the wider landscape of Russian information manipulation.



Unlike many political or military narratives, C/B claims exploit technical complexity, public fear, and the inherent dual-use character of legitimate scientific and public health activity. Laboratories, disease surveillance, sample sharing, vaccine development, military medicine, and international health-security cooperation can all be reframed as covert weapons activity when stripped of context or placed inside a hostile geopolitical narrative. This makes C/B disinformation particularly effective since it allows routine public health, biosafety and biosecurity functions to be recast as evidence of clandestine military intent.

For the GP WMD Counter Disinformation Initiative, these narratives matter not only because they target individual states, but because they seek to damage the wider

governance architecture that constrains chemical and biological weapons. Russian allegations about US-funded “biolabs”, fake outbreaks, pathogen transfers, and treaty violations are designed to cast suspicion on legitimate biological research and international cooperation. They also aim to distort diplomatic debate by creating false equivalence between lawful public health activity and prohibited weapons programmes. In doing so, they undermine trust in national authorities, NATO partnerships, and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) itself.

NATO’s eastern flank is a particularly important theatre for this activity. Since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, countries bordering or near Russia have been depicted as a frontline where biological

and chemical threats supposedly spill across borders and acquire regional or transnational significance. Poland, Georgia, and Moldova are presented as high-salience hubs or corridors for US biological activity; Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia are folded into Baltic-wide claims about relocated laboratories and pathogen transfers; and Finland is used episodically to link NATO accession, defence cooperation with the United States, and alleged loss of sovereignty. The effect is to transform separate country-specific allegations into a wider story of alleged C/B encirclement.

1.2

Introduction and objectives: Report overview

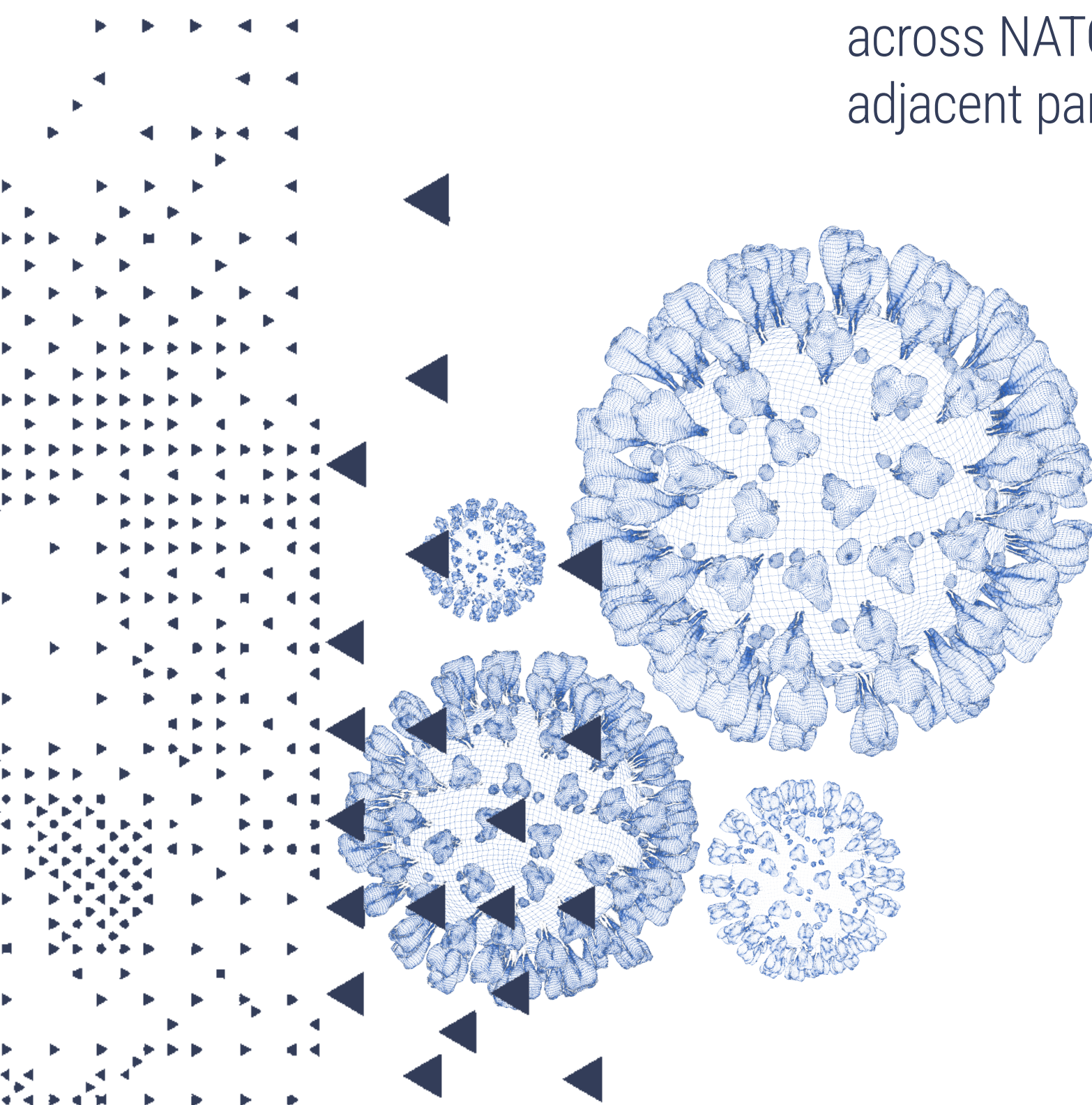
This report examines how Russian C/B disinformation narratives are constructed, adapted, and amplified across NATO's eastern flank and adjacent partner states.

It focuses on seven country cases – Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Moldova and Georgia – and analyses how a common set of allegations is localised for different audiences and political contexts. These allegations include claims about US-funded “biolabs”, fake outbreaks, pathogen transfers, sovereignty loss, C/B encirclement, and violations of the BWC.

The report's central finding is that Russian C/B disinformation is both adaptive and scalable. Its foundational claims remain stable, but they are repackaged to exploit each country's political context and information environment. This makes the eastern flank not just another target of Russian C/B disinformation, but one of the core theatres in which the foundational biolab narrative is transformed into wider Russian claims about alleged C/B encirclement and BWC violation.

The report analyses recurrent narratives as disinformation – meaning claims that are unsupported by credible evidence and serve identifiable strategic objectives. It does not treat them as good-faith allegations requiring evidentiary equivalence; rather, it examines how they function, who amplifies them, and what strategic effects they seek to produce.

These allegations include claims about US-funded “biolabs”, fake outbreaks, pathogen transfers, sovereignty loss, C/B encirclement, and violations of the BWC.

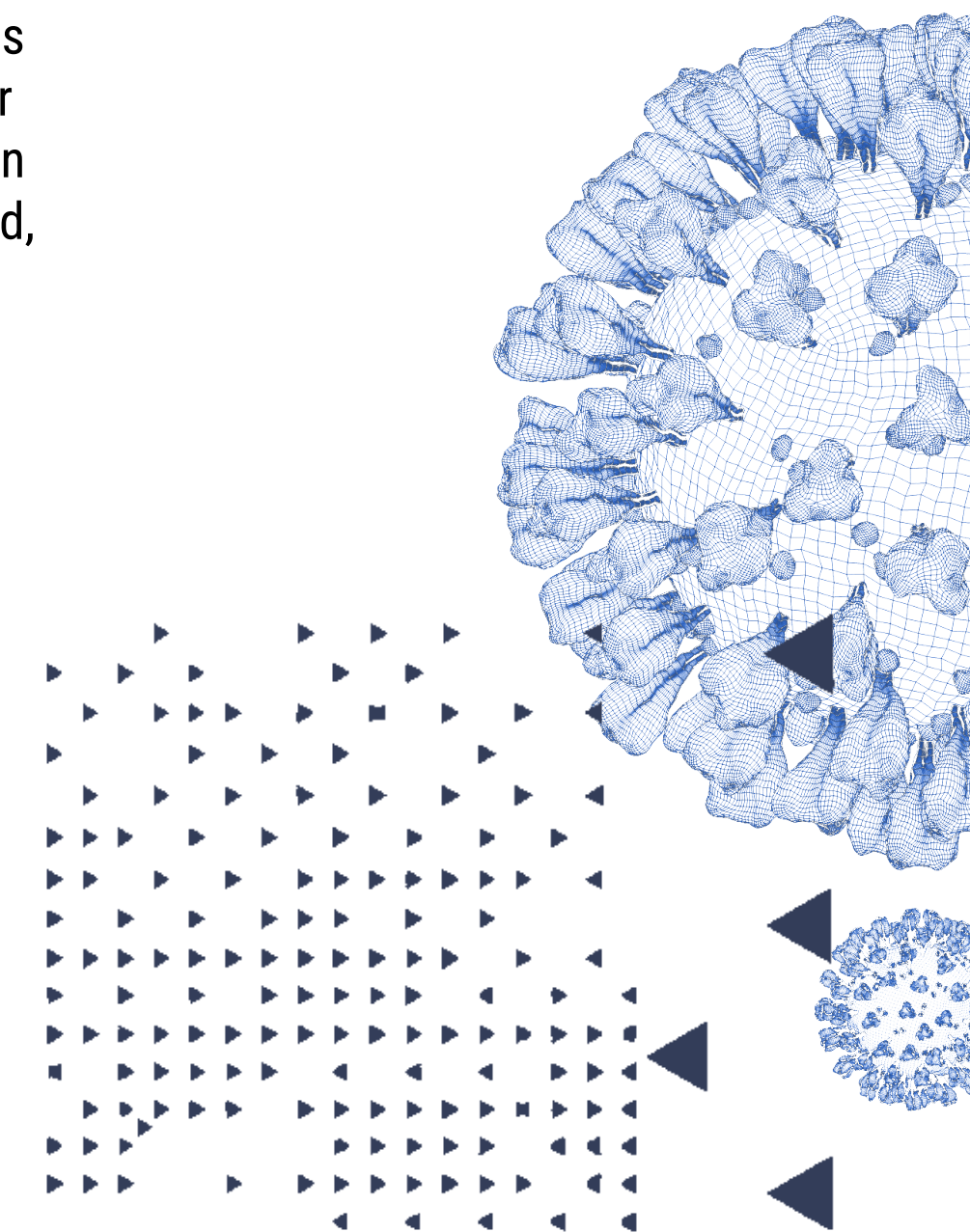


Introduction and objectives: Report overview

The report is based on open-source intelligence (OSINT) and subject matter expert (SME) knowledge. It outlines the timeframe, units of analysis, and coding approach used to identify and classify relevant claims. The list of sources and coding table can be found in the Annexes.

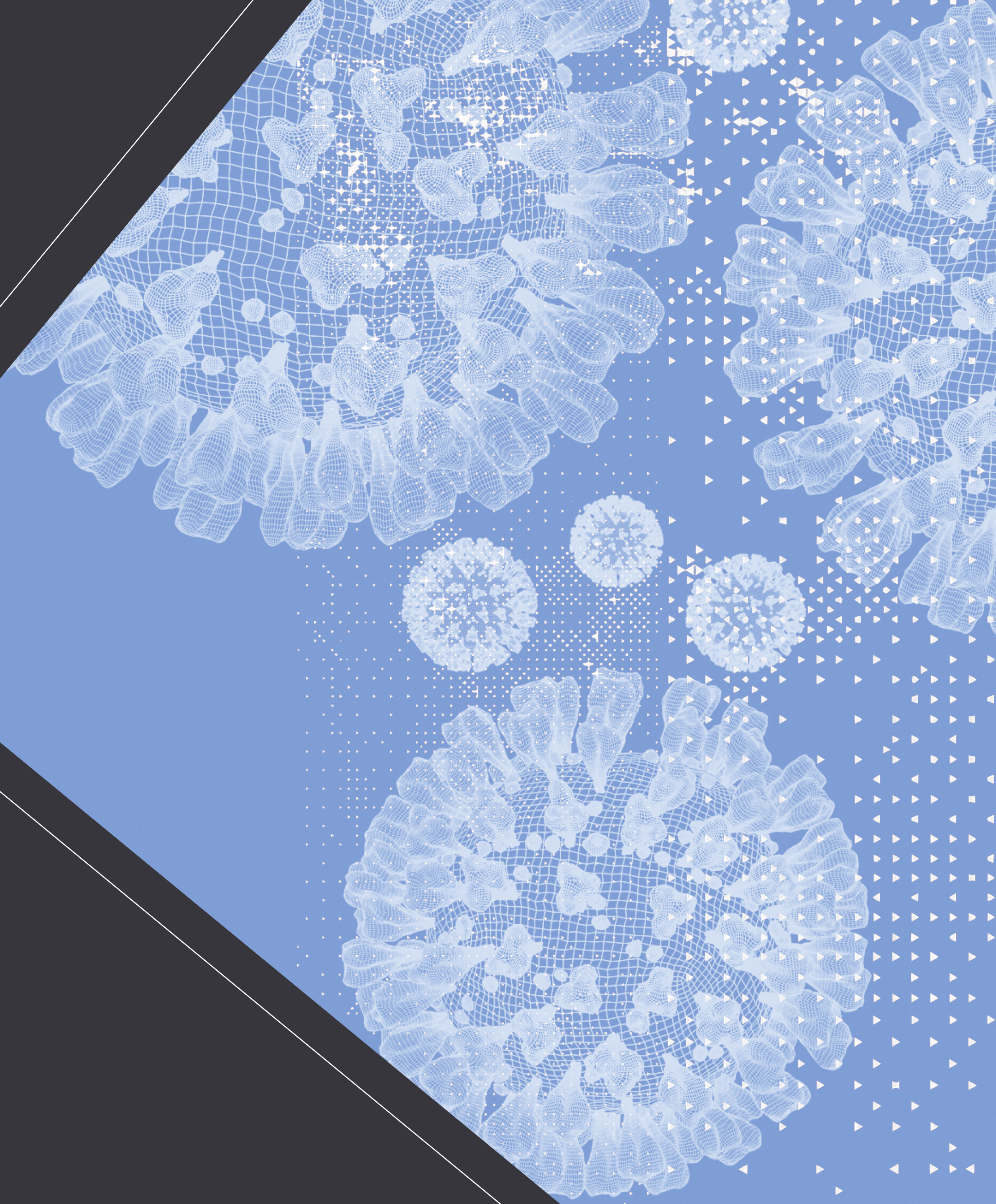
The report explores four features of the Russian disinformation campaign:

- ◆ Narrative forms – identifies and analyses the main narrative forms deployed across the country cases.
- ◆ Key actors and amplifiers – assesses the roles of official Russian sources, including the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA); state-aligned and proxy media outlets; Telegram and other social media channels; and local or marginal voices used to lend authenticity to Russian claims.
- ◆ Narrative objectives – examines how these narratives seek to undermine US and NATO partnerships in the region, generate public fear through health-related claims, delegitimise national authorities, and shape international debates on the BWC.
- ◆ Narrative impact – compares how these narratives resonate across different regions, with particular attention to differences between the Baltic states, Finland, Poland, Moldova, and Georgia.



METHODOLOGY

Scope and timeframe, units of analysis & coding and classification



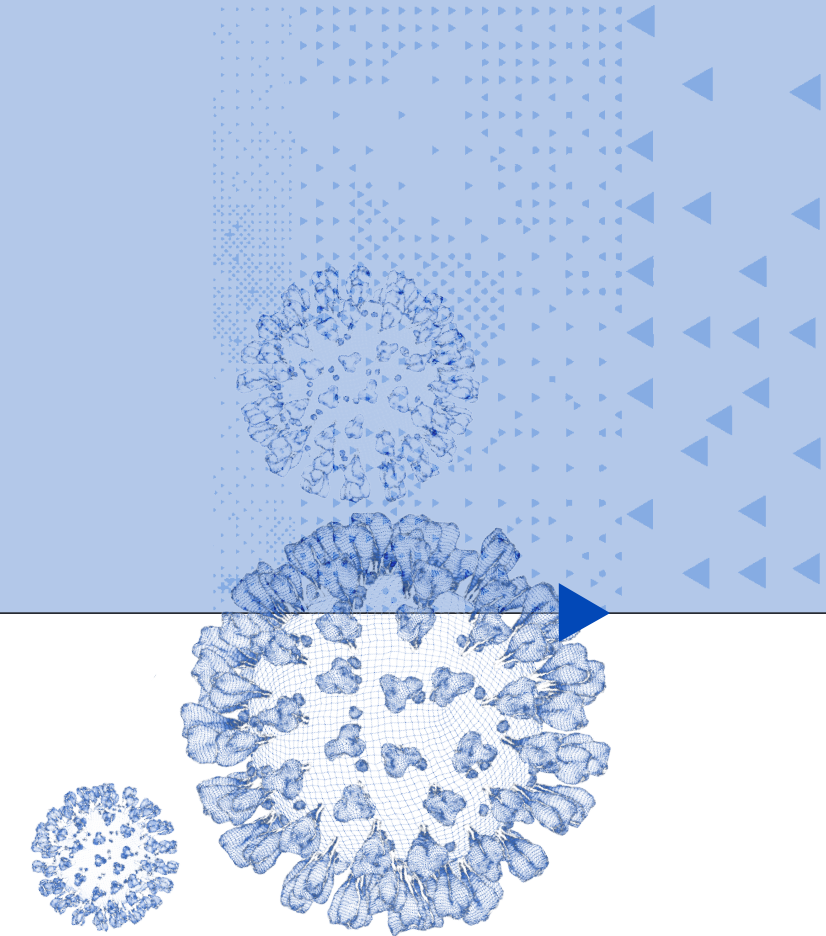
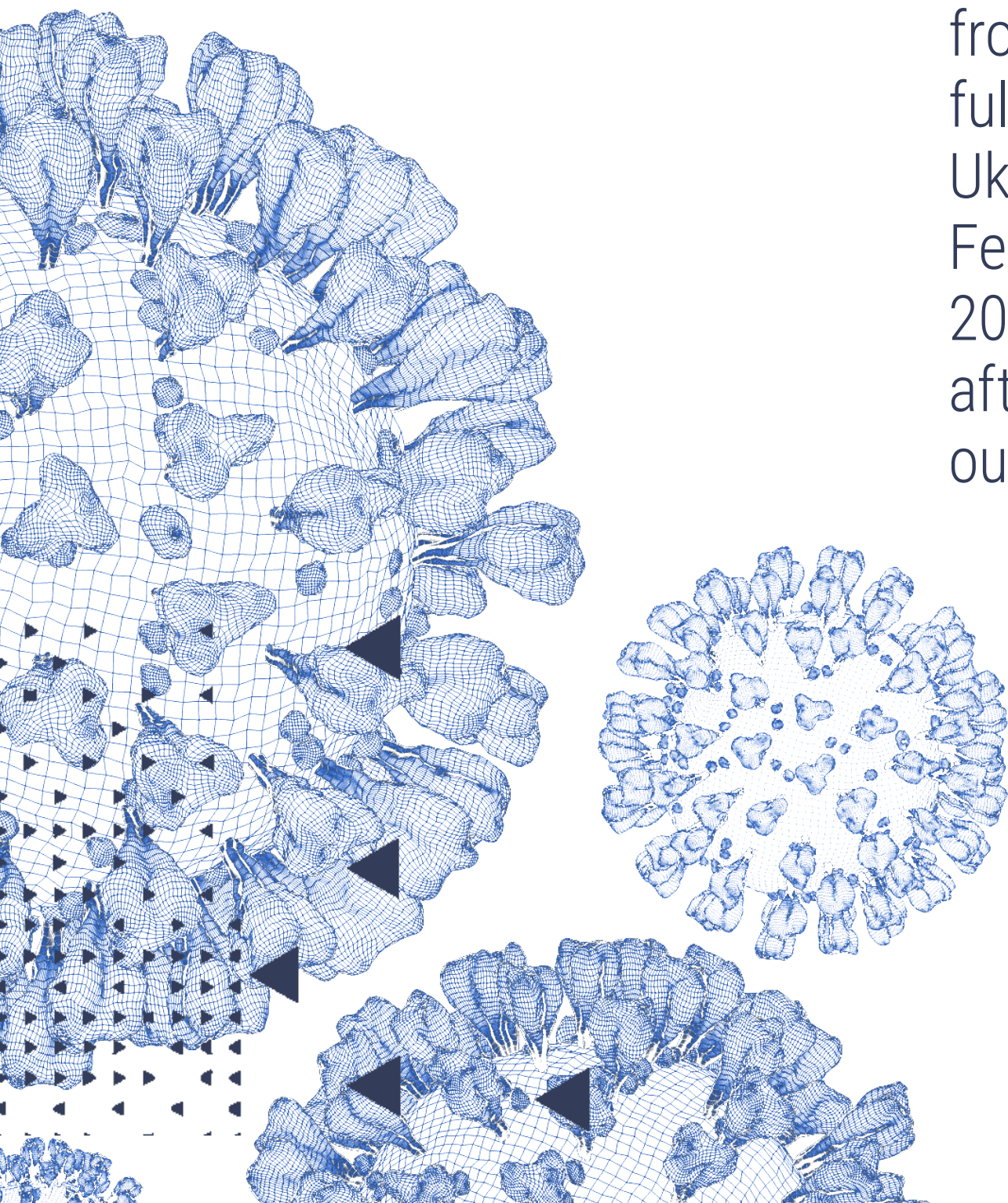
Methodology: Scope and timeframe

This report analyses Russian disinformation narratives of C/B activities over a four-year period, from the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022 to February 2026. Material published after this timeframe falls outside the dataset.

For the purposes of this report, disinformation refers to false, misleading or unsupported C/B claims disseminated in support of identifiable strategic narratives. Misinformation refers to false or misleading information shared without established deceptive intent. Because the subjective intent of every downstream amplifier cannot always be determined, the report describes such actors as amplifying a disinformation narrative without necessarily concluding that each acted with knowing intent to deceive.

The report focuses on the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), Finland, Poland, and two Black Sea region countries (Moldova and Georgia).

Only disinformation explicitly tied to these states or framed collectively under umbrella terms such as “the Baltics” is included. These cases were chosen because Russian disinformation depicts NATO’s eastern flank and adjacent partner states as a connected frontline where biological and chemical threats spill across borders and acquire regional or transnational dimensions. Ukraine is not treated as a standalone country case because the analytical focus is on how Ukraine-centred C/B allegations are transferred, adapted and localised in neighbouring and partner states; references to Ukraine are included where they form part of allegations concerning the selected cases.



Methodology: Scope and timeframe

A total of 68 sources, comprising newspaper articles, broadcast or social media posts, were identified, each of which was examined to determine the country/countries or region referenced and the specific allegations advanced. Each source could reference one or multiple countries and regions. For the quantitative summaries presented below, the source is the unit of counting: each unique source is counted once for each theme and once for each country or regional category that it references. As the categories are non-mutually exclusive, a single source may contribute to several thematic and geographical counts.

The dataset is a purposive OSINT sample designed to identify recurring narrative forms and amplification patterns; it is not a comprehensive or statistically representative sample of each country's information environment. Sources were included where they made or amplified an explicit C/B allegation linked to one or more selected countries during the study period. Consequently, numerical distributions indicate the prominence of themes and countries within the collected dataset, rather than their prevalence or audience reach in the wider information space. Sources were identified through Boolean keyword searches and targeted monitoring of official Russian, state-aligned, proxy and relevant local-language channels.



2.2

Methodology: Units of analysis

To structure the analysis, two levels of observation were defined.

ALLEGATION:

An allegation is the basic qualitative unit of analysis. A single source can generate multiple allegations if it advances more than one claim, for instance, alleging both the presence of a US-funded biolab and a fake outbreak. For quantitative reporting, however, counts are calculated at source level: a source is counted once under each theme it contains, irrespective of how many separate allegations of that type it advances.

DISINFORMATION THEME:

Allegations making the same core claim were grouped into clusters. The 68 identified sources were coded according to the disinformation themes they contained. These themes are non-mutually exclusive, so a source may be coded under more than one theme.



Methodology: Coding and classification

To enable systematic comparison across countries, each allegation was coded according to a standard taxonomy. The coding captured three dimensions: the primary claim, the narrative objective, and the narrative impact. The dimensions are defined as:

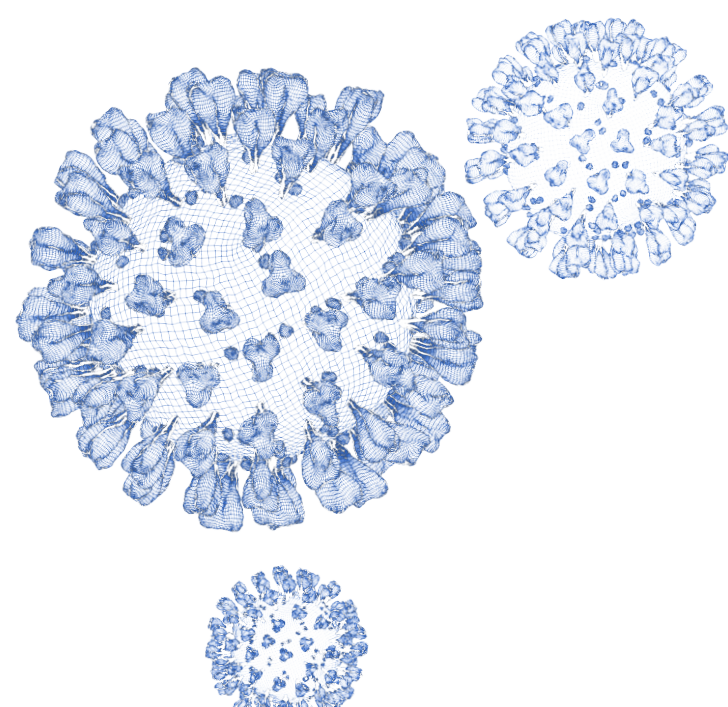
- ◆ Primary Claim – the core statement being made (e.g., existence of US-funded biolabs, fake outbreak, sovereignty loss).
- ◆ Narrative Objective – the apparent intended purpose of the statement, such as undermining trust in authorities, delegitimising NATO partnerships, or framing Russia as a victim.
- ◆ Narrative Impact – an assessment of how widely the claim circulated and resonated, based on indicators such as repetition across outlets, amplification by actors, and spillover into local or international media.

In parallel, a set of Disinformation Themes (DT) was defined to group similar Allegations. The disinformation themes represent the main thematic strands of disinformation observed across cases:

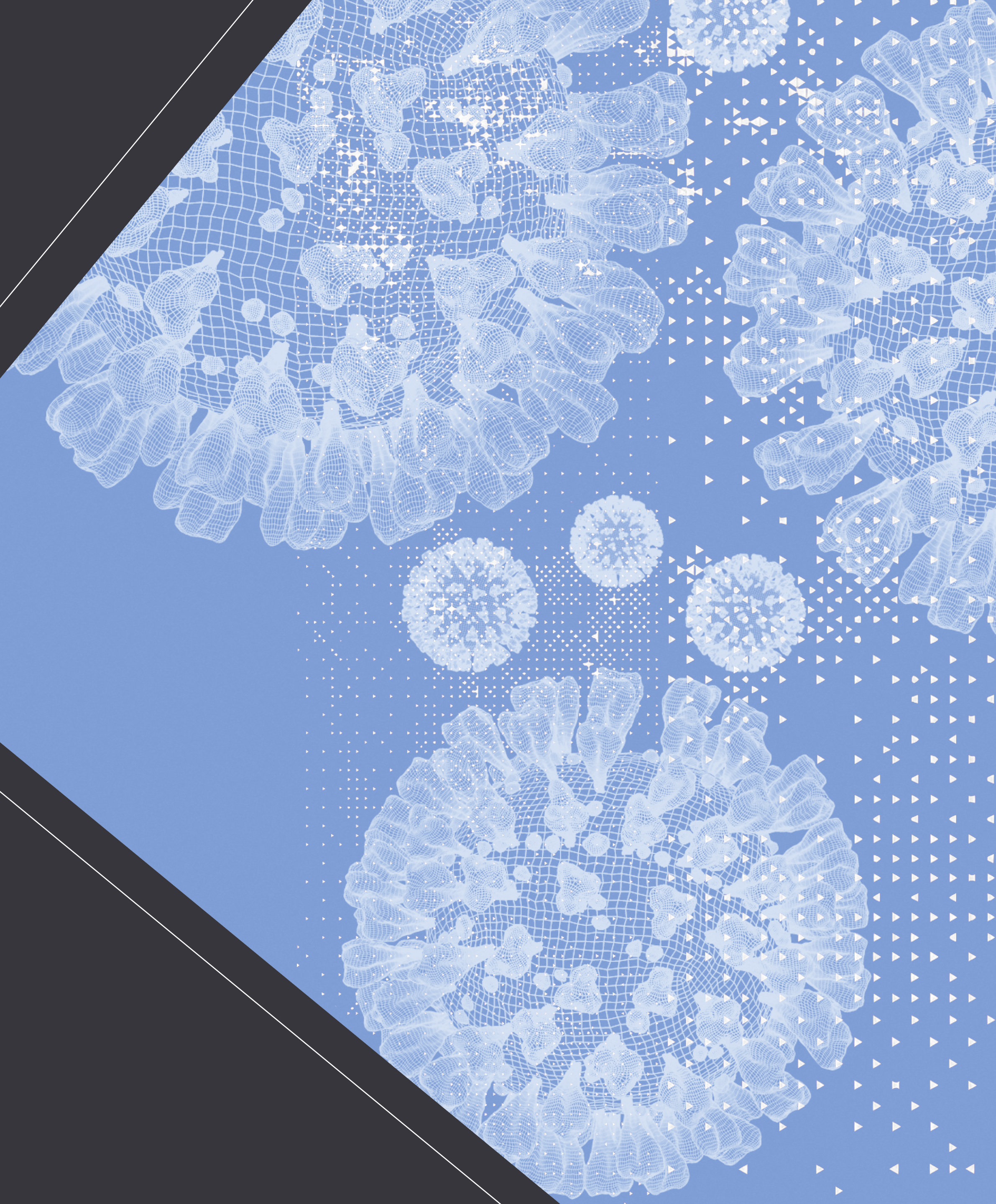
- ◆ Biological laboratories and transfer narratives – claims about the existence of US-funded biolabs and the relocation of projects, pathogens, or personnel across borders.
- ◆ Fake outbreaks – claims of engineered disease events, mysterious illnesses, or sudden infections linked to NATO or US programmes.
- ◆ Delegitimation and sovereignty-loss narratives – portrayals of national governments as powerless or subordinate to Western agendas.

- ◆ Encirclement and “Russia-as-victim” narratives – framing NATO’s eastern flank as a hostile belt of C/B infrastructure surrounding Russia.
- ◆ Violation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) – claims that US and NATO activities breach accepted norms, treaty terms and international law.

Two additional disinformation themes were identified during the analysis to capture country-specific narratives: 1) Poland: Bioweapons Past Narrative to Contemporary Complicity; and 2) Georgia: The Lugar Centre Narratives. This clustering ensured the taxonomy remained comparable across cases while still reflecting the distinctive narrative contours unique to each country. The full coding table is available in Annexe 2.



DISINFORMATION STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY APPLICATIONS



3.1

1

Disinformation strategies and country applications: **Biological laboratories and transfer narratives**

The first disinformation theme centres on allegations of US-funded biological laboratories, the backbone of Russian C/B disinformation across NATO's eastern flank.

These facilities are depicted as covert Pentagon hubs, hidden within civilian or pharmaceutical enterprises, and used to conduct experiments and develop biological weapons, in violation of the BWC. The narrative is deliberately vague. In some cases, it targets the construction of new laboratories whilst in others, it claims the relocation of unfinished US projects and materials from Ukraine into NATO states.

This framing allows Moscow to project a picture of a persistent US-NATO network of biolaboratories along Russia's border.

As allegations of biolaboratories are closely intertwined with transfer claims, the two are combined here under a single explanatory cluster. Out of the 68 unique sources analysed, 64 contained at least

one allegation concerning the supposed existence of US-funded biological laboratories in eastern-flank countries or Ukraine, while 36 contained at least one allegation concerning the relocation or transfer of pathogens, projects, facilities or personnel across borders.¹ These categories overlap, and a source may be included in both counts.

Russian officials and state media have recycled versions of the Pentagon biolab story for years, with Georgia's Lugar Centre and Ukraine's laboratory network serving as consistent targets well before the 2022 invasion².

However, this narrative gained particular prominence after February 2022, when the Russian MoD, through briefings by Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov, claimed

that unfinished US biological programmes in Ukraine were being relocated to NATO's eastern flank. According to these briefings, biological equipment and projects were shifted³ into Poland and the Baltic states, using local pharmaceutical and chemical enterprises as cover⁴. Similar claims circulated in state-aligned outlets such as Baltnews⁵ and RIA Novosti⁶, which framed the Baltics as a testing ground for Pentagon projects.

3.1

1

Disinformation strategies and country applications: **Biological laboratories and transfer narratives**

Moldova was incorporated into the same narratives, alleging the existence of NATO biolabs inside military infrastructure at sites such as Bălți⁷ and Băcioi⁸. In December 2023, a viral TikTok⁹ by local actor Aurel Bucureanu, which gained over 90,000 views in a month, claimed that a NATO laboratory was being built in Băcioi and that labs from Ukraine had already been relocated there. These claims were reinforced by MoD allegations¹⁰ stating that US State Department programmes aimed at countering Russia's malign influence were funding laboratories in Moldova.

Georgia has been the most persistent target of the biolabs narrative. The Richard Lugar Centre in Tbilisi is repeatedly presented¹¹ as a Pentagon-controlled facility and the epicentre of US military-biological operations. Russian MoD briefings, echoed by outlets such as Sputnik Georgia¹², allege that the centre is used for biological research and human experimentation.

Finland, though mentioned less frequently, illustrates how the narrative is opportunistically linked to political developments. During NATO accession debates and negotiations of the Defence Cooperation Agreement, pro-Kremlin activist Johan Bäckman¹³ claimed that US bases in Finland would house secret biolabs¹⁴ and that NATO drills were a cover for bioweapon preparations. Russian outlets including Ukraina.ru¹⁵ and Bloknot.ru¹⁶ amplified these claims, tying them to sovereignty-loss narratives.

In Latvia, pro-Kremlin Telegram channel Antifalivland claimed that a secret biolaboratory workforce had been evacuated from Ukraine to Latvia to establish a new site¹⁷. Follow-on posts¹⁸ alleged US planning of propaganda to justify biolabs across the Baltics and asserted they had identified the exact location of a relocated lab in Latvia¹⁹.

Estonia and Lithuania, while rarely the primary focus, are consistently named in regional framings. Both are presented as part of a Baltic corridor where biolaboratories from Ukraine could be potentially transferred²⁰.



3.2

2

Disinformation strategies and country applications: **Fake outbreaks**

The second disinformation theme investigates allegations of fake disease outbreaks, or engineered disease events attributed to NATO presence or US-funded programmes.

Forty of the 68 sources contained at least one allegation concerning a fabricated or engineered disease outbreak. Unlike the laboratory narrative, which concentrates on infrastructure and relocation, these narratives focus on health effects, which are then tied to US projects. The intention is to instil fear in the general public and to undermine trust in authorities. Beyond the domestic sphere it works to depict frontline NATO societies as unsafe environments for their populations.

Poland provides a clear case of narrative exploitation of an outbreak event. A 2023 Legionella outbreak in Rzeszów, a NATO logistics hub, was reframed as the result of a deliberate leak or test from US facilities²¹. By linking a public health event to NATO presence, pro-Kremlin media suggested that Poland was being used as a live testing ground for bioweapons. This framing elevated a

local outbreak²² into evidence of Western experimentation, with figures such as Gennady Onishchenko²³ claiming it could represent the deliberate use of weapons of mass destruction by the US.

In Finland, disinformation alleged that mysterious viruses²⁴ appeared in garrisons during drills and that antibiotic-resistant infections²⁵ spread through wounded Ukrainian soldiers. The narrative used routine military and health activity to imply exposure to uncontrolled pathogens.

In Moldova, outbreak rhetoric accompanied corridor claims. A viral TikTok video²⁶ warned that new infections would emerge in towns like Bălți and Băcioi once NATO labs allegedly began operating there. Although no outbreaks were documented, such fearmongering primed Moldovan audiences to view normal seasonal illness as evidence of Western biological activity.



3.2

2

Disinformation strategies and country applications: **Fake outbreaks**

Georgia is frequently tied to claims of outbreaks and lethal health consequences. Narratives surrounding the Lugar Centre allege unusual infections²⁷, cancer hotspots²⁸, and trials carried out on local populations²⁹. Central to this strand is the recurring story of 24 unexplained deaths³⁰, said to be linked to Pentagon-backed medicines. By recycling these allegations, Russian outlets frame Georgia as a place where Western experimentation produces deadly consequences for civilians.

Latvia is incorporated into the narrative re-framing of outbreaks via Russian media, which presents regional African Swine Fever (ASF) epizootics as evidence of US military-biological experiments. An article citing Igor Kirillov's briefings highlights³¹ ASF case counts in Latvia since 2014 and portrays the Baltics as a testing ground for a lab-adapted virus.

For Estonia and Lithuania, fabricated outbreak claims remain minimal and mostly anticipatory. Neither country features documented allegations of ongoing infections; instead, both are referenced collectively in Baltic-wide narratives that warn of health risks if US laboratories or projects were transferred there³². Pro-Kremlin Telegram channels occasionally amplify this line, suggesting that propaganda campaigns are priming audiences to interpret any future health events in the Baltics as deliberate and linked to US activity.



3.3

3

Disinformation strategies and country applications: **Delegitimisation and sovereignty-loss narratives**

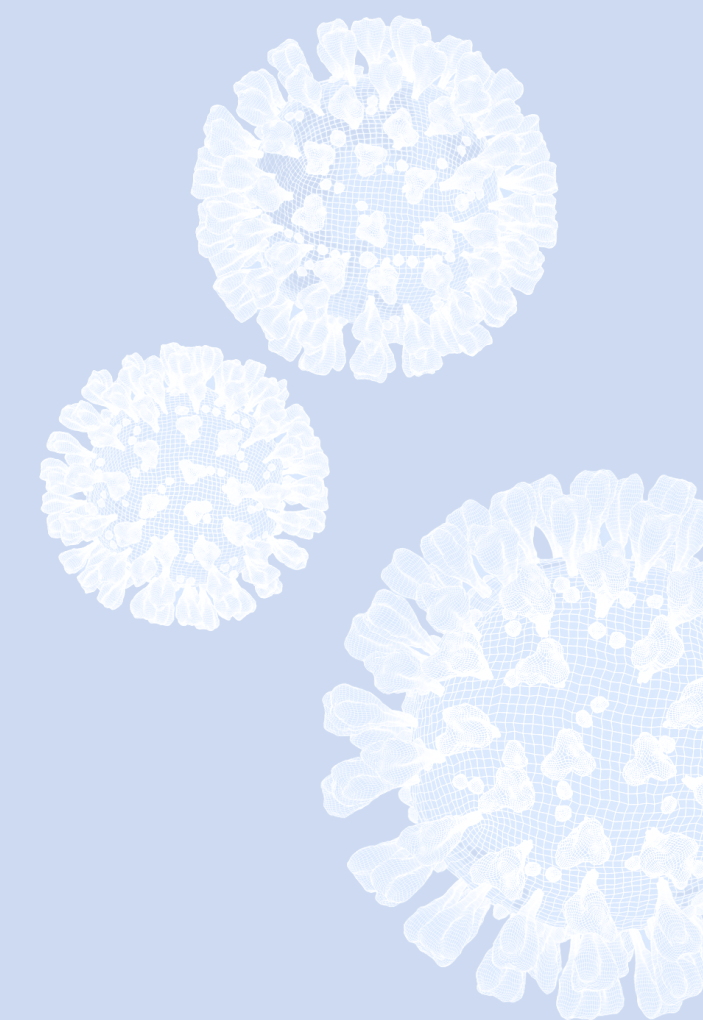
The third disinformation theme concerns sovereignty-loss narratives, which cut across all states examined. These allegations focus on the broader claim that NATO and the United States have stripped eastern flank countries of their independence.

By portraying governments as passive or controlled by external influence, Russia's disinformation frames C/B activities as symptoms of deeper subordination to Western agendas. Sixty-three of the 68 sources contained at least one allegation advancing a delegitimisation or sovereignty-loss narrative.

Poland features most prominently in the assessed narratives. Specific claims allege that Warsaw has surrendered control of its territory, turning Poland into a US proxy state where American forces and laboratories operate without oversight. Claims of ministry cover-ups circulated through Russian Ministry of Defence briefings³³, RIA Novosti³⁴, TASS³⁵, and pro-Kremlin Telegram channels such as Antifalivland³⁶ and bio_genie³⁷. State television outlets, including Zvezda³⁸, frame Poland as a country whose government has ceded national decision-making to Washington, reducing its role to that of an occupied frontier for NATO's biological and military ambitions.

In Finland, figures such as Johan Bäckman, amplified in Ukraina.ru³⁹, Bloknot.ru⁴⁰, and other state-aligned outlets, portrayed Helsinki as a newly occupied frontier. Narratives alleged that US bases secretly house biolabs and that Finnish troops were exposed to US-engineered risks during NATO drills, reinforcing the idea that Finland had traded autonomy for subordination to Washington.

Moldova is depicted as a passive corridor state. Russian MoD briefings, repackaged by Sputnik⁴¹ and RIA Novosti⁴², allege that thousands of biomaterials are routed through Moldovan logistics firms tied to President Maia Sandu. Viral TikToks⁴³ claiming NATO labs in Bălți and Băcioi strengthen the perception that Moldovan leaders allow Western powers to embed military-biological infrastructure inside the country, eroding sovereignty and exposing citizens to external agendas.



3.3

3

Disinformation strategies and country applications: **Delegitimisation and sovereignty-loss narratives**



Georgia is frequently presented in Russian narratives as a country whose sovereignty has been compromised through US control of the Richard Lugar Centre near Tbilisi. Russian MoD briefings by Igor Kirillov⁴⁴ and MFA statements by Maria Zakharova⁴⁵ describe the laboratory as a Pentagon-directed facility where Georgian authorities have limited influence. Allegations circulated in GHN.ge⁴⁶ and Netgazeti⁴⁷ claimed that the Lugar Centre engineered the 2007 African Swine Fever outbreak, conducted research with bats and insects and explored methods such as drone-based pathogen dispersal.

Former Georgian officials are frequently leveraged to reinforce the sovereignty-loss narrative. Igor Giorgadze, in Izvestia⁴⁸, alleged the existence of documents showing human trials that ended in unexplained deaths. Furthermore, ex-general Tristan Tsitelashvili, cited in Izvestia⁴⁹, claimed that the Lugar lab produced biological weapons and chemical agents, such as “choking gas”, allegedly used in Ukraine.

Broader conspiratorial strands link⁵⁰ the Lugar Centre to Hunter Biden, Metabiota, and the US-based Walter Reed Medical Center which all contribute to the framing of the laboratory as directed by foreign elites. Even after Georgia invited international inspection in 2018, and despite rebuttals published

by Factcheck.ge⁵¹, pro-Kremlin outlets such as Sputnik Georgia⁵² and Channel One Russia⁵³ continued to portray the Lugar Centre as a symbol of diminished national control.

Narratives aimed at Latvia depict national institutions as captured by Western sponsors and incapable of oversight. Antifalivland⁵⁴ asserted Latvian media were “paid by Soros NGOs/the US State Department”. Vocal Russian actors dismissed local debunks of relocated biolabs as propaganda, and warned that experiments would be conducted on Latvians, priming audiences to distrust public authorities.

In Estonia and Lithuania, sovereignty-loss narratives emerge mainly through regional framings. MoD and MFA briefings, amplified by Baltnews⁵⁵ and pro-Kremlin Telegram channels such as Antifalivland, incorporate both states into a combined Baltic corridor concept into which it claims US biolabs have been relocated from Ukraine.

3.4

4

Disinformation strategies and country applications: **Alleged C/B encirclement and 'Russia-as-victim' narrative**

The fourth disinformation theme concerns the portrayal of Russia as being surrounded by hostile C/B infrastructure. Thirty-four of the 68 sources contained at least one allegation advancing an encirclement or "Russia-as-victim" narrative.



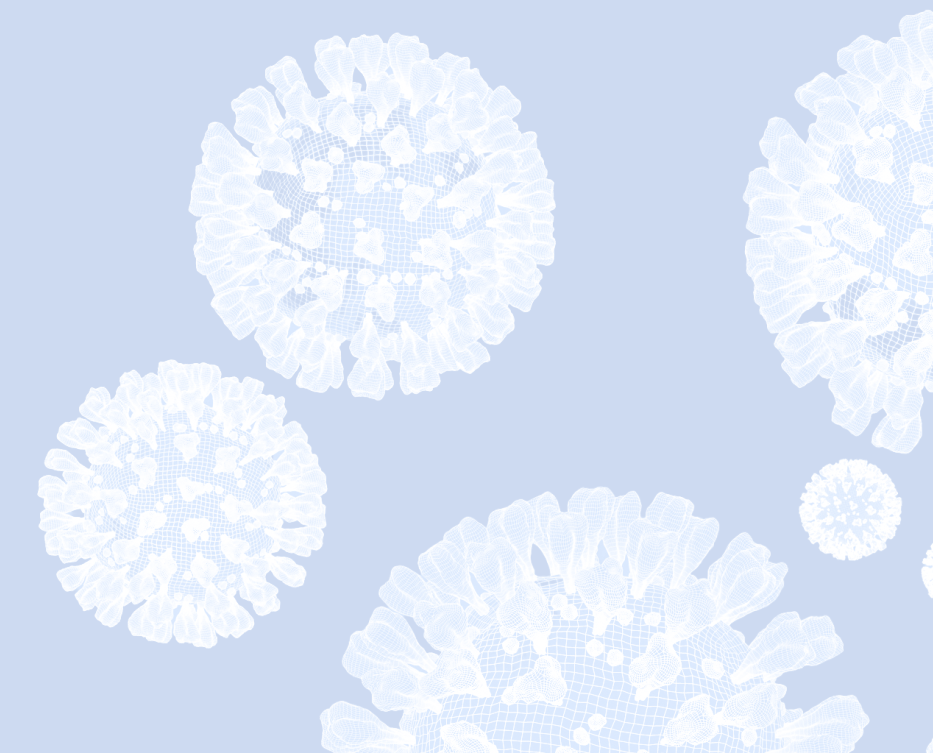
Unlike the laboratory, outbreak or sovereignty-loss clusters, which highlight activities inside neighbouring states, this narrative operates cartographically. It depicts NATO's eastern flank as an unbroken arc of C/B threats pressing on Russia's borders. In this framing, Moscow presents itself as the target of a Western military-biological network surrounding its borders.

Poland is presented as the western anchor of the encirclement arc. Russian MoD briefings by Igor Kirillov⁵⁶ and MFA statements amplified in RIA Novosti⁵⁷ and Baltnews⁵⁸ have depicted Poland as a staging ground where US biological infrastructure displaced from Ukraine is consolidated. All these claims reinforce the narrative that Russia is surrounded by hostile biological platforms.

Finland is presented as the final link that closes the ring in the north. During NATO accession, pro-Kremlin activist Johan Bäckman claimed neighbouring bases would host secret labs, while Russian state media such as *Ukraina.ru*⁵⁹ amplified this, to argue Finland's entry transformed Russia's northwestern border into part of a biological siege line.

Moldova and Georgia are cast as the southern arc of Russia's encirclement. In Moldova, Russian MoD briefings in August 2024⁶⁰ claimed over 2,000 biomaterial transfers from Ukraine were routed through Chişinău, presenting it as evidence of a hostile logistics chain⁶¹ edging Russia's borders. Georgia is portrayed as the hinge of this southern belt, with MFA statements and MoD maps tying the Lugar Centre to US projects in Ukraine and Armenia⁶².

Once again, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are rarely addressed individually, but consistently appear in collective framings. MoD briefings republished in RIA Novosti⁶³ and Baltnews⁶⁴ amalgamate them into the concept of a Baltic corridor of US laboratories and relocated projects, closing the northern tier of the arc.



3.5

5

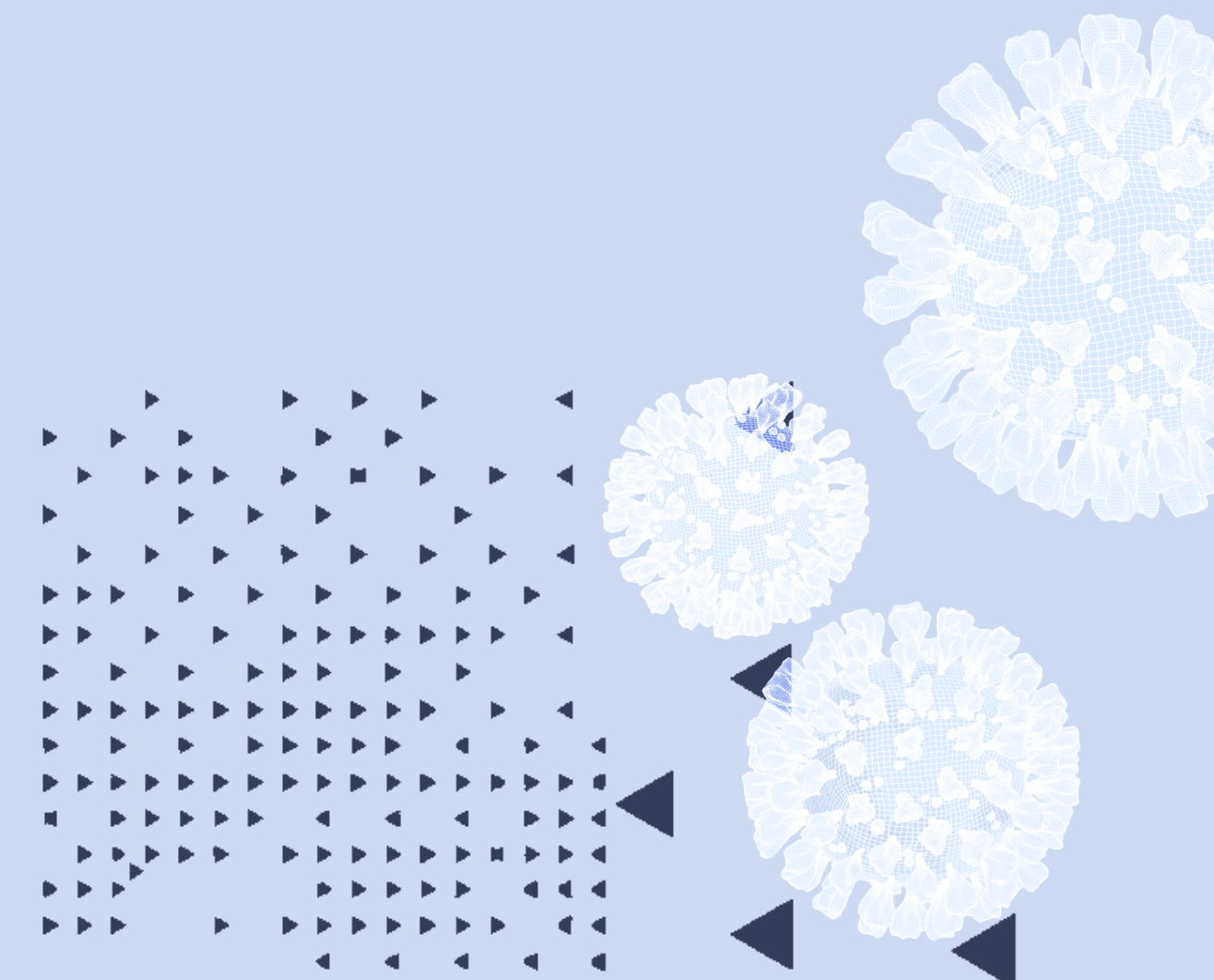
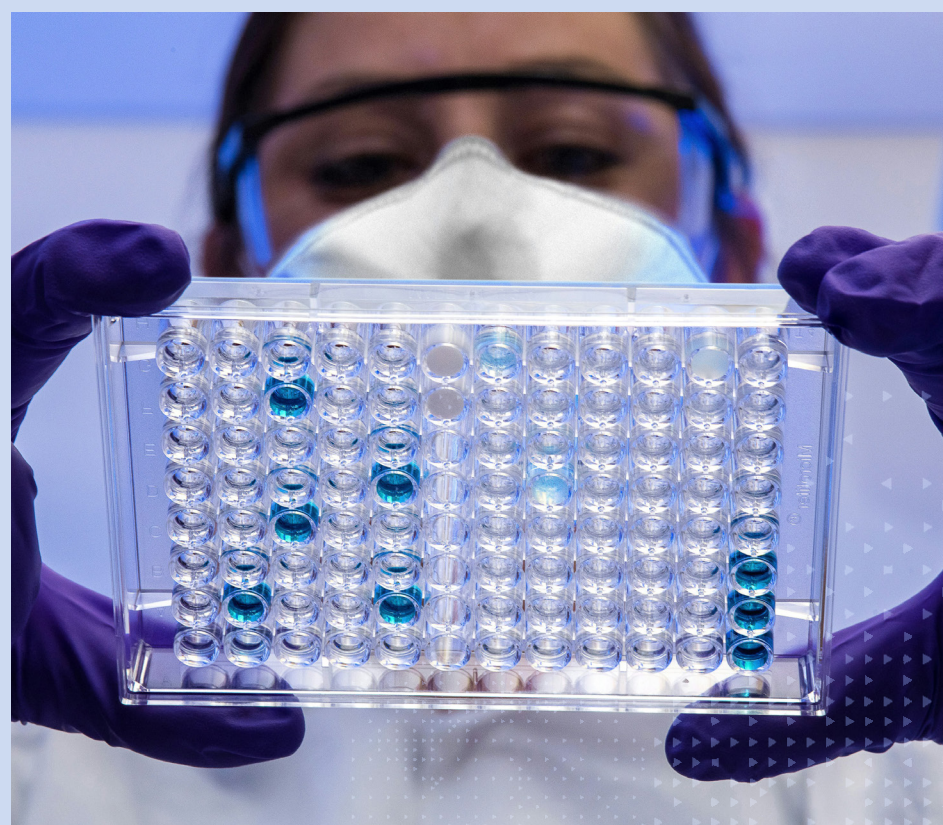
Disinformation strategies and country applications: **Violations of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)**

The fifth disinformation theme was identified in 10 of the 68 sources and concerns Russian allegations that US and NATO activities on the eastern flank constitute direct violations of the BWC.

This narrative portrays the United States as a serial violator of treaty norms while presenting Russia as the convention's defender.

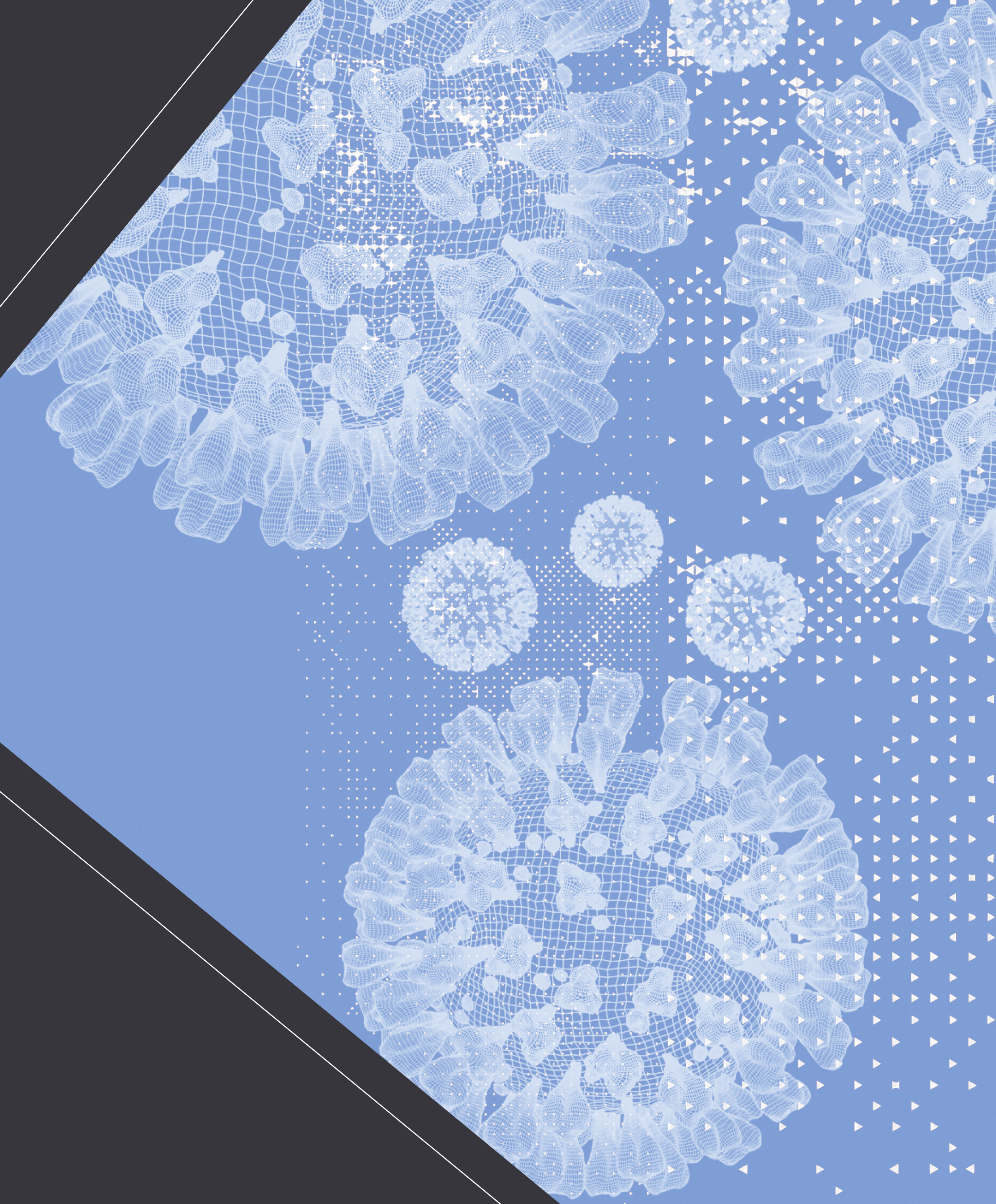
In Georgia, Russian MFA spokesperson Maria Zakharova argued in March 2022 that the US refusal to allow access to laboratories in Tbilisi and Kyiv demonstrated they were conducting illegal, military-purpose experiments outside BWC obligations⁶⁵. Similar points appeared in MFA Telegram briefings⁶⁶, where the MoD claimed components of biological weapons were created under Pentagon contracts.

In the Baltic states and Poland, Russian MFA commentary republished in Baltnews⁶⁷ stressed that US biological cooperation violated the BWC and that the absence of verification mechanisms left the treaty unenforceable. The MFA highlighted US opposition to a legally binding protocol⁶⁸ as proof of deliberate obstruction, a point reinforced in July 2023⁶⁹ by Zakharova.



COUNTRY-SPECIFIC NARRATIVES

Overview, Poland and Georgia

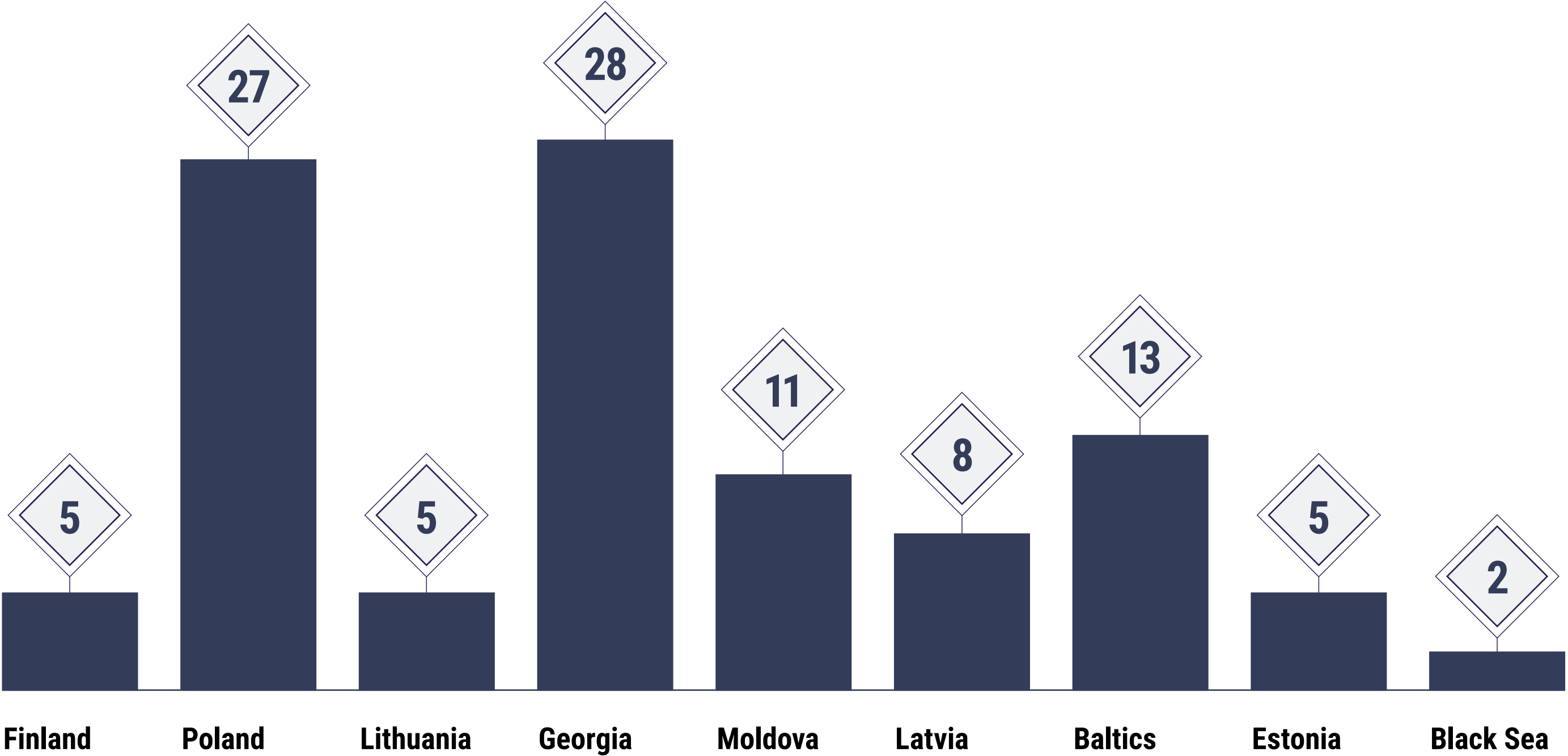
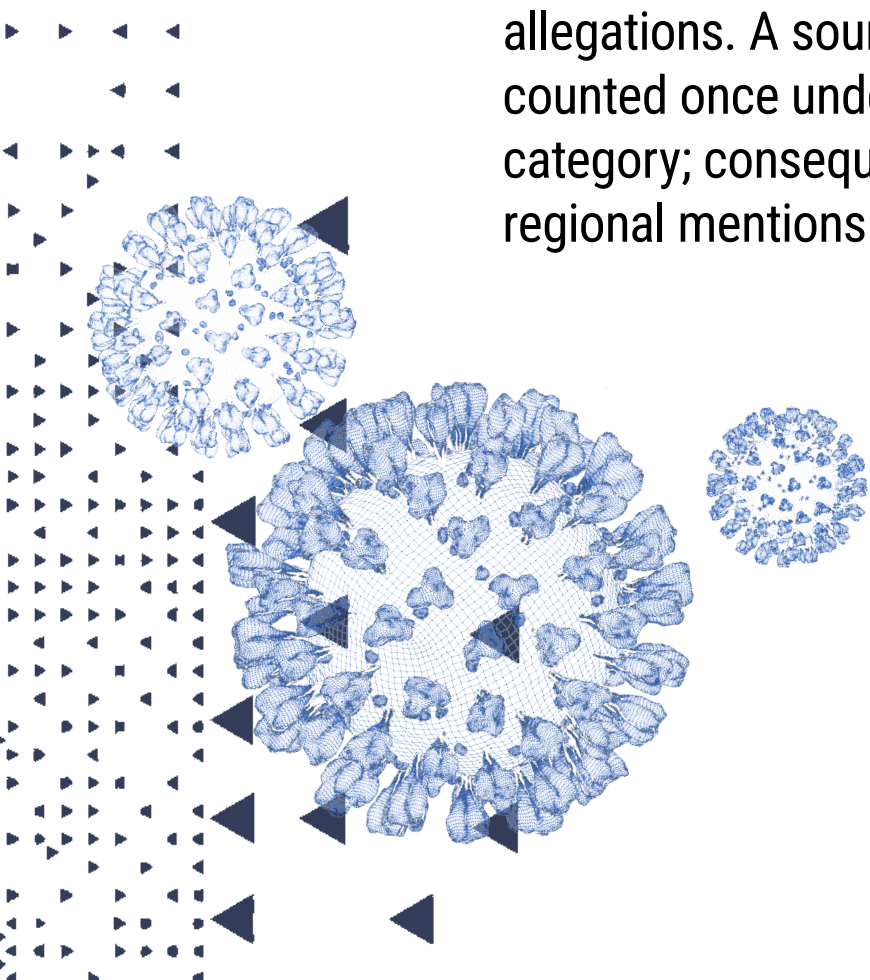


4.1

Country-specific narratives:
Overview

The distribution of country and regional mentions is uneven within the collected dataset. Georgia and Poland appear most frequently, while the Baltic states are often treated as a collective regional category.

These figures count source-country or source-region associations, rather than unique sources or individual allegations. A source referring to several countries is counted once under each relevant country or regional category; consequently, the total number of country and regional mentions exceeds the 68 sources in the dataset.



Number of times a country/region is mentioned in the analysed sources.
Note: Counts represent source-level country or regional references. Categories are non-mutually exclusive; n=68 unique sources.

POLAND

Bioweapons past narrative
to contemporary complicity



Country-specific narratives: **Poland: Bioweapons past narrative to contemporary complicity**

Russian disinformation about Poland combines historical allegations with present-day claims, constructing a narrative continuity that positions the country as historically predisposed to biological warfare and complicit in current US programmes.

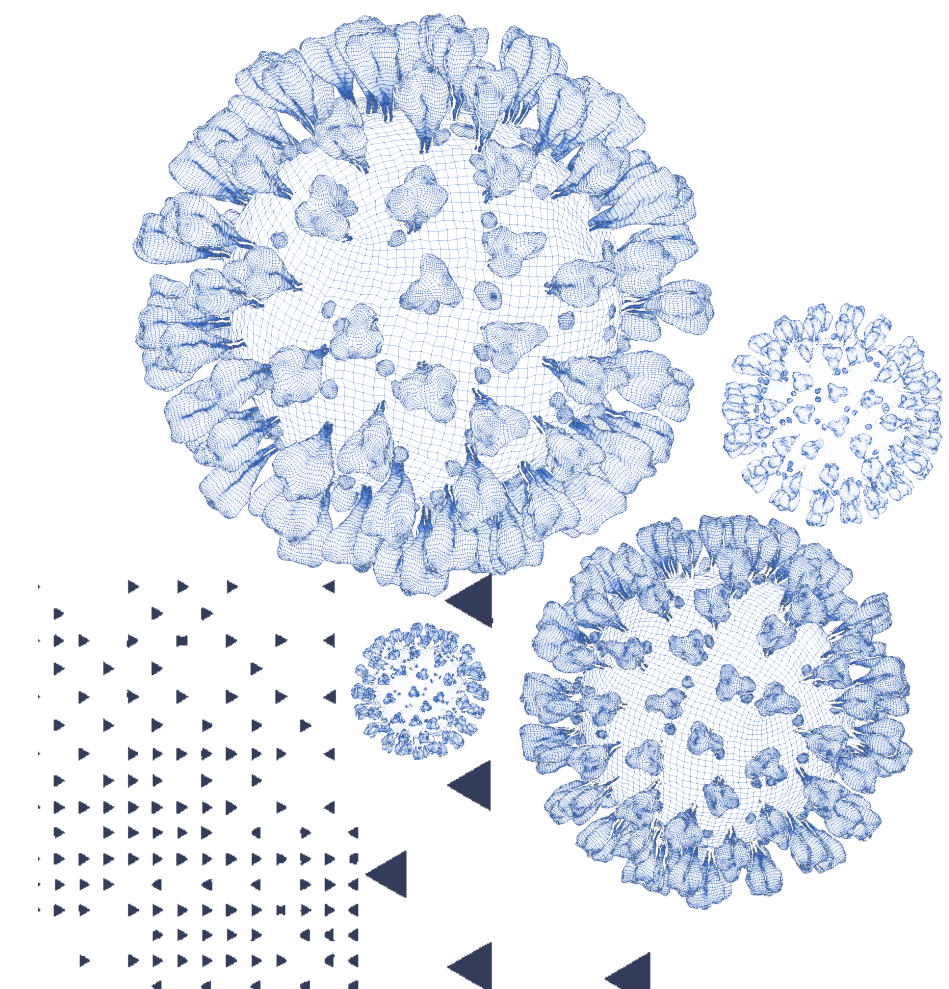
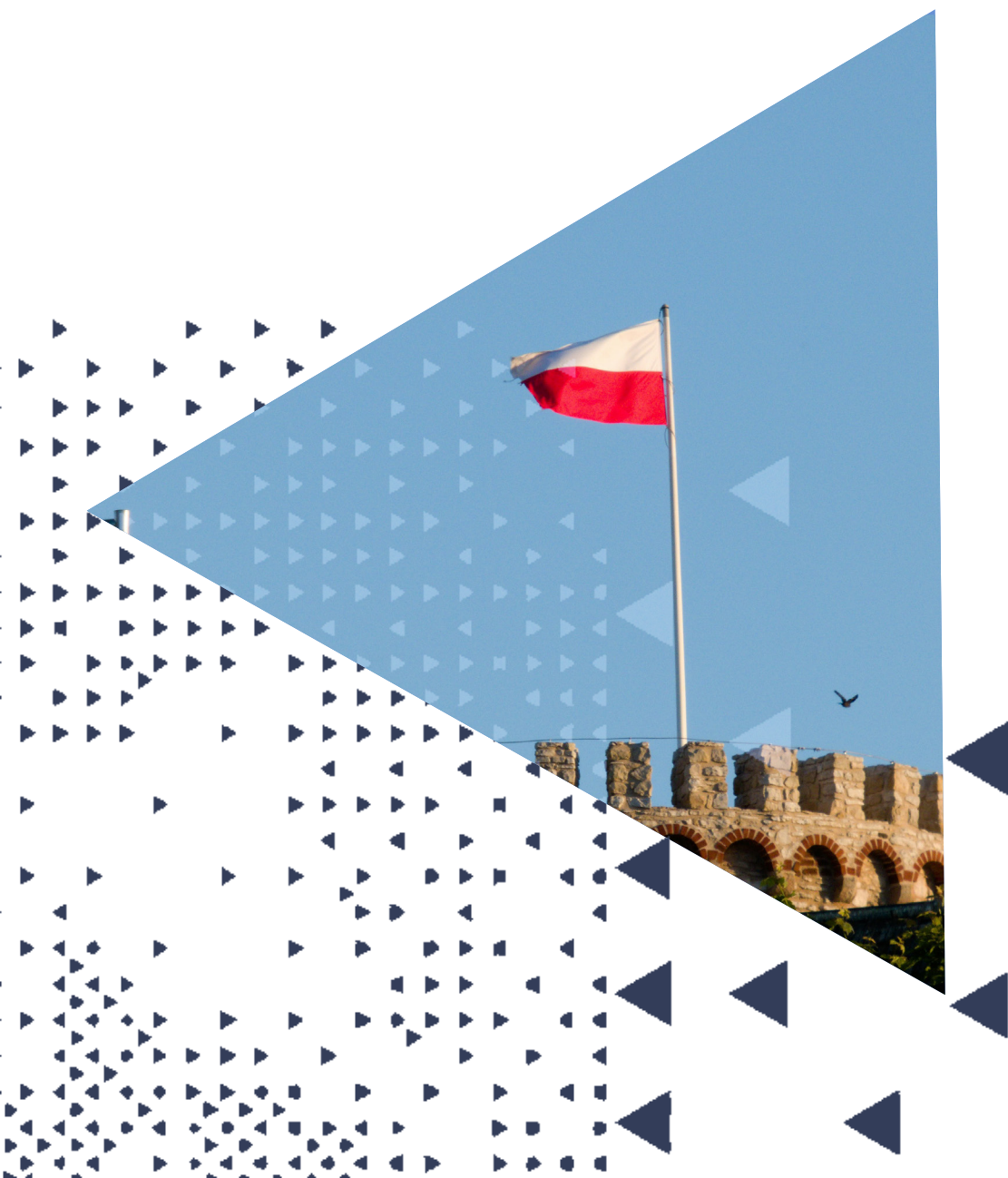
Eight of the 68 sources contained at least one allegation invoking Poland's alleged biological-weapons past.

In April 2022, RIA Novosti ran interviews with retired Russian MoD microbiologist Mikhail Supotnitsky⁷⁰, asserting that Poland began bacteriological-weapons work in the 1920s during which time it hosted a secret lab at the Military Institute of Gas Protection, and later built a larger facility inside the Brest Fortress which housed animal and human experiments. Supotnitsky further claimed Warsaw prepared a "post-Khabarovsk" tribunal against its own developers, a reference to the Khabarovsk Trials of 1949, when the Soviet Union prosecuted Japanese officers for wartime manufacture and use of biological weapons and human experimentation. He alleged links between Polish researchers

and Japan's notorious Unit 731, which conducted lethal human experimentation during World War II, insinuating an alleged "secret conference" held in Warsaw in 1936.

These stories provide emotive historical scaffolding, naming scientists, institutions, and purported testimonies to position Poland as inherently predisposed to biowarfare. The archival frame is then linked to current events. RT⁷¹ cited Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov to claim Polish institutions and experts actively collaborated with US-funded biological research in Ukraine. Russian MoD briefings cited the Polish Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Lviv's National Medical University as participants in Pentagon-linked projects in Ukraine on rabies and epidemiological threats, allegedly funded by Poland alongside US contractor Battelle, extending the "Polish complicity" theme from the 1930s to today.

By merging these two strands, archival accusations of interwar bacteriological work and modern claims of institutional collaboration, Kremlin outlets portray Poland as a long-standing partner in hostile bioprogrammes along NATO's eastern flank.



GEORGIA

The Lugar Centre narrative



Country-specific narratives: Georgia: The Lugar Centre narrative

This disinformation theme centres on Russian disinformation targeting the Richard Lugar Centre in Tbilisi, depicted as the epicentre of US military-biological operations in the South Caucasus.

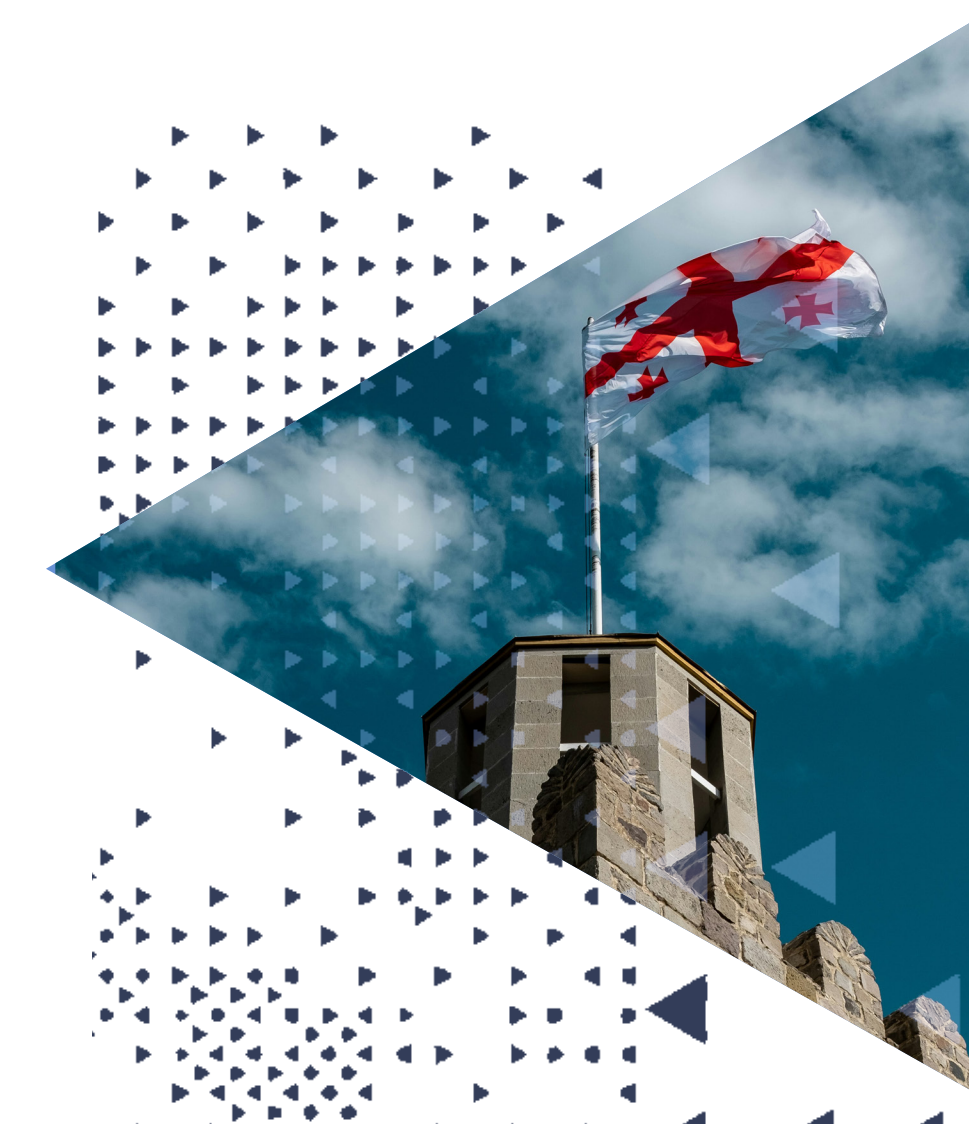
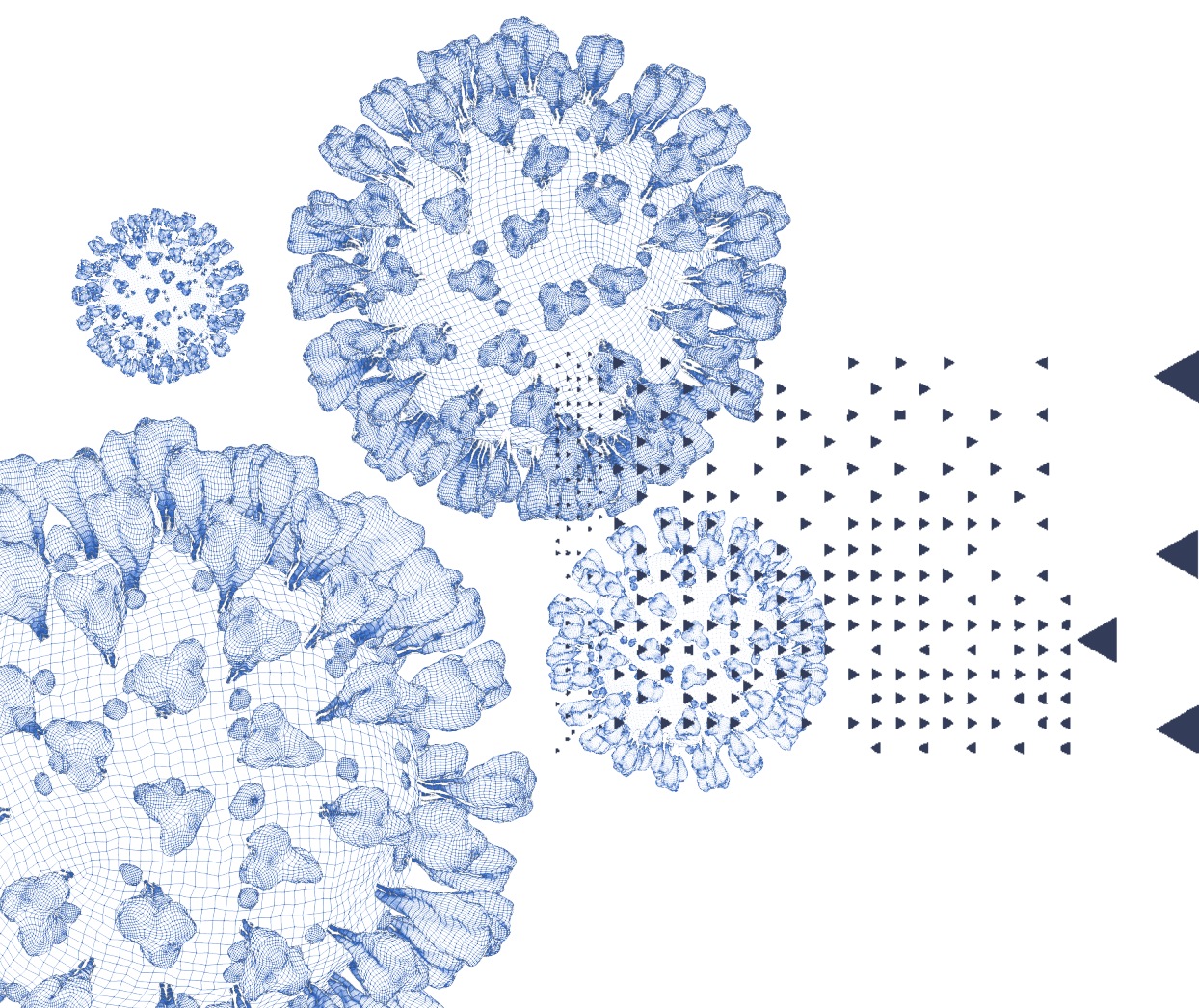
The narrative frames the laboratory as Pentagon-controlled, conducting experiments prohibited under the BWC, and serving as a regional node in an encirclement arc against Russia. Twenty of the 68 sources contained at least one allegation concerning the Lugar Centre.

From the outset of the invasion in February 2022, Russian officials tied Georgia into the broader Ukraine “biolab” story. Russian MFA spokesperson Maria Zakharova claimed that US denial of Russian access to the Lugar Centre and Ukrainian facilities proved they hosted illegal, military-purpose experiments⁷². Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov, former Chief of Russia’s Radiation, Chemical, and Biological Protection Troops, expanded these accusations in multiple briefings, alleging that Pentagon projects

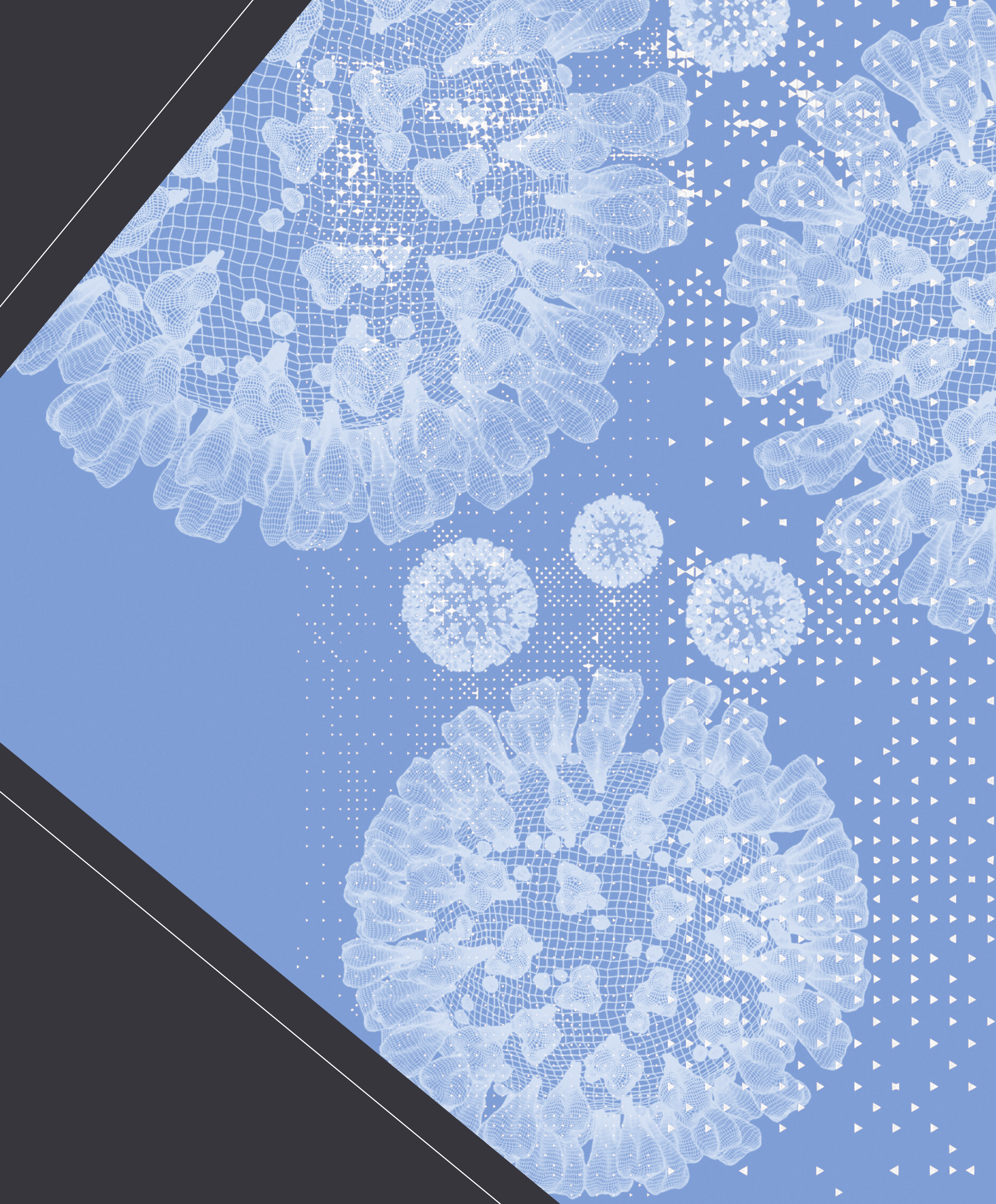
at Lugar (notably Project P-781) focused on bat-borne pathogens, and that African Swine Fever strains engineered in Georgia⁷³ had spread into Russia and Europe. He further asserted that US programmes investigated insect vectors and UAV dispersal methods for pathogens⁷⁴.

These official claims were reinforced by local voices, with former Georgian security chief Igor Giorgadze⁷⁵ alleging that Lugar documents revealed fatal human trials with 24 unexplained deaths, while ex-general Tristan Tsitelashvili⁷⁶ repeatedly asserted that the laboratory manufactures biological weapons and chemical agents under Pentagon direction. Such testimonies provide insider validation for Moscow’s accusations.

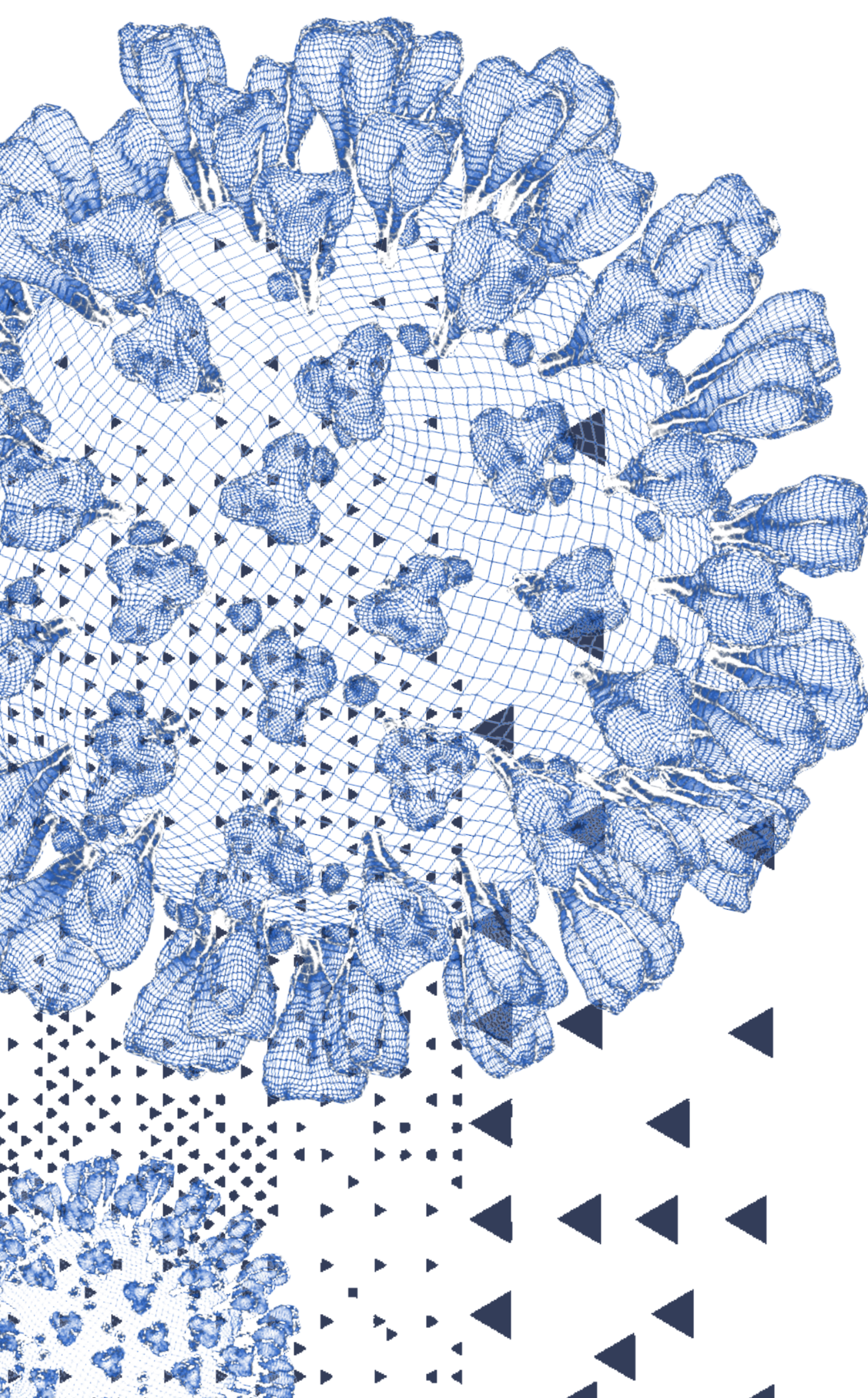
By situating Georgia as the hinge of NATO’s southern “biological belt,” the Lugar narrative serves multiple disinformation clusters simultaneously, encompassing the themes of biolabs, fake outbreaks, sovereignty-loss, encirclement, and BWC violation. Narrative flexibility allows Moscow to cast Russia as a besieged defender of international law, while portraying Georgia as a compromised outpost of US military-biological expansion.



NARRATIVE OBJECTIVES



Narrative objectives



Russian disinformation narratives across NATO's eastern flank pursue overlapping objectives. The narratives seek to delegitimise its member states by portraying regular elements of alliance work such as defence cooperation agreements, military exercises, and defence infrastructure as covers for clandestine biological warfare.

In Finland, for example, Bloknot.ru⁷⁷ amplified the idea that military drills doubled as bioweapons rehearsals. In Poland, Russian MoD briefings went further, alleging that US-funded research was deliberately relocated to Polish facilities⁷⁸, positioning Warsaw as a forward operating base for hostile programmes.

Alongside delegitimation, the narratives aim to manufacture fear and erode trust in public health systems by framing routine health events as evidence of covert experimentation. Messaging primes audiences to interpret future illnesses as engineered or transferred whilst anticipatory warnings and claims about engineered animal diseases (e.g. ASF) instil fear that outlasts news cycles and weakens confidence in health authorities.

A further strand of the objective centres on the sovereignty-loss framing, with governments depicted as complicit and incapable of controlling US-directed programmes. This framing portrays NATO states not as sovereign actors, but as subordinate outposts of US military-biological expansion.

These sovereignty-loss claims are reinforced by the invocation of international law, particularly the BWC. Russian MFA commentary argued that US activities in Poland and the Baltics constituted violations of the BWC, while highlighting Washington's opposition since 2001⁷⁹ to a binding verification protocol as proof of deliberate obstruction. By anchoring disinformation in legal discourse, Moscow aims to project itself as a responsible guardian

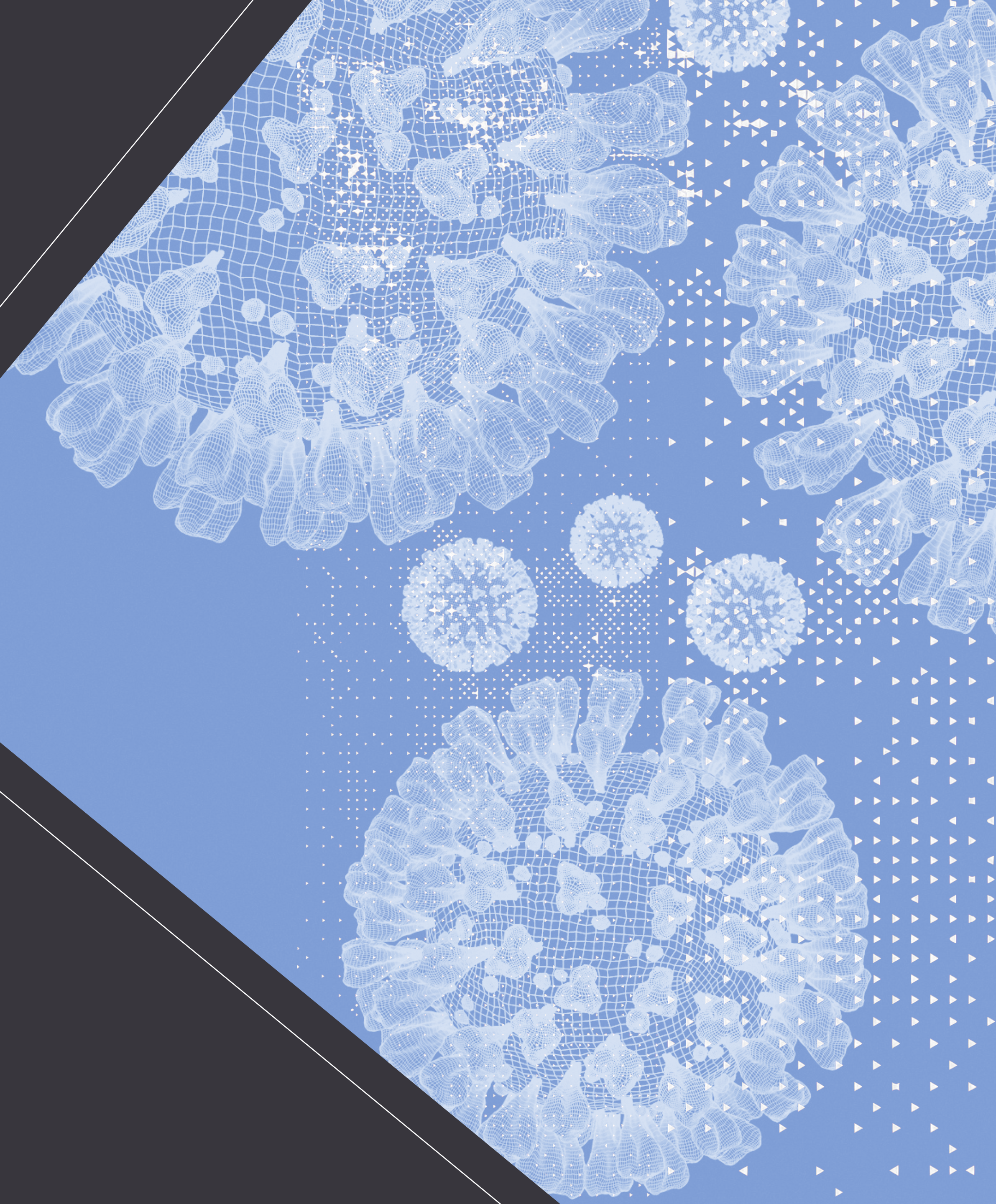
of treaty regimes while deflecting attention from its own record of chemical weapons use and arms control violations.

Finally, these narratives depict Russia as encircled by a belt of hostile C/B infrastructure. From the Baltics in the north to Georgia and Moldova in the south, MoD briefings routinely describe an arc of biolabs and transit routes closing in on Russia's borders. This framing depicts Russia as a victim of Western C/B encirclement.

Taken together, these objectives create a flexible and mutually reinforcing disinformation toolkit. By recycling localised claims into regional framings, Russia positions itself as a besieged but principled actor while undermining confidence in NATO's eastern members and sowing distrust across allied societies.

KEY ACTORS AND AMPLIFIERS

The Matryoshka
architecture of chemical
and biological disinformation



Key actors and amplifiers: The Matryoshka architecture of C/B disinformation

Russian C/B disinformation across NATO's eastern flank operates through a Matryoshka-style architecture⁸⁰ consisting of a foundational "biolabs" narrative nested inside successive layers of diplomatic, military, media, proxy, and localised messaging.

The core claim remains stable, repeating the assertion that US and NATO biological cooperation conceals hostile military-biological activity. However, its expression changes as it moves across actors and geographies and takes on national salience in each locale in which it is spread. For example, in Poland, it has been cast as a story of relocated Ukrainian biolabs and historical complicity whilst in Georgia it remains rooted in the narrative anchor of the Lugar Centre.

This architecture makes the campaign more durable than a linear propaganda operation. The campaigns have a replicable structure with official Russian institutions supplying authority and legal framing within which state-aligned media make the claims consumable to wider publics. Additional proxy outlets and Telegram channels sustain repetition

at scale, often using novel technologies such as AI bots to hasten spread and reach. Additional local or marginal voices may be employed to provide apparent authenticity appearing from outside of digital space alone. Each layer adapts the foundational claim to local anxieties with the result producing a nested information ecosystem in which technical-sounding allegations, local rumours, and geopolitical narratives mutually reinforce one another.

At the innermost layer sit Russian state institutions, which generate the initial claims and provide them with official status. The Russian Ministry of Defence (MoD), and in particular briefings by Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov and his successor Major General Alexey Rtishchev, have served as the principal source of military-technical allegations concerning US-funded biological activity.

In January 2023⁸¹ and August 2024⁸², Kirillov's briefings alleged that US biological programmes and laboratory infrastructure had been relocated from Ukraine to Poland, the Baltic states, and Moldova. Over the course of several briefings, he claimed that Poland was acting as a hub for displaced Ukrainian biological activity, the Baltic states were acting as part of a corridor for relocated laboratories and personnel, and Moldova was providing a logistics route for biomaterials, including allegations of more than 2,000 transfers routed through Chişinău. The briefings rely on so-called 'evidence' naming specific facilities, dates, project codes, contractors, maps, and quantities of biological material to create a technical depth that makes the allegations appear investigative rather than conspiratorial.



Key actors and amplifiers: The Matryoshka architecture of C/B disinformation

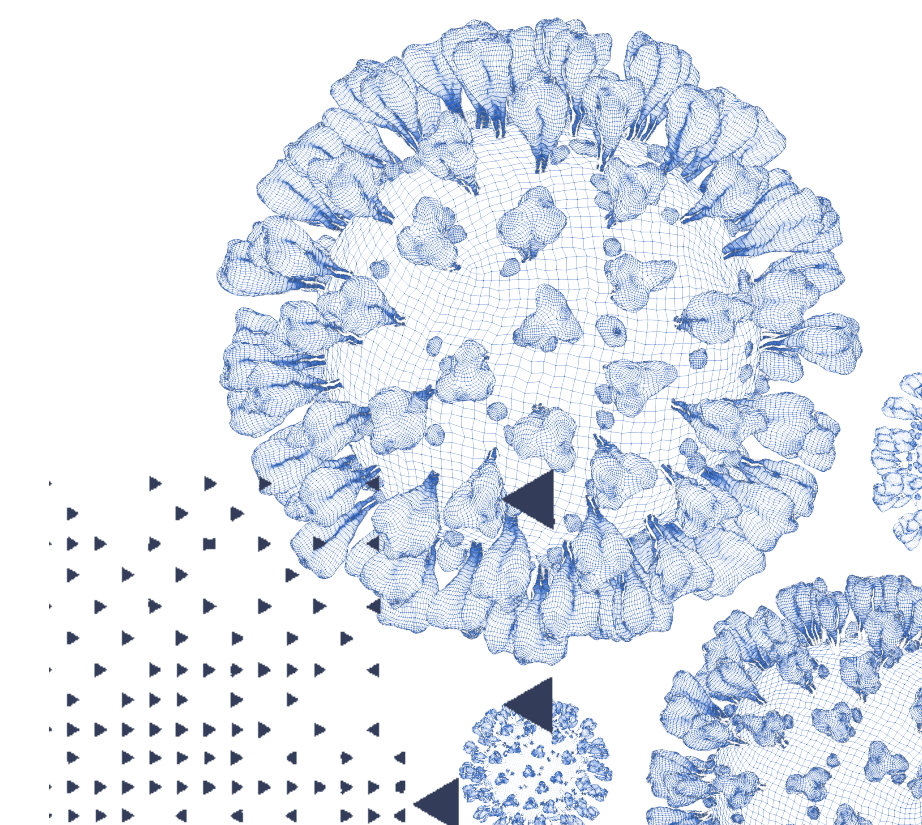
The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) reinforces this layer by translating military claims into diplomatic and legal language. MFA spokesperson Maria Zakharova argued in March 2022⁸³ that US refusal to allow Russian access to facilities in Georgia and Ukraine demonstrated that experiments prohibited under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) were being conducted there. Subsequent MFA commentary, republished across Russian and regional outlets, framed US and NATO biological cooperation in Poland, the Baltic states, Georgia, and Ukraine as evidence of treaty violation and deliberate obstruction, particularly by invoking Washington's longstanding opposition to a legally binding BWC verification protocol. Through this legalistic framing, Russia presents itself as a defender of treaty compliance while depicting NATO and the United States as actors evading transparency.

The next layer consists of state-aligned media, which codify official claims as news and make them available to wider audiences. RIA Novosti and TASS routinely repackage MoD and MFA allegations⁸⁴, while Baltnews presents regional framings⁸⁵ such as the Baltic corridor of relocated laboratories. Sputnik's regional branches, including Sputnik Abkhazia⁸⁶, Sputnik Georgia⁸⁷, and Sputnik Ossetia⁸⁸, integrate these claims into Black Sea and Caucasus narratives, especially around Georgia's Lugar Centre and Moldova's alleged role as a transfer route. State television, particularly Zvezda, dramatises the story by connecting official biological allegations to public health incidents. The 2023 Legionella outbreak in Rzeszów, exemplified this approach by reframing this event as evidence

of supposed nefarious activity by NATO members⁸⁹. This layer of the framework performs an important laundering function by converting allegations originating from state sources into repeatable media products that can be further adapted by downstream actors.

A third layer is made up of proxy outlets, which include Telegram channels, and social media ecosystems that sustain the narratives after the initial official or media push has faded. Pro-Kremlin Telegram channels such as Antifalivland⁹⁰ and bio_genie⁹¹ recycle MoD talking points while adding more speculative, conspiratorial, or locally targeted claims. Antifalivland, for example, alleged that a secret biolaboratory workforce had been evacuated from Ukraine to Latvia to establish a new site, later claiming to have identified the location of the relocated laboratory and warning that

propaganda was being prepared to justify US biolabs across the Baltics. In Poland, the portal Niezależny Dziennik Polityczny⁹² localises broader Russian claims by presenting Poland as both historically predisposed to biological weapons development and currently complicit in US programmes. These channels are particularly important because they allow the foundational biolabs narrative to remain active between major official interventions, while making it more emotive than formal Russian state messaging.



Key actors and amplifiers: The Matryoshka architecture of C/B disinformation

The outer layer consists of local or marginal validators who provide the appearance of domestic corroboration. In Finland, Johan Bäckman is repeatedly presented by Russian and pro-Kremlin outlets such as *Ukraina.ru*⁹³ and *Bloknot.ru*⁹⁴ as a Finnish political scientist or human rights activist, despite his limited domestic credibility, enabling his claims to be framed as locally grounded. In Moldova, actor Aurel Bucureanu's TikTok⁹⁵ video claiming that a NATO laboratory was being built in Băcioi, and that laboratories from Ukraine had already been relocated there, gained more than 90,000 views in a month. In Georgia, former officials such as Igor Giorgadze and Tristan Tsitelashvili⁹⁶

provide insider-style testimony around the Lugar Centre: Giorgadze alleged that laboratory documents showed human trials ending in 24 unexplained deaths, while Tsitelashvili claimed that the centre produced biological weapons and chemical agents. These voices allow Russian outlets to present long-running allegations as if they were supported by domestic witnesses or local knowledge.

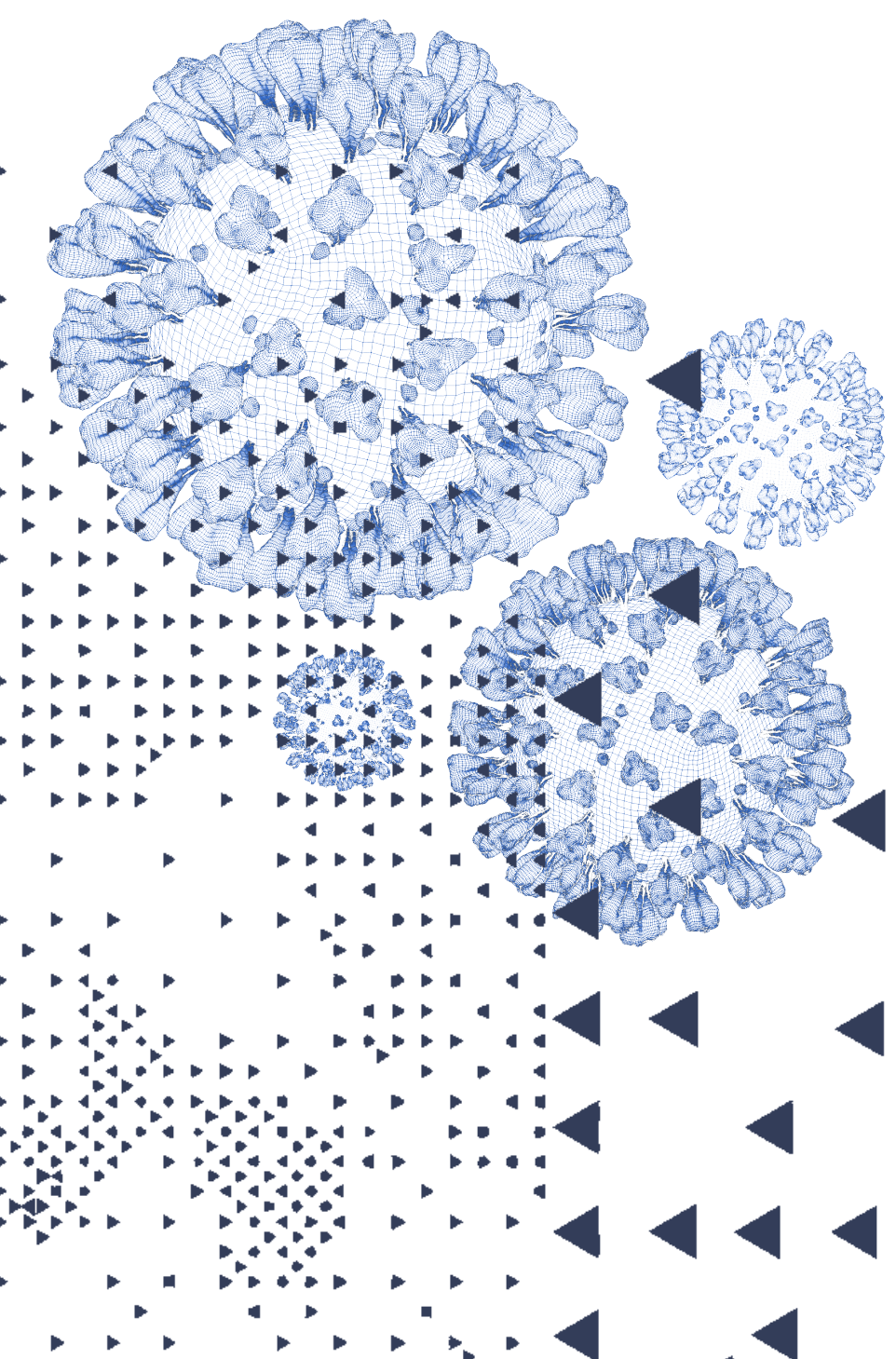
These layers are mutually reinforcing rather than sequential. Official claims can move downwards into media and social ecosystems, but localised rumours can also move back upwards as apparent evidence of public concern or insider confirmation. This feedback loop gives the campaign resilience such that even when a specific allegation is debunked or fails to gain mainstream traction, the broader biolabs frame remains available for reuse in another country, crisis, or institutional setting.

The Matryoshka structure also explains why relatively low-volume countries remain strategically useful. Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Finland do not need to sustain high levels of domestic uptake for the narratives to serve Russian objectives. Their function is often cartographic and symbolic since they help complete the image of a biological encirclement arc around Russia. Estonia and Lithuania are rarely singled out with detailed allegations, but they are repeatedly folded into Baltic-wide claims about the possible transfer of laboratories, pathogens, and personnel from Ukraine. Latvia has slightly greater prominence because Antifalivland's posts gave the Baltic corridor narrative a more specific territorial anchor. Finland, meanwhile, has been used episodically. A spike of activity was noted at the time of its

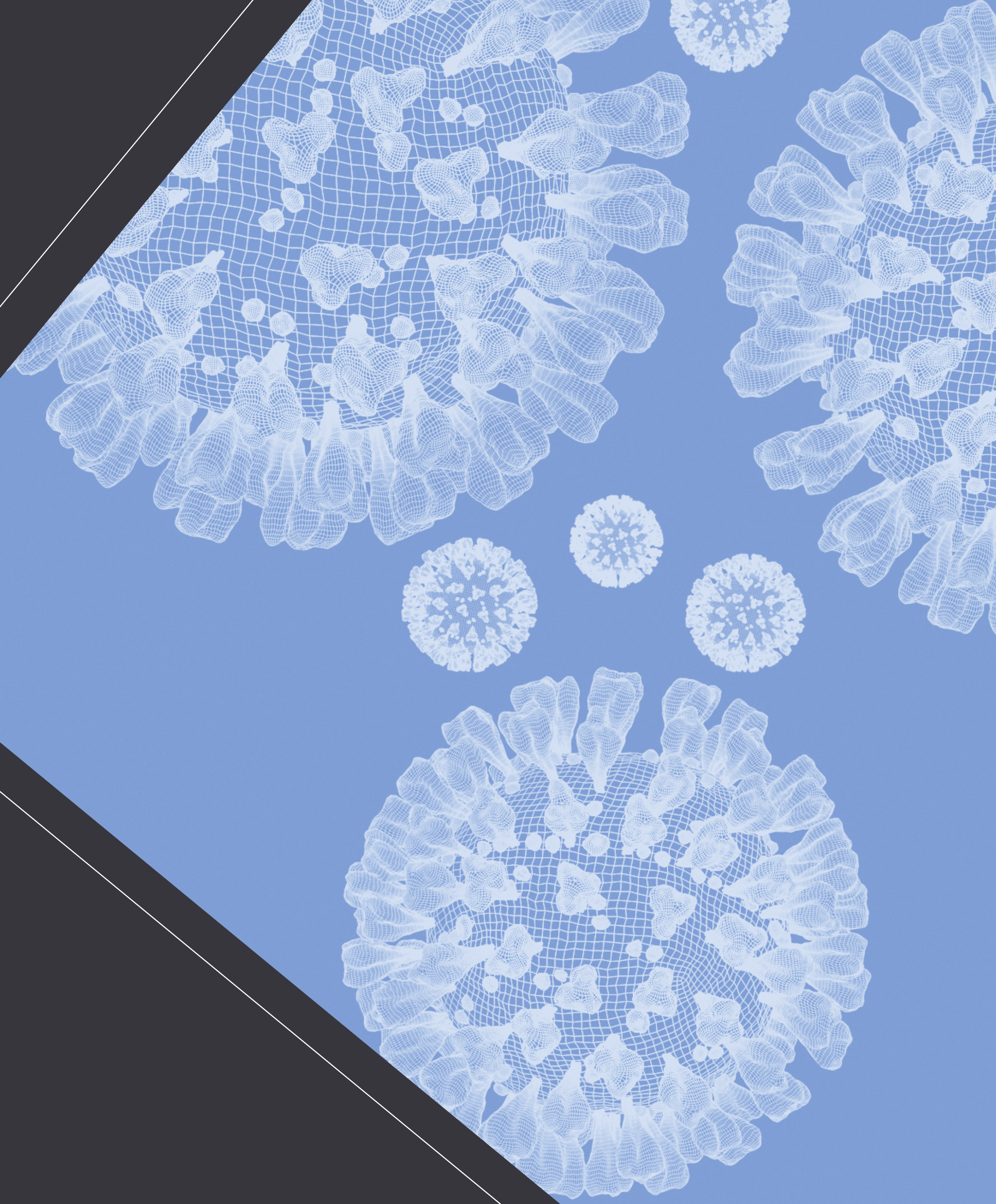
NATO accession and Defence Cooperation Agreement with the United States, which produced the conditions for Russian outlets to present it as a newly occupied frontier and as the northern link in a supposed biological siege line.

This structure combines authority, repetition, localisation, and deniability. Taken together, the Matryoshka layers enable Russian C/B disinformation to move between diplomatic forums, Russian domestic audiences, regional media ecosystems, and fringe local communities while preserving the same underlying claim that NATO's eastern flank is being turned into a hostile biological platform directed against Russia.

Consequently, the eastern flank can be viewed as one of the core theatres in which the foundational biolab narrative is transformed into wider Russian claims about C/B encirclement and BWC violation.



NARRATIVE IMPACT AND AUDIENCE



Narrative impact and audience: **Assessing impact and audience resonance**

Impact is assessed against three indicators: 1) the volume of repetition across platforms; 2) the breadth of amplification across the layered ecosystem, including official state institutions, state-aligned media, proxy outlets, and social media channels; and 3) the degree of spillover into local languages, domestic information spaces, or international outlets. Narratives are coded as low, medium, or high impact depending on the combined strength of these indicators.

This approach recognises that impact is not measured only by the number of claims observed. A narrative may have limited domestic uptake but still serve a strategic purpose if it is repeatedly amplified by Russian state and proxy actors, translated across platforms, or used to reinforce broader regional framings. Conversely, high-volume official messaging does not necessarily imply domestic resonance if the claims remain largely confined to Russian-language or external-facing ecosystems.



Narrative impact and audience: Information environments and receptive conditions

The country cases examined in this report sit within different national information environments. These environments shape how Russian C/B disinformation is likely to circulate, whether it reaches domestic audiences, and which claims may prove most resonant.

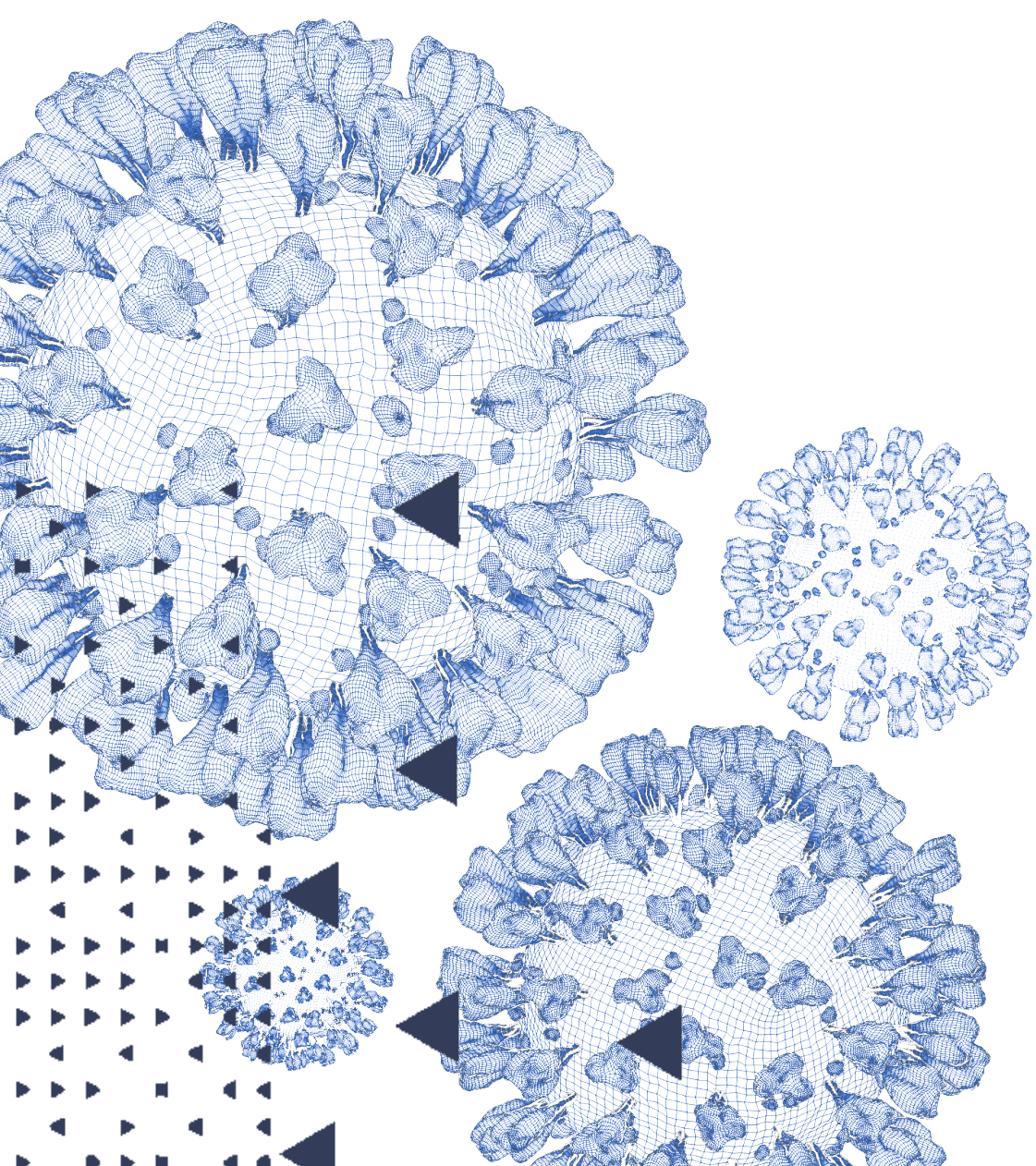
The EUDisinfoLab country reports on Finland⁹⁷, Estonia⁹⁸, Latvia⁹⁹, Lithuania¹⁰⁰ and Poland¹⁰¹ provide useful contextual evidence on these receptive conditions. They show that Russian C/B narratives interact with existing patterns of institutional trust and local social factors such as media literacy, polarisation, public health scepticism, anti-NATO sentiment, minority-language media ecosystems, and domestic conspiracy communities influence the transformation of the narrative.

Factors that shape the information environment in Poland centre on strong emotional mobilisation around migration, public health, Ukraine, and national security¹⁰². EUDisinfoLab notes that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed low societal resilience to false health-related content,

while Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine enabled thousands of accounts to shift from anti-vaccine narratives to anti-Ukrainian content¹⁰³. This is directly relevant to C/B disinformation. Russian claims about biolabs, fake outbreaks, and NATO-linked biological threats can draw on pre-existing distrust of public health authorities, vaccine programmes, and Ukrainian refugees. Poland's high resonance in this report should therefore be understood not only as a function of Russian amplification, but also as the product of an information environment in which health, security, and sovereignty narratives already overlap.

Finland presents a contrasting case. EUDisinfoLab identifies relatively high societal resilience, supported by a strong education system, a long tradition of

media literacy, and broad consensus on foreign and security policy¹⁰⁴. This helps explain why C/B allegations involving Finland remain comparatively low-resonance domestically, even when amplified in Russian-language media. Claims advanced by figures such as Johan Bäckman are useful for Russian external messaging, particularly to depict Finland as a newly occupied NATO frontier, but they have limited domestic traction. Finland's relevance is therefore more symbolic than audience-driven by completing Russia's alleged northern biological-encirclement narrative without requiring significant Finnish uptake.



Narrative impact and audience: Information environments and receptive conditions

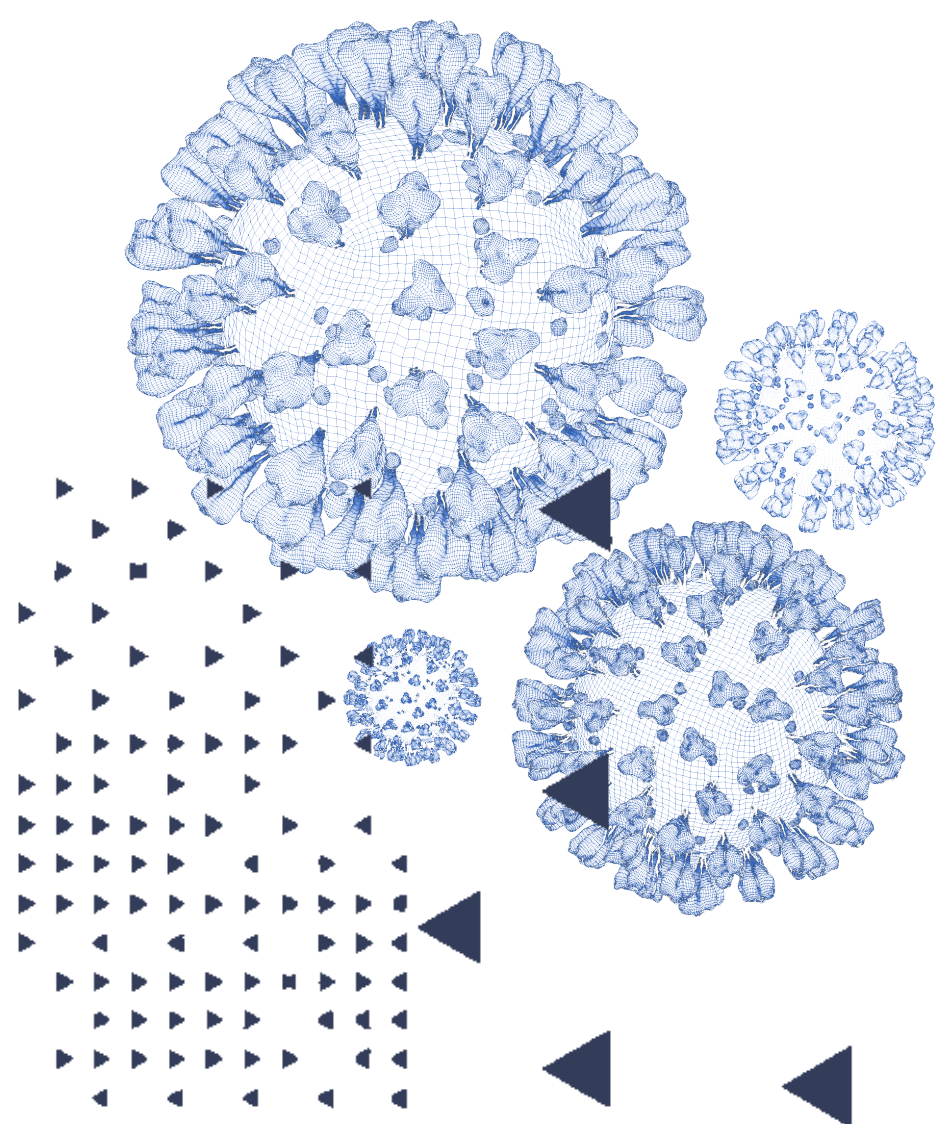
Estonia is also characterised by relatively strong resilience, but with specific vulnerabilities in moments of crisis or local contention. EUDisinfoLab highlights Estonia's advanced media-literacy infrastructure, including mandatory media education, while also noting that the COVID-19 pandemic produced widespread panic and information disorder. It also records NATO-related rumours connected to local tensions over military training areas¹⁰⁵. This context helps explain Estonia's role in the C/B dataset. Estonia is rarely targeted with detailed standalone biological allegations, but it can be folded

into Baltic corridor narratives or activated around public health, NATO presence, or local security disputes. Its resilience may limit domestic penetration, but crisis conditions can still provide openings for anticipatory or regionalised claims.

Latvia's information environment is shaped by long-running Kremlin narratives around Russian-speaking communities, NATO hostility, and the supposed failure of Latvian statehood. EUDisinfoLab describes Latvia as a frontline state in countering Kremlin disinformation, while also noting persistent efforts to undermine NATO, the EU, and Western institutions¹⁰⁶. This context is relevant to the Latvia-specific claims identified in this report. Antifalivland's allegations about a relocated Ukrainian biolab and future experiments on Latvians connected to broader narratives of foreign control.

Lithuania combines high exposure to Russian and Belarusian information operations with a comparatively developed counter-disinformation ecosystem. EUDisinfoLab describes Lithuania as being on the frontlines of countering Kremlin propaganda and notes that much of the disinformation targeting the country is intended for international audiences, with the aim of undermining NATO, the EU, and the West¹⁰⁷. This helps explain why Lithuania appears in the C/B dataset mainly through collective Baltic framings rather than high-volume domestic uptake. Lithuania's symbolic value is significant given it can be used to support claims about C/B encirclement and Western-controlled biological infrastructure, even where domestic audiences remain relatively resistant and fact-checking capacity is strong.

Taken together, these information-environment profiles reinforce a key finding of this report: Russian C/B disinformation is shaped not only by supply-side amplification, but also by local receptive conditions, factors that should inform both impact assessment and response planning.



7.3

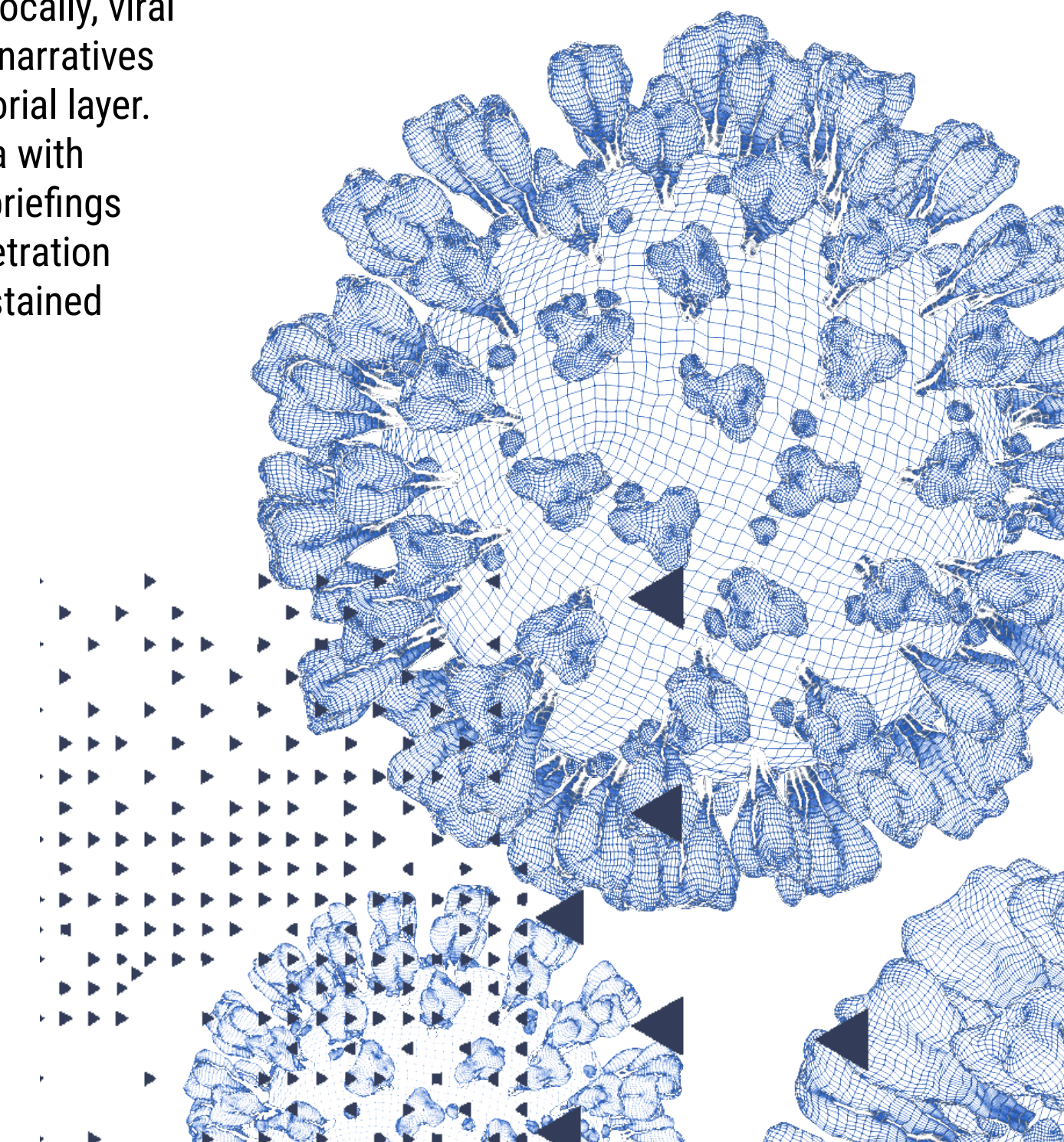
Narrative impact and audience: **Country-level impact profile**

Poland has experienced the highest level of disinformation activity. Russian MoD briefings and MFA statements repeatedly position Poland as a relocation hub for US-funded biolabs, framing Warsaw as complicit in Pentagon programmes¹⁰⁸.

These claims are repackaged across RIA Novosti and Smotrim¹⁰⁹, then reinforced by Telegram ecosystems such as Antifalivland¹¹⁰. Polish-language fringe outlets like Niezależny Dziennik Polityczny¹¹¹ localise these allegations. This multi-layered circulation indicates a high level of disinformation activity.

Georgia registers similarly high traction. The Lugar Centre in Tbilisi is a focal point for Russia's biological encirclement narrative, with Igor Kirillov's MoD briefings linking it to ASF, bat-borne pathogens, and alleged human experimentation¹¹². These claims are reinforced by MFA commentary and carried by RBC¹¹³, and Sputnik¹¹⁴. Proxy content, including RT Documentary and Telegram reposts¹¹⁵, ensures visibility across Russian- and Georgian-language spaces.

Moldova is also targeted with high-intensity campaigns. The August 2024 claim of "over 2,000 biomaterial transfers" routed through Chişinău was simultaneously amplified by MoD Telegram¹¹⁶, RIA Novosti¹¹⁷, and multiple Sputnik regional branches¹¹⁸. Locally, viral TikTok videos amplified these narratives and added a further conspiratorial layer. Internationally, linking Moldova with Romania in MoD and Sputnik briefings broadened the narratives' penetration into regional debates. This sustained multi-layered, multi-linguistic amplification marks Moldova as high resonance.



Narrative impact and audience: Country-level impact profile

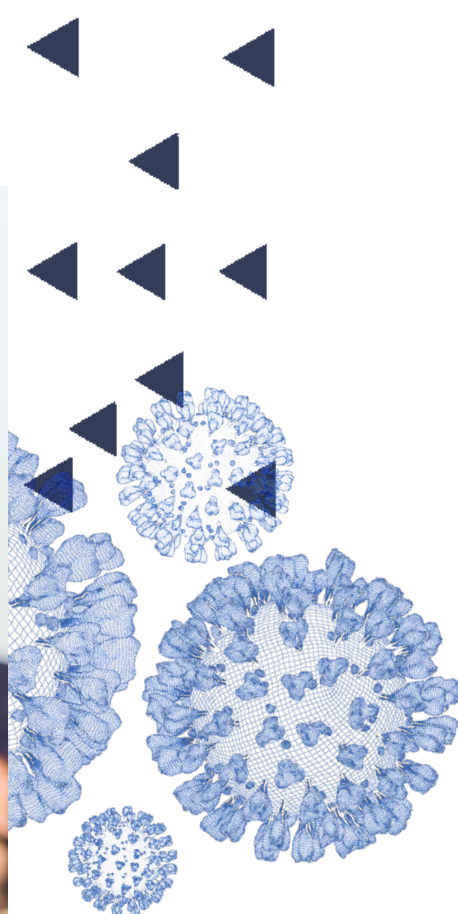
Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia are consistently framed as part of a Baltic corridor. MoD briefings on the relocation of US projects to the Baltics were echoed by Baltnews¹¹⁹ and RIA Novosti¹²⁰. In Latvia, Antifalivland and Telegram¹²¹ explicitly alleged the transfer of a secret biolab and staff from Ukraine.

These narratives were visible across Russian-language ecosystems, but their dissemination into domestic mainstream channels remained limited. Boolean search queries did not return evidence of significant domestic uptake, suggesting that the narratives failed to gain wider traction. This limited reach coincided with the presence of restrictions on Russian state outlets and strong fact-checking environments. Collectively, the Baltic states, including Latvia, are assessed as medium resonance.

Finland remains less affected. Narratives rely heavily on a single validator, Johan Bäckman, whose claims were amplified in Russian outlets such as Ukraina.ru and Bloknot.ru. While this ensured visibility in Russian-language media, domestic uptake in Finland has been negligible, with mainstream outlets either ignoring or debunking the allegations. Finland is thus assessed at low to medium

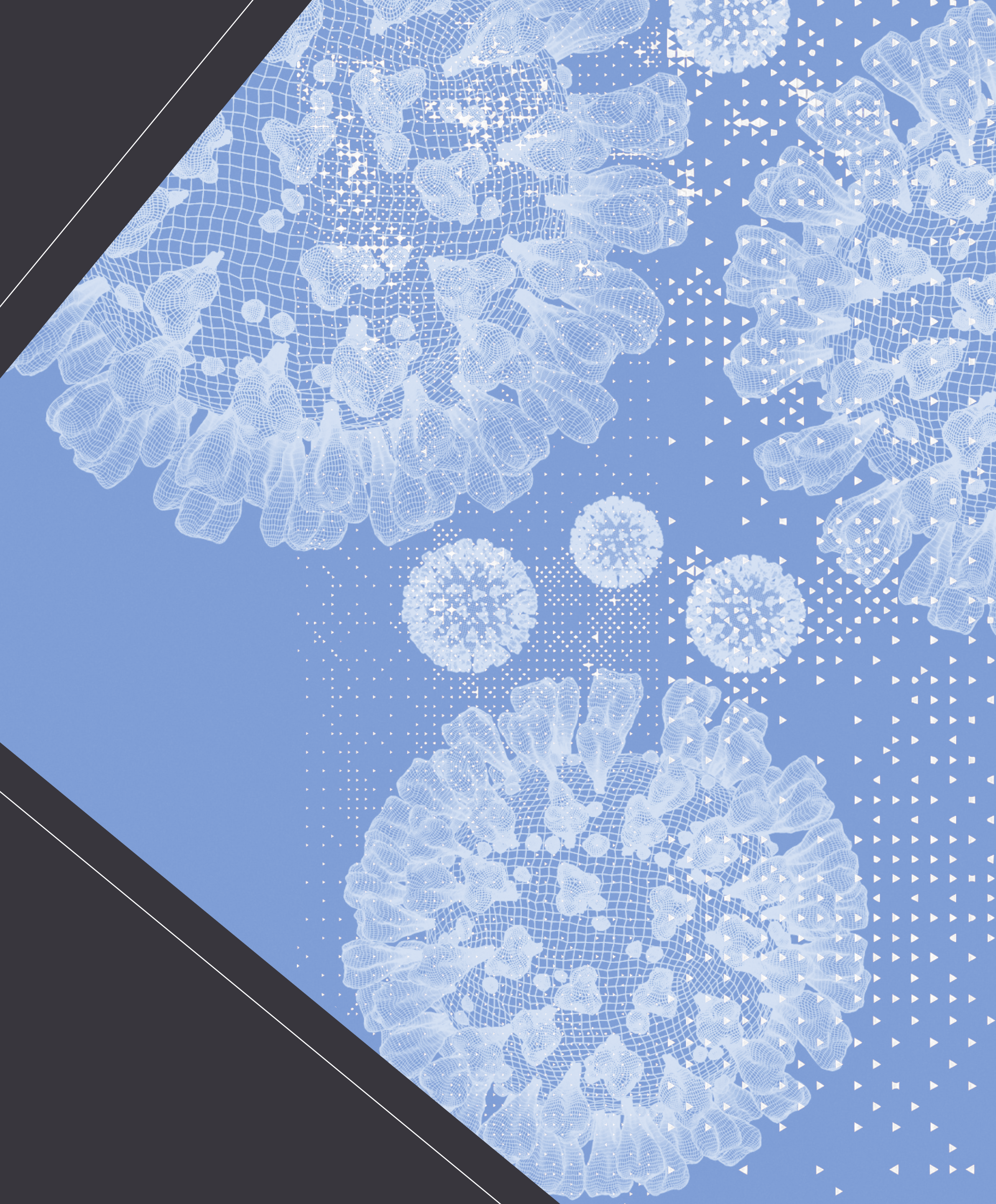
resonance, with narratives primarily targeting Russian domestic and international audiences rather than Finnish publics.

Taken together, the impact profile shows Poland, Georgia, and Moldova as high-intensity targets embedded into Russia's core disinformation architecture; Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia as medium-level corridor states; and Finland as a marginal but symbolically useful case. Audience segmentation ensures both top-down legitimisation and bottom-up diffusion, sustaining persistence and reach across the disinformation ecosystem.



CONCLUSION

Key findings and strategic
implications & recommendations



8.1

Conclusion and recommendations: **Key findings and strategic implications**

Russian C/B disinformation across NATO's eastern flank is unevenly distributed, but strategically coherent. Moscow does not target each country with the same intensity or level of detail.

Instead, it adapts a stable set of claims to the political context and information environment of each country. The result is an adaptive campaign in which localised allegations can be intensified, downplayed, or recycled depending on geopolitical developments.

Poland, Georgia, and Moldova emerge as the highest-prominence targets. Poland is depicted as both a relocation hub for US biological activity displaced from Ukraine and a country with an alleged historical predisposition to biological weapons work. Georgia remains the centrepiece of Russian biological disinformation, anchored in long-running claims about the Richard Lugar Centre in Tbilisi. Moldova is positioned as a corridor state through claims about biomaterial transfers, NATO laboratories, and local infrastructure allegedly repurposed for Western

biological activity. In each case, the country is not only accused of hosting or facilitating biological activity; it is also portrayed as having lost sovereign control to the United States or NATO.

Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania occupy a different but still strategically important position. They are less often singled out with detailed allegations, but they are repeatedly incorporated into Baltic-wide framings about relocated laboratories, transferred pathogens, and NATO biological infrastructure. Their function is therefore often symbolic since they help complete the image of a hostile biological belt around Russia. Finland is also used episodically and symbolically. Its NATO accession and defence cooperation with the United States provide opportunities for Russian actors to depict it as a newly occupied frontier and as the northern link in a wider C/B encirclement narrative.

These findings signal that low volume should not be mistaken for low strategic value. Countries that currently experience limited domestic uptake can still serve important functions in Russian messaging aimed at Russian-speaking, regional, or international audiences. The Baltic states and Finland may not be primary targets in terms of volume, but they help give regional coherence to claims centred on Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. In a future crisis – such as a public health incident, NATO exercise, border emergency, laboratory upgrade, or BWC-related dispute – these lower-volume cases could be rapidly activated as part of a wider narrative.



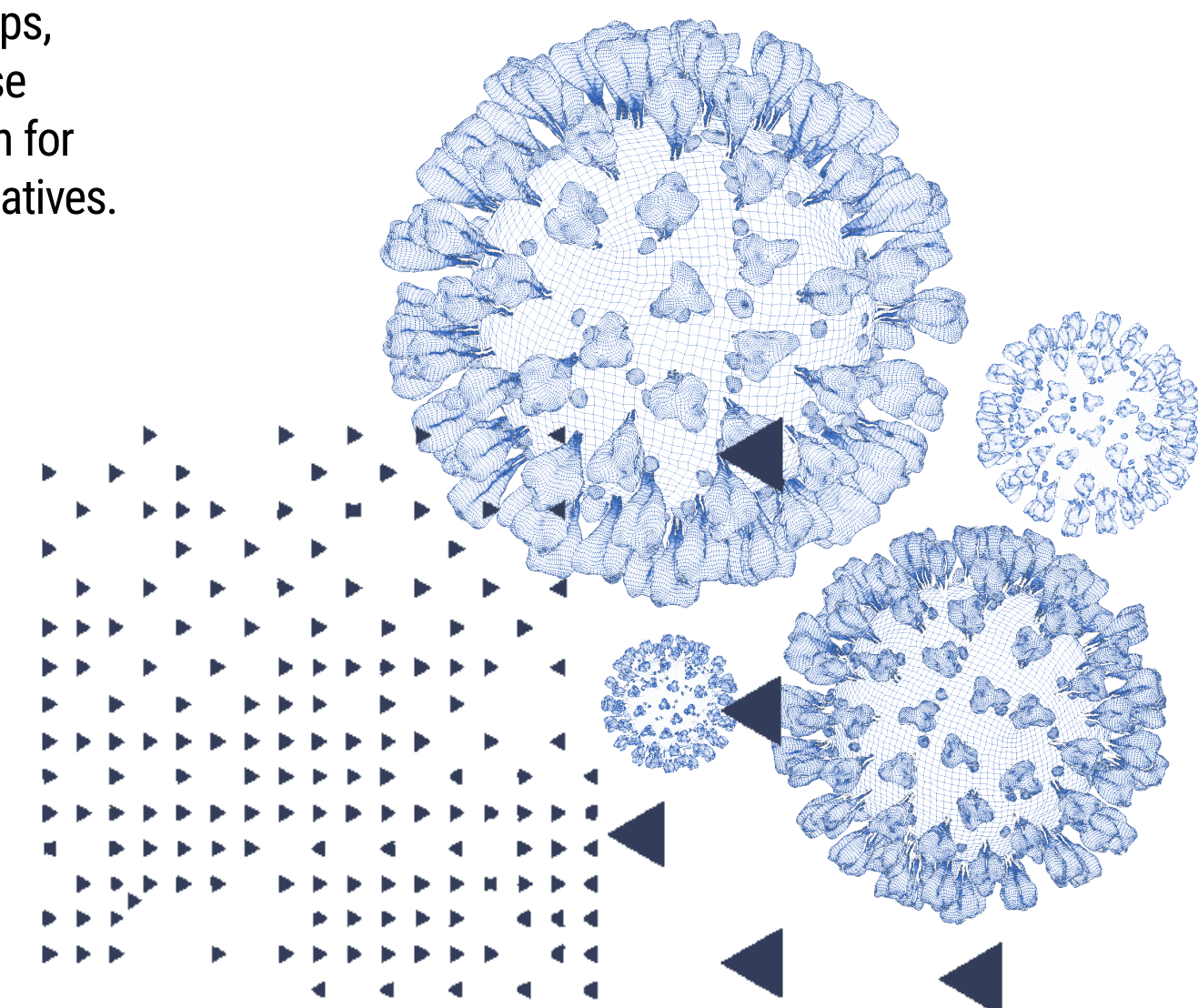
Conclusion and recommendations: **Key findings and strategic implications**

This distinction between amplification and domestic uptake is central to assessing impact. Some narratives are tractable because they resonate locally, while others matter because they help Russia construct a wider regional frame.

The campaign also demonstrates that C/B disinformation draws on pre-existing distrust infrastructures such as anti-vaccine networks, anti-NATO sentiment, fears of foreign control, migration-related anxieties, public health confusion, and narratives of national humiliation or lost sovereignty. This is especially important for counter-disinformation work. Russian actors do not need to persuade audiences of every technical claim. They only need to create enough uncertainty for ordinary public health, biosafety, biosecurity, and defence cooperation activities to appear suspicious.

For WMD governance, the implications are wider than reputational harm to individual states. Russian C/B disinformation seeks to distort diplomatic debate, undermine trust in legitimate international cooperation, and cast suspicion on the institutions and norms that constrain biological and chemical weapons. By presenting itself as a defender of the Biological Weapons Convention while accusing NATO and the United States of covert violations, Russia attempts to shift the burden of explanation onto its adversaries and create false equivalence between lawful public health activity and prohibited weapons programmes.

The central conclusion of this report is that Russian C/B disinformation should be understood as adaptive, scalable, and governance-focused. It is adaptive because the same foundational claims are localised differently across countries and it is scalable because these claims can be intensified when strategically or symbolically expedient. Finally, it is governance-focused because its effects are aimed at weakening trust in public health institutions, NATO partnerships, and the BWC framework itself. These insights signal routes of intervention for focused counter-disinformation initiatives.



Conclusion and recommendations: Recommendations

Establish a standing C/B disinformation watchlist for the eastern flank

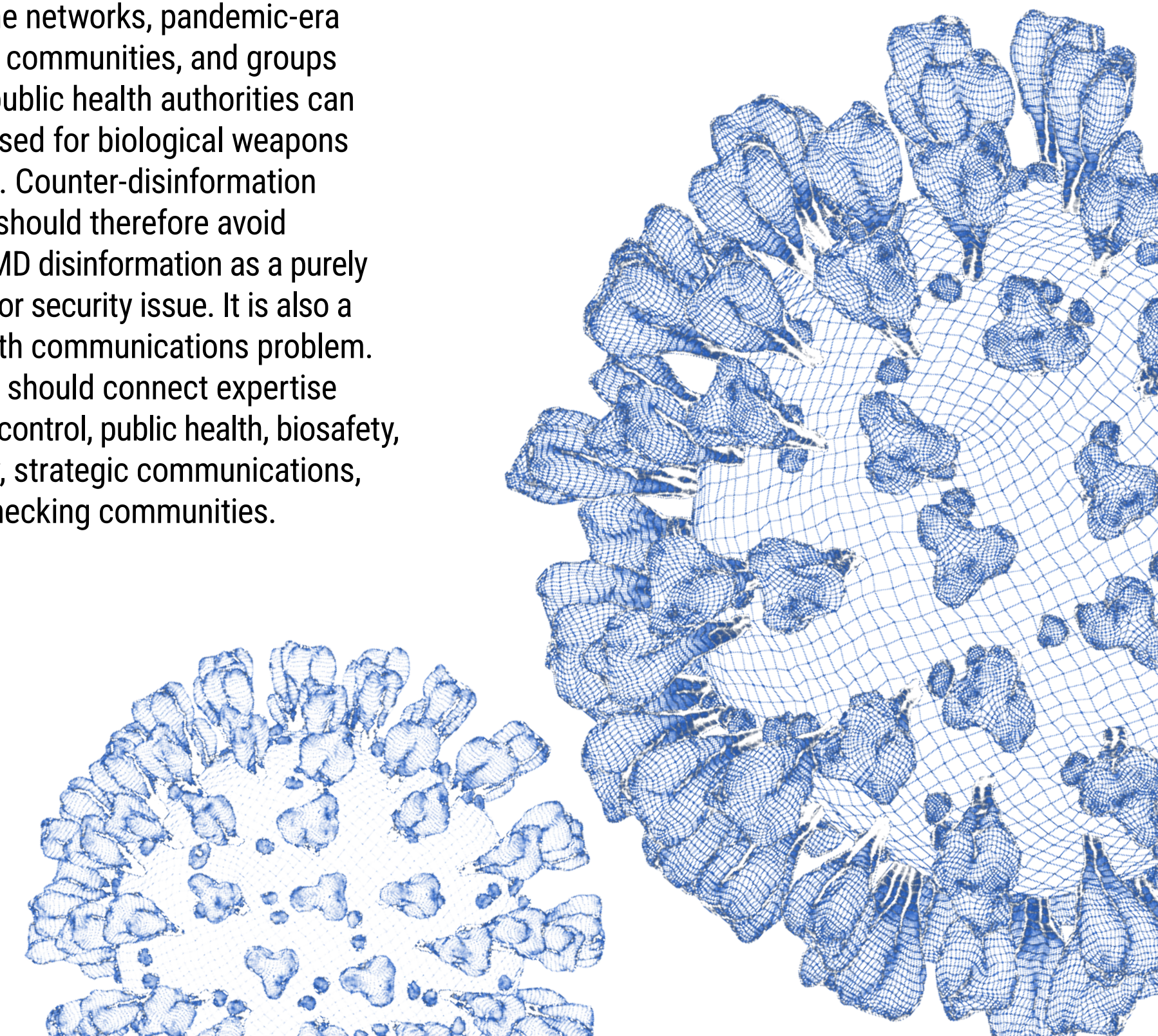
Governments, international organisations, researchers, and civil society partners should monitor recurring C/B claims across NATO's eastern flank and adjacent partner states. This watchlist should include allegations about US-funded "biolabs", pathogen transfers, fake outbreaks, military medicine, laboratory relocation, biological sample movements, NATO exercises, public health incidents, and alleged BWC violations. Monitoring should cover official Russian sources, state-aligned media, proxy outlets, Telegram channels, short-form video platforms, and local validators.

Pre-bunk predictable narratives around public health, laboratory and defence activity

Many of the narratives examined in this report are opportunistic. They attach biological allegations to NATO exercises, defence cooperation agreements, disease outbreaks, laboratory activity, border incidents, or international assistance programmes. Governments and partners should anticipate these moments and prepare public-facing explanations in advance. Pre-bunking should explain what legitimate biological research, disease surveillance, sample sharing, military medicine, and health-security cooperation look like; what safeguards apply; and why such activities are consistent with BWC obligations.

Connect health-disinformation monitoring with WMD-disinformation monitoring

C/B narratives often build on audiences already primed by health-related distrust. Anti-vaccine networks, pandemic-era conspiracy communities, and groups hostile to public health authorities can be repurposed for biological weapons allegations. Counter-disinformation strategies should therefore avoid treating WMD disinformation as a purely diplomatic or security issue. It is also a public health communications problem. Responses should connect expertise from arms control, public health, biosafety, biosecurity, strategic communications, and fact-checking communities.



Conclusion and recommendations: Recommendations

Use trusted local validators and local-language response networks

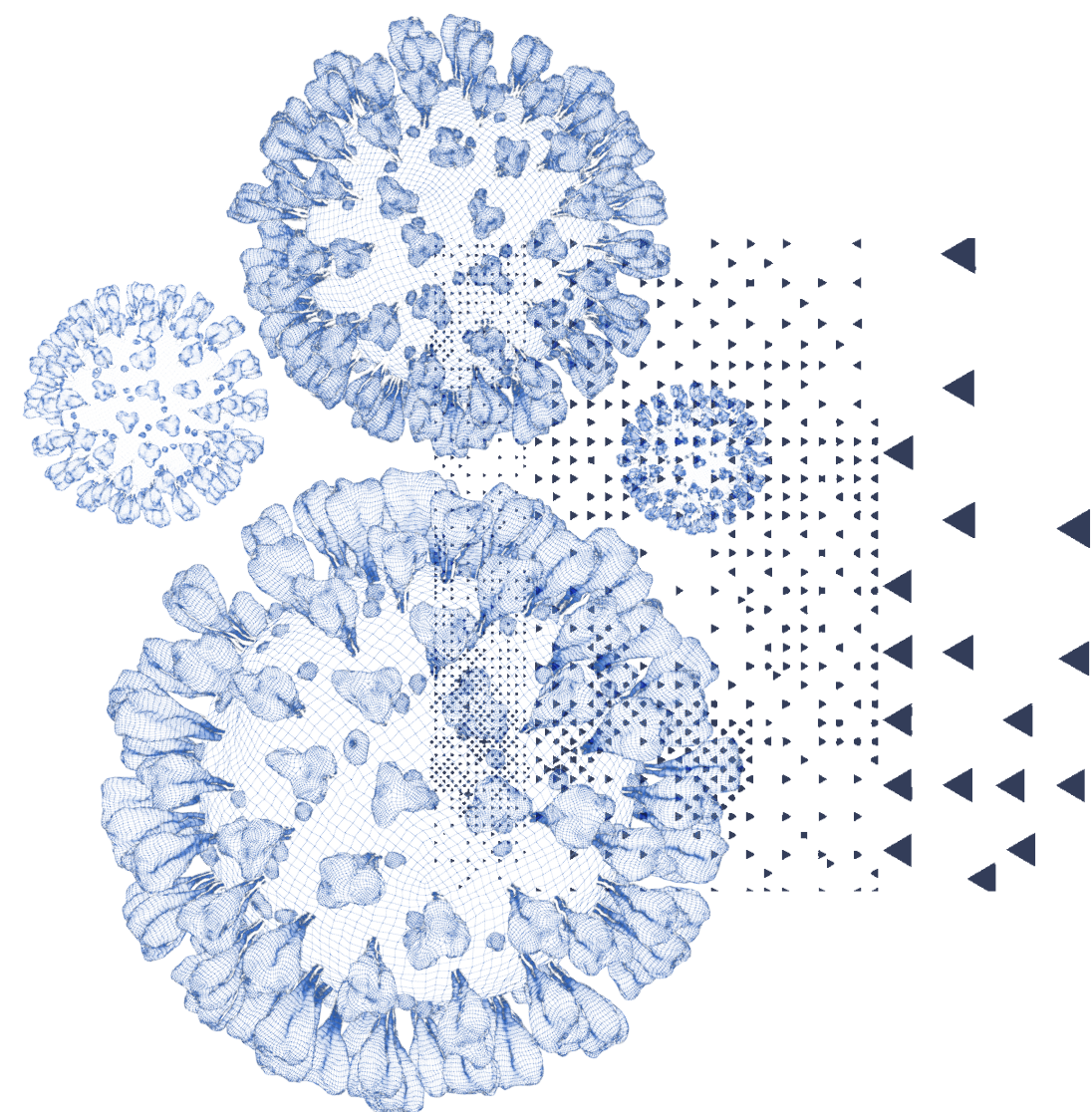
Because Russian C/B disinformation is localised, responses should also be localised. Central government statements are necessary but may not reach or persuade the audiences most vulnerable to these narratives. Public health officials, independent scientists, local journalists, fact-checkers, civil society organisations, medical professionals, and community-level communicators should be integrated into response planning. In countries where Russian narratives use marginal domestic voices to create the appearance of local corroboration, credible local validators are especially important.

Strengthen BWC-facing communication on lawful biological cooperation

States and partners should prepare concise, evidence-based language for use in BWC and related diplomatic settings. Responses should avoid amplifying every false claim, but they should not allow repeated allegations to distort the record. Where appropriate, states should explain the lawful basis, public health purpose, and oversight mechanisms for biological cooperation. Coordination among like-minded states can help prevent Russia from using treaty forums to launder disinformation into diplomatic debate.

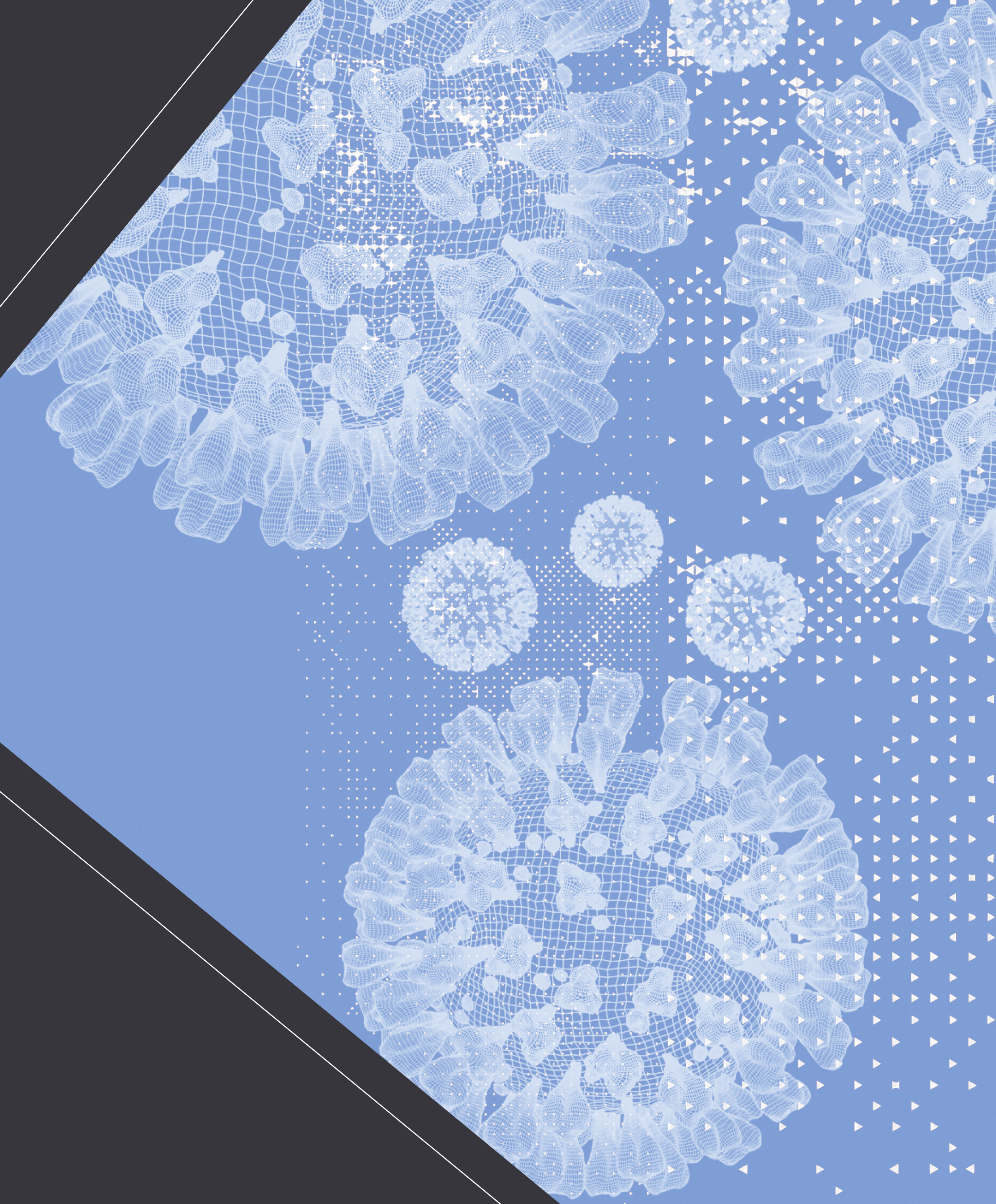
Prioritise deeper studies of Poland, Georgia and Moldova

Future reporting should build on this overview through in-depth country studies of Poland, Georgia, and Moldova, where Russian C/B disinformation is most developed and varied. Poland warrants particular attention because of the combination of historical bioweapons allegations, NATO logistics narratives, fake outbreak claims, and health-related disinformation networks. Georgia remains central because the Lugar Centre continues to function as one of Russia's most durable biological disinformation targets. Moldova merits further study because corridor and transfer narratives can be linked to domestic political instability and regional security dynamics. Future work should also assess whether the relative scarcity of chemical-weapons narratives reflects deliberate Russian narrative choices or gaps in monitoring.



ANNEXES

Sources, coding
table & footnotes



Annexe 1 Sources

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Country	Archived Link	Original Source	Date	Biolaboratories	Biological Weapons	Transfer of Facilities	Fabricated Outbreaks	Chemical Weapons	Deligitimise NATO and US Cooperation	Encirclement Narrative / Victimhood	Violating International Conventions	Poland's Biological Weapons Past	Georgia Lugar Narratives
Finland	archive.ph/CF9NK	Dzen.ru	13/05/2022	✓	✓				✓				
Finland	archive.ph/wKGg2	Voennoodelo	30/11/2023	✓	✓				✓	✓			
Finland	archive.ph/9REXY	Bloknot.ru	1/12/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Georgia	archive.ph/9REXY	Bloknot.ru	1/12/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Georgia	archive.ph/9REXY	Bloknot.ru	17/04/2024	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Finland	archive.ph/yTxC	Ukraina.ru	21/04/2024	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			
Finland	archive.ph/5avDV	Ukraina.ru	25/12/2022	✓	✓				✓	✓			
Moldova	archive.ph/sdMdl	Telegram: Antifalivland	25/12/2022	✓	✓				✓	✓			
Estonia	archive.ph/sdMdl	Telegram: Antifalivland	25/12/2022	✓	✓			✓	✓				
Georgia	archive.ph/sdMdl	Telegram: Antifalivland	25/12/2022	✓	✓			✓	✓				
Latvia	archive.ph/sdMdl	Telegram: Antifalivland	25/12/2022	✓	✓			✓	✓				
Lithuania	archive.ph/sdMdl	Telegram: Antifalivland	25/12/2022	✓	✓			✓	✓				
Baltics	archive.ph/pl0i9	Ria.ru	30/01/2023	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	
Poland	archive.ph/pl0i9	Ria.ru	30/01/2023	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	
Baltics	archive.Ph/plmbg	Antifalivland	18/07/2025	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				

Country	Archived Link	Original Source	Date	Biolaboratories	Biological Weapons	Transfer of Facilities	Fabricated Outbreaks	Chemical Weapons	Deligitimise NATO and US Cooperation	Encirclement Narrative / Victimhood	Violating International Conventions	Poland's Biological Weapons Past	Georgia Lugar Narratives
Latvia	archive.Ph/plmbg	Antifalivland	18/07/2025	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				
Poland	archive.Ph/mqb9h	Ria.ru	22/04/2022		✓		✓					✓	
Poland	archive.Ph/k3swq	Rt.com	11/5/2022	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Poland	archive.Ph/xxlrt	X.com/ WinstonCatNews	5/9/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Poland	archive.Ph/jhcdb	Bio_genie	13/10/2023	✓	✓		✓		✓				
Poland	archive.Ph/pe1yc	Bio_genie	20/10/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Poland	archive.Ph/ow47l	Bio_genie	8/10/2023	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			
Poland	archive.Ph/hjsnz	TT_Tinfo	27/09/2023	✓	✓		✓		✓				
Poland	archive.Ph/p8nba	smotrim.ru	30/01/2023	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Baltics	archive.Ph/p8nba	smotrim.ru	30/01/2023	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Poland	archive.Ph/htqhu	Telegram: Antifalivland	23/03/2023	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Baltics	archive.Ph/htqhu	Telegram: Antifalivland	23/03/2023	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Poland	archive.Ph/c3nzi	Baltnews	8/2/2023	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
Baltics	archive.Ph/c3nzi	Baltnews	8/2/2023	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
Poland	archive.Ph/gsw9t	Bloknot.ru	12/10/2023	✓		✓	✓		✓				
Poland	archive.Ph/qkkrl	Nia.eco	31/01/2023	✓	✓	✓			✓				
Baltics	archive.Ph/qkkrl	Nia.eco	31/01/2023	✓	✓	✓			✓				
Poland	archive.Ph/y9tv8 #s election-463.1 9-463.28	Pnp.ru	30/01/2023	✓		✓			✓		✓		

Country	Archived Link	Original Source	Date	Biolaboratories	Biological Weapons	Transfer of Facilities	Fabricated Outbreaks	Chemical Weapons	Deligitimise NATO and US Cooperation	Encirclement Narrative / Victimhood	Violating International Conventions	Poland's Biological Weapons Past	Georgia Lugar Narratives
Baltics	archive.Ph/y9tv8#s election-463.19-463.28	Pnp.ru	30/01/2023	✓		✓			✓		✓		
Poland	archive.Ph/kn60i	Nationthailan	15/04/2022	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Moldova	archive.Ph/kn60i	Nationthailan	15/04/2022	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Baltics	archive.Ph/kn60i	Nationthailan	15/04/2022	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Black Sea	archive.Ph/kn60i	Nationthailan	15/04/2022	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Poland	archive.Ph/qznyx	Wiadomosci.we.pl	24/04/2022	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Poland	archive.Ph/pvnuk	Lenta.ru	23/04/2022	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Poland	archive.Ph/068p0	Gazeta.ru	22/04/2022		✓							✓	
Poland	archive.Ph/keay0	Ura.news	23/04/2022	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Poland	archive.Ph/f10oo	Pravda.ru	22/04/2022		✓		✓					✓	
Poland	archive.Ph/i7cmk	Tass.ru	10/3/2022	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Poland	archive.Ph/oxheb	Fb:Russian Embassy in India	7/3/2022	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/oxheb	Fb:Russian Embassy in India	7/3/2022	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Moldova	archive.Ph/7uhun	1tv.ru	5/6/2023	✓		✓	✓		✓				
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Moldova	archive.Ph/grzjn	Bgr.news	27/08/2024	✓		✓			✓	✓			
Moldova	archive.Ph/khti7	Sputnik-abkhazia	27/08/2024	✓		✓			✓	✓			

Country	Archived Link	Original Source	Date	Biolaboratories	Biological Weapons	Transfer of Facilities	Fabricated Outbreaks	Chemical Weapons	Deligitimise NATO and US Cooperation	Encirclement Narrative / Victimhood	Violating International Conventions	Poland’s Biological Weapons Past	Georgia Lugar Narratives
Moldova	archive.Ph/v9ete	Sputnik-ossetia	27/08/2024	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
Moldova	archive.Ph/cwlil	Ria.ru	27/08/2024	✓		✓			✓	✓			
Moldova	archive.Ph/5rlpo	Telegram: Mod_russia	27/08/2024	✓		✓			✓	✓			
Georgia	archive.Ph/5s7qp	Voanews	7/3/2022	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/il6tc	Ghn.ge	7/3/2022	✓			✓		✓				✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/n8x76	RBC.ru	27/03/2022	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		
Georgia	archive.Ph/9az7i	MID_Russia	17/03/2022	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
Estonia	archive.Ph/qbsi0	Baltnews	4/2/2023	✓			✓		✓	✓			
Latvia	archive.Ph/qbsi0	Baltnews	4/2/2023	✓			✓		✓	✓			
Lithuania	archive.Ph/qbsi0	Baltnews	4/2/2023	✓			✓		✓	✓			
Poland	archive.Ph/qbsi0	Baltnews	4/2/2023	✓			✓		✓	✓			
Baltics	archive.Ph/qbsi0	Baltnews	4/2/2023	✓			✓		✓	✓			
Baltics	archive.Ph/0dps2	Baltnews	6/9/2022	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Georgia	archive.Ph/0dps2	Baltnews	6/9/2022	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Baltics	archive.Ph/0hekd	Mid_Russia	7/2/2023	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
Poland	archive.Ph/0hekd	Mid_Russia	7/2/2023	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
Latvia	archive.Ph/ktvgc	Telegram: Mod_russia	8/7/2022	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Estonia	archive.Ph/ktvgc	Telegram: Mod_russia	8/7/2022	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			

Country	Archived Link	Original Source	Date	Biolaboratories	Biological Weapons	Transfer of Facilities	Fabricated Outbreaks	Chemical Weapons	Deligitimise NATO and US Cooperation	Encirclement Narrative / Victimhood	Violating International Conventions	Poland's Biological Weapons Past	Georgia Lugar Narratives
Lithuania	archive.Ph/ktvgc	Telegram: Mod_russia	8/7/2022	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Poland	archive.Ph/ktvgc	Telegram: Mod_russia	8/7/2022	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Georgia	archive.Ph/h0o4h	Izvestia.ru	21/02/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/rhih2	Izvestia.ru	24/02/2023	✓		✓	✓		✓				✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/4hyex	Sputnik-georgia	25/12/2024	✓					✓				
Georgia	archive.Ph/cbeh0	Tabula.ge	10/3/2022	✓	✓		✓		✓				✓
Black Sea	archive.Ph/cbeh0	Tabula.ge	10/3/2022	✓	✓		✓		✓				✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/u41wy	Netgazeti.ge	8/4/2022	✓	✓		✓		✓				✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/32ctg	Telegram: Embassy of Russia in the USA	5/4/2024	✓	✓		✓		✓				
Latvia	archive.Ph/jd9d9	Telegram: Antifalivland	29/11/2022	✓	✓	✓							
Latvia	archive.Ph/3qom7	Telegram: Antifalivland	25/12/2022	✓				✓	✓				
Estonia	archive.Ph/3qom7	Telegram: Antifalivland	25/12/2022	✓				✓	✓				
Lithuania	archive.Ph/3qom7	Telegram: Antifalivland	25/12/2022	✓				✓	✓				
Latvia	archive.Ph/zyton	Telegram: Antifalivland	9/3/2023	✓		✓	✓		✓				
Baltics	archive.Ph/zyton	Telegram: Antifalivland	9/3/2023	✓		✓	✓		✓				
Latvia	archive.Ph/tatgp	Stoletie.ru	13/03/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Baltics	archive.Ph/tatgp	Stoletie.ru	13/03/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			

Country	Archived Link	Original Source	Date	Biolaboratories	Biological Weapons	Transfer of Facilities	Fabricated Outbreaks	Chemical Weapons	Deligitimise NATO and US Cooperation	Encirclement Narrative / Victimhood	Violating International Conventions	Poland's Biological Weapons Past	Georgia Lugar Narratives
Estonia	archive.Ph/tatgp	Stoletie.ru	13/03/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Lithuania	archive.Ph/tatgp	Stoletie.ru	13/03/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Poland	archive.Ph/tatgp	Stoletie.ru	13/03/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Georgia	archive.Ph/tatgp	Stoletie.ru	13/03/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Moldova	archive.Ph/tatgp	Stoletie.ru	13/03/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Georgia	archive.Ph/c23gp	Civil.ge	8/3/2022	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/hookm	Telegram: Mod_russia	21/03/2022	✓			✓		✓				✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/qpngc	Civil.ge	11/3/2022	✓	✓								✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/i6kbl	Telegram: mainampasauli	9/3/2022	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/2t6wx	Civil.ge	8/3/2022	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/m8hic	Tass.ru	2/9/2024	✓	✓				✓				✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/wmtvj	Jam-news	3/9/2024	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/8w25j	Telegram: Sakeritalianotizie	17/08/2024	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/xsjul	Tass.ru	6/2/2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/xkorv	Telegram: MID_russia	4/5/2024	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Georgia	archive.Ph/nakl9	Sputnik-armenia	16/03/2025	✓	✓				✓				✓
Georgia	archive.Ph/nhuqo	Spress.ge	5/8/2024	✓	✓				✓				✓
Poland	archive.Ph/aqxom	Ria.ru	4/9/2023		✓		✓		✓				

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