



The Collage of the Kremlin's Communication Strategy

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Introduction: Research Process and Methodology

This research builds upon two reports published by NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. A multi-dimensional analysis, published in 2023, sought to explore the connection between hostile information activities and physical actions during Russia's war against Ukraine¹. The study analysed both written content (six domains of official Kremlin communications) and audio-visual media (TV coverage) from the pre-war period (October 2021–February 2022) and the initial stage of the war (February 2022–March 2022). The findings indicated no clear signs of hostile information activities that could have served as warnings for the invasion.

The second part of the analysis, published in 2024, was expanded by adding Telegram channels as an additional source of data. The analysis examined six key events (Victory Day, referendums, mobilisation, Kerch Bridge explosion, Nord Stream explosion, and sanctions imposed on Russia) and their portrayal across three different communications platforms (official communications, Telegram and weekend TV programmes). It revealed that a significant part of Russia's hybrid media system content deviates to a certain extent

from the official Russian narratives, and that the Kremlin is not fully in control of that information. Depending on the type of events (initiated/able to prepare for in advance or coming as a surprise), the manoeuvring space for Telegram channels spans from simply stylising and adapting official narratives, to generating their own narratives and stories. This flexible and adaptive approach has served the Kremlin well on many occasions during this war, also pointing towards a paradoxical relation between the Kremlin's monopolisation of power over the official media and the demonopolisation of power among Telegram channels.

Unlike previous reports, this report adopts a different methodology. Instead of a top-down qualitative methodology, it applies a bottom-up topic modelling technique to uncover latent narratives propagated by the Kremlin from 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2023. In other words, while the primary focus of this report is on new data from 2023, it also utilises the data collected in previous reports, trying to identify Russian information campaigns that were missed in previous reports due to the top-down approach.

1. Research Questions

The concept of strategic narratives provides a framework to address the main research questions of this analysis:

- How Russia's communication related to the invasion of Ukraine was conducted throughout the research period?
 - How did the communication differ based on intended audiences (Russian domestic, Ukraine, Baltic countries)?
- How did the communication differ throughout the sources and how separate parts of the information ecosystem (official communication, television, and Telegram) interacted with each other?
- What were the disruptions (if any) in the Kremlin's communication flow and how these manifested in the overall information environment and/or its different segments (official statements, television, and social media)?

- How did the Kremlin's communication match the events that took place on the ground? In what cases was the communication proactive, and in what cases

was it reactive? What were the strengths and weaknesses of the communication strategy?

2. Data Collection

2.1. Sources

For the purpose of this analysis that builds on the previous research done by Debunk.org in the field, the classification of sources stays in line with the previously analysed communications platforms, comprising Russian official government communication, Telegram and television.

The choice of these platforms allowed us to track the process of the creation, projection and/or adaption of strategic narratives, bearing in mind how Moscow's 'information vertical' has been reflecting the Kremlin's monopolisation of power over the official media alongside the demonopolisation of power among Telegram channels, and raising questions of how much control is exerted onto Russia's hybrid media system, as demonstrated in the 2024 report by Debunk.org².

The Russian official government communication is represented by articles from the official websites of six institutions, directed at both internal (Russia's domestic) and highly varied external (from the so-called 'near abroad' (*blizhneye zarubezhye*) to the Global South) intended audiences:

- The President of the Russian Federation (<http://kremlin.ru>);
- The Security Council of the Russian Federation (<http://scrf.gov.ru/>);
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (<https://mid.ru>);
- The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation (<https://function.mil.ru>);
- The State Duma of the Russian Federation (<http://duma.gov.ru/>);
- The Federation Council of the Russian Federation (<http://council.gov.ru/>);

For the analysis of the Russian communications on Telegram, a total of 301 Telegram channels were monitored, following the methodology used in the second part of the research, which focused on events of 2022. Data collection from the channels, if available (some of the channels have been created for/after the start of the war against Ukraine as a part of Russia's deployment of information operations against the country) was carried out for the period from 1 October 2021 until the end of 2023. The channels were selected to represent various target audiences (TAs), ensuring a multidimensional approach to the analysis:

- 71 public Telegram channels with the Baltic countries as the target audiences and/or as a source of malign information in the region, overtly and/or covertly producing and amplifying pro-Kremlin messaging. We classified these channels as 'Baltic TA.'
- 129 Telegram channels with their target audiences potentially located in Ukraine (including Russia-occupied territories), identified as a means of hostile information operations coordinated by the Kremlin. These channels were labelled as 'Ukrainian TA.'
- A total of 101 public Telegram channels primarily targeting a Russian domestic audience were selected based on their measurable influence and established role in information operations. The channels fall under the category 'Russian Domestic TA.'

Two Sunday TV programmes—*Vesti Nedeli* (News of the Week, *Rossiya 1* channel, duration from 2.5 to 3 hours) and *Voskresnoye Vremya* (Sunday Time, *Perviy Kanal* channel, duration of approximately 2 hours)—were monitored for the period from 1 October 2021, to 31 December 2023. The selection covers two TV

programmes with different formats and target audiences broadcasted on two different state-owned TV channels, whereas the programmes' weekly basis allows for a pinpointed summary of the events which were the most important for the Kremlin to communicate preceding and during the episode's release.

2.2. Scope

Official government communication: 69,480 articles in total.

Timeframe	Council.gov.ru	duma.gov.ru	function.mil.ru	kremlin.ru	mid.ru	scrf.ru	Total
2021-10-01 - 2022-03-31	2,116	1,956	10,336	889	1,172	119	17,188
2022-04-01 - 2022-12-31	2,946	2,629	13,432	1,026	3,788	197	24,108
2023-01-01 - 2023-12-31	3,755	3,189	14,247	1,764	5,107	212	28,274

Telegram: 3,672,357 posts in total.

Timeframe	TG Baltic TA content pieces	TG Russian TA content pieces	TG Ukrainian TA content pieces	Total
2021-10-01 - 2022-03-31	46,072	405,374	117,623	569,069
2022-04-01 - 2022-12-31	234,127	770,603	447,209	1,451,939
2023-01-01 - 2023-12-31	388,806	768,005	494,538	1,651,349

Television: 216 episodes (= 536 watch hours) in total.

Timeframe	Vesti Nedeli (episodes)	Voskresnoye Vremya (episodes)	Vesti Nedeli (hours)	Voskresnoye Vremya (hours)	Total episodes	Total hours
2021-10-01 - 2022-03-31	24	24	72	48	48	120
2022-04-01 - 2022-12-31	36	39	108	78	75	186
2023-01-01 - 2023-12-31	44	49	132	98	93	230

3. Data Processing and Quantitative Analysis

To identify different narratives, Debunk.org analysts used topic modelling. Topic modelling is a technique used in natural language processing to uncover latent themes or topics within a collection of documents, enabling automated organisation and understanding of textual data.³ Topic modelling was carried out with the BERTopic tool⁴ that combines the power of BERT, a transformer-based language model, with clustering algorithms to extract coherent topics from textual data. It efficiently captures semantic information and context to produce meaningful clusters, enabling deeper insights into large collections of documents. BERTopic is capable of not only providing distinctive clusters, but also able to generate new insights comparing to other models by on-negative matrix factorisation (NMF), Top2Vec and latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA)⁵.

Several factors informed our choice of BERTopic, including its semantic richness—it employs transformer-based embeddings that outperform traditional statistical models in capturing meaning and context. In addition, the model offers multilingual flexibility. Given that our dataset included both Russian and translated materials, BERTopic's support for multilingual embeddings was essential (to ensure

uniformity in textual analysis and enable effective topic modelling, all non-Russian content was translated into Russian prior to BERTopic processing).

BERTopic also provides automatic topic estimation, allowing the model to determine the optimal number of topics without requiring this parameter to be predefined. Moreover, the model automatically flags documents that do not fit well into any cluster (assigned to topic -1), which proved useful for filtering out generic or off-topic television content. These detected semantic outliers were excluded from further topic analysis, and no recursive filtering was applied (semantic dispersion of these items was not conducive to meaningful clustering). Finally, BERTopic offers strong refinement capabilities: its topic representations can be further improved through post-processing and manual thematic labelling based on domain-specific criteria.

The sentence embeddings for BERTopic were generated using the all-MiniLM-L6-v2 model from the SentenceTransformers library, since it offered balanced performance and efficiency in handling short to medium-length texts.

3.1 Text Preparation

As the first step, separate data collections for different media platforms (official government communication, Telegram, and television) were created. During the following phase, the annotated data was cleaned by removing stopwords for the languages included in the report, as well as URL links and email addresses by employing the open-source spaCy library. In addition, lemmatisation was applied to transform different forms of the same word into the version considered basic, improving the rendition of thematic clustering.

Before proceeding with topic modelling, all content pieces were equalised so that they

were of a comparable format. Television, as a multimodal medium, involves audio-visual cues, whereas Telegram posts and official statements predominantly come in text format that we use for thematic clustering. Therefore, the television shows monitored for the analysis were transcribed, and ChatGPT (the gpt-4o model accessed via the OpenAI API) was employed to assist in the segmentation of transcribed television content into coherent paragraph-sized units. The model's role was not to semantically interpret or generate new content but to summarise and reformat transcripts into structured, semantically compact paragraphs suitable for downstream topic modelling. All

the texts were split into paragraphs: for this research, we opted for a paragraph-based split instead of the sentence-based one, as the former procedure, through a qualitative inspection of results, was found to yield more interpretable

and coherent topics. This was particularly true for longer-form content such as TV transcripts, where individual sentences may lack sufficient context for semantic clustering.

3.2 Topic Modelling

BERTopic infers topics (clusters of words) from the corpus, giving the probability of a document to belong to a topic and the probability of a word to represent a topic without the need of an input for how many topics it should find. However, in a large set like ours, this model can lead to an excessive number of topics, hindering the interpretation of the results. Therefore, the number of topics obtained by default needs to be limited through probing and assessment of different variants, determining the one that would return the most representative, coherent, and readable clusters. To answer the research questions of this project, each data set (Telegram, official communications, and TV) was divided into 4 subsets (dimensions) using sets of keywords to thematically narrow them for further analysis by BERTopic software:

- Military (e.g., mobilisation, developments on the front, demonstration of Russia's military might)
- Economy (e.g., introduction of sanctions and their effect)

- Foreign policy (e.g., Russia's isolation in international politics)
- 'Liberated Areas' (e.g., developments in temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine Russia rebuilding destroyed cities, incorporating the 'liberated areas' into Russia)

The output by BERTopic was filtered out of unrelated thematic clusters (a feature most expected in the television content, i.e. the weekly news programme). Coherent clusters were named thematically based on the themes they represented. The words returned by BERTopic for each cluster should not be interpreted as coherent narratives, but rather as a starting point for unveiling latent content, characters, and sequence structures⁶. Therefore, several of the most representative content pieces for each topic were examined, aiming to distinguish narrative elements, and situating them within a context (paving way for qualitative analysis).

4. Qualitative Analysis: Building Case Studies

Data analysis carried out with BERTopic constituted the quantitative part of the analysis. However, functionalities of BERTopic were also used to assess trends in Kremlin communication during the analysis period, allowing the selection of relevant and meaningful events for qualitative analysis of selected case studies. Following the definition of the explanatory sequential design, the research started with quantitative data collection and analysis and followed by qualitative data collection and analysis, leading to interpretation.

As mentioned above, words returned by BERTopic were a starting point for assembling coherent clusters of topics and discerning concrete narratives. Therefore, several case studies in each dimension were examined by the analysts in full, hoping to distinguish particular narrative elements and place them within context.

Chapter 1: Initial Results per Communication Channels

Part 1: Telegram

1.1. Channels

For the purpose of this analysis a total of 301 Telegram channels were monitored. Data collection from the channels, if available (some of the channels have been created for/after the start of the war against Ukraine as a part of Russia's deployment of information operations against the country), was carried out for the period from October 2021 to the end of 2023. The resulting dataset included 3,672,357 posts published by the identified channels during this analysis period.

To enable a multidimensional analysis approach, the Telegram channels were labelled according to their target audiences (TAs):

- the Baltic TA category comprises 71 public Telegram channels identified as sources of malign information in the Baltics, either openly or covertly producing and amplifying pro-Kremlin narratives⁷;
- 129 Telegram channels classified under the category of Ukrainian TA were identified as a means of information operations coordinated by the Kremlin in Ukraine (including Russia-occupied territories)⁸;

- a total of 101 public Telegram channels under the category of Russian Domestic TA, identified as a part of Russia's domestic information operations, were selected based on their measurable audience impact and established role in these operations⁹.

In addition to collecting the posts published on these channels during the analysed period, the statistical data per channel included: total number of published posts, total number of views and an average number of views per post. This data allowed us to identify the most significant channels in every TA group. To do so, every channel was ranked based on its performance in every statistical category (e.g., the channel with the highest number of published posts was given rank 1, the channel with the second highest number of published posts was given rank 2, etc.), the total ranking represents a sum of the ranking in each section. The lists of the most significant channels were compiled by selecting the 10 top channels in each category.

Rank	Channel Name	Posts		Views		Average Views per Post	
		Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
1	Кирилл Фёдоров / Война История Оружие	84,382	2	11,115,832,142	1	131,732	1
2	BALTNEWS	33,118	4	131,254,490	2	3,963	2
3	Шпроты в изгнании Новости Латвии	22,550	6	40,725,579	4	1,806	12
4	Алексей Стефанов	6,385	17	37,852,742	5	5,928	5
5	РУССКИЙ ДНЕВНИК	11,063	10	18,630,865	8	1,684	14
6	Антифашисты Прибалтики 	3,764	25	66,728,922	3	17,728	4

7	AdeQatus Kanalas	18,808	7	20,921,991	7	1,112	23
8	atsibudimas	13,612	9	14,245,808	9	1,047	25
9	Балтология	15,696	8	13,652,455	10	870	30
10	Трибалтийские Вымираты	2,964	30	7,456,784	12	2,516	7
11	Sputnik Ближнее зарубежье	1,510	42	30,259,497	6	20,039	3
12	Латвийская кочка 	56,239	3	5,286,013	17	94	66
13	Karas Z	23,237	5	3,019,985	22	130	62
14	Glorija Grevcova	775	51	1,946,500	30	2,512	8
15	Igors Kuzmuks (Игорь Кузьмук)	226,556	1	2,789,380	23	12	71
16	Rudolfs Bermanis LIVE	632	56	1,399,078	36	2,214	9
17	KOOS/ВМЕСТЕ	558	59	1,098,702	38	1,969	10
18	Mindaugas Puidokas	295	65	1,059,600	39	3,592	6

FIGURE 1. Most significant channels in the Baltic TA

From this list, it is clear that the Kremlin's information operations towards Baltic audiences (Figure 1) are based mainly on bloggers (only one channel in the top 10—BALTNEWS—is managed by a media outlet), with the majority of the channels operated from Russia.

Interestingly enough, 'Igors Kuzmuks (Игорь Кузьмук)' (ranked 1 in total number of posts with 226,556 posts) did not end in the top 10. With an average of 12 views per post (ranked 71 out of 71), this channel represents a perfect case of 'polluter'—when the posts are released for the sake of being published, rather than being read by the audience.

Rank	Channel Name	Posts		Views		Average Views per Post	
		Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
1	Украина.ру	114,010	1	6,622,517,048	2	58,087	12
2	Анатолий Шарий	15,118	15	11,184,406,458	1	739,807	1
3	 Open Ukraine! Открытая Украина	21,997	9	1,176,775,814	8	53,497	13
4	Резидент	10,802	25	4,278,366,844	3	396,072	2
5	Типичная Одесса	17,129	12	1,213,520,833	7	70,846	11
6	ЗеРада	9,948	27	1,815,347,538	5	182,484	5
7	Главное в Херсоне и области	11,668	22	577,334,885	9	49,480	14
8	Отряд Ковпака	25,110	8	474,254,215	11	18,887	28
9	Легитимный	7,438	41	2,786,410,730	4	374,618	3
10	MediaKiller	7,408	42	539,470,569	10	72,823	10
11	#МОНТЯН!	4,730	61	1,334,507,755	6	282,137	4
12	ОЛЬГА ШАРИЙ	4,644	62	391,369,371	13	84,274	9
13	Картель	4,025	65	376,763,972	14	93,606	6
14	Женщина с косой	2,582	72	222,744,184	18	86,268	8
15	Одесса За Победу! 	91,285	2	231,369,002	17	2,535	81
16	ХАРЬКОВ НАШ	2,000	75	186,820,594	21	93,410	7
17	«Лисичанск - колыбель Донбасса»	90,407	3	201,179,599	20	2,225	83
18	Новости Херсонщины	40,408	5	122,310,461	29	3,027	75
19	Украина. Спецоперация. Мониторинг СВО	56,292	4	80,011,842	41	1,421	91
20	Новокаховская ПРАВДА	25,553	6	38,306,949	55	1,499	89
21	Луганьмедиа 	25,551	7	21,920,894	64	858	104
22	ФОРУМ СПАСЕНИЯ МАРИУПОЛЯ	19,157	10	938,544	94	49	129

FIGURE 2. Most significant channels in the Ukrainian TA

In the case of the Ukrainian target audience (Figure 2), the Kremlin's information operations are also based mainly on bloggers (only one channel in the top 10—Украина.ру—is managed by a media outlet), with majority of the channels operated from Russia.

It is important to note that the Kremlin's information operation towards Ukrainian audiences is characterised by a high number of 'polluting channels'. Many channels (with total rank of 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22) scored very high on the total number of posts (2, 3, 5, 4, 6, 7 and 10 respectively), but have a very low number of average views (81, 83, 75, 91, 89, 104 and 129).

Similarly to the other target audiences, in the case of the Russian Domestic TA (Figure 3), the Kremlin's information operations are based mainly on bloggers (only one channel in the top 10—РИА Новости—is managed by a media outlet). While this list offers an interesting overview of the actors involved in the Kremlin's

information operations on Telegram, it is important to point out two additional phenomena about channels that did not finish in the top 10.

The first is the phenomenon of 'polluting channels', most of which are managed by media outlets and fail to attract significant viewership—ТАСС (ranked 11), Комсомольская правда: КР.RU (14), Zvezdanews (16), Караульный Z (18), and Темы. Главное (ГлавМедиа) (21). The second is the phenomenon of 'high-value channels'—a limited number of published posts viewed by an unproportionally large size of audience. This phenomenon is unique to the Russian Domestic TA dataset. It includes Мир сегодня с "Юрий Подоляка" (total rank 8), as well Kadyrov_95 (12), Стрелков Игорь Иванович #КРП (13), Сладков + (15), Александр Ходаковский (19), Дмитрий Медведев (20), Вячеслав Володин (22).

Total Rank	Channel Name	Posts		Views		Average views per Post	
		Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
1	РИА Новости	72,258	5	50,648,772,339	1	700,943	5
2	Readovka	42,991	16	23,603,249,089	3	549,028	7
3	СОЛОВЬЁВ	130,298	3	32,809,491,593	2	251,803	29
4	Colonelcassad	61,675	10	17,617,632,475	4	285,653	22
5	Операция Z: Военкоры Русской Весны	37,281	19	15,863,293,450	5	425,506	13
6	Кровавая барыня	13,933	41	6,572,360,109	10	471,712	10
7	Рыбарь	25,589	28	6,965,356,345	9	272,201	26
8	Мир сегодня с "Юрий Подоляка"	8,599	56	13,120,850,099	6	1,525,858	2
9	Повёрнутые на Z войне 🇷🇺	39,046	17	7,994,376,618	7	204,743	40
10	Ньюсач/Двач	45,798	13	7,642,459,444	8	166,873	47
11	ТАСС	115,783	2	5,271,135,639	12	45,526	82
12	Kadyrov_95	2,460	79	2,493,045,898	32	1,013,433	4
13	Стрелков Игорь Иванович #КРП	4,425	72	2,262,724,875	37	511,350	9
14	Комсомольская правда: КР.RU	71,109	7	2,826,043,677	29	39,742	85
15	Сладков +	3,841	74	1,974,237,672	39	513,991	8
16	Zvezdanews	69,687	8	1,503,875,314	45	21,580	89
17	IZ.RU	71,799	6	1,431,451,234	49	19,937	90
18	Караульный Z	85,593	4	1,176,675,813	53	13,747	93
19	Александр Ходаковский	1,304	90	909,259,494	55	697,285	6
20	Дмитрий Медведев	396	99	776,733,300	61	1,961,448	1
21	Темы. Главное (ГлавМедиа)	131,538	1	666,757,752	65	5,069	99
22	Вячеслав Володин	410	98	583,258,597	68	1,422,582	3
23	СМОТРИ	61,910	9	667,762,655	64	10,786	97

FIGURE 3. Most significant channels in the Russian Domestic TA

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of the most significant Telegram channels used by the Kremlin in its information operations target Russian domestic audiences. This tendency is also supported by the total number of posts published across all 301 channels during the analysed period (Figure 4).

Moreover, by comparing the collective behaviour of the channels in each TA (i.e., total number of posts targeting each TA across time), it is easy to observe a level of coordination. In other words, the easily observable correlation in the fluctuation of the number of posts directed towards different target audiences suggests that the behaviour of channels that post them is explicitly or implicitly coordinated (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

Targeted Audience	Number of channels	Total Number of Posts
Baltic	71	669005
Russian domestic	101	1943982
Ukrainian	129	1059370

FIGURE 4. Total Number of Posts by Targeted Audience



FIGURE 5. Telegram posts by targeted audience

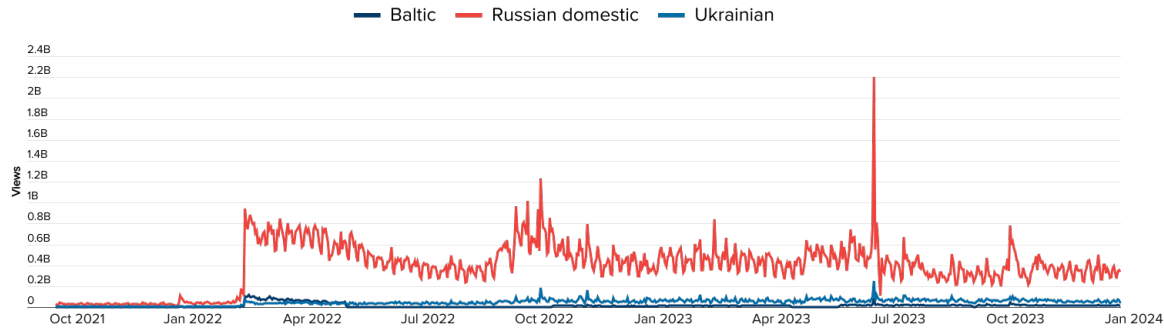


FIGURE 6. Views by audience across time on Telegram

Between ‘Polluting Channels’ and Amplifiers

The analysis of most significant channels across all three TAs allowed for identifying 13 different ‘polluting channels’ with a very high number of posts and very low viewership

rate. A further analysis into the collected data about these channels, particularly into the percentage of amplification (the percentage of messages forwarded from other channels), allowed for identifying a pool of eight main amplifiers, the majority of which target Ukrainian audiences (Figure 7):

Channel Name	Target Audience	Total Number of Posts	Total Number of Views	Average Views per Post	Share of Forwarded Posts
ФОРУМ СПАСЕНИЯ МАРИУПОЛЯ	Ukrainian	19,157	938,544	129	50%
Igors Kuzmiks (Игорь Кузьмук)	Baltic	226,556	2,789,380	12	44%
Украина. Спецоперация. Мониторинг СВО	Ukrainian	56,292	80,011,842	91	35%
«Лисичанск - колыбель Донбасса»	Ukrainian	90,407	201,179,599	83	33%
Караульный Z	Russian Domestic	85,593	1,176,675,813	93	32%
Темы. Главное (ГлавМедиа)	Russian Domestic	131,538	666,757,752	99	27%
Новокаховская ПРАВДА	Ukrainian	25,553	38,306,949	89	27%
Новости Херсонщины	Ukrainian	40,408	122,310,461	75	24%

FIGURE 7. Main amplifiers among the Telegram channels

The network analysis of the amplifying activity of these channels demonstrates not only that the amplified content is taken from

thousands of different channels, but also that each amplifier has its own pool of channels to amplify (Figure 8).

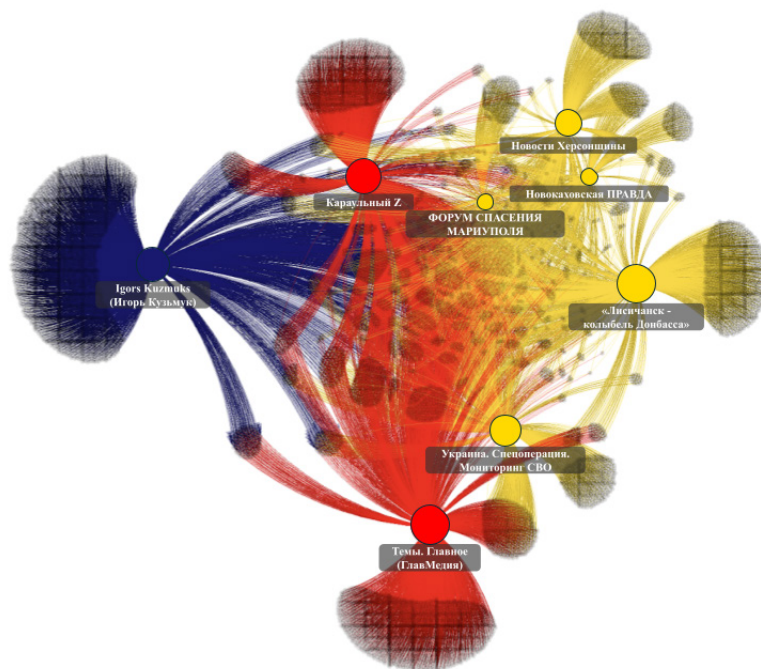


FIGURE 8. Network of the amplifying Telegram channels

To showcase the channels shared by all amplifiers, a threshold of 1% (i.e., leaving only channels that constitute at least 1% of the overall amplified content) was applied, thus significantly reducing the number of amplified channels. This simplification of the amplification network (Figure 9) offers two important observations. The first is about the reach and viewership of Russian media outlets on Telegram. While each amplifier has its own pool of channels to amplify, the majority of the amplified content comes from a limited number of channels owned by Russian media outlets (rentv_news, izvestia, readovkanews, zvezdanews, rt_russia, and LentaDnya).

have relatively low viewership. Therefore, they are usually disregarded in research and analysis as insignificant. For example, zvezdanews (TV channel of Russia's MoD) has an average of 21,580 views per post. This number is incomparable to Soloviev (251,803 views per post) or Мир сегодня с "Юрий Подоляка" (channel of milblogger Yuri Podolyaka with 1,525,858 views per post). However, this analysis suggests that due to the amplification effect, the posts published by these media channels might enjoy significantly larger viewership than indicated on their posts only. For example, from 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2023, Igors Kuzmuk (a pro-Russian blogger targeting Baltic audiences) published 226,556 posts

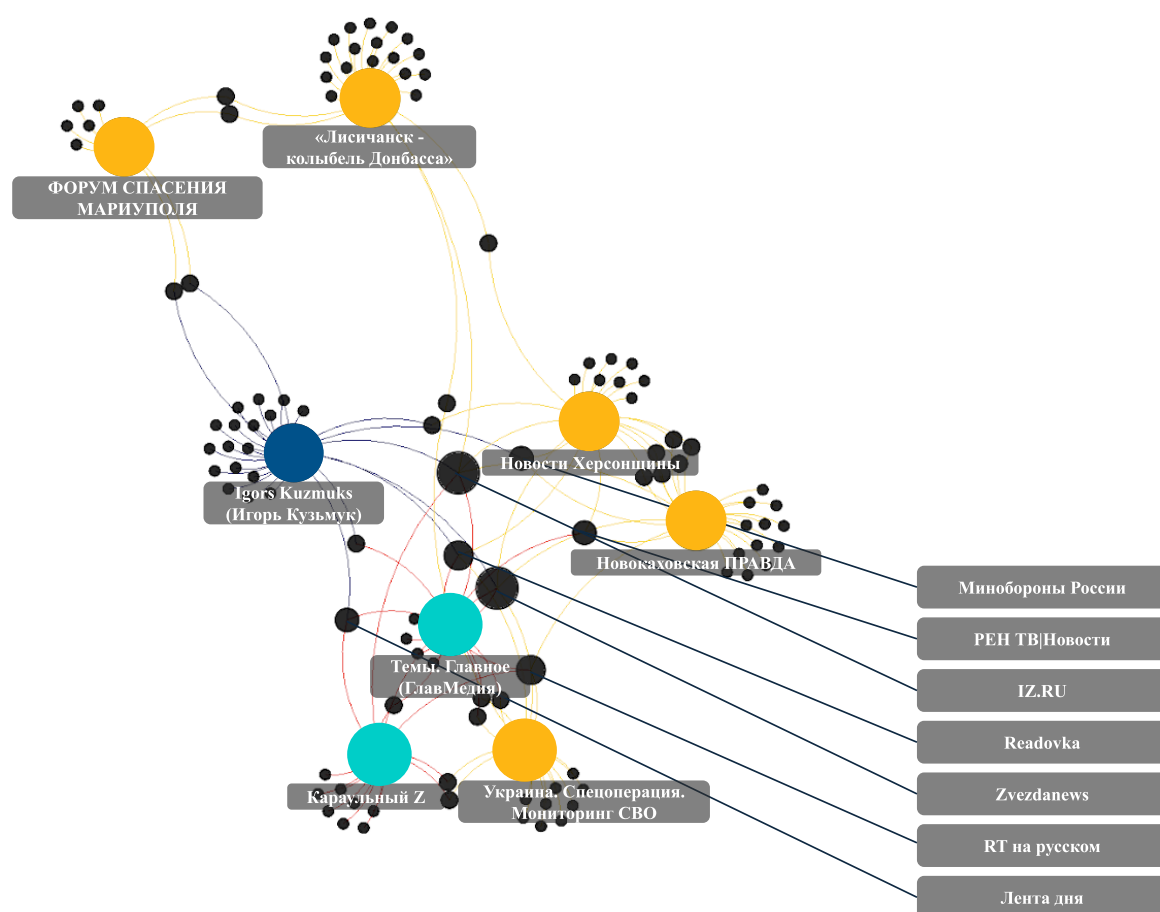


FIGURE 9. Telegram channels shared most by amplifiers

As discussed earlier, the Telegram channels of Russian media outlets, when considered independently and without external promotion,

(an average of 276 posts per day). Of these 226,556 posts, 15% promoted content from the following Russian media channels: Baltnews,

Zvezdanews, Anna_news, Izvestia, Lentadnya, and NTVnews.

The second observation is about the amplifiers themselves. An initial investigation indicates that many of these amplifiers maintain a presence on other social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)

1.2. Four Dimensions

To answer the research questions of this project, the whole data set was divided into 4 subsets corresponding with the four dimensions that this research focuses on: Military, Economic, Foreign Policy and ‘Liberated Areas.’ This division was done by using 4 sets of keywords—each set for each dimension (see Figure 10 for details on the Telegram dataset). The words for each set were identified

Since they are not considered to be associated with the Kremlin or the Kremlin-controlled media outlets, they freely amplify Russian narratives on other platforms. While the analysis of this amplification rests beyond the scope of this research, it seems to be an important phenomenon for further investigation.

from the list of 500 most used words in the whole dataset, which were manually labelled by Debunk.org researchers. The top 20 words were used to build each dimension’s data subset (for full details, see Appendix 1).

Since the division into subsets was based on dimension-related keywords, there is a certain overlap between the subsets subsets

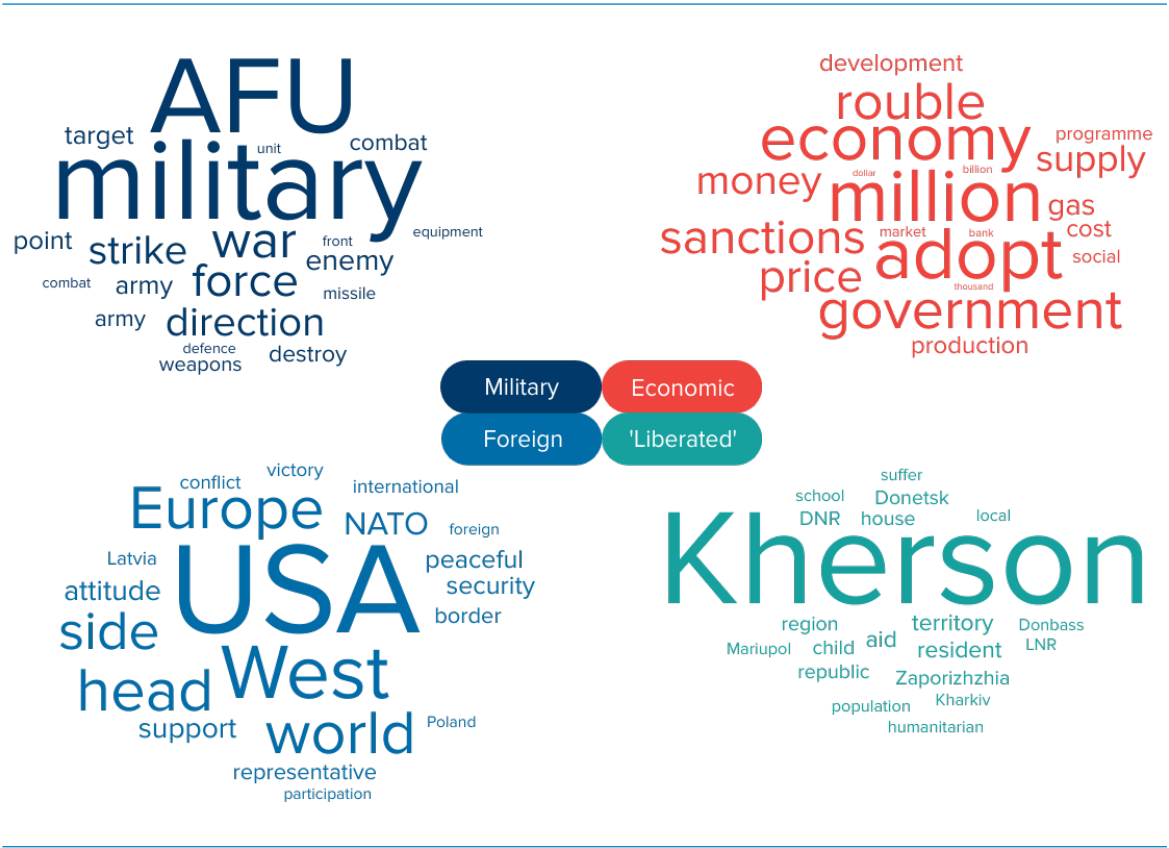


FIGURE 10. Most frequently used words denoting the dimensions on Telegram

(Figure 11). In other words, many posts were placed into two or three subsets as they discuss issues related to two or three dimensions (e.g., military and foreign policy, or military and economic issues in the ‘Liberated Areas’).

Each data subset was used to conduct topic modelling using BERTopic tool based on paragraphs within published posts. The thirty largest clusters returned by BERTopic were labelled by Debunk.org analysts. Since

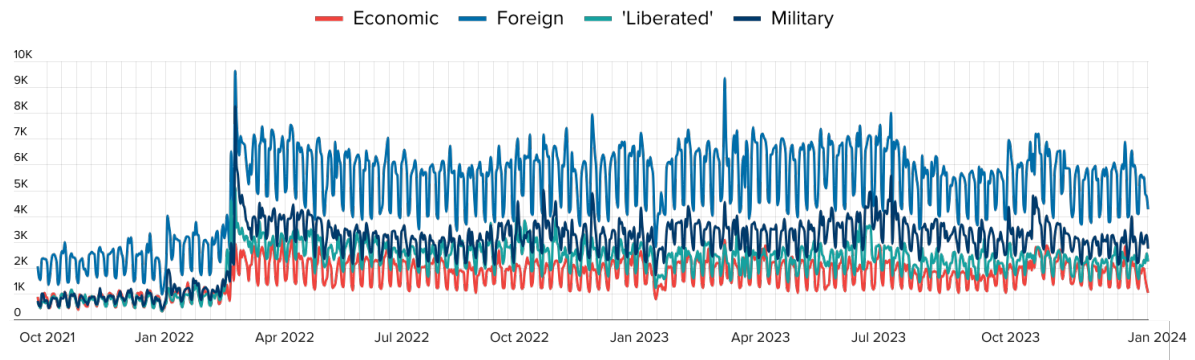


FIGURE 11. Number of paragraphs by dimension on Telegram

BERTopic uses natural language processing to capture semantic information and uncover latent contextual similarities, some of the returned clusters focus on narratives (e.g., Russian Air Strikes or Ineffectiveness of Western Sanctions), others focus on channels’ behaviour (e.g., References to Western Media or (pro)Russian Sources). For the same reason, some clusters might appear in several dimensions (e.g., References to Western Media appears in the Military, Economic and Foreign Policy dimensions; and Destruction of Western

Equipment appears in the Foreign Policy and the ‘Liberated Areas’ dimensions) (see Figures 12–15 for details on the Telegram dataset).

Irrelevant clusters were disregarded and similar clusters were combined together. The ten top labelled clusters in each dimension were chosen for further analysis. For descriptions of each label, please see Appendix 2.

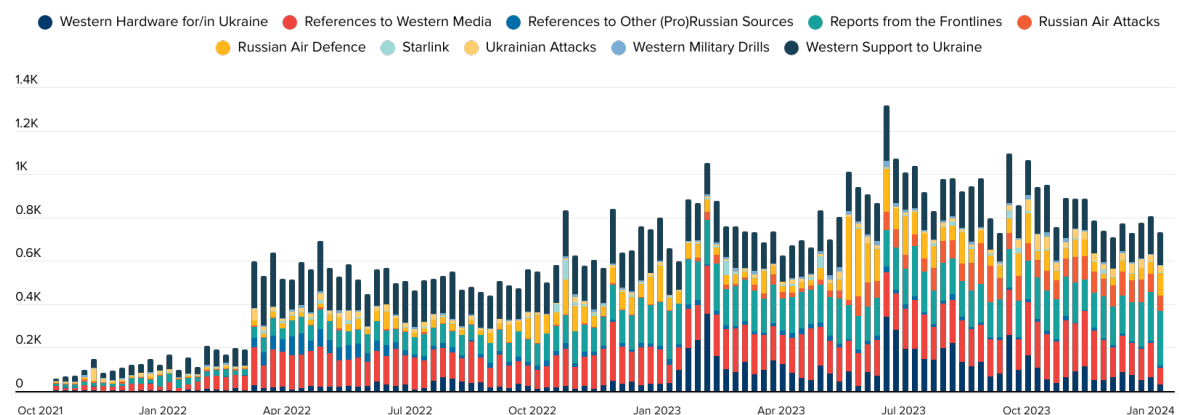


FIGURE 12. Military dimension on Telegram

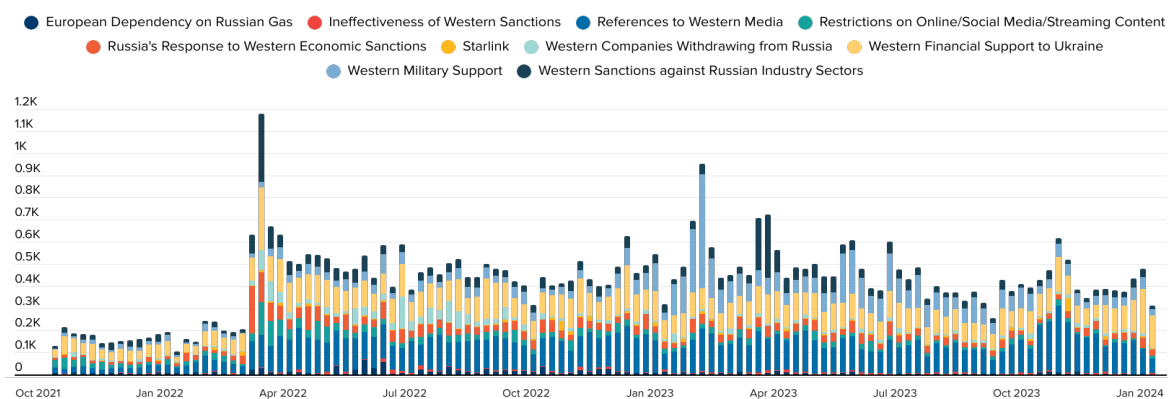


FIGURE 13. Economic dimension on Telegram

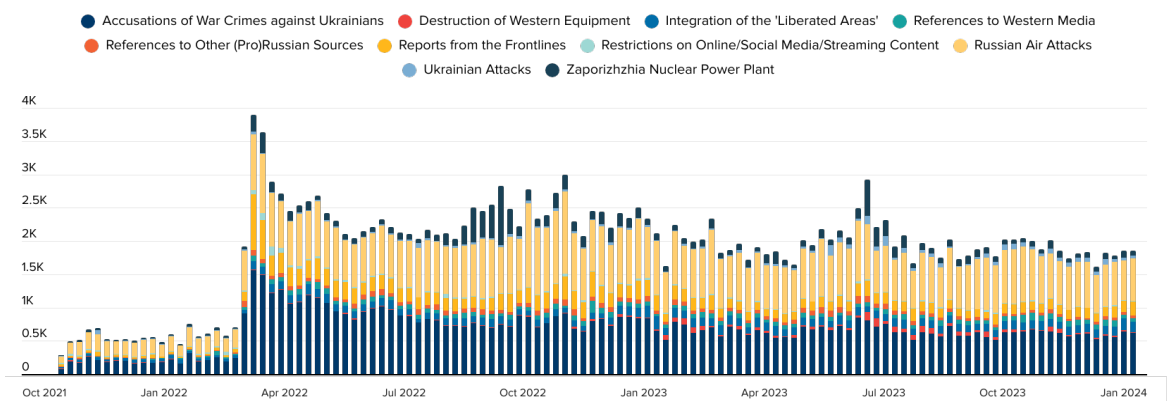


FIGURE 14. 'Liberated Areas' dimension on Telegram

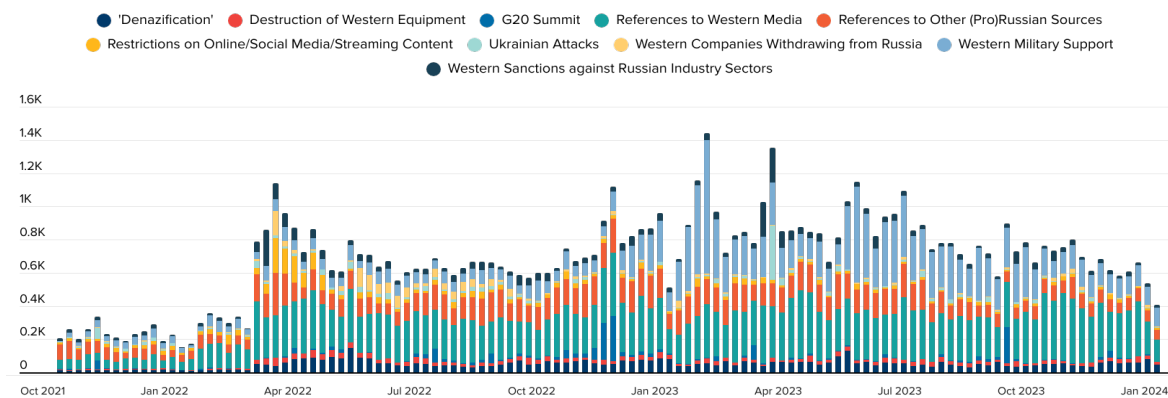


FIGURE 15. Foreign Policy dimension on Telegram

Part 2: Official Communication

2.1. Sources

The Russian official communication is represented by articles from the official websites of six government/regulatory institutions, directed at both internal (Russia's domestic) and highly varied external (from the so-called 'near abroad' (*blizhneye zarubezhye*) to the Global

South) potential audiences. These institutions represent main pillars of Russian governance and public information dissemination, positioned at the top of the 'information vertical' and are responsible for the creation and circulation of Russia's strategic narratives:

- The President of the Russian Federation (<http://kremlin.ru>)
- The Security Council of the Russian Federation (<http://scrf.gov.ru/>)
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (<https://mid.ru>)
- The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation (<https://function.mil.ru>)
- The State Duma of the Russian Federation (<http://duma.gov.ru/>)
- The Federation Council of the Russian Federation (<http://council.gov.ru/>)

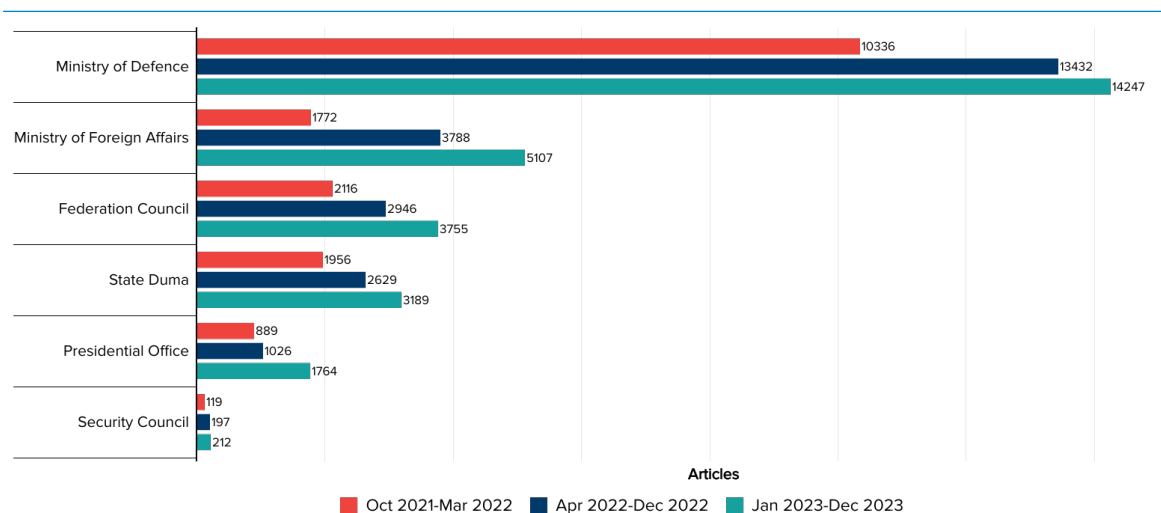


Figure 16. Official communication by sources through different research periods

From a total of 69,480 articles scraped from the websites of six official regulatory institutions throughout the period from 1 October 2021, to 31 December 2023, the Ministry of Defence's share in official communications was the highest, at almost 55%, followed by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at approximately 15% (Figure 17).

To verify whether and how a communications strategy to justify Russia's military actions in Ukraine has been developed, this report tracked the scope of the focus on Ukraine and its shifts within official communication sources. As has been pointed out in the previous reports, the Ministry of Defence's website, function.mil.ru, recorded the steepest growth in the communication flow regarding Ukraine after Russia's full-scale invasion into Ukraine on 24 February 2022 (Figure 18). The highest number of its messaging regarding Ukraine per week amounted to four articles pre-invasion (overall, the vast majority of those did not concern the tensions on the borders/with Ukraine, and instead revolved around commemoration of historical events/special dates with Ukraine and its toponyms as a battlespace of WW2, as well as a Russian missile destroyer saving a cargo ship from pirates with

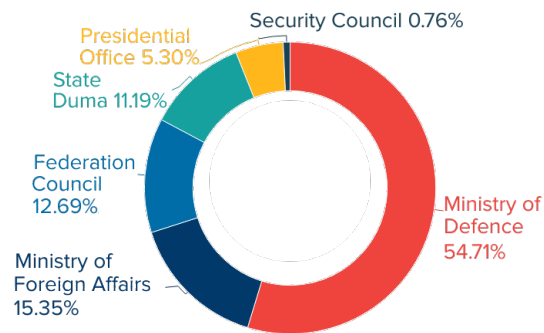


FIGURE 17. Share of coverage by websites of the official communication

Ukrainians amongst the crew), whereas with the launch of the war, the number grew to 70 articles and more weekly (in the period from 15 March to 15 April 2022).

However, the share of mentioning both Ukraine and the so-called 'special military operation' (Russian: специальная военная операция – СВО, SVO) remained low up until early October 2022, never exceeding one-fifth of the total volume of communication. It was only in mid-November of 2023 that the share of mentioning Ukraine on the official website

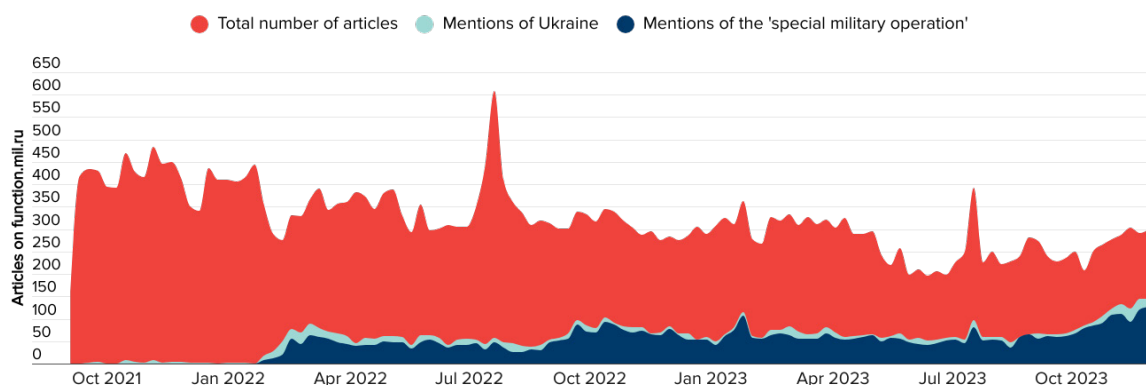


FIGURE 18. Dynamics of communication volume on Defence Ministry's website

of the Russian Ministry of Defence explicitly grew, exceeding 30% for the first time, and the upward trend was vivid until the end of the year. The lowest share of mentioning the so-called

'special military operation' was observed through early August to late September 2022, ranging from 7% to 10%. The period associated with the announcement of 'partial mobilisation'

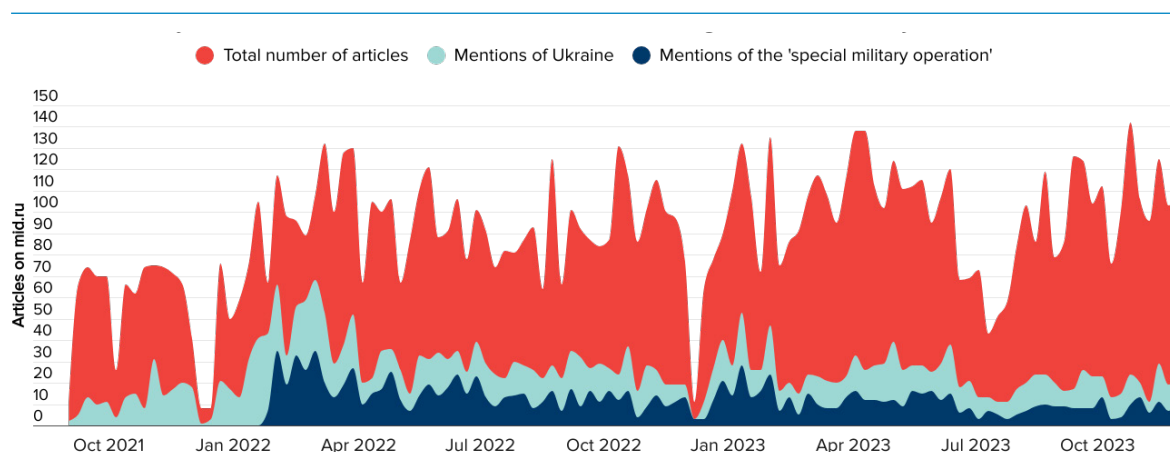


FIGURE 19. Dynamics of communication volume on Foreign Affairs Ministry's website

saw a notable surge in the number of articles, primarily driven by coverage of the 2022 Army International Games and the Army-2022 military expo and forum.

Thus, whilst the average monthly share of the 'special military operation' mentions on the official website of Russian Ministry of Defence stood at approximately 15% in 2022 (after the invasion into Ukraine), growing to almost 24% in 2023, the monthly average on the website of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs declined from 16.3% to 10.8%, respectively.

The downward trend in the communication related to Ukraine and the so-called 'special military operation' within the Russian foreign service's communication, however, included several spikes in the coverage (Figure 19). Thus, in the first weeks after 24 February 2022, the country's diplomats were busy with attempts to justify the brutal assault on the neighbouring country via their interviews to pro-Kremlin sources, extensive speeches at international organisations and simple mentions of the Russian top officials having calls with their counterparts trying to

explain their actions against Ukraine. Another peak in the communication came in February 2023, a period of heightened diplomatic activity by the Russian foreign service in the context of a new round of sanctions imposed on Russia, the country's continuing efforts to expand its presence and influence in Africa and the Middle East, as well as OSCE and UN meetings as the war against Ukraine marked its first anniversary.

On the websites of both chambers of the Russian Federal Assembly—the Federal Council and the State Duma—higher activity in producing articles related to both Ukraine and the 'special military operation' was observed in 2023, rather than 2022 (see Figures 20 and 21 for details). This was especially true of *council.gov.ru*: the monthly average of the percentage of articles mentioning the war against Ukraine grew from 6.4% in 2022 to 15.1% in 2023. The largest spike in mentions of the so-called 'special military operation' occurred in the last week of April 2023 and related to massive assistance for those 'working for victory,' as the beneficiaries of the Putin regime's largesse were the segments of society directly linked to

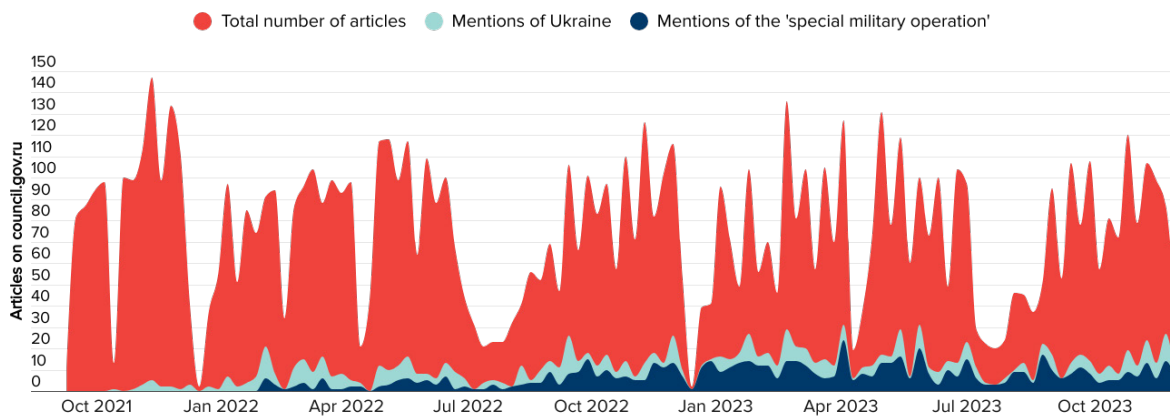


FIGURE 20. Dynamics of communication volume on Federation Council's website

the war against Ukraine¹⁰. Thus, the mentions included news on regulations allowing for co-borrowers of 'SVO participants' for the right to suspend fulfilment of obligations under loan agreements¹¹, news on regional 'social support measures for participants of the SVO and their family members,'¹² etc.

On the official website of the Duma, the number of 'special military operation' mentions in some cases exceeded the number of articles mentioning Ukraine—a trend traceable in 2023. As an example, the number of articles mentioning the so-called 'special military operation' posted on the Council's website exceeded the number of those mentioning

Ukraine in mid-March 2023. The coverage mainly concerned regulations about to come into force, such as those stipulating that 'participants of the *spetsoperatsya*, who are orphans, will receive housing from the state on a priority basis, while families of servicemen deployed to the SVO zone and outside of Russia will be able to continue to use service housing at their former place of service.'¹³

Mentions of the war against Ukraine on the official Russian presidential website *kremlin.ru* increased year-on-year, as reflected in the average weekly share of mentions, rising from 14.2% in 2022 to 17.6% in 2023. Peaks occurred after Putin's televised announcement

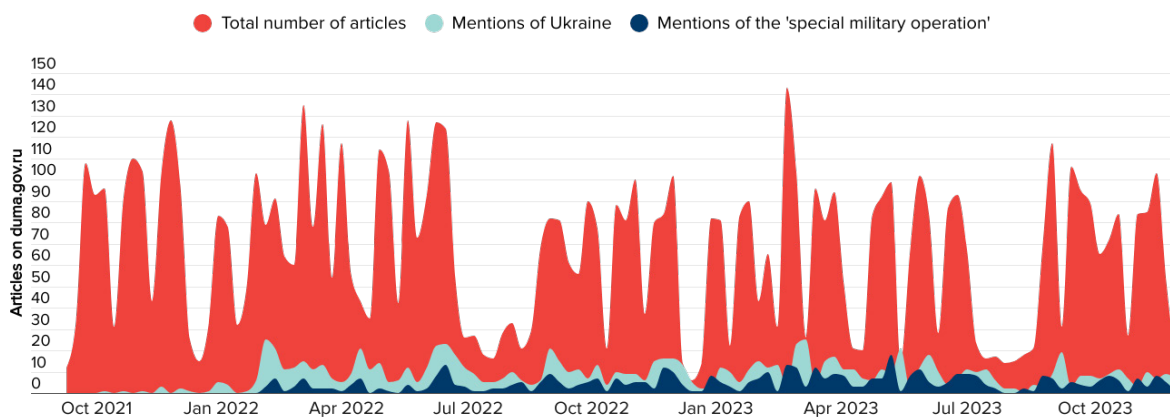


FIGURE 21. Dynamics of communication volume on State Duma's website

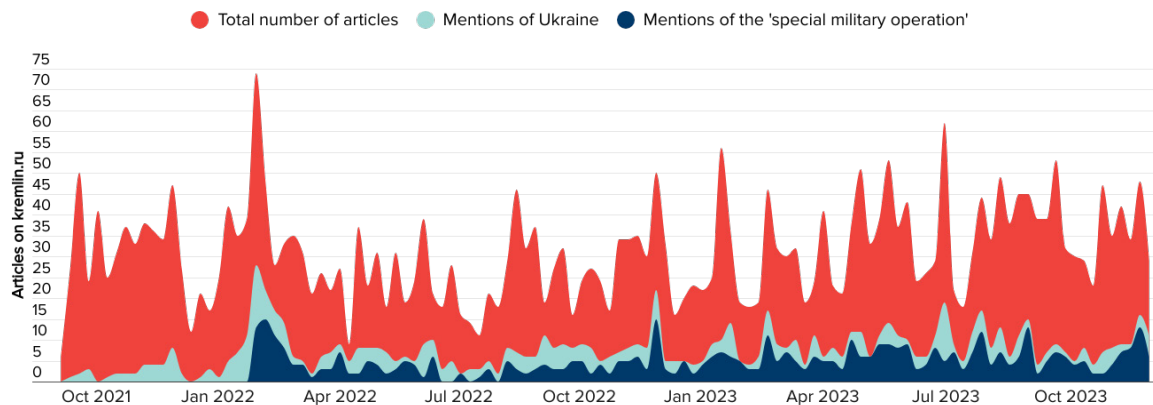


FIGURE 22. Dynamics of communication volume on Presidential Office's website

of the 'special military operation' and articles about his talks with other state leaders about the invasion (Figure 22). Additional spikes in late December 2022 and 2023 were primarily driven by events such as Putin awarding individuals involved in the war and participating in year-end institutional meetings.

mentions of Ukraine is higher than elsewhere among other monitored websites. Similarly, the share of mentions about the 'special military operation' on a weekly basis constituted an average of 21.3 % in 2022, since the invasion of Ukraine, and 17.2% in 2023.

The volume of articles posted on the online resource of the Russian Security Council (*scrf.ru*) was generally low (Figure 23), leading to a situation where the share (not number) of

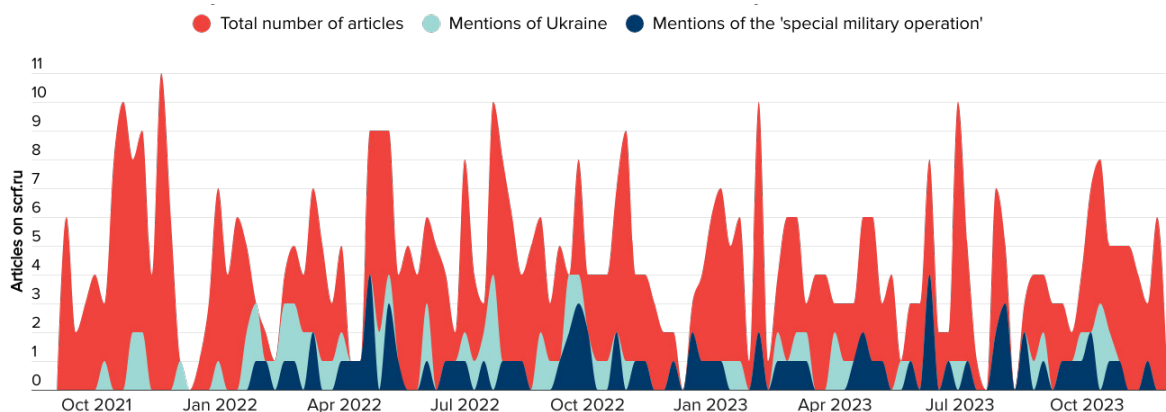


FIGURE 23. Dynamics of communication volume on Security Council's website

2.2. Four Dimensions

Similar to the analysis of the Telegram posts, the whole data set of the Official Communication was divided into four subsets corresponding with the four dimensions that this research focuses on—the Military, Economic, Foreign Policy and the ‘Liberated

Areas’—by defining four sets of keywords for each dimension (Figure 24). Again, the words were identified from the list of 500 most used words in this particular dataset, labelled manually by Debunk.org researchers (for the complete keyword sets, refer to Appendix 3).

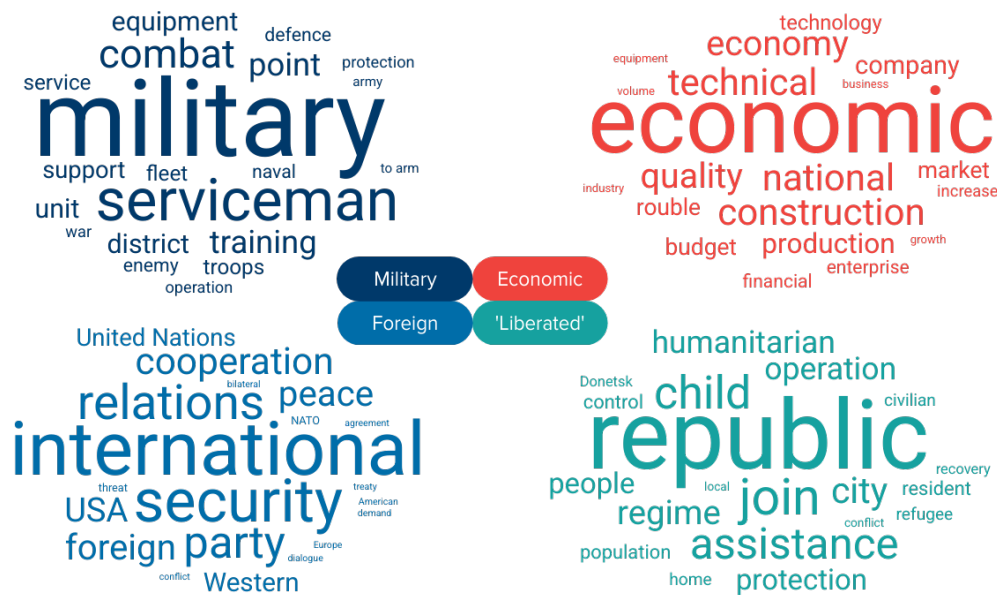


FIGURE 24. Most frequently used words denoting the dimensions in the official communication

The division into subsets based on dimension-related keywords, as in the case with the dataset of Telegram posts, led to some overlap as many articles were assigned to several subsets due to their relevance to several dimensions (Figure 25).

Therefore, some clusters by topic modelling using BERTopic, also appeared across multiple dimensions. Analysts at Debunk.org labelled the 30 largest clusters generated by BERTopic, excluding the irrelevant and merging the similar ones. The top 10 labelled clusters in

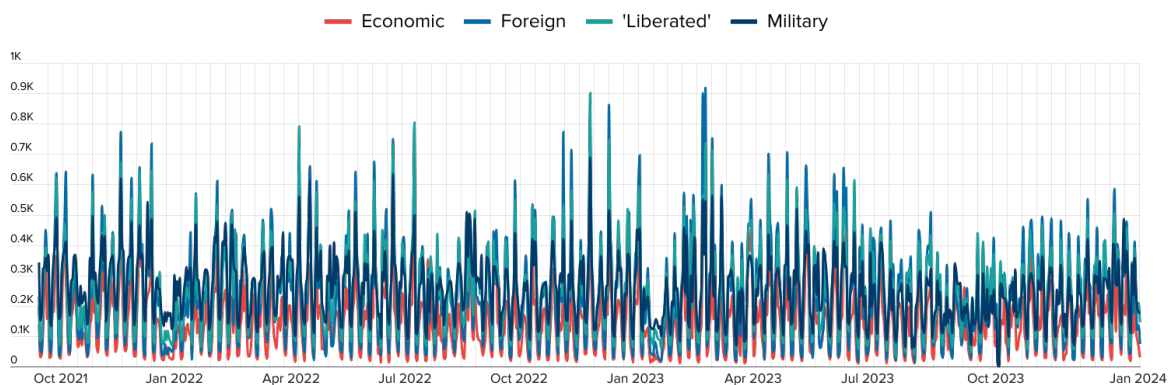


FIGURE 25. Number of articles by dimension in the official communication

each dimension (see Figures 26–29 for details on the official communication dataset) were selected for further analysis, with a particular

focus on narrative-based clusters throughout the report. For detailed descriptions of each label, refer to Appendix 4.



FIGURE 26. Military dimension in the official communication

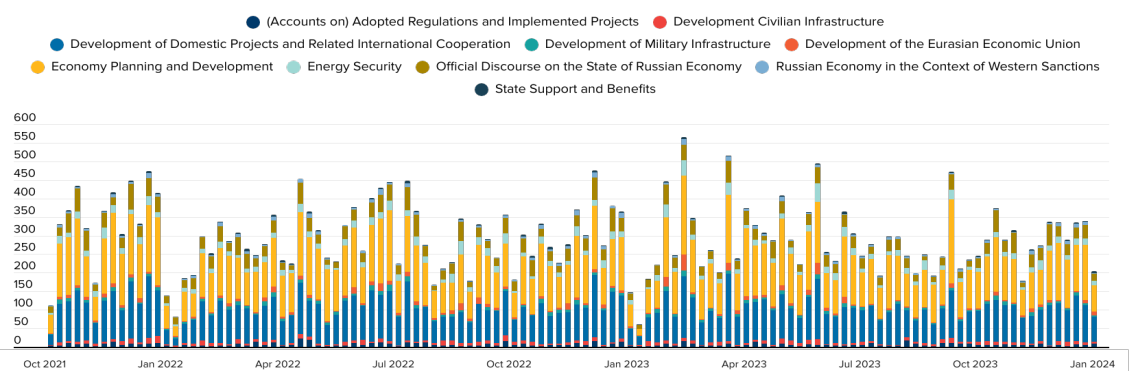


FIGURE 27. Economic dimension in the official communication

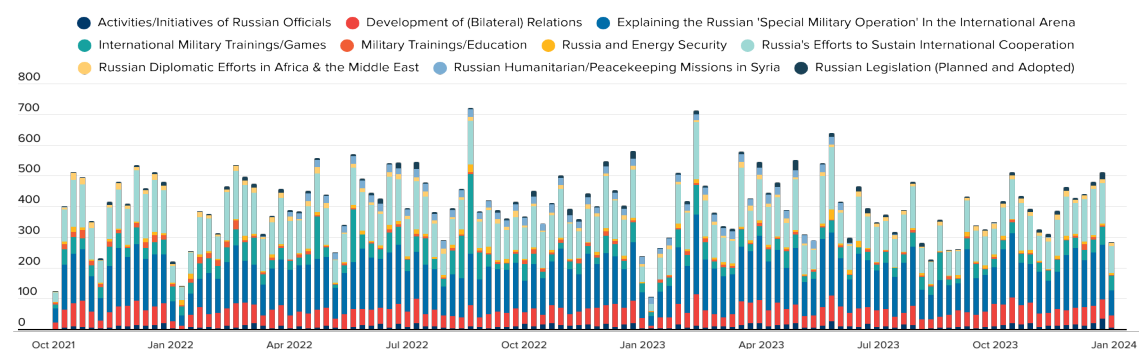


FIGURE 28. Foreign Policy dimension in the official communication

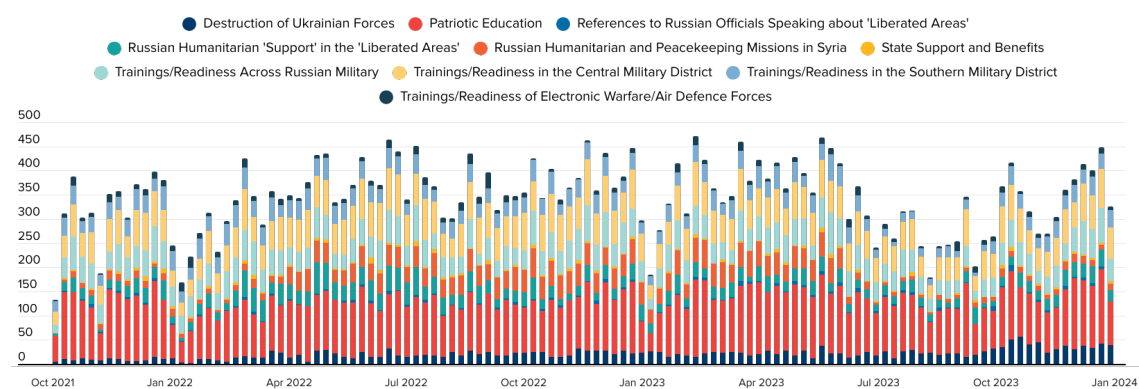


FIGURE 29. 'Liberated Areas' dimension in the official communication

Part 3: Television

3.1. Sources

For this research, two prominent weekly TV programmes—*Vesti Nedeli* (*News of the Week*, broadcast on the Rossiya 1 channel) and *Voskresnoye Vremya* (*Sunday Time*, aired on Pervyy Kanal)—were monitored from 1 October 2021, to 31 December 2023. These programmes were selected because they are broadcasted on two of Russia’s most-watched television channels: Rossiya 1, part of the VGTRK holding (Russia’s primary state-owned broadcaster), and Pervyy Kanal, which is also government-controlled.

While studies increasingly highlight the declining influence of television among younger, urban audiences in Russia, TV remains a cornerstone of the Kremlin’s communication strategy. It still serves as a vital component in the production, dissemination, and amplification of Moscow’s messaging, particularly for older and rural demographics where its impact is still profound.

Vesti Nedeli, hosted by Dmitry Kiselyov, a key propagandist and head of the state-controlled *Rossiya Segodnya* news agency, delivers a weekly roundup of current events interspersed with pointed commentary. The

programme generally follows the Kremlin’s official narratives, offering insight into the regime’s priorities and messaging strategies. Its format allows for curated summaries of events deemed most critical for the Kremlin. Viewers of this programme are likely drawn to the direct and declarative style of Dmitry Kiselyov, whose commentary often aligns with their worldview and reinforces their loyalty to Kremlin narratives¹⁴.

Voskresnoye Vremya, on the other hand, provides a broader, magazine-style presentation of news and its framing. Viewers of this show favour a programme that blends information with entertainment and human stories, seeking less overtly propagandistic style than *Vesti Nedeli*, although the underlying narratives still align with state-controlled messaging.

This diversity in format between the two programmes provided researchers with a comparative lens to evaluate how the Kremlin adapts its messaging across different media styles to reach various segments of the population.

Television: **216 programmes (= 536 watch hours)** in total.

Timeframe	Vesti Nedeli (episodes)	Voskresnoye Vremya (episodes)	Vesti Nedeli (hours)	Voskresnoye Vremya (hours)	Total episodes	Total hours
2021-10-01 - 2022-03-31	24	24	72	48	48	120
2022-04-01 - 2022-12-31	36	39	108	78	75	186
2023-01-01 - 2023-12-31	44	49	132	98	93	230

FIGURE 30. Televised content considered for analysis

3.2. Four Dimensions

In an attempt to conduct a comparative analysis between the TV shows and data collected on Telegram and official communications, the monitored television programmes were transcribed. The transcripts were divided into paragraphs (units of measurement, comparable with Telegram posts or paragraphs in official communications articles) by ChatGPT. The resulting data set was divided into four subsets corresponding with the four dimensions that this research focuses on—Military,

Economic, Foreign Policy and the ‘Liberated Areas’—by defining four sets of keywords per each dimension (Figure 31). Again, the words were identified from the list of 500 most-used words in this TV dataset, labelled manually by Debunk.org researchers (for the complete keyword sets, refer to Appendix 5).

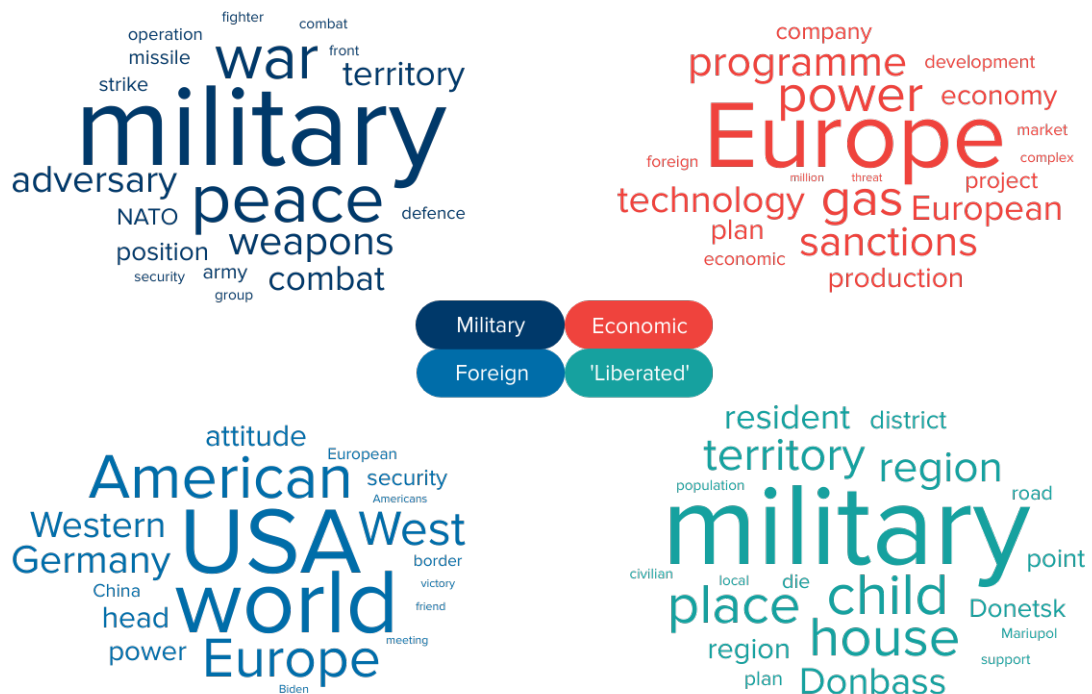


FIGURE 31. Most frequently used words denoting the dimensions on television

The division into subsets based on dimension-related keywords produced an uncharacteristically synchronised behaviour that points towards a possibility that each one of the created subsets is too generic (Figure 32). In other words, unlike with the cases of Telegram and the Official Communication, the content on TV is too broad and generic to be divided into dimensions. That assumption explains the fact that the application of BERTopic on each dimension failed to identify coherent clusters.

Their purpose of the weekend TV programmes is to summarise and reflect on the events that took place across a whole week. Due to their broad focus, their ability to allocate enough time to a certain narrative is limited. This explains why the topic clustering software struggled to identify clear clusters of narratives in TV programmes. Therefore, the examination of the TV shows in the following chapters will be based on qualitative analysis only.

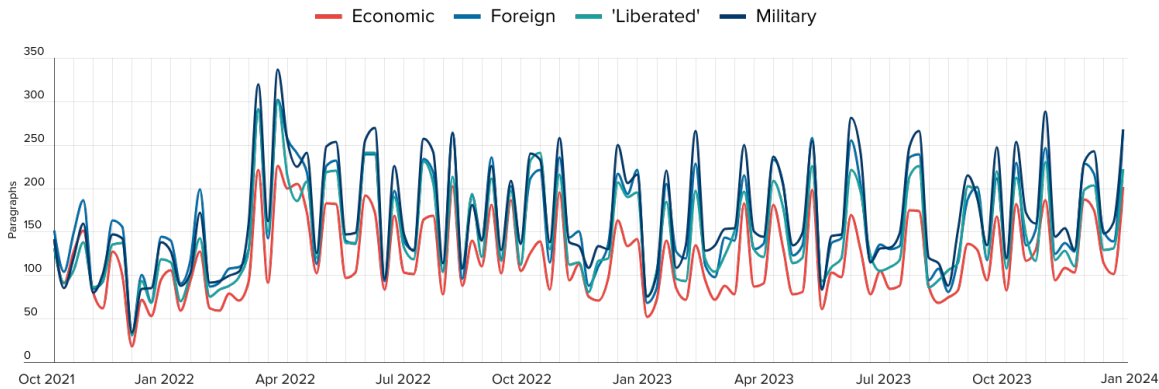


FIGURE 32. Dynamics of the volume of TV coverage by dimensions

Chapter 2: Military Dimension— Case Studies Analysis

The analysis of communications channels in Chapter 1 offered a vibrant picture of different narratives propagated by the Kremlin on both Telegram and official platforms. Within the framework of the military dimension, three main narrative-based clusters in each communication domain are:

■ Telegram:

- Western Support to Ukraine
- Reports from the Frontlines
- Western Hardware for/in Ukraine

■ Official Communications:

- Training/Readiness across Russian Military
- Trainings/Readiness in the Central Military District
- International Military Trainings/Games

While BERTopic struggled to identify clear clusters within the collected TV dataset, the narrative-based clusters on Telegram and the Official Communication offer an interesting picture of different trends that allows the selection of three relevant and meaningful events for case studies analysis.

Two case studies were chosen from Telegram dataset, to qualitatively analyse two abnormal spikes in the ‘Western Hardware for/in Ukraine’ cluster (in January and in June 2023, see Figure 33 for details).

The third case study was chosen from the Official Communication dataset, to investigate the unusual spike in ‘International military trainings/games’ cluster in August 2022 (Figure 34).

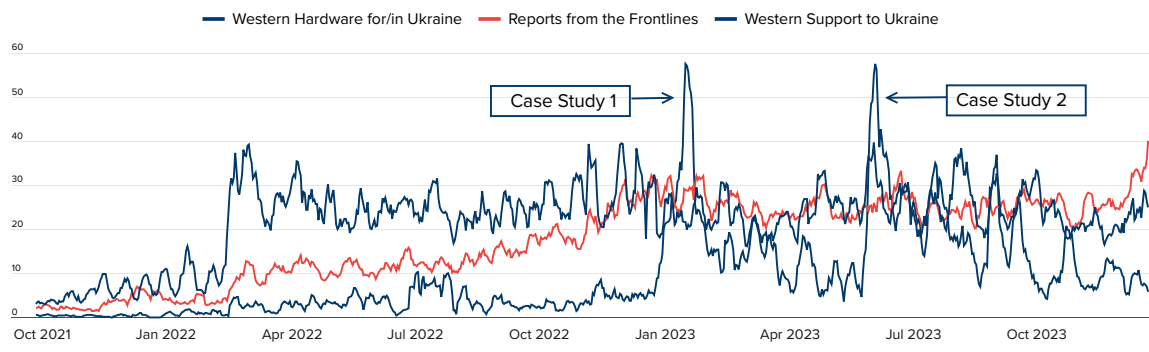


FIGURE 33. Major narrative-based clusters, the Military dimension on Telegram



FIGURE 34. Major narrative-based clusters, the Military dimension in the official communication

After identifying the real-life event that created each spike, each case study involved a comparative analysis across all three channels of communications (Telegram, official

communications and TV) to investigate how this event was covered on different communication platforms.

Case Study 1: *Supply of Western MBTs to Ukraine*

The decision of the Western countries to supply main battle tanks (MBTs) to Ukraine in January 2023 marked a pivotal moment in the international response to Russia's invasion, signalling a deepening commitment from NATO allies to support Ukraine's defence.

Throughout 2022, Ukraine's push to secure Western MBTs became a key part of its broader efforts to strengthen its military capabilities and resist the Russian invasion. In the early months of the war, Ukraine primarily received Soviet-era tanks from neighbouring countries that were once part of the Warsaw Pact, such as Poland, Slovakia, and Czechia. These countries were able to supply Ukraine with older T-72 tanks, which were familiar to the Ukrainian military and required minimal additional training.

Ukrainian officials repeatedly called for more advanced Western equipment, emphasising that Ukraine needed modern MBTs and other heavy weaponry to defend its territory and reclaim occupied areas. Ukrainian diplomats and military officials stressed that NATO-standard MBTs like the Leopard 2, Challenger 2, and M1 Abrams could give Ukraine the edge in direct armoured confrontations with Russian forces.

Despite Ukraine's requests, Western governments hesitated to provide modern MBTs, fearing that such a move could escalate the conflict and provoke a more aggressive response from Russia.

This all changed on 14 January 2023, when British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak confirmed the decision to send 14 Challenger 2 tanks to Ukraine. This decision set a precedent that was followed by Germany and the United States on 25 January. The German decision was particularly important as it opened the door for other European nations, such as Poland, Norway, Spain, and others to contribute Leopard 1/2 tanks from their own inventories.

Since the beginning of the war, Russian bloggers and media channels on Telegram have closely followed the developments surrounding potential and real supplies by Western countries of military hardware to Ukraine, as well as its performance there, with particular focus on its destruction by the Russian military (as reflected in the evolution of the cluster Western Hardware for/in Ukraine, see Figure 35). For example, a spike on 8 July 2022 occurred after reports about the destruction of the supplied Harpoon anti-ship missile launchers near Odessa. Another spike in activity, on 2 August 2022,

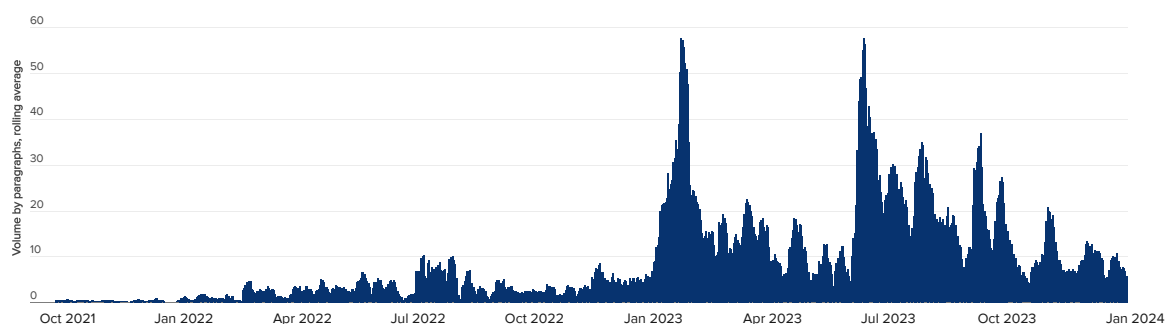


FIGURE 35. Western Hardware for/in Ukraine cluster over time, the military dimension on Telegram

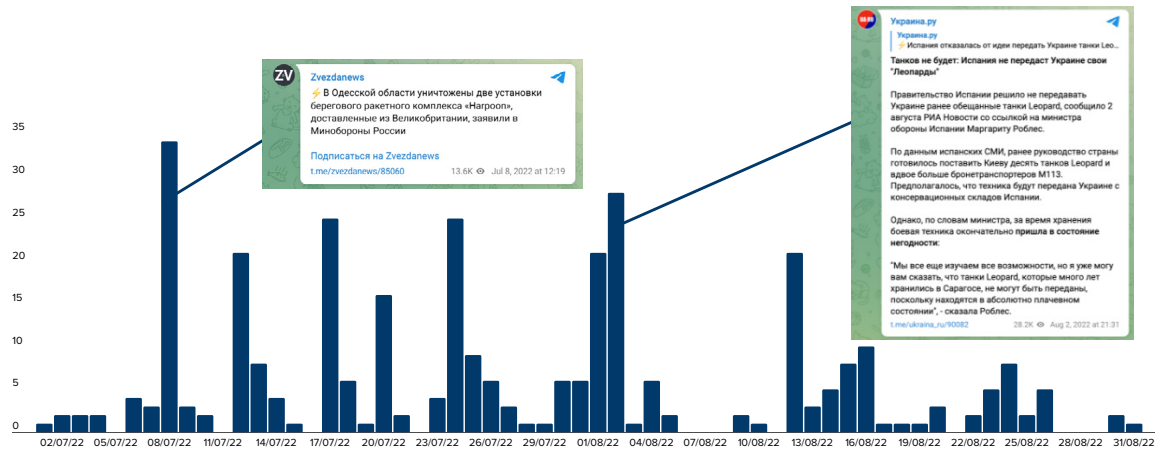


FIGURE 36. Spike in the Western Hardware for Ukraine cluster on Telegram, July–August 2022

centred on the definitive refusal of Spain to supply Leopard tanks (Figure 36).

Closely following policy changes in the Western capitals in the beginning of 2023, the coverage of this topic started to increase in

early January, peaking on 25 January, when Germany and the US announced their decisions to supply MBTs to Ukraine (Figure 37).

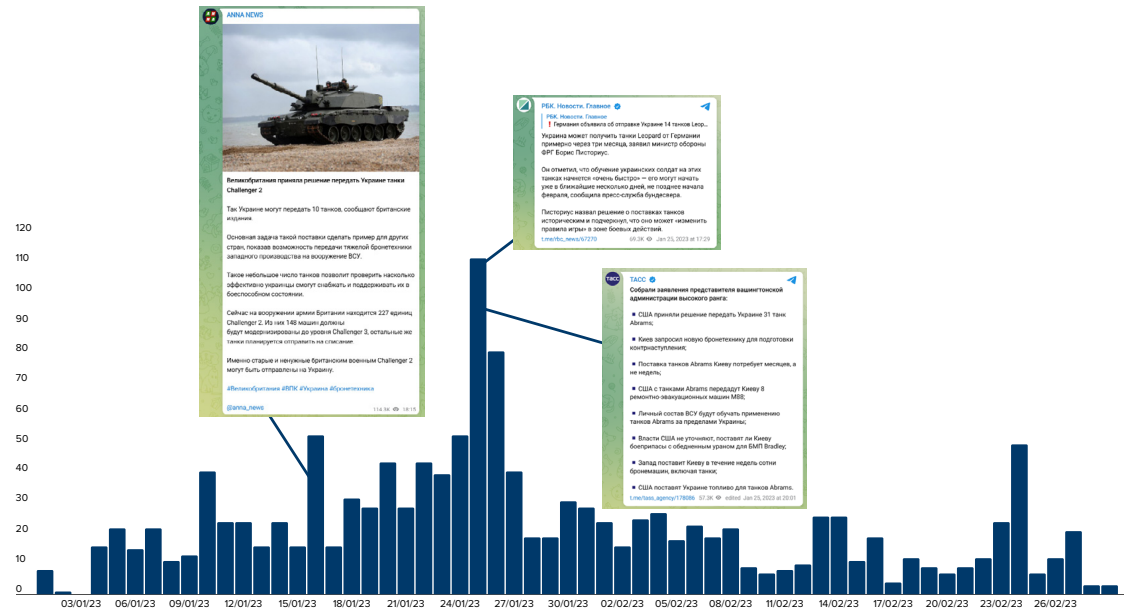


FIGURE 37. Spike in the Western Hardware for/in Ukraine cluster on Telegram, January–February 2023

From 1 January to 15 February 2023, 1,197 posts were published by different Telegram channels on this topic—112 posts on 25 January only, and an average of 26 posts per day. For comparison, throughout the whole analysed period the coverage of this topic consisted of nine posts per day on average. In other words, the decision of Western countries to supply MBTs to Ukraine was considered

a pivotal moment by Russian and pro-Russian actors on Telegram. This coverage can be generally divided into two groups. The first group consists of posts that have an informative character, without much interpretation and frequent references to Western sources (Figure 38).

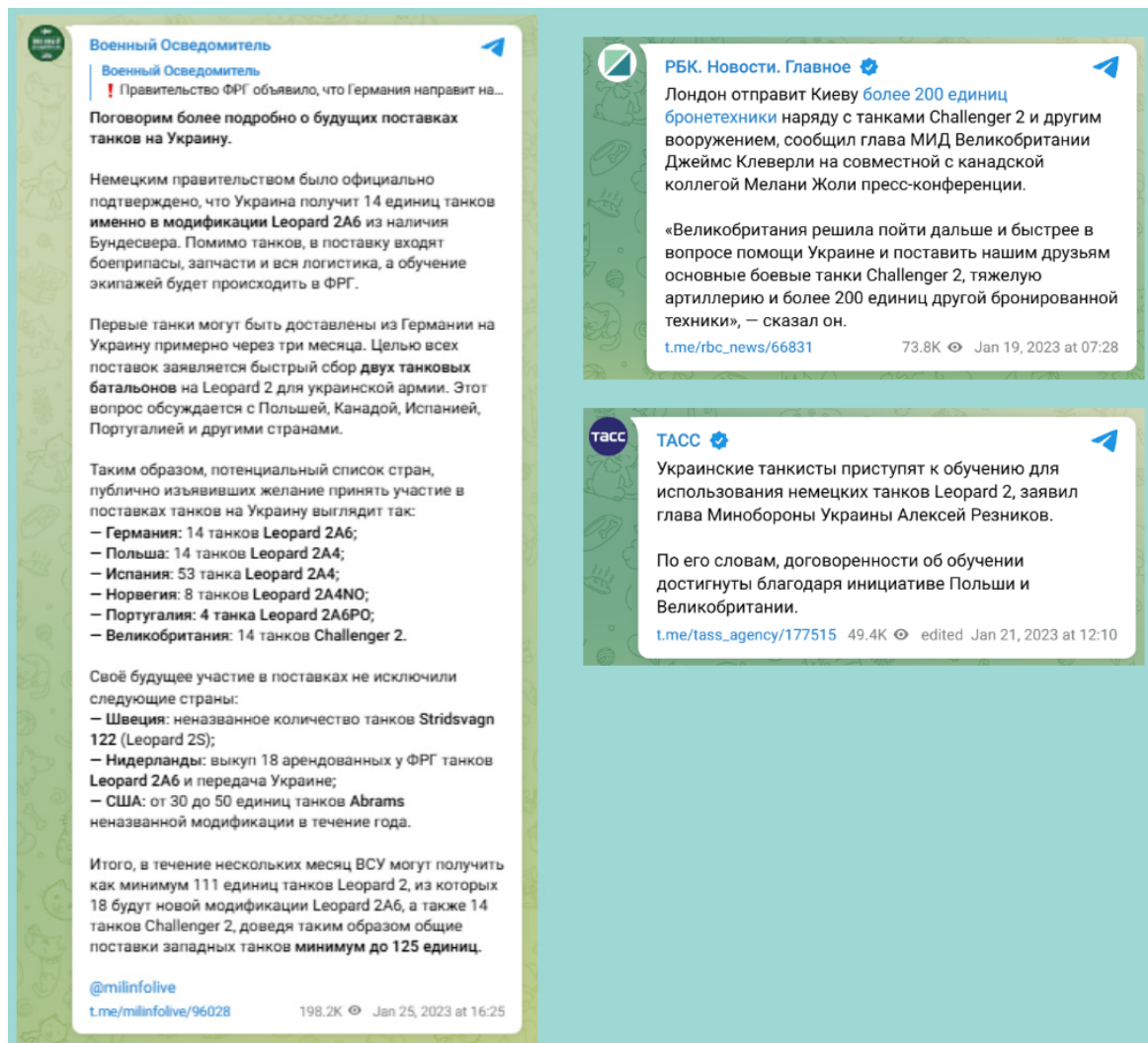


FIGURE 38 Informative posts on the supply of Western MBTs to Ukraine

The second group, led by Russian milbloggers and military experts (either via their own channels, or via their commentaries

to media), tried to downplay the potential contribution of the Western MBTs to Ukrainian military (Figure 39).

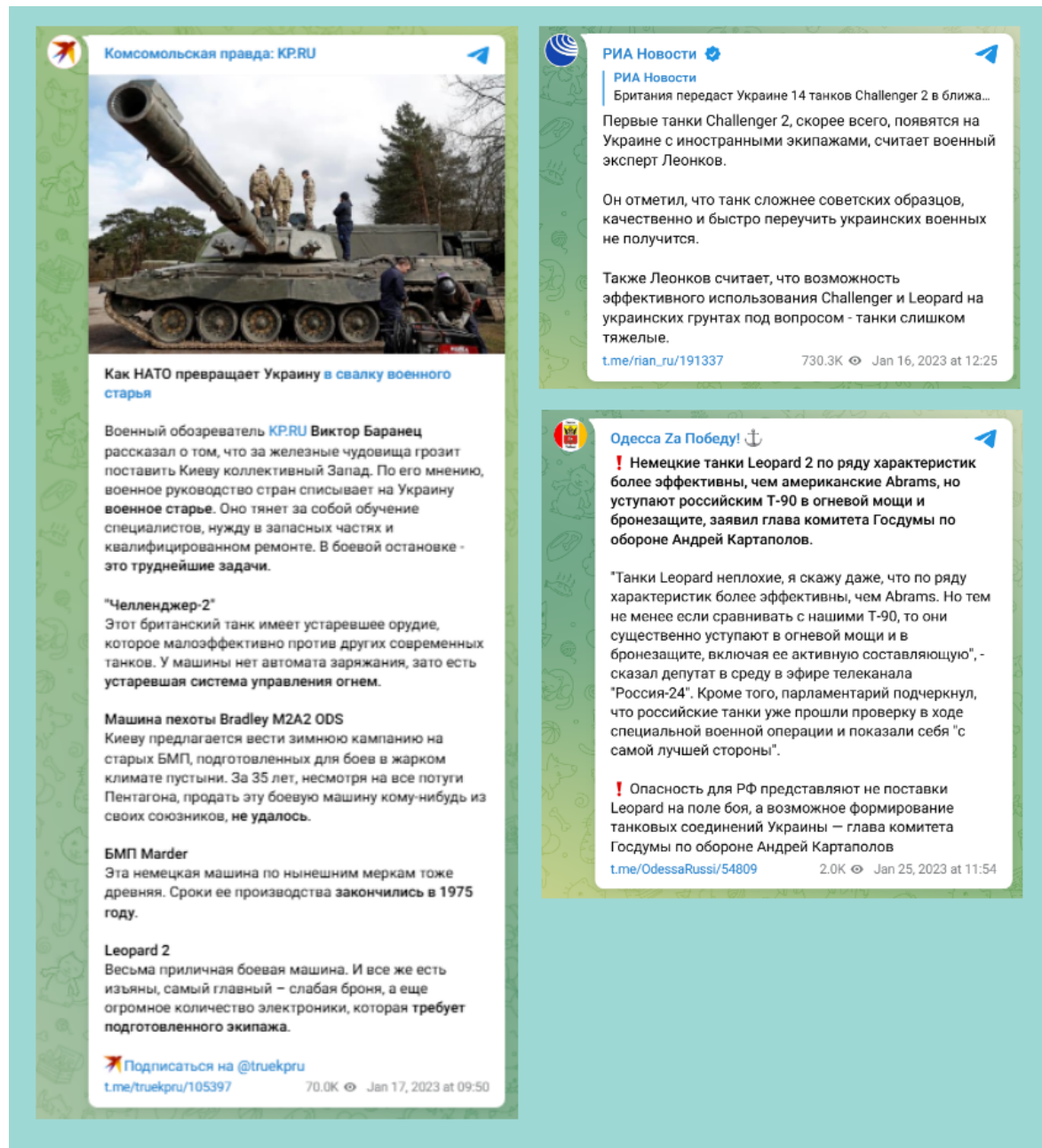


FIGURE 39. Posts downplaying the supply of Western MBTs to Ukraine

While the discourse on Telegram was preoccupied with the decision of the NATO countries to supply modern MBTs to Ukraine, the Kremlin was reluctant to give the same level of attention to the subject on its official

communication channels. From 1 January to 15 February 2023, this issue was mentioned only 11 times (for details, see Appendix 5 and Figure 40).

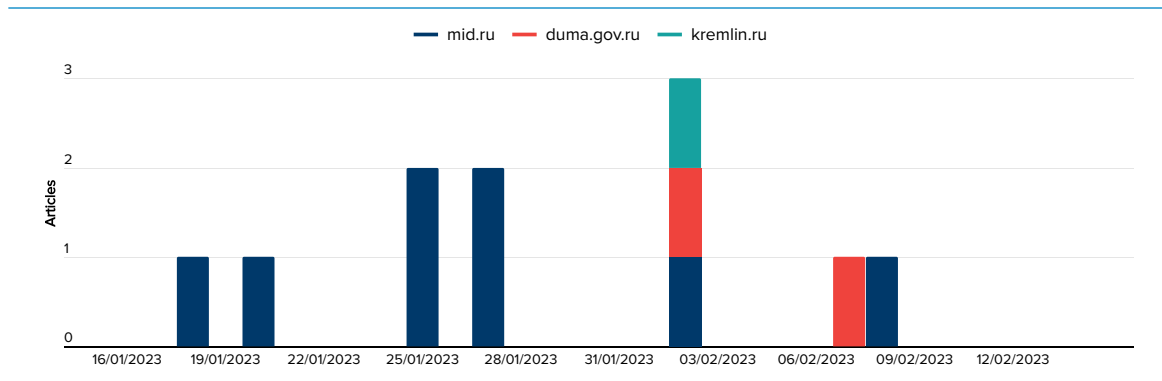


FIGURE 40. Articles on the supply of Western MBTs to Ukraine in the official communication

The majority of these communications were conducted by the Russian MFA, referring either to the statements of Russia's representatives to OSCE, or interviews with Russian ambassadors in Germany and Poland. While on Telegram the Kremlin (through milbloggers and experts) tried to downplay the significance of the Western decision to transfer MBTs to Ukraine, the MFA communications focused on two different narratives. The first was to highlight the escalatory potential of this decision '[because it marks] an entirely new level of escalation on the battlefield'¹⁵ as 'the armoured vehicles sent to Ukraine are intended for offensive combat operations ... to facilitate the "liberation" of Ukrainian territories, including Crimea.'¹⁶ The second narrative centred around the potential counter-productiveness of this decision, as 'many in Germany also see that such aid ... has a negative impact on the socio-economic situation in the country,'¹⁷ and 'there is a certain contradiction between the "cautious" statements about not wanting escalation and the delivery of huge quantities of modern weapons to the conflict zone.'¹⁸

In this respect, the statements by President Putin and Vyacheslav Volodin (the Chairman of the Duma) are particularly interesting, as they stood out from the narratives promoted by Russia's MFA. While both

delivered their statements in the context of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Stalingrad, Putin only briefly mentioned the fact that 'we are again being threatened by German Leopard tanks,'¹⁹ Volodin, however, took a more radical stand, stating that 'their [German MBTs] fate will be the same as 80 years ago. The Leopards will be burned, repeating the fate of the fascist Tigers.'²⁰

In times when the campaign on Telegram tried to downplay the potential contribution of the Western MBTs to Ukrainian military, and official communications from MFA tried to portray such a decision by Western countries as escalatory and counter-productive, the weekend TV programmes mixed and matched between these two. It is important to note that, despite the lack of clear narrative, the TV coverage of the developments during January-February 2023 paid significant attention to this subject. An average length of time dedicated to the topic per programme was more than 10 minutes (shortest—6 min 11 sec, longest—16 min 50 sec). Starting on 15 January (after the UK announced its commitment to transfer Challenger 2), the coverage peaked on 29 January (as NATO countries applied pressure on Germany) and slowly faded following the announcement of Germany and US (Figure 41).

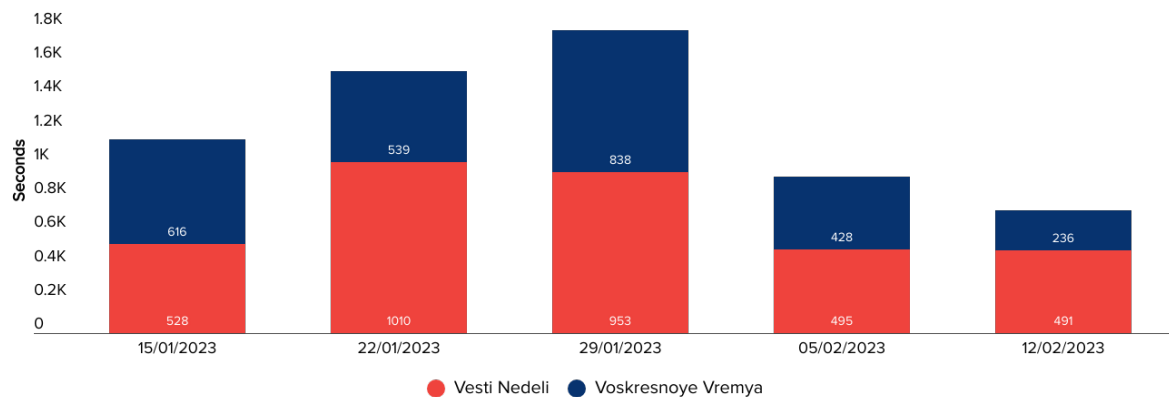


FIGURE 41. TV coverage of the supply of Western MBTs to Ukraine

Much of the coverage on 15 January was spent on introducing the Leopard 2 tank to the Russian audiences, outlining its main characteristics: ‘classic layout, four-person crew, engine with 1,500 horsepower, decent manoeuvrability, and speed.’ However, echoing similar commentary on Telegram, this assessment of the MBT’s strength was immediately followed by an attempt to downplay its potential performance in Ukraine, particularly due to its weight: ‘between 50 and 70 tons ... the Leopard won’t hold up because these bridges [in Ukraine] were designed to support T-72 tanks, but they won’t support the Leopard.’

The coverage on the following weekend (22 January) continued to criticise Western MBTs, this time the US-made Abrams tanks: ‘[in Ukraine] diesel is required. The complexity of maintaining the Abrams and its high cost make tank supplies to Ukrainians pointless.’²¹ However, following the official communications that marked the decision to supply Western MBTs as an escalatory move, TV commentators started to echo this narrative as well: ‘America insists on continuing the bloodshed, demanding that NATO allies, primarily Germany, start supplying Ukraine with German Leopard 2 tanks.’²²

The weekend of 29 January was the first weekend after the decisions of the US and Germany to supply their MBTs. Completely aligning with the official message of ‘an entirely

new level of escalation on the battlefield,’²³ TV hosts argued that, ‘on Wednesday, perhaps for the first time, it was openly stated from Berlin: the West is waging war against Russia.’²⁴

Interestingly enough, this message of escalation (aligned with official communications) was accompanied with the messages downplaying the potential threat (aligned with the messaging on Telegram): ‘both the Leopard and Abrams are good machines, with powerful weapons, excellent fire control systems, and multi-layered armour for frontal protection... But they are heavy.’²⁵

The segments on the weekend of 5 February followed the overall propaganda campaign around the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Stalingrad. Following the ideas expressed by President Putin and Vyacheslav Volodin, the TV hosts invoked World War II imagery, stating that ‘it’s incredible, but true. We are once again threatened with German Leopard tanks with crosses on their sides, preparing to fight Russia on Ukrainian soil.’²⁶

By mid-February, the interest in the subject started to fade. The general narratives dismissed the supply of Western (particularly American) MBTs as irrelevant as they will ‘arrive later, as their delivery requires additional logistical support.’²⁷

Case Study 2: Destruction of Western armoured vehicles in Ukraine

After Western nations decided to supply Ukraine with advanced MBTs like the German-made Leopard 2, British Challenger 2, and US-made Abrams, many Western analysts viewed these deliveries as a game-changing development. These MBTs were expected to provide a qualitative advantage over Russian armour, which primarily consisted of older Soviet-era T-72s and T-80s, as well as more modern T-90 models. The Leopard 2, in particular, was seen as a game-changer due to its advanced firepower, mobility, and armour.

However, by June 2023, when Ukraine launched the first phases of its long-anticipated counteroffensive, with Western MBTs taking a prominent role, it became clear that these advanced platforms were facing significant challenges on the battlefield.

Since it took significant time for the Western countries to agree on the supply of offensive hardware (including MBTs) to Ukraine before January-February 2023, Russian forces

utilised this time to build significant layered defensive lines. These defensive networks included extensive minefields, dragon's teeth (concrete pyramids designed to block armoured vehicles), trenches, and a dense concentration of anti-tank weapons. The use of Russian loitering munitions, kamikaze drones, such as the Lancet, advanced anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) like the Kornet, became a key factor in the destruction of Western MBTs.

Images and videos emerged on Telegram in early June 2023 showing several Leopard 2 tanks being destroyed or abandoned in southern Ukraine, particularly near the Zaporizhzhia front.

The information operation surrounding the destruction of German-made Leopard tanks, started on 6 June 2023 with the statement from the Russian MoD (with accompanying video) that was amplified across the (pro-) Russian Telegram ecosystem (Figure 43).



FIGURE 42. Spike in the Western Hardware for/in Ukraine cluster on Telegram, June–July 2023

However, by 9 June, the narrative took on a life of its own, with different channels posting different videos arriving from the field. From 1 June to 15 July 2023, 1,345 posts were published by different channels on this topic (an average of 30 posts per day, see Figure 42). While this information operation was initiated by the Russian MoD, the official communication did not take part in its promotion. In addition to two main statements on this subject on 6 June that initiated the operation, there were only 5 additional references to it (for details, see Appendix 6 and Figure 44).

Unlike the vibrant and sensational in nature discussions on Telegram, the majority of references in the Official Communication were quite laconic, referring to general numbers of (alleged) Ukrainian destroyed hardware, rather

than to any particular incident. For example, citing the total number of destroyed tanks, Putin argued that ‘at least a third are of Western production, including Leopards.’²⁸ The same line of argument can be found in statements by Russia’s Deputy Permanent Representative to OSCE, who was simply listing the (alleged) casualties of Ukrainian forces since the beginning of June, mentioning Leopards and other Western hardware as a part of the total number of destroyed equipment.²⁹ The only sensational commentary in the Official Communication was by Volodin, when the Duma’s website republished his Telegram post from 6 June, in which he claimed that in the last 24 hours Russian forces ‘burned 32 tanks, including eight German Leopards and three French AMX-10s’ and, therefore, ‘plan “Barbarossa 2” has collapsed.’³⁰

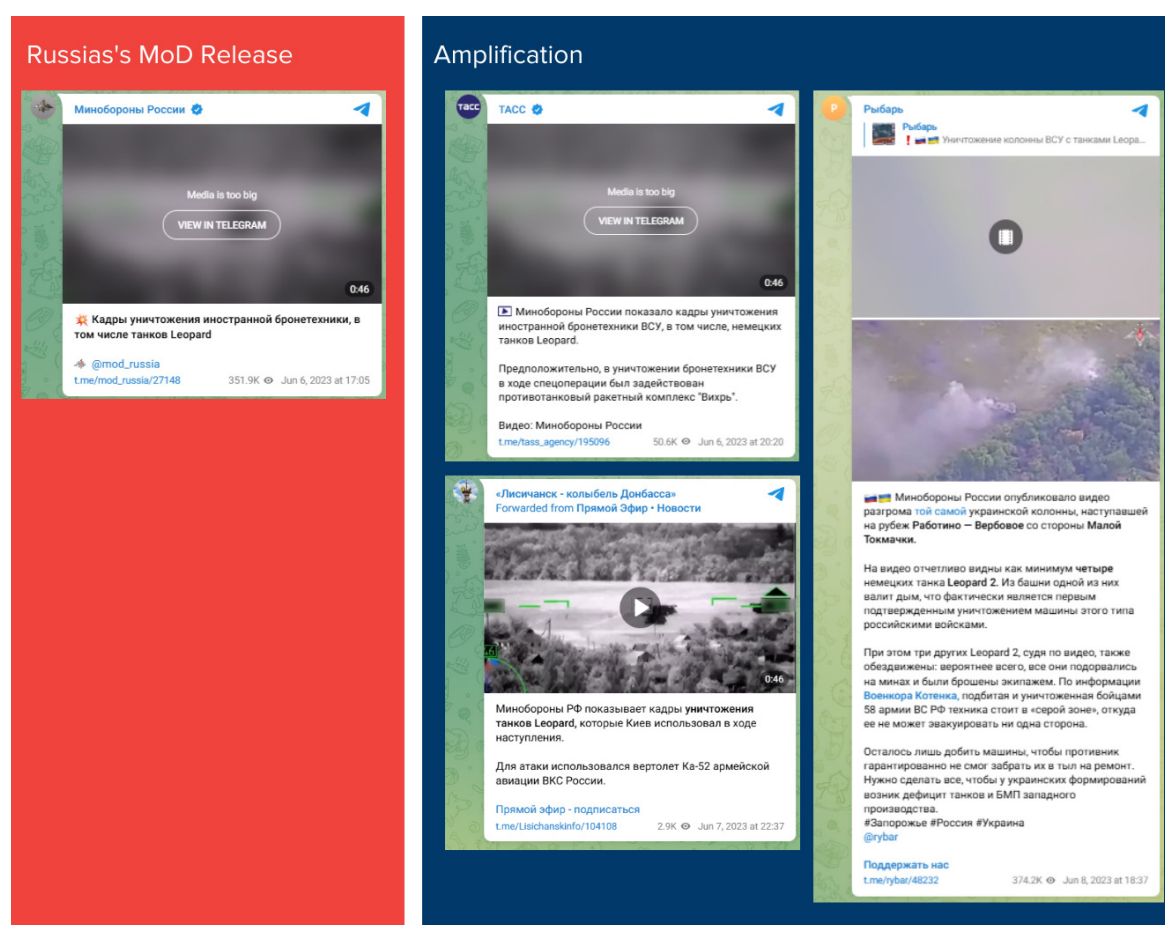


FIGURE 43. Posts amplifying the 6 June 2023 Russian MoD statement on destroyed Leopard tanks

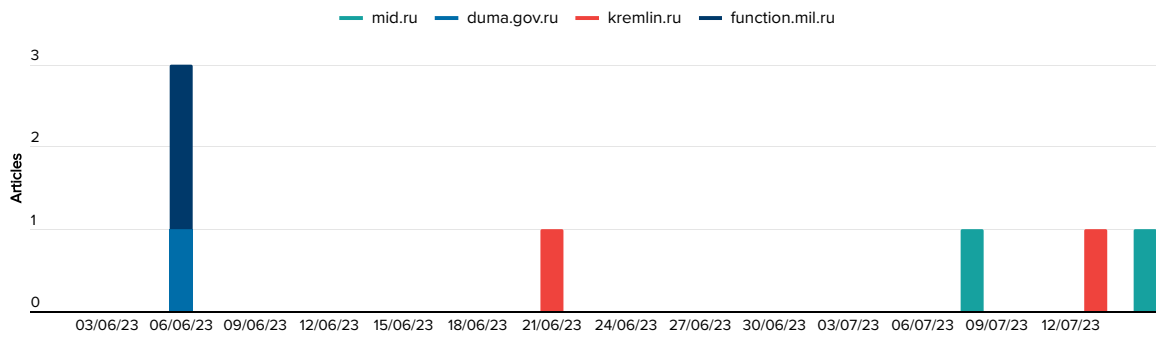


FIGURE 44. Articles on the destruction of Western armoured vehicles in Ukraine in the official communication

While the campaign on Telegram supplied many details and commentary, and the official communication was dry and laconic, the weekend TV programmes went back and forth between these two. It is important to note that the attention given by TV programmes to this subject was very mixed. An average length of designated type per programme was 8 min 36 seconds (shortest—33 seconds, longest—16 min 46 sec). Interestingly enough, the allocation of time to this topic by TV channels generally followed the pattern on Telegram, peaking in mid-June following the initial reports by the Russian MoD, particularly on *Voskresnoye Vremya* (Figure 45).

The TV coverage on the weekend of 4 June (before the release by the Russian MoD) generally focused on the destruction of Western equipment: ‘the destruction

of Western military equipment continues’ showing ‘a convoy of Ukrainian forces with an American anti-aircraft missile system.’³¹

On the weekend of 11 June (the first weekend after the beginning of the information campaign), *Vesti Nedeli* ran a segment of almost 14 minutes, presenting a compelling account of the toll on Western-supplied military hardware in Ukraine, particularly in the Zaporizhzhia region and surrounding battlefields. Echoing the narratives on Telegram (as well those voiced by Vyacheslav Volodin and posed on the Duma’s website) the TV coverage drew parallels to World War II: ‘German Leopard tanks are burning again in Zaporizhzhia, just like in the Great Patriotic War.’³² Echoing the official communications, the overall tone underscored Russian strategic preparedness and tactical success: ‘in Novo Donetsk, NATO armoured vehicles are

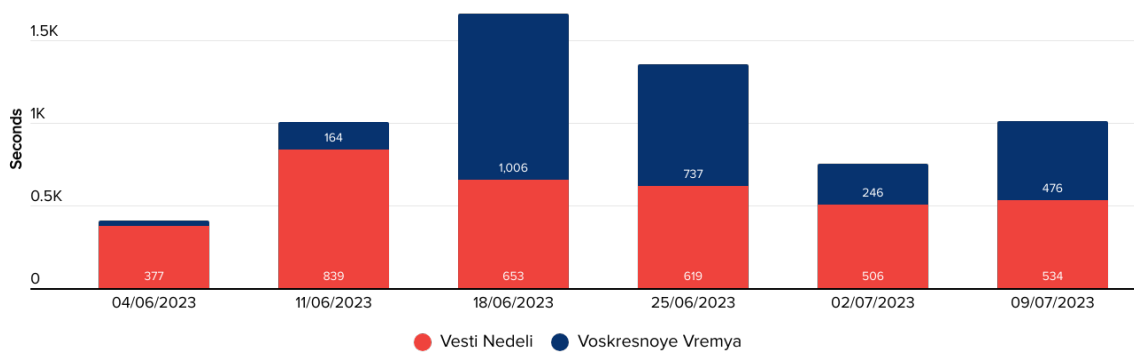


FIGURE 45. TV coverage of the destruction of Western armoured vehicles in Ukraine

burning. Russian drones and artillery destroyed over 30 units of enemy equipment, including Leopards and other Western-supplied armoured vehicles.³³ Interestingly enough, *Voskresnoye Vremya* ran a very short segment of less than 3 minutes, briefly mentioning that there were three Leopard tanks among large numbers of Ukrainian hardware destroyed by 'decisive and competent actions of the defending units.'

On the following weekend (18 June), the coverage of the topic peaked, when each of the programmes ran a segment devoted to the destruction of Leopard tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles (almost 7 minutes of designated time on *Vesti Nedeli* and a remarkable 17 minutes on *Voskresnoye Vremya*). Following the previous week's coverage that drew parallels to World War II, this week, in a seemingly orchestrated manner, both programmes connected the destruction of Leopard tanks to the narrative of 'denazification' (which was not emphasised either on Telegram or in the Official Communication). The host of *Voskresnoye Vremya* started the segment with a premise of 'how denazification expresses itself on the battlefield, as much-vaunted Leopards and Bradleys are blazing in flames'³⁴ In his opening statement, the host of *Vesti Nedeli* continued in the same vein: 'and now

about how denazification expresses itself on the battlefield, as vaunted Leopards and Bradleys are blazing in flames.'³⁵

The coverage on the weekend of 25 June shifted away from the main story of destroyed Leopards and Bradleys. *Voskresnoye Vremya* emphasised that, 'our troops have received special payments for destroying Western equipment; over 10,000 service members were rewarded,'³⁶ while *Vesti Nedeli* echoed the official communications, referring to general numbers of Ukrainian (allegedly) destroyed hardware: 'from 4 June 4 to 21 June, 246 tanks were reported destroyed, including 13 Western; alongside 500 armoured vehicles, including 59 Western; and 279 artillery pieces, including 48 Western.'³⁷

The coverage during the weeks of 2 and 9 July followed more or less the same pattern, moving off from the main event at the beginning of the month and aligning more and more with the line drawn by official communications. The coverage focused intensively on the general numbers of alleged Ukrainian losses: 'since the start of the counteroffensive, the enemy has lost 259 tanks and 780 armoured vehicles,'³⁸ or followed the sensational tones expressed on Telegram: 'this is what the much-vaunted Western equipment looks like.'³⁹

Case Study 3: *The International Army Games*

The Military dimension in the Official Communication dataset experienced two unusual spikes in the ‘*International military*

trainings/games’ cluster in August 2022 and August 2023 (Figure 46).

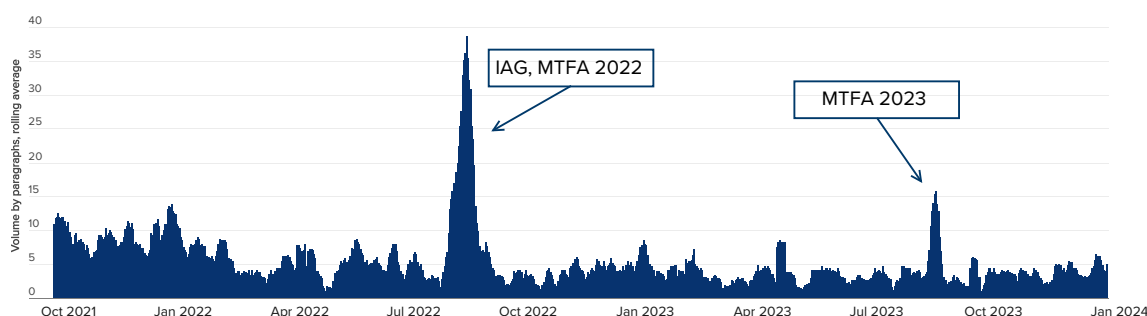


FIGURE 46. Major narrative-based clusters, the Military dimension in the official communication

Both spikes corresponded with the events organised by the Russian MoD. In 2022, it was the International Army Games 2022 (IAG 2022) and the International Military-Technical Forum Army 2022 (MTFA 2022). Despite the fact that both events had been running simultaneously since 2015 (the year of the first IAG), in April 2023 the Russian MoD decided to cancel IAG 2023, stating that the event would be held on a biennial basis. While no information was provided regarding the reasons behind the decision, it seems safe to assume that the Russian military commitment to the war effort disrupted the ability to stage the games.

The lack of the games in 2023 explains the relatively small scale of the spike of messages in the websites of the official communication in comparison to 2022—273 articles in 2022 vs only 114 articles in 2023. Since the case of IAG 2022 offers a better understanding of the dynamics of the Kremlin’s official communication in the military dimension, the following analysis focuses on the 2022 information campaign.

The International Army Games 2022 (IAG 2022) was the 8th iteration of the annual military competition event organised by the Russian Ministry of Defence. Held from 13 to 27 August 2022, this event brought together armed forces from various nations to compete in a wide range of military disciplines.

The IAG 2022 was co-hosted by 12 countries: Russia, Belarus, China, Iran, India, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Vietnam, Venezuela, and Mongolia. This decentralised format spread the events across different continents, with the host nations organising specific competitions within their territory. In total, over 30 countries participated. By hosting and participating in these games, these countries signalled their continued support for Russia’s global military ambitions. Moreover, the participation of countries such as India and Mongolia reflected the event’s appeal beyond Russia’s immediate circle of allies.

The IAG 2022 featured 34 individual competitions. These competitions ranged from tank biathlons to sniper contests, aviation challenges, and even military dog training. Some of the major events included:

- **International Military-Technical Forum Army 2022:** hosted by Russia, the event served as the main exhibition and conference platform.
- **Tank Biathlon:** hosted by Russia, often referred to as the “crown jewel” of the International Army Games, this competition involved tank teams navigating difficult terrain, crossing obstacles, and engaging targets with machine guns and cannons at different distances.
- **Aviadarts:** hosted by Russia, this military aviation competition evaluated the piloting skills of military aircrew in tasks such as air-to-ground attack, target bombing, and aerial navigation.
- **Sniper Frontier:** hosted by Kazakhstan, this competition tested the skills of sniper teams in various settings.
- **Safe Route:** hosted by Uzbekistan, this competition focused on engineering units’ ability to clear minefields, build bridges, and secure passageways for advancing ground forces.
- **Masters of Artillery Fire:** hosted by Kazakhstan, this competition tested the artillery units of participating nations on their ability to calculate fire missions, deploy heavy artillery, and deliver precise strikes against enemy targets.
- **Sea Cup:** hosted jointly by Russia and Iran in the Caspian Sea, this competition required ships and their crews to demonstrate precision, coordination, and quick decision-making in a variety of maritime tasks.

As an event orchestrated by the Russian MoD, it is not surprising that it was turned into an information campaign to promote the image of the Russian military and provide a platform for showcasing its technological capabilities. This campaign was on an unprecedented scale. Throughout August 2022, the MoD (function.mil.ru) published 270 articles covering the games (19% of all official communications in the military dimension across all analysed websites). Three additional articles were published by Russia’s Federal Council (council.gov.ru), covering the participation of the members of the Council in the International Military-Technical Forum Army 2022—Sergey Martynov and Galina Karelova on 15 August, and Margarita Pavlova on 22 August. Starting shortly before the official opening of the games on 13 August and ending a few days after their official closure on 27 August, the information campaign peaked on 19 August (Figure 46).

The main aim of this information campaign was to promote the image of Russian military strength, the Kremlin’s international standing and the continued support it receives from the international community.

While the articles published by MoD closely followed the events and the performance of Russia’s teams in different categories, the discussion on Telegram was quite different. Unlike the official communication, which focused more on the IAG 2022, channels on Telegram focused more on the International Military-Technical Forum (with the number of posts peaking on 15 August—the opening day of the Forum in Moscow).

Moreover, the attention given to this event on Telegram was hardly comparable to the scope of the information campaign conducted in the official communication. Only 750 posts mentioning the events were published on Telegram (368 of which were posts by Russia’s MoD and state-owned media). In other words, while it was a big information campaign for the MoD, the Telegram ecosystem hardly followed it (Figure 47).

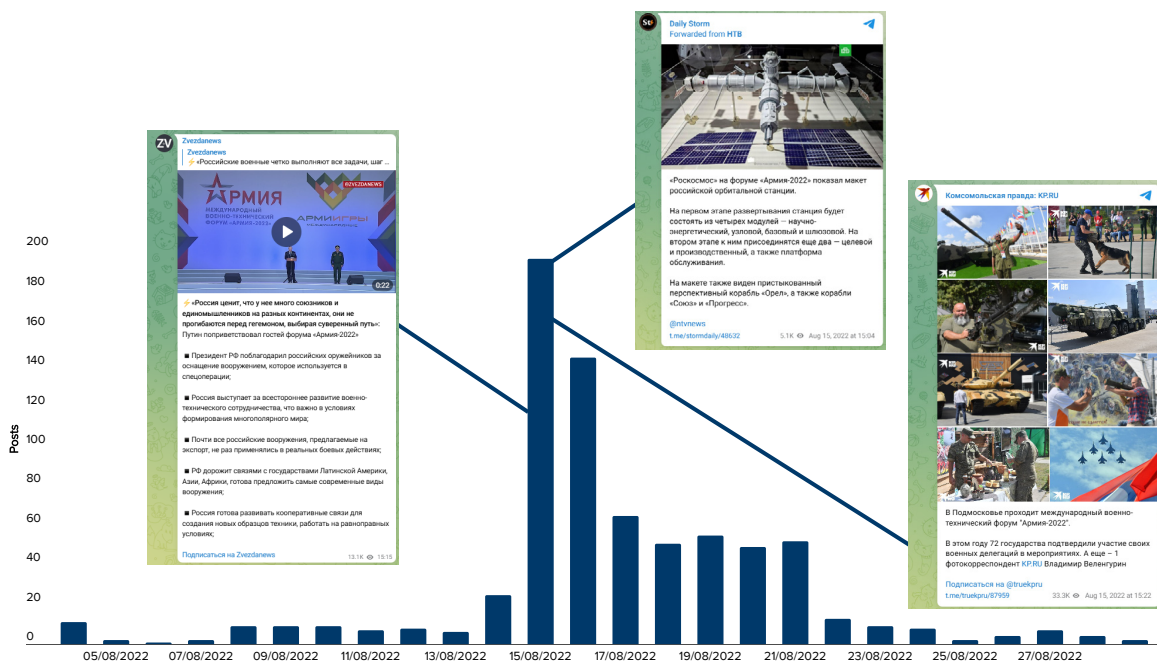


FIGURE 47. Mentioning of the International Army Games and associated activities on Telegram

The same conclusion can be applied to the weekend TV programmes. Similar to the coverage on Telegram, and unlike the official communication, the TV programmes focused more on the International Military-Technical Forum, designating significant time on the weekend of 21 August (Figure 48). The segments that covered the games themselves were quite general in nature, praising either the scale of the event ('The forum featured 28,000 pieces of weaponry and military equipment'),⁴⁰ or the performance of the Russian team ('The Russian team was the absolute winner with over forty awards, more than half of them gold').⁴¹ This lack of detailed coverage by weekend TV programmes can be explained by the fact that

this MoD-organised event was covered in detail on the MoD-run TV network, Zvezda.

This chapter analysed three different information campaigns orchestrated by the Kremlin in the military dimension—two campaigns conducted on Telegram and one through official communication channels. As demonstrated by data-driven evidence, there seems to be very little coordination between Telegram, the official communication and the weekend TV programmes, as there is no cross-platform correlation in coverage in any of the 3 cases. When real-life events in relations to the war in Ukraine ignite information operations on Telegram, they are not followed

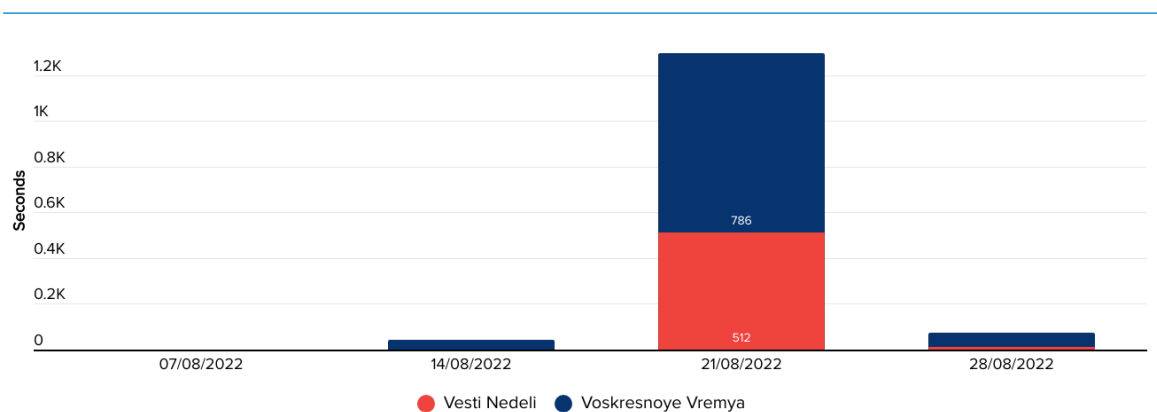


FIGURE 48. TV coverage of the International Army Games 2022

in the official communication, and vice versa—when information campaigns are conducted on official channels, they do not receive similar coverage on Telegram. The weekend TV programmes seem to mix and match between

the narratives on these two main platforms, following the general line dictated by the official communication and generally avoiding the detailed discussions on Telegram.

Chapter 3: Economic Dimension— Case Studies Analysis

After reviewing and labelling the thematic clusters generated by BERTopic for analysts at Debunk.org, focusing on the economic dimension and refined through a tailored keyword specification process, we identified the following prevailing conceptual and narrative topics during the reporting period:

■ Telegram:

- Western Financial Support to Ukraine
- Western Military Support
- Western Sanctions against Russian Industry Sectors

■ the Official Communication:

- Economy Planning and Development
- Development of Domestic Projects and Related International Cooperation

● Official Discourse on the State of the Russian Economy

To qualitatively analyse irregularities in communication volume within the datasets of Telegram channels and the six official government/regulatory institution websites, we selected a case study from each. We then conducted a comparative analysis across three communication channels—social media platforms, official statements, and two monitored TV programmes—to identify any discernible correlations in their coverage of the subject. On Telegram, the cluster entitled ‘*Western Military Support*’ was the most distinctive when it comes to forming irregular peaks of data flow (Figure 49). We looked at how it unfolded from 15 January 15 to 28 February 2023.

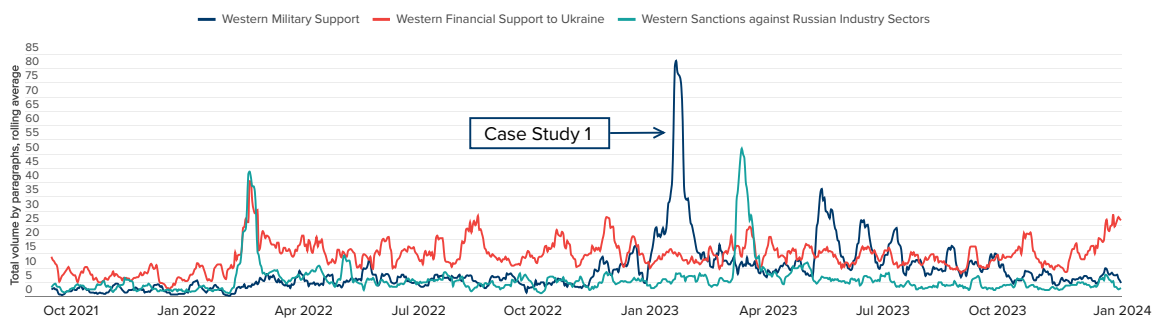


FIGURE 49. Major narrative-based clusters, the Economic dimension on Telegram

With regards to the Official Communication dataset, we investigated the major spike in the dominant topic ‘*Economy*

planning and development’ cluster from 31 August to 28 September 2023 (Figure 50).

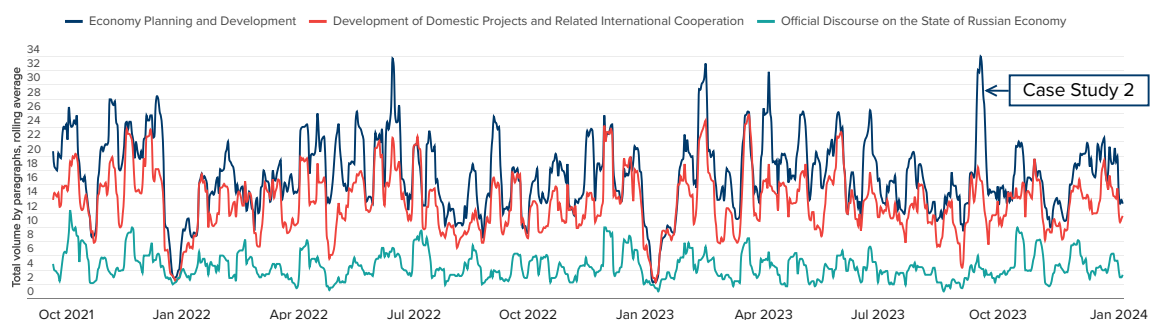


FIGURE 50. Major narrative-based clusters, the Economic dimension in the official communication

Case Study 1: *Military Support to Ukraine*

The thematic cluster we identified as *‘Military Support to Ukraine’* emerged as the most prominent in terms of communication volume within our Telegram-based dataset on the economic dimension (Figure 51). This peak closely followed a surge of the cluster *‘Western Equipment for/in Ukraine’* in the military dimension, discussed in the previous chapter. To identify and emphasise content relevant to the economic dimension alongside its military counterpart, thereby enriching the

analysis, Debunk.org analysts conducted an additional/supplementary targeted search using specific keyword combinations. Terms denoting military equipment and its delivery were linked to keywords related to aid and financial expressions, such as [‘помощь’, ‘пакет’, ‘поставка’, ‘накачивать’] and [‘миллион’, ‘миллиард’, ‘млн’, ‘млрд’]. This method sought to uncover and contextualise economic narratives that both complemented and paralleled the discourse within the military dimension.

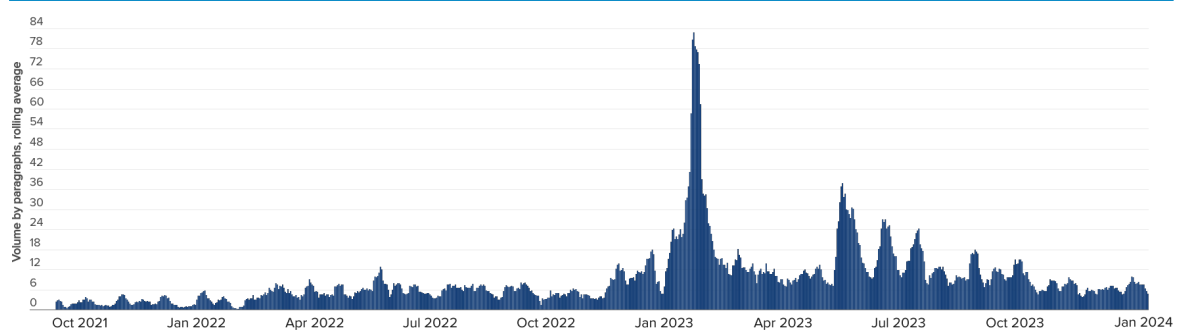


FIGURE 51. Western Military Support cluster over time, the economic dimension on Telegram

On Telegram, posts referencing the economic scale of Western military assistance to Ukraine displayed a mix of purely informative content and opinionated commentary. The former category simply reflected real-life events, such as the US \$2.5 billion security assistance package announced on 19 January 2023, Finland’s \$434 million aid package on 20 January, the \$2 billion in USAI funds announced on 24 February 2023, Canada’s \$32 million pledge on the invasion’s anniversary etc. Meanwhile, the latter posts went beyond informative reporting and actively framed or commented on these developments. These discussions revolved around recurring themes, such as:

- *US profit from the conflict*: emphasising narratives about the US leveraging the war in Ukraine for economic and strategic gains, including profits from arms sales.

- *EU detriment*: highlighting how military support to Ukraine strains the European Union economically and politically, potentially harming its unity and stability.
- *Western societal divisions*: suggesting significant discord among Western societies and political actors regarding the extent and continuation of military aid to Ukraine.
- *Corruption allegations*: amplifying claims of widespread misappropriation of funds and corruption in Ukraine, casting doubt on the efficacy and accountability of the support provided.
- *Global ripple effects*: focusing on the adverse impacts of military aid on non-combatant countries, such as energy crises and economic pressures linked to the war and associated policies.

- *Russia vs. the West/NATO—preparing for a protracted war: emphasising claims of Russia standing alone against overwhelming Western aggression and dominance;*
- *Challenges in Western military support: critiquing the delivery and reliability of Western aid to Ukraine, highlighting delays, instability, outdatedness and unfulfilled promises.*

Since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine, the Kremlin has used US military aid to Ukraine as a rhetorical tool to claim that the US benefits from the war, arguing that large-scale military aid packages serve as evidence of the US leveraging the war to sustain and expand its defence industry, which profits from prolonged military conflicts. It has been claimed that the US not only arms Ukraine to weaken Russia strategically, but also ensures lucrative contracts for American defence manufacturers (Figure 52). Such claims by the Telegram channel Readovka were bolstered by references to arms sales and production boosts among major US defence companies, including Lockheed Martin and Raytheon,

which have seen increased demand for weapons like HIMARS and Patriot missile systems:

‘The conflict in Ukraine has beneficiaries both among big capital and within the political elite—often, the two overlap through non-public agreements. US military supplies to Kyiv have been ongoing for almost a year, increasingly featuring modern types of weapons, which means new government contracts are being signed with defence contractors. The dynamics of stock prices for these companies directly reflect the gains in the pockets of investors.’⁴²

In a similar vein, Voyennaya Khronika and other channels claimed that in just the last three months of 2022, the shares of military companies sponsoring the reception hosted by the Ukrainian Embassy in the US to mark the 31st anniversary of the founding of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in December that year had risen above 15%.⁴³

In the meantime, a post from 24 January 2023, on Solovyov’s channel claimed



FIGURE 52. Framing of Western military aid as war profiteering

that Ukraine was financially draining the US with billions of dollars being ‘literally burned’ in Ukraine, with reference to the record US national debt reinforcing the narrative of financial strain:

‘Ukraine drains America: The US has announced a new military aid package of \$2.5bn to the Kyiv regime. Meanwhile, the US national debt has reached a record high of \$31.4 trillion. US politicians are outraged that billions of taxpayers’ dollars are literally being burned in Ukraine.’⁴⁴

While these narratives may seem contradictory, they could serve to create a fragmented and polarising discourse, allowing the Kremlin to adapt its messaging to various audiences, both domestic and international. The US benefiting motif may appeal to critics of US foreign policy by emphasising the profit of defence contractors and political elites. Meanwhile, the ‘America is being drained’ rhetoric may be targeting ordinary American taxpayers frustrated with government spending on foreign conflicts or Russian domestic audiences to denigrate the US as a superpower and juxtapose ‘united Russia’ with ‘disunited America’. In addition,

there was a revival of an old Soviet narrative that ‘the US is a country where billionaires profit while ordinary taxpayers suffer’, which was transferred onto Ukraine:

‘The ingenuity of Ukrainian officials in begging for subsidies from the West and appropriating them would put any fraudster to shame. The BBC has already published information about how the financial standing of Ukraine’s elite has increased. (...) And we, dear subscribers, don’t need to be told that the main and incurable weakness of Ukraine’s rulers is counting other people’s money and rummaging through others’ pockets while simultaneously portraying themselves as both victims and heroes.’⁴⁵

Thus, it was claimed, the soldiers of the Ukrainian armed forces began receiving money in ‘certificates with redemption in February 2026. And it’s nobody’s business whether a soldier lives or not up to this date: after all, he is just a unit in the statistics of casualties, allowing to save money and cut budgets.’⁴⁶

Zelensky, meanwhile, was attacked for allegedly appropriating the aid delivered



FIGURE 53. Framing of Ukrainian elites as corrupt and misusing Western aid

to Ukraine, suggesting that while his country suffers (Figure 53):

*'Watching the Kyiv clown's tour through London, Paris, and Brussels, one is truly surprised only by how much the 'mini-dictator Ze' has literally fattened up during the fight against 'Russian aggression.' So that's where all the endless 'pennies of economic aid' go!'*⁴⁷

As far as the rhetoric of European detriment is concerned, some posts suggested that Europe is arming Ukraine at the expense of its own security, portraying Germany's military as 'hole-ridden' (referring to alleged shortcomings in its own defence capabilities) and mocking the attempts to cover the costs of the military aid to Ukraine through various mechanisms such as funds, military exchanges, or contributions to collective EU programmes like the European Peace Facility (EPF), (Figure 54)⁴⁸. European nations were criticised for allegedly capitulating to Washington's demands to finance and arm what Kremlin-aligned sources

described as 'Kyiv's thieves,' despite opposition from their own citizens⁴⁹. Denis Pushilin, the self-proclaimed head of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic, used his Telegram platform to claim that the US was intentionally engineering European decline. He argued that Europe's political 'degeneration' had precipitated the erosion of its economy and living standards. Pushilin suggested that this decline was sparking unrest across the continent, particularly in countries leading military support for Ukraine. He described the unrest as an inevitable consequence of governments prioritising external commitments—military support to Ukraine—over domestic interests:

*'It is not at all coincidental that widespread unrest has broken out in the countries of Europe, which are at the forefront of US support for military assistance to Ukraine. (...) the authorities, which surrender the interests of the people of their countries, inevitably get the growth of internal problems, which is what we are witnessing.'*⁵⁰

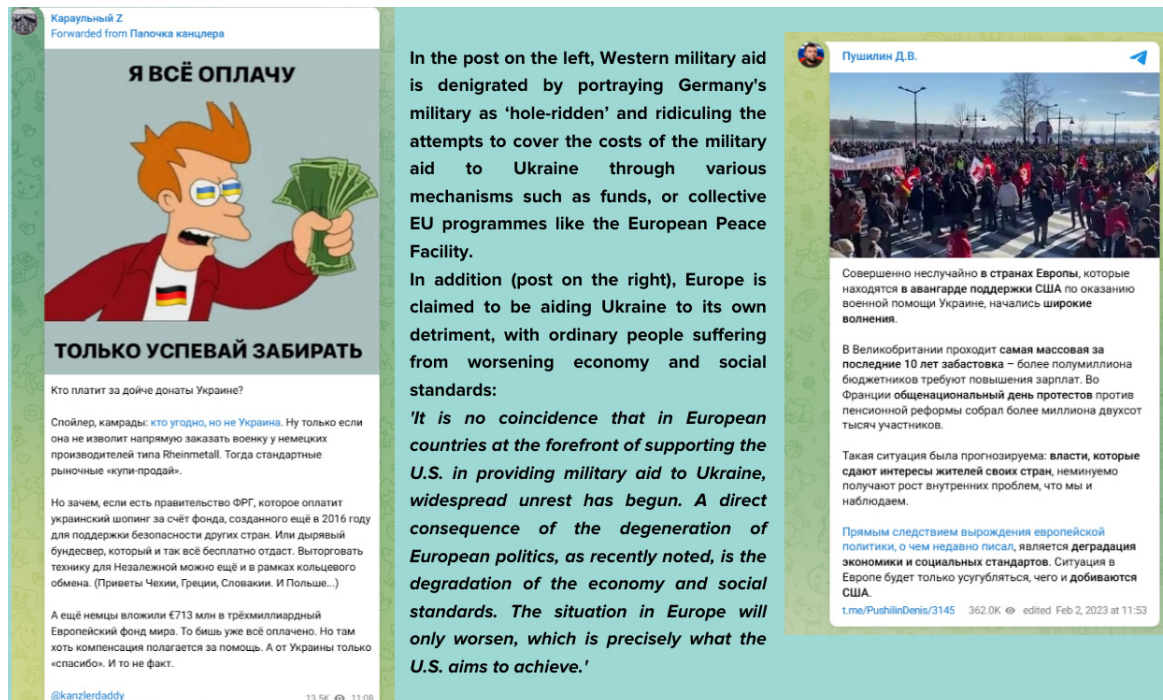


FIGURE 54. Framing of European support for Ukraine as futile and harmful

The rhetoric reinforced a common Kremlin narrative, framing the West as fragmented and manipulated by US interests, while portraying European support for Ukraine as not only futile, but also harmful to their societies.

The Telegram channels eagerly highlighted signs of discord among Ukraine's Western allies, often portraying the US and Germany as emblematic of 'war fatigue' and dissatisfaction over the mounting costs of military aid to Ukraine. US Republican Matt Gaetz and ten co-signing congressmen were reported to have urged President Biden to halt the allocation of billions in taxpayer dollars to Ukraine, claiming that American arms supplies 'unintentionally' escalated civilian casualties and prolonged the conflict⁵¹. Similarly, German MP Petr Bystron from the far-right populist party AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) was cited as he opposed transferring German tanks to Ukraine by invoking historical trauma:

*'Your grandfathers already tried to do this, and what was the result? Unspeakable suffering, millions of deaths on both sides, and eventually Russian tanks here in Berlin.'*⁵²

These narratives were intended not only to amplify internal disagreements but also frame Western support as both morally questionable and strategically unsustainable,

reinforcing a broader Kremlin message that the West is divided and weary of the conflict.

The Telegram channel *Kremlevskaya Prachka* ('Kremlin Laundress'), reportedly managed by former Federal Security Service (FSB) Colonel Mikhail Polyakov, displayed some of the most fervent rhetoric on the subject. Polyakov is believed to have overseen a network of pro-Kremlin Telegram channels in coordination with Sergey Kiriyyenko, the First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration. He was also collaborating with Alexey Goreslavsky, head of the Institute for Internet Development and a former leader of ANO Dialog⁵³, a Kremlin proxy, which was tasked with ensuring that government-dictated narratives reach the required number of viewers across Russia⁵⁴. The latter's influence extends to the Telegram channel *Readovka* (it gets instructions directly from ANO Dialog⁵⁵), ranking among the top disseminators of narratives about Western military assistance to Ukraine. Posts from *Kremlevskaya Prachka* are further amplified by prominent outlets like the highly-subscribed *Solovyov* Telegram channel, enabling content to achieve exponential reach. Overall, the top five channels that garnered the highest number of views through their posts on the theme included *Readovka*, СОЛОВЬЁВ, РИА Новости, Резидент and Кремлёвская прачка (in ascending order, see Figure 55 for more details).

Date	Channel	Quotes	Total views
3 Feb	Дмитрий Медведев	'The Kiev camarilla is not embarrassed to ruin the country. It continues to squander its territory with exorbitant military expenditures. On the assumption that the West will always give them money. It will not let all treasury thieves, who share the Western dough, to starve (...) Only the longer the leaders of Ukrainian Nazis will beg and steal help from their donors, the closer is the final collapse of the economy. After all, they will have to pay for the course of treatment in full. And the goal of Western doctors is not at all to cure the economy of the unfortunate country. The West has a long experience of killing the subject countries. The West is not the good Doctor Aybolit, but Doctor Mengele. It is a sinister doctor-killer. Therefore, Ukraine will face the sad fate of those colonies that were once raped in the most perverted form, and then thrown to die on the rotting dump of history.'	2,300,000

Date	Channel	Quotes	Total views
24 Feb	Мир сегодня с "Юрий Подоляка"	'In this format, the delivery of aid could take much longer. It also suggests that the U.S. either only has its reserve stock of ammunition left or is close to that. Or, it could mean that the war with China is near, and something must be kept for Taiwan.'	1,800,000
16 Jan	Kadyrov_95	'As I have said many times before, the West and Europe are supplying Ukraine with old, decommissioned equipment that does not pose a significant threat to our military. Russia is a great nuclear power that can easily oppose NATO and even the entire world.'	1,000,000
2 Feb	Readovka	'The conflict in Ukraine has beneficiaries both among big capital and within the political elite—often, the two overlap through undisclosed agreements. (...) On January 31, it was reported that Lockheed Martin and Rheinmetall are discussing the joint production of HIMARS MLRS on German territory. This indicates that the monster of the Western military-industrial complex will continue to expand, along with the wealth of Western beneficiaries.'	986,800
4 Feb	Объясняет Readovka	'New 'gifts' from Grandpa Joe — EW systems, air defense, armored vehicles, and long-range missiles, but no tanks. Interestingly, there's no place for Abrams tanks in the PDA program, which are not currently being produced but are available in large quantities in storage bases. They're also absent from the USAI program. Either their time hasn't come yet, or the whole 'Abrams' announcement is purely a political move.'	976,500

FIGURE 55. Most viewed posts in the Western Military Support cluster, 15 January–28 February 2023

In the Official Communication, the timing and frequency of messages related to the economic scale of Western military aid to Ukraine were not as tightly aligned with the specific events (such as military aid announcements) as on Telegram (Figure 56). A total of 16 articles were categorised as referring to economic aspects of Western military support to Ukraine during the same period. The arms delivery and related announcements were mentioned in speeches by Russian diplomats during meetings of international organisations, as well as during regular briefings held by Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, particularly within the scope of her Q&A sessions.

On the other hand, the issue of arms supplies—presented as a long-standing narrative of the West ‘pumping’ Ukraine with military aid—was highlighted as part of a co-ordinated campaign by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This campaign utilised Russian ambassadors to counter information related

to the first anniversary of the full-scale war against Ukraine. The anniversary was tied to increased support from Western nations to Kyiv, a subject explored further in the ‘Foreign Policy Dimension’ chapter of this research.

In one of the articles, the MFA spokeswoman commented on whether peace negotiations were possible at the time, when Ukraine Defense Contact Group was meeting at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on 20 January 2023. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky was allegedly ‘demanding the West to provide heavy weaponry’ to the country, which ‘effectively meant the increasingly intensive involvement of Western countries in the conflict with Russia and Ukraine’s growing loss of independence.’⁵⁶

Zakharova addressed the \$2.5 billion in US aid, European pledges to expand arms supplies, and the training of Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel to operate Western-supplied howitzers and tanks, describing these actions

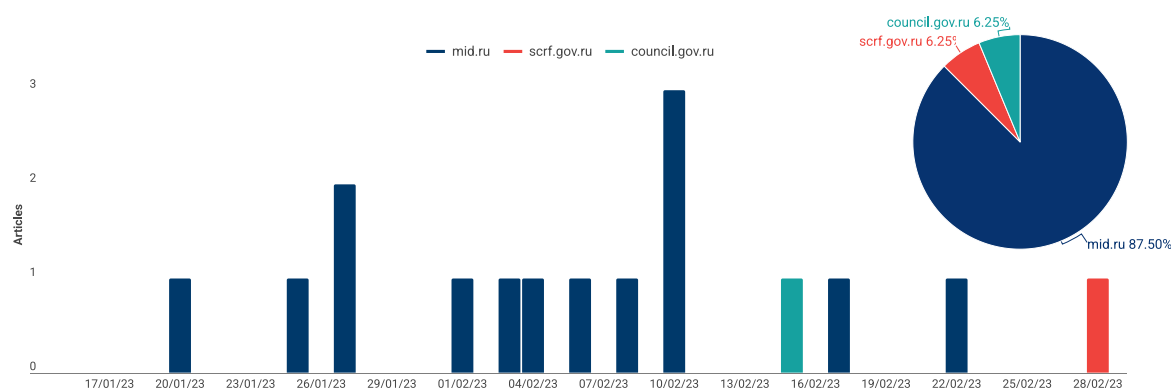


FIGURE 56. Daily dynamics of the Western Military Support by sources in the official communication

as blatant provocations by the West aimed at escalating the conflict. She claimed such measures would inevitably result in higher casualties and dangerous escalations, accusing the 'collective West' of indifference toward civilians affected by alleged Ukrainian military strikes on non-combatant targets, including schools and hospitals.

Zakharova's rhetoric exemplified persistent Kremlin narratives, emphasising the supposed recklessness of Ukraine's Western allies and the 'Kyiv regime.' Her argument reinforced the official framing of Russia's invasion as a necessary operation to achieve 'denazification,' 'demilitarisation,' and the elimination of perceived threats from Ukraine.

'This once again demonstrates that it is the delusional 'war party,' which has lost its sense of reality, that is setting the tone and determining the policy of the Kyiv regime today. Under such conditions, there can be no question of negotiations with Ukraine. The facts presented show that the objectives outlined in the framework of the special military operation—denazification, demilitarisation of the current Kyiv regime, and the elimination of serious threats to the security of our country and its citizens originating from Ukrainian territory—remain relevant and will undoubtedly be fulfilled.'

Echoing this narrative, Maksim Buyakevich, Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the OSCE, criticised NATO's involvement, claiming that Western interference had fuelled the escalation. His invocation of Putin's remark, "Why would we need a world without Russia?" suggested Russia's determination to combat perceived existential threats to its sovereignty.⁵⁷

On 28 February 2023, the Russian Security Council published on its official website an interview given by its Deputy Chairman, Dmitry Medvedev, to the National Defense magazine, titled 'The Year of Defending the Homeland'. It included elements of war merging—outlining the parallels between the Great Patriotic War and the so-called 'special military operation', nuclear blackmail and references to the US aid of almost \$30 billion, all of which seems to have been designed to reinforce the narrative of a 'besieged fortress Russia' that never gives up:

*'Once again, we are confronted by almost an entire empire of various enemies: Ukrainian and European neo-fascists, the United States, other Anglo-Saxons and their vassals (about fifty countries). They have set themselves the goal of strangling and wiping our country off the face of the earth. It will not work. We are stronger, and now this is also obvious.'*⁵⁸



FIGURE 57. TV coverage of the Military Support to Ukraine

Regarding to the two television programmes monitored for the research, the highest volume of coverage on the economy-related aspects of Western military support to Ukraine occurred in the episodes that aired on 15 January and 22 January 2023, and on 12 February 2023. *Vesti Nedeli* was more focused on the theme in the first half of the period, whilst *Voskresnoye Vremya* took the lead in the second half (Figure 57).

In the episode on 15 January, *Vesti Nedeli* portrayed Ukraine's military and economic survival as heavily reliant on Western—especially US—aid. The logistical details of military shipments, including tanks like the Abrams and systems like Patriot air defence, were outlined to underscore the scale of US involvement, also suggesting that influential figures in Washington were unified in opposing peace talks. The nearly \$25 billion allocated to Ukraine and recurring announcements of new aid packages were mocked: the proposal by a US congressman to place a bust of President Zelenskyy in the Capitol was framed as a representation of wasted money and symbolic of misplaced priorities. Meanwhile, Ukrainian elites were accused of wasting money on lavish parties in Courchevel, France, a symbol

of opulence, drinking champagne under the national flag.⁵⁹ *Voskresnoye Vremya* devoted significant attention to the economic impact on EU countries, particularly Germany, contrasting it with alleged US gains from European investments drawn by lower energy costs and subsidies. It highlighted protests in Germany, Hungary's criticism of sanctions, and Europe's deepening industrial struggles, framing EU actions as self-destructive⁶⁰.

In the episode from 22 January 2023, *Vesti Nedeli* berated Ukraine's 'persistent demands' of military aid from its allies, highlighted Western divisions, and questioned the broader impact of sanctions and military aid policies. It was said that, despite significant January aid packages, including US weapons worth \$5.5 billion and EU contributions of €3 billion, Kyiv insisted it was insufficient⁶¹. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was blamed for pushing for a 10th sanctions package and unrestricted military aid for Ukraine, prioritising ideology over economic consequence, as an increasing number of 'rational politicians' were voicing concern that the sanctions harm Europe's economy more than Russia's. *Voskresnoye Vremya* underscored the Western divisions over military aid (for instance,

debates in Germany over supplying Leopard tanks) while Russia maintained its strategic focus. The impression was strengthened by contrasting struggling Western nations with Putin's visit to the Obukhov Plant in St. Petersburg, a historic defence manufacturer, claimed to produce advanced weaponry such as Kalibr missiles and air defence systems. Highlighting Russia's missile production outpacing global counterparts, Putin expressed confidence in the country's defence capabilities.⁶²

Kremlin-aligned media often amplifies statements by Western figures, particularly those critical of US policies, to legitimise their own narratives. By quoting Donald Trump Jr. about alleged discrepancies in US spending on Ukraine, *Voskresnoye Vremya* highlighted supposed financial mismanagement of American aid programmes, reinforcing a broader Kremlin narrative about the self-serving or chaotic nature of Western governments, portraying their aid to Ukraine as reckless or detrimental to their citizens. In addition, the programme often resorted to quoting former Fox News primetime host, Tucker Carlson, as it needed a rhetoric that would align with a broader theme that portrayed Western involvement in Ukraine as self-serving, profit-driven, and indifferent to Ukrainian suffering. In the *Voskresnoye Vremya* episode of 29 January, Carlson accused the Biden administration of prolonging the conflict in Ukraine instead of pursuing peace, suggesting that this decision is deliberate and driven by ulterior motives. It

was claimed that Western corporations, such as BlackRock and Goldman Sachs, viewed Ukraine's post-conflict reconstruction as a lucrative business opportunity.

In mid-February, *Voskresnoye Vremya* leveraged Western military aid to Ukraine as a justification for ongoing Russian strikes, stating: 'Achieving the special operation's objectives requires disrupting Western supply chains to Ukrainian forces, disabling their repair and production capabilities, and depleting ammunition stocks through precise strikes.'⁶³

Comparing the two shows, *Vesti Nedeli* interwove more historical parallels into its framing of the Russian war against Ukraine, critiquing Western interventionism and colonialism. One programme marked the 50th anniversary of the US defeat in Vietnam, presenting it as a humiliating episode shaped by loss and atrocities, while accusing the US of repeating similar mistakes in Ukraine. It highlighted Western arms supplies, including Abrams and Leopard tanks, as exacerbating tensions with Russia and compared this to past policy failures. Growing domestic scepticism in the US about global interventions was also underscored. The programme also covered colonial racism, referencing historical 'human zoos' and figures like Sarah Baartman. It criticised Western narratives of progress, linking past exploitation to contemporary claims of moral superiority amid the invasion of Ukraine.⁶⁴

Case Study 2: *Economy Planning and Development*

‘Economy planning and development’ emerged as the most pronounced narrative-based cluster in the dataset of official communications for Economic dimension, as identified by BERTopic. Throughout the research period, the highest communication volume occurred in autumn 2023, with a notable rise starting on 31 August, peaking in mid-September, and declining by 28 September (Figure 58).

Analysis revealed three major events driving this spike:

- the 8th Eastern Economic Forum (10–13 September)
- the 8th Caspian Media Forum (18–19 September)
- the 551st Federation Council Meeting (25 September).

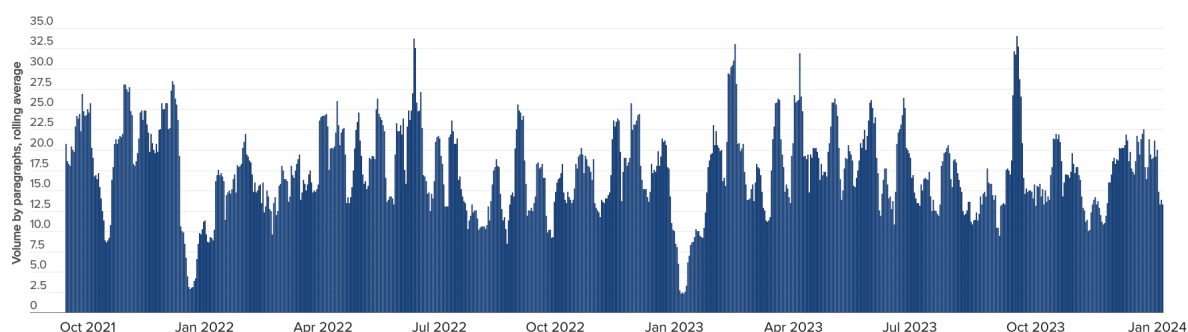


FIGURE 58. Economy Planning and Development cluster over time, the Economic dimension in the official communication

Domestically, the Eastern Economic Forum is framed as a mechanism to enhance regional infrastructure and investment opportunities in the Russian Far East, a historically underdeveloped area. Internationally, it is meant to serve as a platform to attract foreign direct investments and signal Russia’s openness to global collaboration in areas such as energy, technology, and trade. Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the Forum has taken on added importance as a platform to counter Western sanctions, showcasing economic resilience, fostering non-Western alliances, and promoting a narrative of strategic independence and self-reliance.

Meanwhile, the 551st Federation Council meeting on 25 September 2023, was a part of the autumn session that focused on legislative reviews and policy discussions relevant

to federal and regional interests. It featured a presentation by Maksim Reshetnikov, the Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, which outlined the forecast for the socio-economic development of Russia for 2024 and the planned period of 2025 and 2026.

Officially aimed at developing socio-economic and humanitarian cooperation between the countries of the Caspian region, the Caspian Media Forum 2023, which took place from 18–19 September in Astrakhan, aimed at aligning regional perspectives with Russia’s strategic goals through public diplomacy and shared economic opportunities.

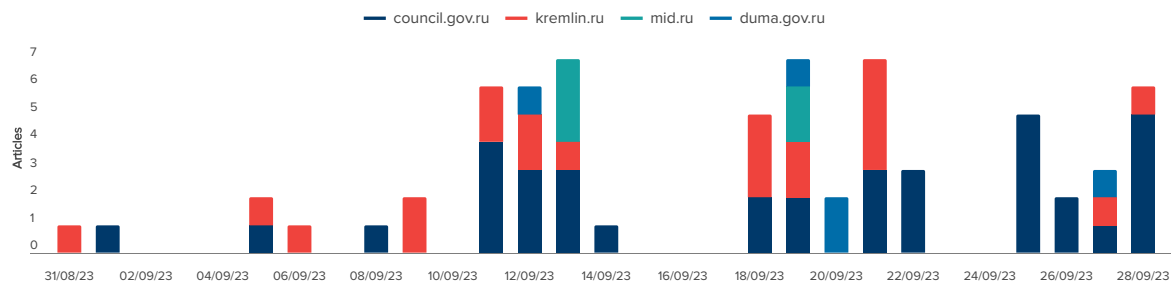


FIGURE 59. Daily dynamics of the cluster Economy Planning and Development in the official communication

Of the three events analysed through official Russian governmental and regulatory websites, the Eastern Economic Forum received the highest level of attention, accounting for 72% of mentions (Figure 60). It was featured by four out of six tracked sources, with mid.ru,

kremlin.ru, and council.gov.ru each contributing roughly a third of its overall mentions. In contrast, the 551st Council Meeting and the Caspian Media Forum were each highlighted by one source—the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Federation Council, respectively.

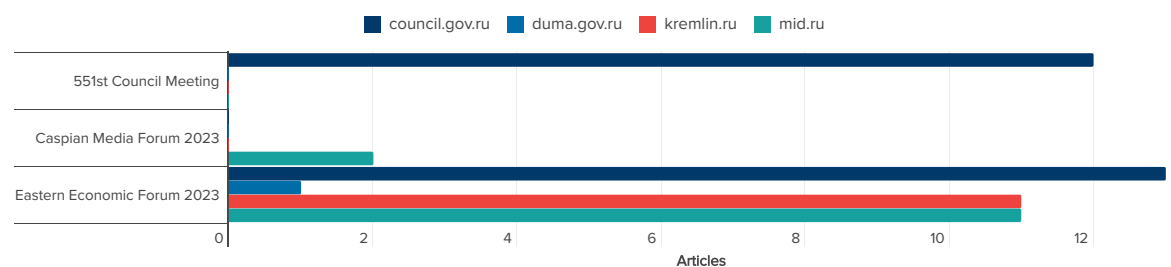


FIGURE 60. Mentions of selected events in the official communication

Articles published on council.gov.ru primarily detailed sessions involving individual senators, portraying optimism about Russia's problem-solving capabilities and future prospects. International experience was emphasised when discussing the financial incentives for promoting 'green technologies' in industry, claiming that '*almost all jurisdictions provide for special measures within the framework of resolving the issues of the "green agenda"*'⁶⁵. Regarding Special Administrative Regions (SARs), a Russian senator celebrated the ₮5 trillion asset growth in Russky Island's SAR, framing SARs as vital for attracting investment amid new geopolitical realities, saying: 'The topic of

discussion is becoming increasingly relevant. Special administrative regions are now not only a tool for moving from foreign jurisdictions, but also an important source of attracting investment in new geopolitical conditions.'⁶⁶

On the official website of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zakhárova's announcement of the forthcoming Eastern Economic Forum highlighted two key aspects of the event: its role as a collaborative platform for education and technology within the APEC framework and as a stage for promoting a counter-narrative to Western dominance. The mention of the panel 'Global Alternative

to Western Dominance: Contours of the Future' underscored the Kremlin's focus on positioning Russia as a leader in a multipolar world order, whereas by promising to involve high-level participants and 'an engaging discussion', Zakharova signalled the importance of the forum as a strategic tool in Russia's soft power agenda⁶⁷.

The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov used the forum as a stage to reinforce Russia's pivot to the East, highlighting its growing ties with Asia and the Global South in the face of Western sanctions. By framing the sanctions imposed on Russia since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine as failed attempts to 'punish' Russia, he emphasised a narrative of resilience and independence, suggesting that Russia is successfully replacing Western economic partnerships with stronger relationships in the East:

*'...the West decided to 'take a stand' and 'punish' Russia with sanctions because we would not tolerate, and could not tolerate, its designs to use Ukraine to undermine our security and eradicate everything Russian in the Ukrainian territories created and developed by Russian tsars, engineers, and military leaders. When the West imposed sanctions for the failure of its plans, the scale of our economic and foreign trade relations with the East began to surpass those with the West, which EU and NATO nations voluntarily forfeited. This trend is historic, objective, and will continue to strengthen.'*⁶⁸

Russian President Vladimir Putin used his speech at the Eastern Economic Forum to project a mood of financial calm, just weeks after the rouble's exchange rate exceeded 100 to the dollar.⁶⁹ 'That is to say that we remain in control of the situation, and I will not go into too much detail because this is quite a delicate topic. But overall, we have all it takes to mitigate these risks,' Putin reassured the audience.⁷⁰ His statements were meant for both domestic and international messaging, as he criticised

Ukraine and its Western allies by portraying Ukraine as entirely dependent on external support for defence and economic survival, painting a bleak picture of its future. This aligned with his narrative that Western nations, rather than pursuing peace, exploited Ukraine for geopolitical purposes while neglecting its long-term welfare:

'In the defence sphere, they need someone to provide cover for them; otherwise, they will fail. In the economic sphere, they need someone to send them funds, or else they will not be able to lift their economy. By the way, no one wants peace in Ukraine because, if the war comes to an end, they will have to answer to their people for the economic and social aspects, and there is not much to show.'

Putin's reference to making Russia 'even stronger in cooperation with our partners and friends and in integration with the overwhelming majority of countries that represent most of the world's population' aligned conceptually with the rhetoric surrounding the 'golden billion' used by officials representing the MFA, including Sergey Lavrov. The 'golden billion' narrative typically critiques Western nations as representing a small, privileged global minority exploiting resources at the expense of the rest of the world. Putin's words underscored Russia's effort to position itself as a leader of the 'global majority,' rallying support from non-Western nations against the alleged hegemony of the 'collective West.'

Meanwhile, the 551st Federation Council meeting was mentioned primarily in connection with two topics. First, the chamber's discussions on integrating Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, and Donetsk into Russia's socio-legal framework⁷¹ and declaring 30 September as their 'Reunion Day' with Russia.⁷² Second, Economic Development Minister Maxim Reshetnikov's remarks were quoted, forecasting sustained high inflation levels in Russia throughout 2024.⁷³

The top three Telegram channels that (re)posted content about the Council meeting

included two Kremlin-aligned information agencies (*RIA Novosti* and *Ura.ru*), as well as the channels of the Russian government. While the Caspian Media Forum was mentioned in several cases in the Official Communication (through speeches of Sergey Lavrov and his deputy at the event, published by the official website of the MFA), it was absent from the Telegram dataset. The Eastern Economic Forum, meanwhile, attracted more attention, yet it was also comparably low and, primarily, generated by either announcements of Putin's participation in the forum, or news on attendance and his quotes. The top three channels that posted about the forum included *Solovyov* (СОЛОВЬЁВ) and two major amplifiers discussed in Chapter 1—*Karaulny Z* (Караульный Z) and *Igors Kuzmiks* (Игорь Кузьмук). The post that garnered the highest number of views (around three million) and was reposted the most times was the one by State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin, known for his praises of Putin and rivalling Dmitry Medvedev in his vitriolic attacks on Ukrainian authorities and its supporters in the West. In 2023, the Telegram channel of Volodin ranked second after Medvedev's in terms of views per post on average in Russia,

at around 2.2 million.⁷⁴ In the post concerning the forum, Volodin alleged that Washington and Brussels were targeting Russia, as they were driven by 'powerless anger' over the loss of global leadership. Their measures, including confiscating personal items like 'cars, phones, and even shampoo' from Russian citizens in the EU, backfired:

*'These criminal measures against Russia proved ineffective. As President Vladimir Putin stated at the Eastern Economic Forum, Russia has already earned double the amount frozen by the West in its gold and foreign currency reserves. (...) Washington and Brussels planned to weaken and eventually divide our country, as American and European politicians have publicly stated multiple times. It didn't work. The trade war launched against Russia has been lost by them.'*⁷⁵

The post was also published on the official State Duma's website,⁷⁶ with a reference to Telegram (Figure 61). This approach might serve to reduce the perception of direct official

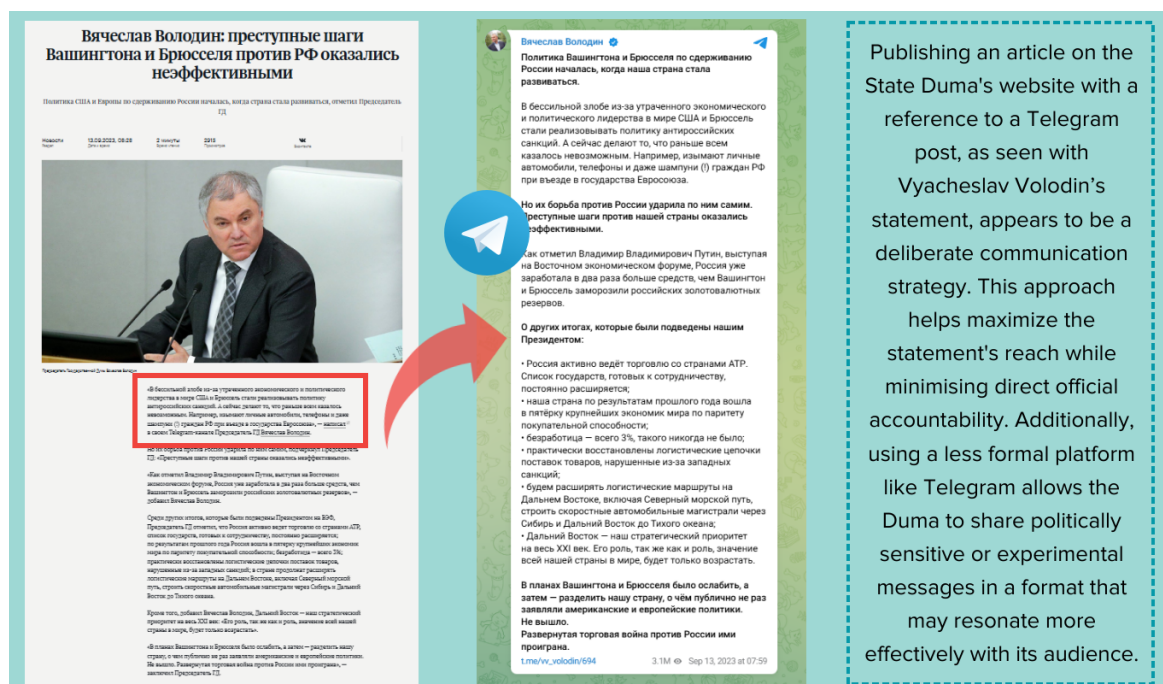


FIGURE 61. Blending official and informal channels to frame Western economic measures as ineffective and 'criminal'

accountability while maintaining the reach and significance of the statement. In addition, by linking to a less formal platform, it allowed the Duma to share politically charged or experimental messaging in a format that could resonate differently with its audience.

On the monitored TV programmes, the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) in Vladivostok was extensively covered in two episodes of *Voskresnoye Vremya* and one episode of *Vesti Nedeli* (Figure 62). On *Voskresnoye Vremya*, the forum's coverage was tailored to a broad audience and presented in a lighter format. For instance, the episode on 10 September framed the EEF alongside the G20 summit, emphasising the global attention both events received. The coverage also included reports on conservation efforts, such as the protection of Amur tigers, and noted how Western suppliers had ceased providing tracking collars, leading to a brief period when Russian-made alternatives—at a fraction of the cost—were used to continue tracking the tigers⁷⁷.

The episode on 17 September focused on Putin's speech and Q&A at the plenary session of the Eastern Economic Forum. The coverage emphasised that, while Western countries imposed sanctions on Russia, many from the US, UK, Japan, Germany, and France attended the event, suggesting a contradiction in their stance.⁷⁸ Additionally, it was highlighted that sanctions were allegedly driving the development of new enterprises in the Russian Far East, with the Amur oil refinery—supervised personally by Putin—as one of the main examples. Even though Western companies left the facility, the refinery was completed without them, successfully processing 42 billion cubic metres a year.

Vesti Nedeli, meanwhile, focused on the 'political results of the forum,' with Ukraine as one of the key issues. Putin was quoted commenting on 'Kyiv's desperate attempts to prove to Europe and America that it is not wasting their billions':

*'There are no results, of course. Let's refrain from calling it a failure or not a failure. There are no results. There have been significant losses. (...) And they want to achieve results at any cost, as they say. Sometimes it seems as if these are not even their own people that they are throwing into this counteroffensive; it is as if they are not their own people.'*⁷⁹

Putin was also quoted as saying that 'political persecution of Trump' showcased the 'rotteness of the American political system,' and hence the US had no right teaching others about democracy. Sino-Russian economic relations were juxtaposed with 'American imperialism' as those shaping the future of economic developments—a pivotal moment in global geopolitics.

This chapter analysed two different information campaigns orchestrated by the Kremlin in the economic dimension—one on Telegram and another through official communication websites. The collected data, as well as qualitative analyses, suggest very little overlap between Telegram, the Official Communication and the weekend TV programmes, as there is no cross-platform correlation in coverage in any of the cases. The case of financial support to Ukraine in January–February 2023, closely followed the characteristics of the information flows regarding the supplies of main battle tanks, discussed in Chapter 2. The case of '*Economy planning and development*' presented similar characteristics to the coverage of the 2022 International Army Games, when both Telegram and TV programmes didn't seem to follow the information campaign orchestrated by the Kremlin through official communications.

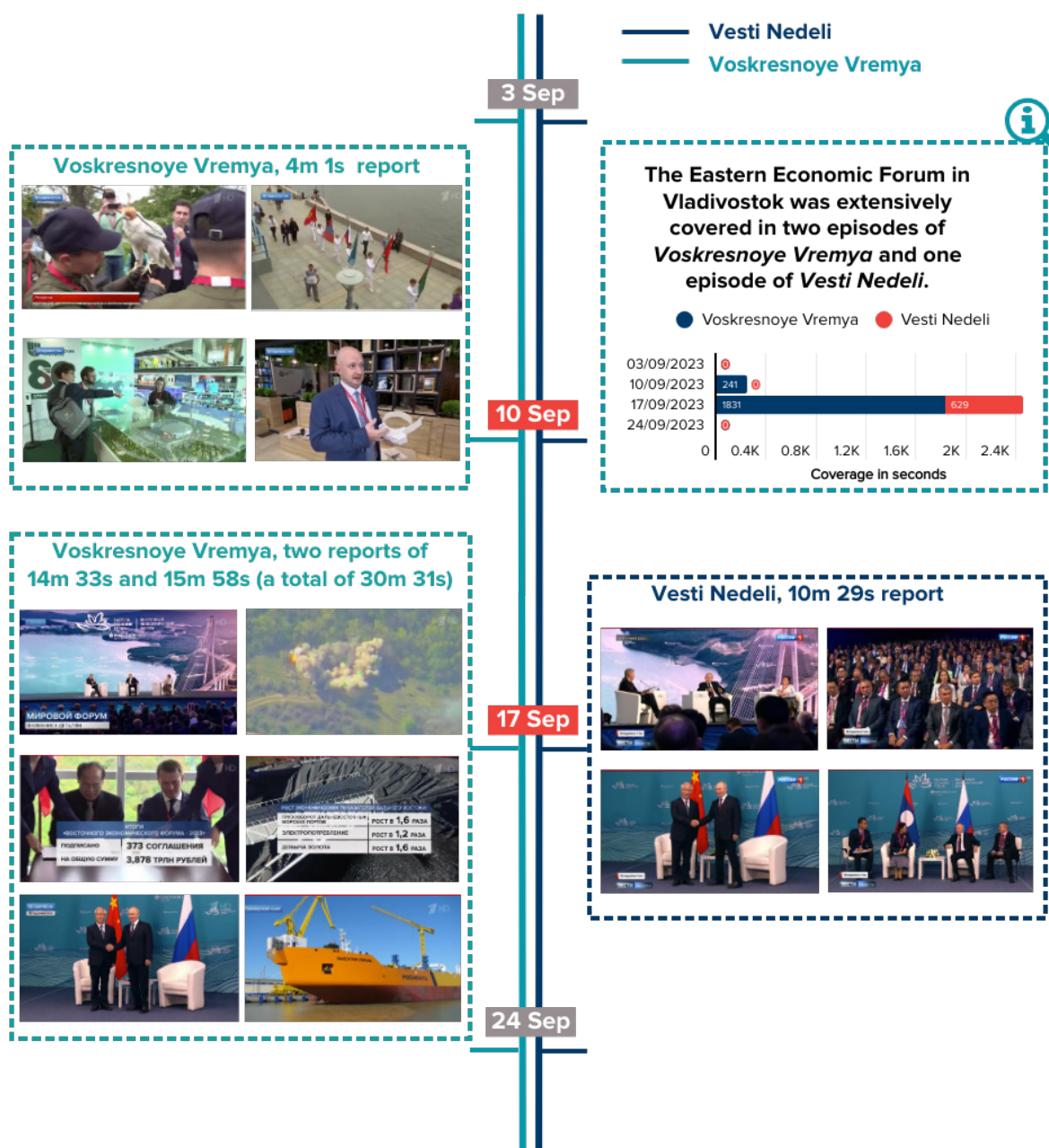


FIGURE 62. TV coverage of the Eastern Economic Forum, September 2023

Chapter 4: Foreign Policy Dimension—Case Studies Analysis

The top 10 labelled clusters within the foreign policy dimension datasets contained both thematic topics (conceptual/narrative, event-specific) and those of a media-referential nature (source-focused, e.g. *References to Western media*). For the purposes of this study, we focus on the former, hence the top three labelled clusters on Telegram and in the Official Communication line up in the following way:

■ Telegram:

- Western Military Support
- 'Denazification'
- Western Sanctions against Russian Industry Sectors

■ the Official Communication:

- Explaining the Russian 'Special Military Operation' in the International Arena
- Russia's Efforts to Sustain International Cooperation
- Development of (Bilateral) Relations

A case study for each of the datasets was chosen for qualitative analyses of irregularities in the volume of communication.

On Telegram, the cluster titled '*Western military support*' was the most distinctive when it came to forming irregular peaks of data flow. However, as the topic was already examined whilst discussing the military and economic dimensions, the thematic cluster '*Denazification*' was chosen for the analysis in this chapter (Figure 63).

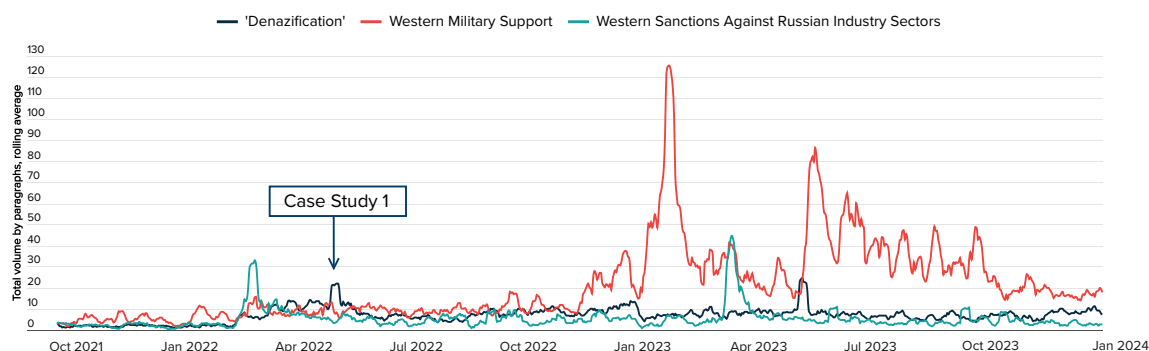


FIGURE 63. Major narrative-based clusters, the Foreign Policy dimension on Telegram

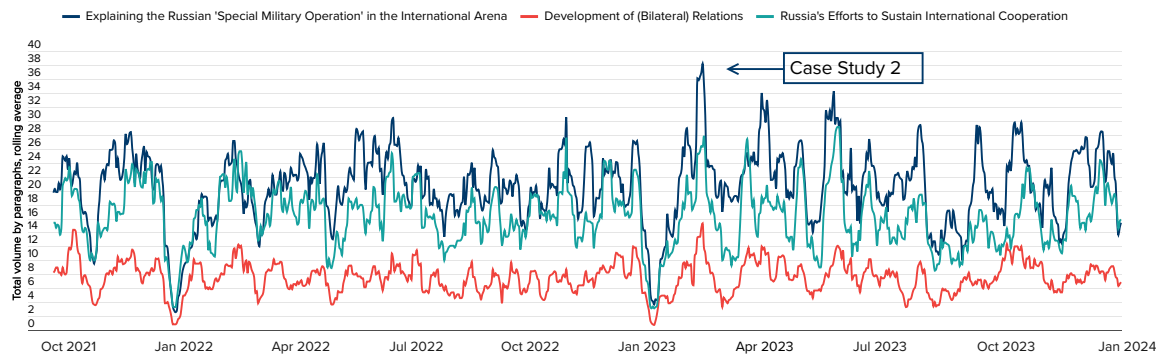


FIGURE 64. Major narrative-based clusters, the Foreign Policy dimension in the official communication

With regards to the Official Communication dataset, we investigate a major spike in '*Explaining the Russian 'special military operation' on the international arena*' cluster in February 2023 (Figure 64).

Similar to the previous chapters, a comparative analysis across all three communication platforms (the Telegram channels, the official communication and the TV programmes) is conducted to investigate how real-life developments in each case study were covered.

Case Study 1: ‘Denazification’

Throughout the period of analysis, the ‘Denazification’ theme peaked twice significantly above the average data volume on Telegram—in May 2022 and the same month of 2023 (Figure 65). However, the keywords that denote the cluster and go along with the word ‘denazification’ itself aligned differently over time. In 2022, words such as *‘novorossiya’* (a term that translates as ‘New Russia’ and has been applied by the Kremlin to a part of Ukraine’s territory), *‘minoborony’* (MoD, defence ministry) and *‘dapobede’* (‘yes to victory’) frequently appeared together with ‘denazification’. In 2023, however, these were replaced by

more general words such as ‘victory,’ ‘parade,’ ‘to win’ dominating the peak of 2023. By that point—one year into Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine—only 12 percent of Russians polled believed their country’s attack aimed at ‘denazification’ (framed broadly as ‘ridding Ukraine of nationalists, eradicating fascism, freeing it from Banderites, ‘denazification,’ and ‘restoring order’⁸⁰). For the analysis below we focused more on the former peak, within the specific timeframe of 17 April to 25 May 2022, however, looking into the comparable period of 2023, as well.

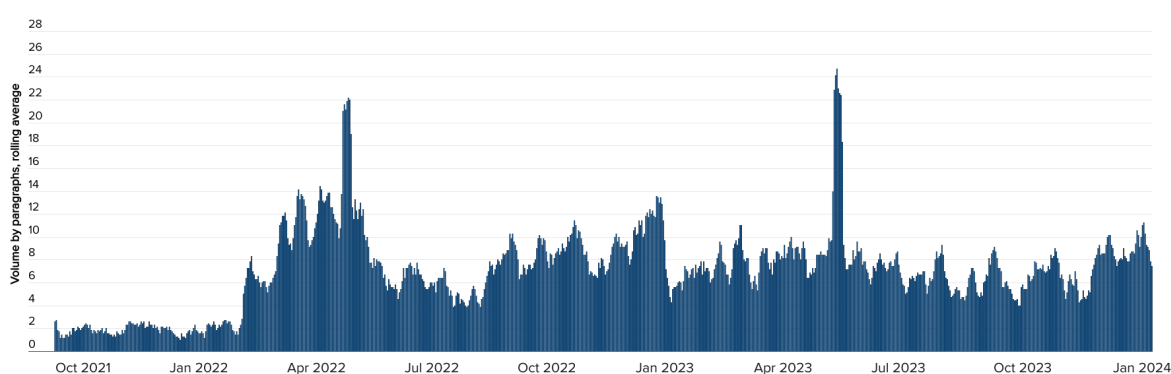


FIGURE 65. ‘Denazification’ cluster over time, the Foreign Policy dimension on Telegram

The frequency of ‘denazification’, as found by BERTopic in the dimension of foreign policy on Telegram, was considerably lower within the peak in 2023, which is also reflected

in the use of the word alone throughout the whole period of our analysis on both Telegram and the websites of Russian official government/regulatory institutions (Figure 66).

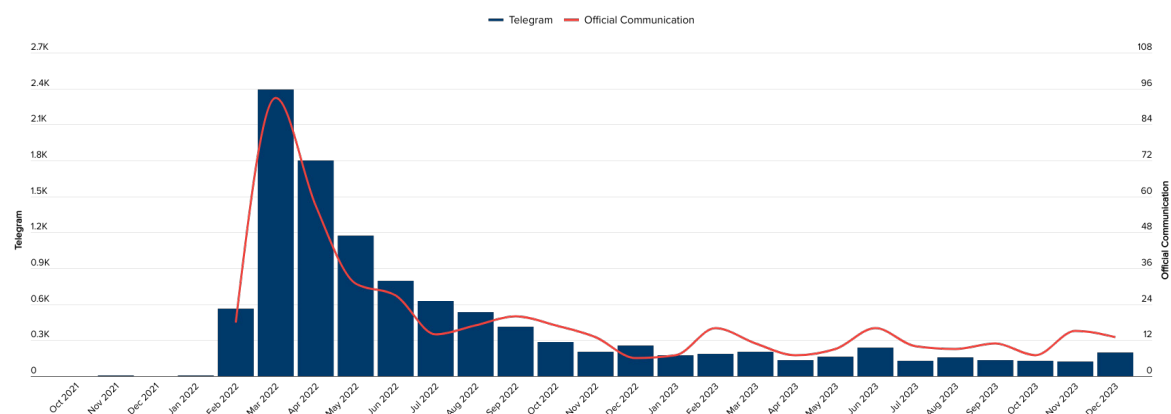


FIGURE 66. Mentions of ‘denazification’ by articles/posts

The usage of the term peaked as, in his televised speech on 24 February 2022, Putin claimed the goal of invading Ukraine was ‘to protect the people that are subjected to abuse, genocide from the Kyiv regime’ and to ‘demilitarise and denazify Ukraine.’⁸¹ With time, however, the use of ‘denazification’ both on the social media platform and in the official communication subsided. On Telegram, it was

kept alive by consistent and repetitive efforts to use the word, such as by (re)posting the daily briefings of the Russian Ministry of Defence on (alleged) Ukrainian casualties and equipment losses with a note saying, ‘Denazification is inevitable!’—most notably on the *Kremlevskaya Prachka* channel (Figure 67)⁸².

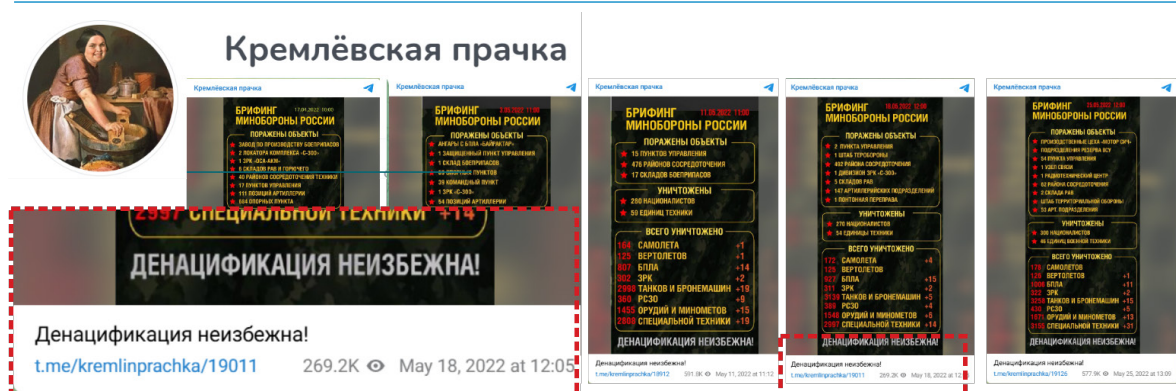


FIGURE 67. Amplification of the ‘denazification’ narrative on Telegram, exemplified by Kremlyovskaya Prachka

In late October 2022, *Kremlevskaya Prachka* ceased posting the briefings with the tagline of ‘denazification’, yet remained one of the main channels that still used the term throughout 2023. Even though rarer, the use of the term seemed to escalate to harsher tonality, from calling for ‘denazification’ as a voluntary choice to live in a ‘bright world of goodness, traditional values, and development opportunities, hand in hand with the fraternal peoples of Russia,’⁸³ to the recipe of regulating ‘the Ukrainian crisis’ by the West accepting the ‘security demands’ of Russia and ‘completing the denazification and demilitarisation of the remains of Ukraine’ (often referred to as ‘country 404’).⁸⁴

Both in 2022 and 2023, the association of ‘denazification’ with casualties of the Ukrainian army and their equipment losses as described above also translated into ‘denazification’ used as a synonym for killing and destroying everyone and everything that is Ukrainian (Figure 68). Hence Telegram channels spoke

of how Russian rockets ‘denazify’ the Ukrainian Armed Forces,⁸⁵ military objects⁸⁶ and infrastructure⁸⁷, also calling for ‘denazification’ of foreign fighters in Ukraine⁸⁸ or equating ‘denazification’ to ‘*de-ukropisation*,’⁸⁹ which basically means ‘*deukrainisation*,’ as ‘*ukrop*’ is a derogatory term used by Russians to describe Ukrainians (although it literally means ‘*dill*’ in Russian language).

Within the peak identified by BERTopic, the Telegram channel *Otryad Kovpaka* (which translates to ‘Detachment of Kovpak’, where Kovpak refers to Sydir (Sidor) Kovpak, a leader of Soviet partisans in Ukraine during the Second World War) led in terms of the number of posts.

In the context of our research, it is evident that the *Otryad Kovpaka* has been consistently promoting and amplifying the idea of Ukraine’s ‘demilitarisation’ and ‘denazification’, or the so called ‘special military operation’ in general, through repetitive use of the terms as hashtags,

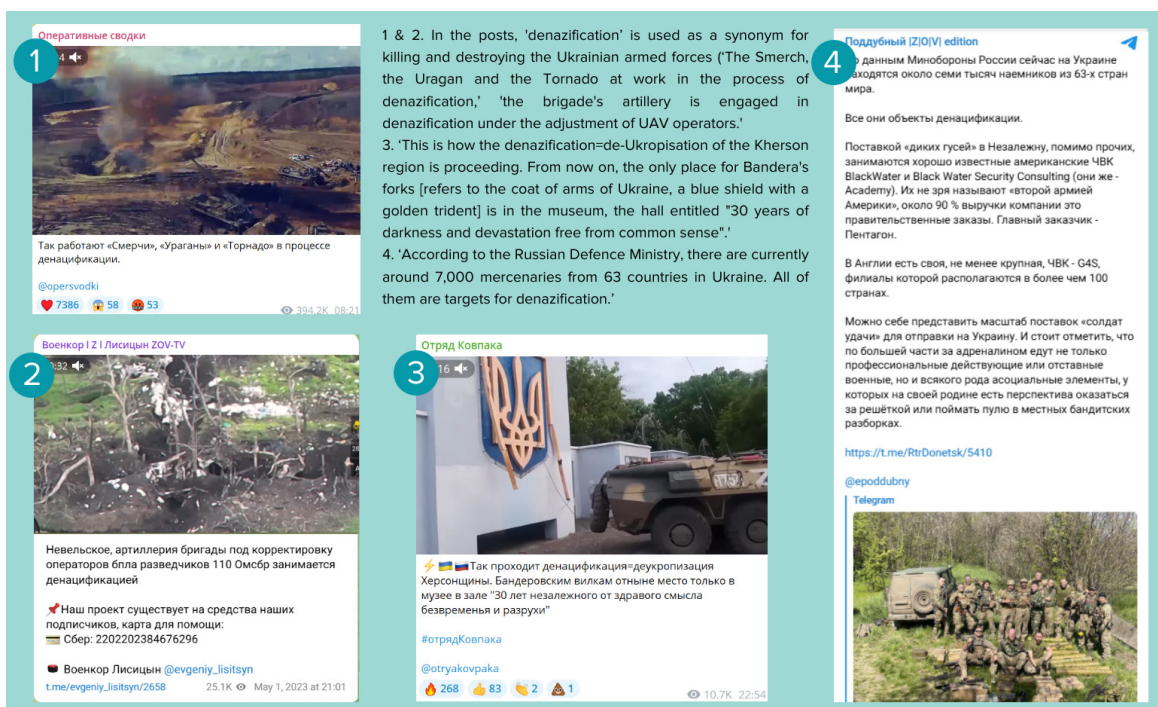


FIGURE 68. Use of 'denazification' as a euphemism for violence against Ukrainians

in line with the same pattern used on the Telegram channel *Vladimir Rogov*, a Moscow-installed official in the partly-occupied Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine, whose posts were amplified by *Otryad Kovpaka* (Figure 69). Interestingly enough, within the collected dataset, all top five users of the term 'denazification' target Ukrainian (not Russian domestic) audiences (Владимир Рогов, Оtryad Ковпака, Украина. Спецоперация. Мониторинг СВО, ЗАПОРОЖСКАЯ НАРОДНАЯ РЕСПУБЛИКА, «Лисичанск - колыбель Донбасса»).

Thus, on Telegram the term 'denazification' was intended to mean '*deukrainisation*' or destroying the state of Ukraine and their people, as well. Through the use of hashtags, the channels framed the term as a central and legitimate concept in ongoing Kremlin discourse. Through repetition, the term was normalised and its association with the narrative the channel promoted was reinforced. The prominently displayed hashtag was intended to shape how audiences interpreted the context of the reported content (such as destroying the city of Mariupol by bombs, rockets, shells, and

gunfire, killing tens of thousands of people), thus framing 'denazification' as a justification for the Kremlin's actions and policies.

In the meantime, after processing the data from the six websites of Russian official government/regulatory institutions, BERTopic did not return a cluster that would either correspond thematically to the labelled topic of 'denazification'. Therefore, we proactively searched for 'denazification' in the data of official government/regulatory websites. We found 41 articles mentioning the word 'denazification' in five official sources (no mentions on the Council's webpage), around two-thirds of which were published on the website of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (for further details, see Figure 70, whereas for a complete list of articles, refer to Appendix 9).

Whilst on Telegram, the diminishing use of 'denazification' was brought back to life by the Victory Day (9 May) celebrations throughout Russia and the occupied territories, it did not form a similar semantic alliance to resuscitate the term on the official communication

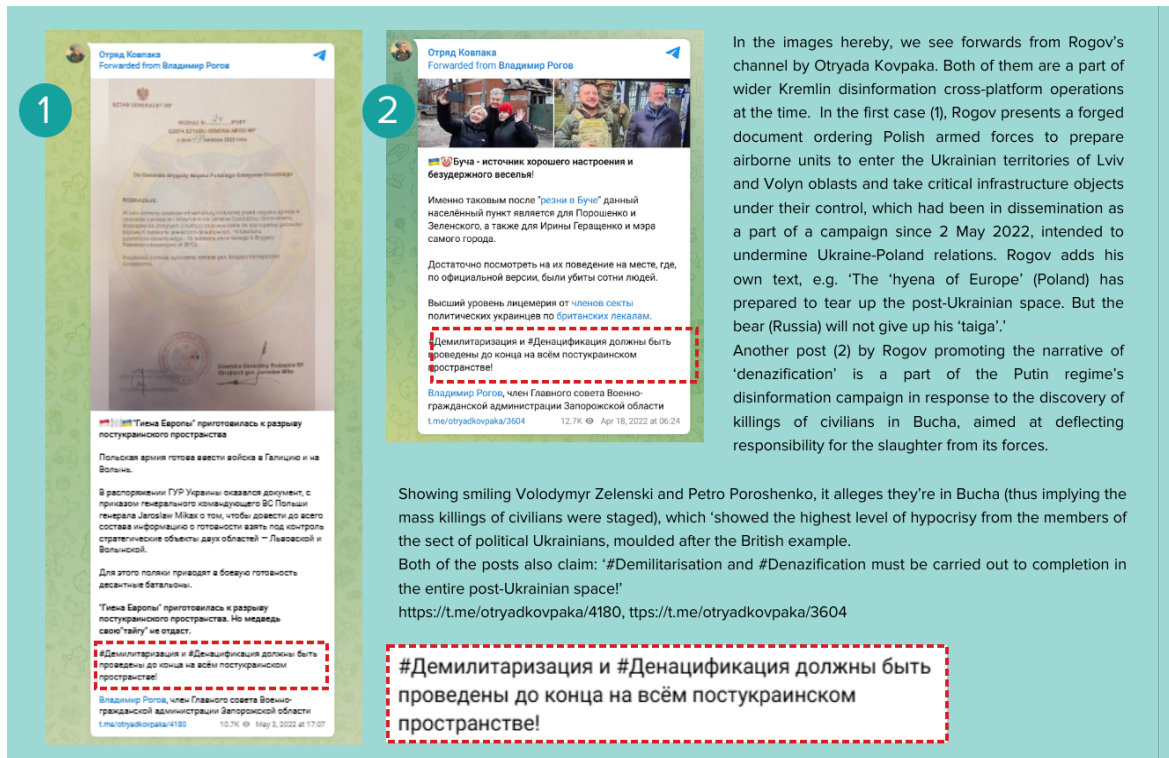


FIGURE 69. Integration of the 'denazification' narrative into Kremlin-aligned information operations on Telegram

channels. Overall, from 17 April to 25 May 2022, there was only one article mentioning 'denazification' on the website of the Russian President, where the term was mentioned by Russian Education Minister Sergey Kravtsov at a meeting of the Supervisory Board of the ANO Russia –Land of Opportunity, headed by Putin. According to Kravtsov, Russian authorities

have been carrying out educational activities at schools aimed at countering the 'disinformation' and 'falsehoods' about Russia since the start of the 'special operation,' and explaining 'what is really happening, what you, Vladimir Vladimirovich <Putin>, said about the purpose of the special operation: to help our people, to denazify and demilitarise Donbas.'⁹⁰

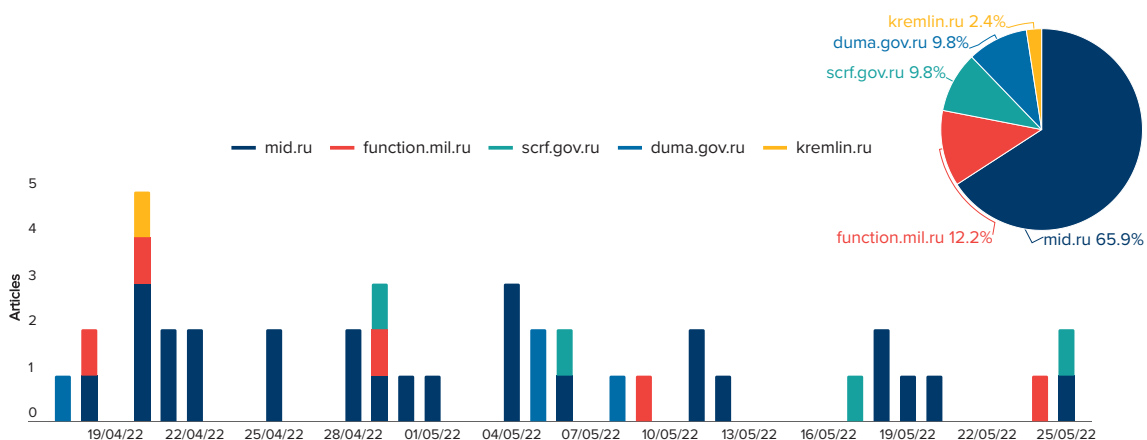


FIGURE 70. Distribution and daily dynamics of 'denazification' mentions across official sources

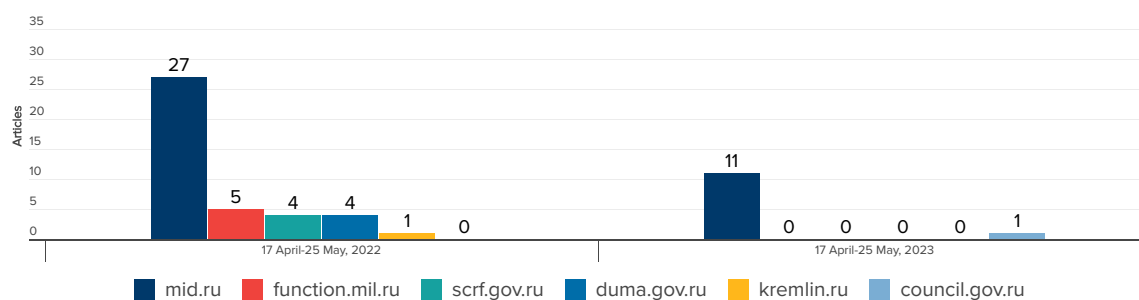


FIGURE 71. Mentions of 'denazification' in the comparable periods of 2022 and 2023, the official communication

The fact that it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs using the word the most often attests to the failure of 'denazification' as a slogan for domestic audiences. In his interview to the *Argumenty i Fakty*, Russia's largest and most popular weekly publication, on 25 May 2022, Nikolay Patrushev, the head of the Security Council, was still explaining what 'denazification' meant. He compared Ukraine to Nazi Germany, claiming Russia's goals mirrored historical efforts to punish Nazi crimes and eradicate discriminatory laws and doctrines. Patrushev accused England and the US of supporting Nazism in contrast to their World War II stance and 'acting aggressively towards most countries in the world.'⁹¹ He was even less specific in his interview to the *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, a newspaper published by the Government of Russia, a month before, in late April 2022, suggesting that 'denazification' meant defeating 'the neo-Nazi bridgehead created by Western efforts near our borders. The need for demilitarisation is due to the fact that an armed Ukraine poses a threat to Russia, including in terms of the development and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.'⁹²

The mentions of 'denazification' on the Duma's and the Ministry of Defence's webpages were not meant to explain and were rather tags attached to the term 'special military operation' by default. On the contrary, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was trying hard to assert that the 'denazification' objectives of the so-called 'special military operation' were justified and still relevant. When Minister Lavrov was asked how Russia can claim that it

is fighting to 'denazify' the country whose president is Jewish, he claimed that 'Hitler also had Jewish blood. [That Zelensky is Jewish] means absolutely nothing. Wise Jewish people say that the most ardent anti-Semites are usually Jews.'⁹³

A year later in the official communication (during the comparable period of 17 April to 25 May, 2023), mentions of 'denazification' were virtually reduced to persistent claims by Russia's MFA at OSCE meetings on how Russia was allegedly forced to defend itself against the aggressive West and 'Kyiv's bloody repressions against the population of Donbass' by launching the so-called 'special military operation' aimed at 'denazifying' Ukraine⁹⁴ (Figure 71). The communication involving the term 'denazification' was the most intensive around the anniversary of seizing Mariupol and Russia's capture of Bakhmut, capitalising on the two military successes and justifying the (almost complete) devastation of the two cities.

The only article that did not come from Russia's Foreign Ministry and yet used the word 'denazification' was an article by the deputy chairman of Russia's upper house of parliament, Konstantin Kosachyov, commenting on the drone attack on the Kremlin in Moscow on 3 May 2023. Claiming that the West was waging a proxy war using Ukraine against Russia, he suggested the 'special military operation' was as 'beneficial for everyone' as demilitarisation and denazification of Germany after World War II.⁹⁵

During the analysed period in 2022, the usage of the term on TV programmes was mixed (Figure 72). It was not used even once on *Voskresnoye Vremya*. While it is as controlled by the Putin regime as *Vesti Nedeli*, due to their different target audience, it seems to have been allowed a degree of deviation from official narratives. *Voskresnoye Vremya* targets a more general audience, including families and those interested in a mix of news and lighter content, with a less aggressive approach aimed at sustaining credibility among viewers who prefer a less overtly propagandistic presentation. The two shows hold on to different stylistic approaches to influence diverse segments of the Russian population, where *Vesti Nedeli* appeals to a politically engaged audience through a highly confrontational tone, and therefore, appeared more eager to use the term ‘denazification’.

It should be noted that whilst on 17 April, the term was absent from *Vesti Nedeli*, it was mentioned a week after, on 24 April, presented

as a matter-of-fact objective of the so-called ‘special military operation,’ claiming that:

‘...the goals of Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine, as we know, are demilitarisation and denazification of the country. If it hadn’t been launched, in a couple of years the Americans would have already turned the Ukrainian army into a completely different force with different weapons and even an atomic bomb’⁹⁶

By placing ‘denazification’ alongside demilitarisation, the statement consolidated Russia’s dual narrative of both removing Ukraine’s military capabilities and eradicating purported ideological threats. The phrase ‘as is known’ suggested that the rationale for the operation has been previously established, reinforcing the idea that Russia’s actions are part of an ongoing and well-publicised effort to eliminate nationalist ideologies. Here, in just two sentences, ‘denazification’ was also

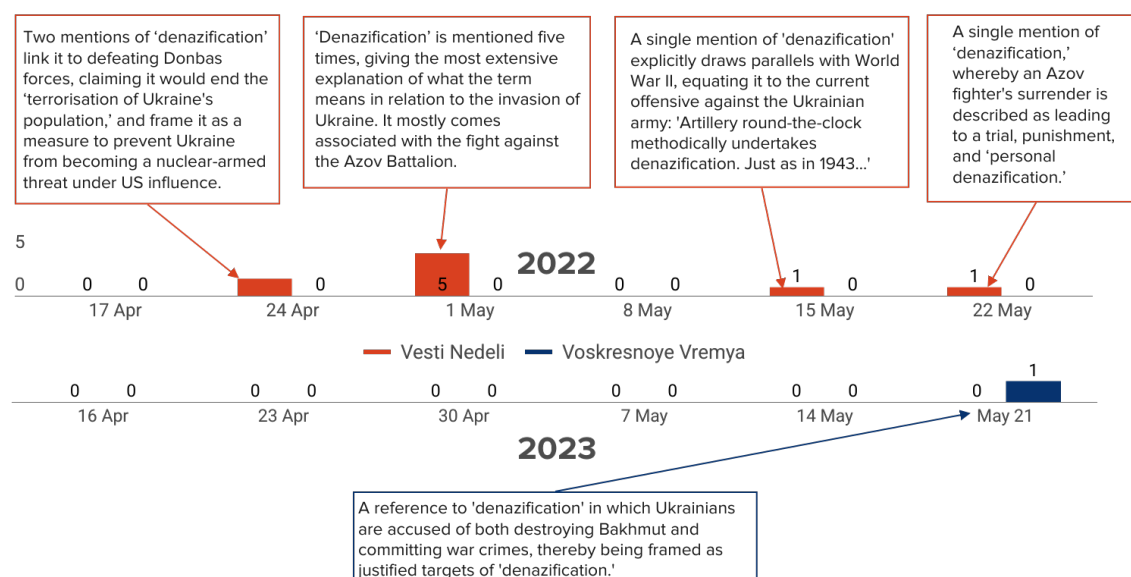


FIGURE 72. Mentions of 'denazification' on television programmes in the corresponding periods in 2022 and 2023

neatly tied to a number of Kremlin-promoted narratives:

- justification of the invasion as ‘preventative’ (Russia as forced into action as Ukraine is being militarised by the United States to a point where it could develop nuclear weapons and pose a direct existential danger to Russia);
- anti-American messaging (the statement shifts responsibility for the war onto the US, accusing it of using Ukraine as a proxy to threaten Russia);
- delegitimising Ukraine (it’s portrayed as a puppet state dominated by fascist or neo-Nazi elements).

On *Vesti Nedeli*, the topic received the widest attention on the 1 May episode (for further details, please see Figure 73). ‘Denazification’ was presented as the moral and operational core of the ‘special military operation,’ framing Russia’s intervention as a historical and ethical imperative, positioning it as a continuation of the Soviet struggle against Nazism in World War II. Each mention of ‘denazification’ was explicitly tied to the portrayal of Ukrainian forces, particularly the Azov Battalion, as the carriers of Nazi ideology, thereby justifying the broader Russian military strategy. The episode also discussed the ideological shift in Ukraine, portraying it as a country deeply influenced by nationalist and neo-Nazi ideology. To rationalise what had evolved into a full-scale invasion of Ukraine rather than the swift and decisive ‘special military operation’ originally promised, *Vesti Nedeli* employed the term ‘denazification’ to obscure the reality of indiscriminate artillery bombardments, which struck both civilian infrastructure and military targets. On 15 May,

the programme paired this term with extensive narratives of alleged Ukrainian atrocities, claiming that Russian artillery was ‘methodically and round-the-clock engaged in denazification.’⁹⁷ As the defenders of Azovstal surrendered, the show adapted the rhetoric, describing a ‘personal process of denazification’ for those who laid down their arms. Host Dmitry Kiselyov referred to the surrender as ‘humiliating,’⁹⁸ framing it as not only a military victory but also an ideological triumph for Russia, reinforcing the Kremlin’s narrative of moral and strategic superiority.

In 2023, only one episode of the TV programmes that aired between mid-April and late May—a period corresponding to the peak of communications flow in the previous year—mentioned ‘denazification’. The term followed a similar narrative pattern to 2022, particularly in relation to Mariupol, where the destruction of the entire city was framed as a necessary measure to eradicate so-called Ukrainian Nazis, with a specific focus on the Azov battalion. In an episode of *Voskresnoye Vremya* on 21 May 2023, the final capture and devastation of Bakhmut (referred to interchangeably as Artemovsk) served as the pretext for invoking ‘denazification’, reinforcing the Kremlin’s justification for the war by equating military conquest with ideological cleansing.

The segment on Bakhmut portrayed Ukrainian troops as indiscriminately shelling the city, intentionally targeting civilians, and committing war crimes, thus framing the Ukrainian military as ruthless aggressors rather than defenders. The show implied that Ukrainian forces were acting like Nazis by executing civilians, making ‘denazification’ a necessity.



1

'This is what denazification looks like from a practical perspective.'
'The war against Nazism is not an abstract thing. It's not a slogan. It is what the Russian army is successfully doing today.'

By describing 'denazification' as a practical, hands-on effort, the programme seeks to convey that Russia's military actions are not merely abstract political moves but are designed to have tangible effects on the ground. This line communicates that 'denazification' is actively taking place through Russian operations, and the concept is being realised through real actions rather than empty rhetoric.



2

'Denazification is when the remnants of the Azov Battalion hide, shielding themselves with hostages in the basements of the Azovstal plant'

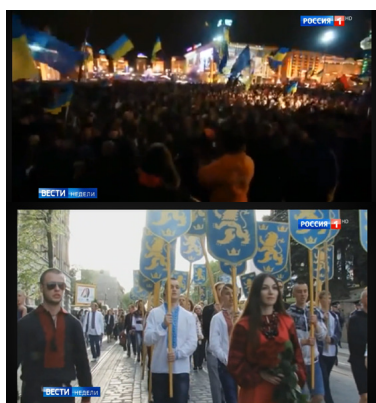
By linking 'denazification' with forcing Azov fighters into retreat and hiding, the show seeks to illustrate that Russia's actions are effectively weakening 'neo-Nazi forces'. The Azovstal plant is presented not just as a location but as a symbol of Ukrainian nationalist resistance, allegedly using civilians as human shields, which is further presented as a hallmark of Nazi cruelty. It's an attempt to invoke moral outrage among viewers, framing 'denazification' as the process of bringing such 'inhumane' forces to justice.



3

'Denazification is when neo-Nazis from the Azov Battalion rot alive in cold factory basements, while the bodies of other Nazis rot at destroyed positions.'

'Denazification' is framed as the literal decay of 'Nazi elements' within Ukraine, symbolising both their physical defeat and moral degradation. The use of words like 'rot' evokes visceral imagery meant to underscore the elimination of Nazism as a purging of both ideology and individuals. 'Denazification' is connected with a form of moral retribution and eradication of evil: Russian forces are not merely engaging in combat but are fulfilling a quasi-sacred mission.



4

'Today, however, the concept of denazification applies not only to neo-Nazi units but also to a large portion of the Ukrainian army.'

It is implied that the ideology Russia seeks to dismantle is not confined to specific battalions like Azov but pervades much of the Ukrainian military. Thus, a wider-reaching campaign across Ukraine is justified, suggesting that 'denazification' must be extensive and relentless. This rhetoric rationalises the continuation and expansion of Russian operations under the banner of 'denazification,' portraying it as a battle against a deeply-rooted and pervasive enemy.

FIGURE 73. Most extensive articulation of the 'denazification' narrative across the tracked television programmes

Case Study 2: Explaining the Russian ‘Special Military Operation’ in the International Arena

As the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine was nearing, discussions about new rounds of sanctions on Russia and enhanced coordination against its aggression were taking place in January and February 2023, with the EU/G7 petroleum products ban taking effect on 5 February 2023. A number of Western countries ramped up their military support to Ukraine, whereas Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky expanded diplomatic efforts by travelling to the UK and EU on his second foreign trip since the launch of the war, seeking additional military support such as long-range weapons and fighter jets, as well as delivering a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

The results returned by BERTopic’s semantic analysis of the official government/regulatory communications within the frames of the dimension of foreign policy indicate an attempt to respond to these developments. Thus, the leading narrative-based cluster,

which was labelled as *Explaining the Russian ‘special military operation’ in the international arena*, peaked in February 2023. After examining the content units that formed the spike, we identified (accounts of) interviews given by Russian ambassadors as the main contributing factor to the growth of communications volume.

Articles containing interviews of Russian ambassadors or reports about them peaked twice during the whole period of the analysis (from October 2021 to December 2023): from February to April 2022 (immediately after the launch of the so-called ‘special military operation’), and in February 2023 (in response to the actions of the Western countries described above). However, there is an important difference between the two peaks: the first one mostly contained interviews by Russian ambassadors to foreign media whereas the second one—to the Russian media (Figure 74).

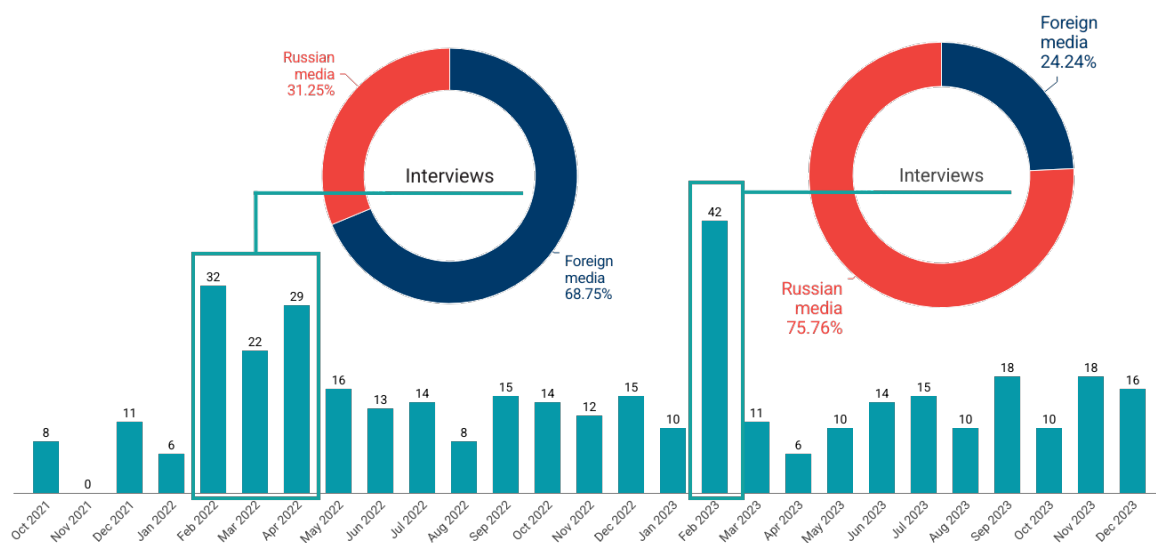


FIGURE 74. Interviews of Russian ambassadors in the official communication

With Russia still being challenged by after-invasion isolation in the international arena, publicising ambassadorial activities domestically may have served to project an image of an active and functional diplomatic network. Messaging from ambassadors may have been intended to highlight perceived successes in diplomacy or cooperation with non-Western allies to reassure domestic audiences of Russia's global influence, as ambassadors' statements may serve to create an impression of broad diplomatic activity and international support for Russia's policies. By featuring diplomats, the Kremlin showcased its engagement with global affairs and its framing of events, whilst interviews on prominent state-controlled platforms ensured

consistency in messaging across both diplomatic and domestic channels. In the Official Communication, interviews of the Russian ambassador to Turkey, Alexei Yerkhov, were mentioned the most, followed by the heads of diplomatic missions to Angola, Bahrain, Mozambique, Tajikistan and UK (Figure 75).

Yerkhov's interviews to Russia's largest news agencies were in time for the Diplomatic Workers' Day, marked on 10 February in Russia, and after a massive earthquake in southern Turkey on 6 February 2023. In his interview, the Russian ambassador hailed Turkey for not joining Western sanctions imposed on Russia, claiming it was 'a courageous move and a bold decision that fully meets the national interests

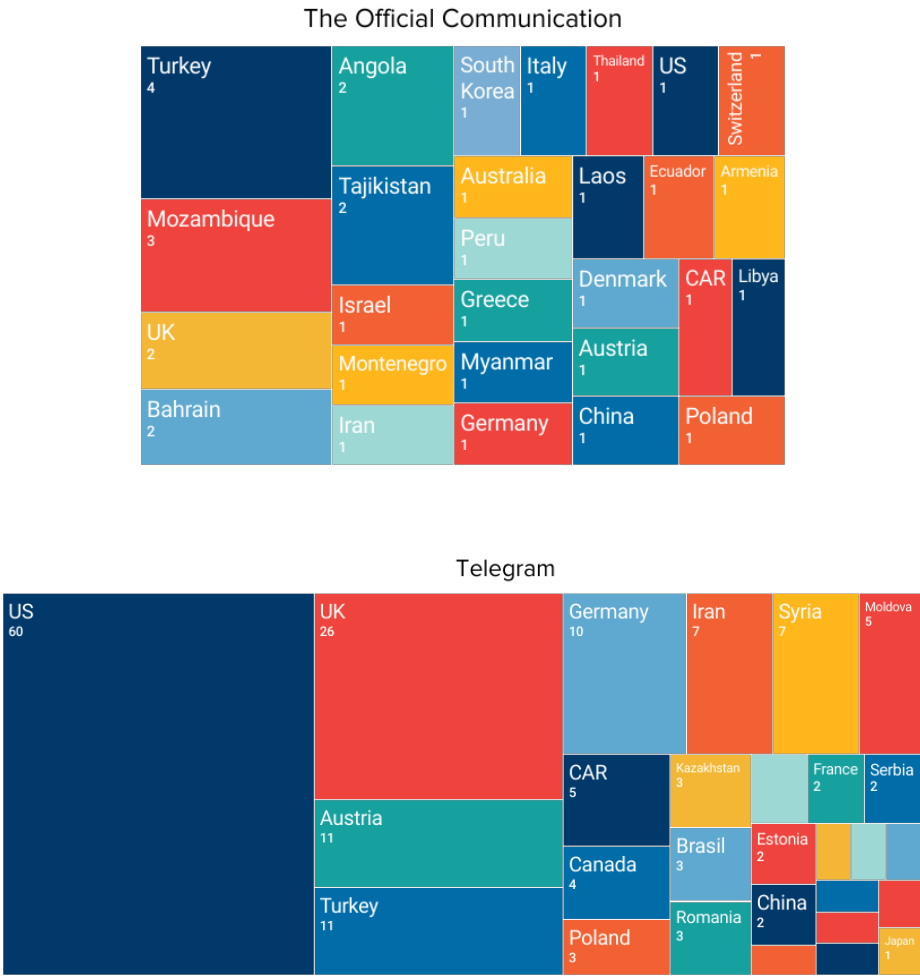


FIGURE 75. Interviews with Russian ambassadors reported in the official communication and mentioned on Telegram

'The Czechs supply Ukraine with arms and ammunition, but cry that there are 30 times fewer Russians at their resorts in Karlovy Vary. European neighbours go to the Czechs, but for a day, and they're cheapskates and can't go on a splurge. Turks supply Ukraine with equipment, weapons and ammunition. And we are too shy to pressure them on matters concerning resorts. Oh, for crying out loud! Moscow, my dear, ban tourism to these two countries, let them accept and swallow! Why be shy?!?!?!?!'

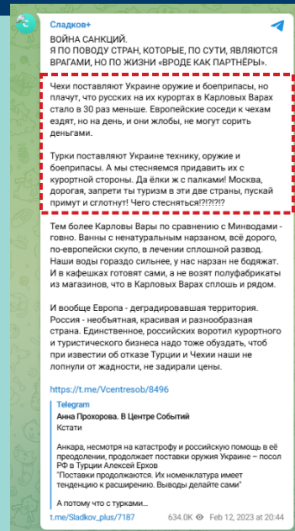
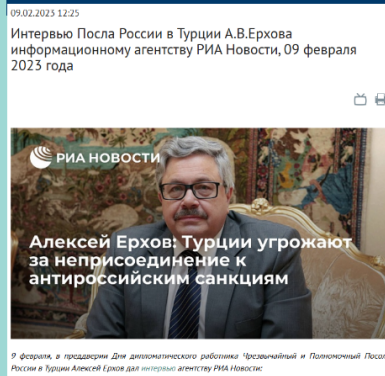


FIGURE 76. Amplification of Russian ambassador's statements from official outlets to Telegram

of the country' and which leads to pressure on Turkey from the West (the headline of the original article on *RIA Novosti* also emphasised the sanctions, as the headline read '*Aleksey Yerkhov: Turkey is threatened for not joining*

anti-Russian sanctions').⁹⁹ When asked about Turkey's arms supplies to Ukraine, Yerkhov replied: 'Deliveries continue. Their range tends to expand. Draw your own conclusions.'

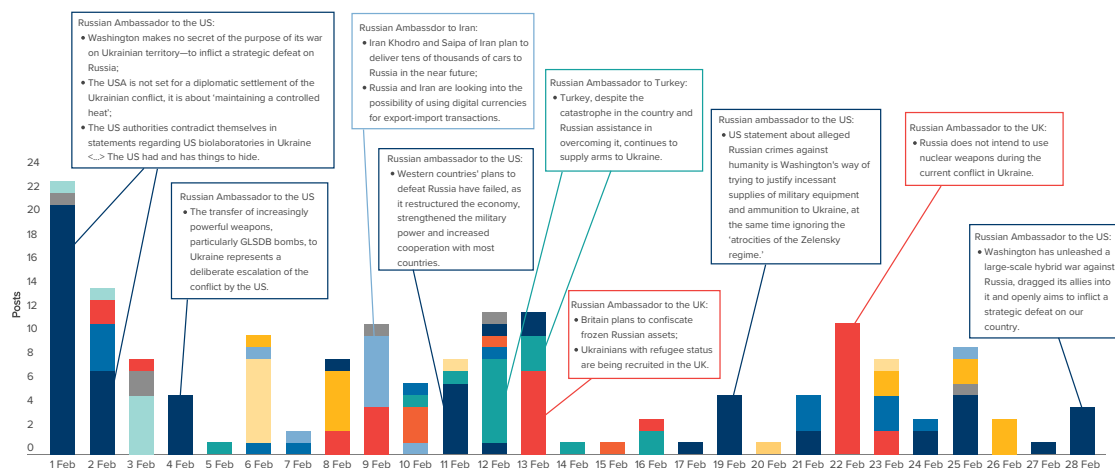


FIGURE 77. References to Russian ambassadors on Telegram

The phrase was widely amplified on Telegram, adding words that seem to have not been uttered by Yerkhov himself: ‘Ankara continues to supply arms to Ukraine despite the catastrophe in the country and Russian assistance in overcoming it.’¹⁰⁰ Russian milblogger Alexander Sladkov went a step further and, after comparing the Turks to the Czechs, ‘who are now crying over a diminishing number of rich Russian tourists to their country,’ urged Moscow to make a bolder move and ‘ban tourism to these two countries’ (Figure 76).

Although the ambassador to Mozambique ranked second in terms of mentions in official communications, these references were not direct interviews but rather reports of his interactions with Mozambican media, coinciding with the first anniversary of the ‘special military operation.’ Similarly, mentions of the ambassador to Angola were primarily informational. Meanwhile, coverage of the ambassador to Tajikistan emphasised discussions on the ‘prospects of trade, economic, and investment cooperation between Moscow and Dushanbe,’ framed against the backdrop of ‘Russophobia in the West and the imposition of anti-Russian sanctions.’¹⁰¹

Overall, we found that around one fifth of the interviews by Russian ambassadors within the Official Communication in the timeframe

of the case study were covered on Telegram. Thus, in addition to amplifying a line from the interview with Yerkhov, Telegram channels reacted to an interview by the Russian ambassador to Germany, Sergey Nechayev, although the number of posts in reaction to his interview to *Izvestiya* on 8 February 2023, was lower than the one concerning the interview by Yerkhov (Figure 77). The interview included the notion of Germany’s decision to provide Leopard tanks to Ukraine, and the country ‘crossing all of its red lines,’ even though saying it will not be giving fighter jets. The Telegram posts put emphasis on Germany ‘working out options for withdrawing Russia’s frozen funds in favour of Ukraine’¹⁰² and the ‘era of cheap Russian energy in the Federal Republic of Germany coming to an end.’¹⁰³ The economic relationship between Iran and Russia, such as mass delivery of vehicles produced by Iran Khodro to Russia¹⁰⁴ and the possibility of using digital currencies for export-import transactions among the two countries,¹⁰⁵ were highlighted in posts on Telegram, which was also the main focus of the interview of the Russian ambassador to Iran to *Rossiya Segodnya*, published on mid.ru.¹⁰⁶

Whilst in the official media there was no mention of the Russian ambassador to the US, Anatoliy Antonov was quoted the most within the dataset we compiled from the Telegram content to see whether the dynamics there

would match the interviews by Russian ambassadors in the Official Communication. Antonov was the most intensively quoted in the first days of February, making a number of statements blaming the US for escalating the ‘conflict in Ukraine’¹⁰⁷ and again accusing it of maintaining secret biolabs in Ukraine that were being used to develop biological weapons.¹⁰⁸

The second most mentioned Russian ambassador on Telegram was the head of the diplomatic mission to the UK, Andrei Kelin, with his statements that Russia has no intention of using nuclear weapons during its invasion into Ukraine.¹⁰⁹ These words by Kelin seem to have been challenged by one of the Kremlin’s chief opinion makers, Vladimir Solovyov, who rhetorically asked: ‘Is it now the prerogative of honourable ambassadors to comment on such matters?’¹¹⁰ Whilst the website of the Russian MFA sought to maintain a veneer of professionalism—even amid Russia’s isolation—through carefully curated diplomatic engagement, the Telegram channels published sensational claims with little or no concern for diplomatic formalities, focusing on rapid, emotional, and informal dissemination of state-approved narratives, with a focus on the most polarising and symbolic statements.

On the two TV programmes, there were three instances of mentioning interviews by Russian ambassadors, all of them on *Vesti Nedeli*, the host of which, Dmitry Kiselyov, is known for inflammatory rhetoric, including statements like ‘Russia can turn the US into radioactive ash,’ which underscores the show’s history of nuclear threats themes (Figure 78).

The mentions were in line with those themes, as, in the first case, the ambassador to Denmark, Vladimir Barbin, suggested Denmark’s potential acquisition of long-range missiles would put Denmark at the forefront of attacks against Russia, as the Tomahawks were able to reach Red Square.¹¹¹ By February 2023, the war had devolved into grinding attritional combat, particularly in areas like Bakhmut. Russia was struggling to achieve significant territorial gains, whereas Western countries, including Denmark, had significantly ramped

up military aid to Ukraine in this particular period. Barbin’s quote was used to showcase the alleged absurdity and extent of the Western military hysteria at its extreme, by an example of ‘little Denmark.’ The episode trivialised Denmark’s security concerns, sarcastically suggesting that its pursuit of advanced defence systems is about ‘tickling their nerves’ or alleviating ‘boredom.’ Barbin was also among the Russian ambassadors quoted in an interview to *RIA* in the official communication on 5 February 2023, blaming Denmark for deteriorating relations with Russia claiming that Denmark was ‘increasingly involved’ in the conflict through financing military equipment and alleged mercenary activity.¹¹²

In a similar escalatory attempt, a former Russian ambassador to the US, Sergey Kislyak, was quoted regarding the suspension of the New START Treaty by Russia, which was intended as leverage against the US to convince Washington to stop supplying military aid to Ukraine.¹¹³ On *Vesti Nedeli*, Kislyak, then serving as a Russian senator, argued the treaty required revision because there was no longer any ‘mutual intent to strengthen international and strategic stability’ which was allegedly evidenced by ‘daily massive shelling of civilians by American HIMARS missiles.’¹¹⁴

On the same episode of the show, the Russian ambassador to Germany, Sergey Nechayev, was quoted commenting on a destroyed Russian T-72 tank being displayed in front of the Russian Embassy in Berlin as a vivid symbol on the anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The display was reframed by *Vesti Nedeli* as a symbol of German admiration for Russia’s World War II legacy, claiming it evoked respect and nostalgia, particularly in the former DDR, ‘where many people have preserved fond memories of the past and hold great sympathy for Russia.’ It dismissed the protest’s intent, labelling it a ‘propaganda failure’ for Ukraine, and shifted focus to advocating negotiations instead of military support for Ukraine, asserting that half of Germans think that military aid to Ukraine risks escalating to nuclear conflict. Quoted along with those participating at the Peace Protest organised by Die Linke,

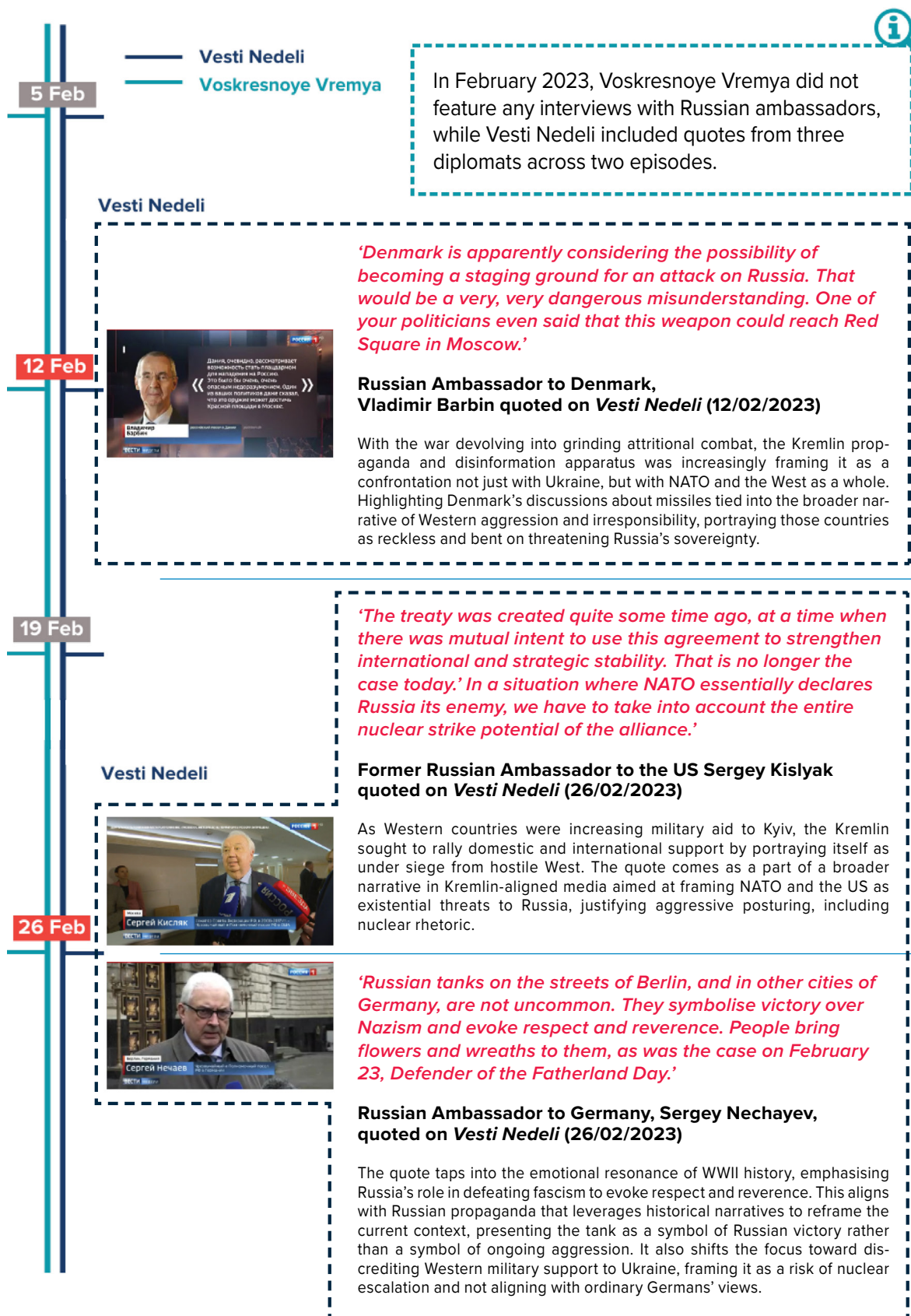


FIGURE 78. Interviews of Russian ambassadors on television

Germany's left-wing party, as saying German tanks should not be shooting 'at grandchildren of Russian women and men, millions of whom were slaughtered by the Wehrmacht,' Nechayev leveraged historical narratives to reframe the current context. He claimed that Russian tanks on German streets 'are not uncommon,' symbolising victory over Nazism and evoking 'respect and reverence.'

This chapter analysed two different information campaigns orchestrated by the Kremlin in the foreign policy dimension. The first was the promotion of 'denazification' narrative on Telegram, and the second was the information campaign in the official communication intended to explain and justify Russia's 'special military operation in Ukraine' in the context of growing Western support. Similar to the cases analysed in

the previous chapters, the collected data suggests little correlation between Telegram, the Official Communication and the weekend TV programmes. The narratives promoted on Telegram get little friction on official communications, and vice versa—when information campaigns are conducted on official channels, they do not earn similar attention on Telegram. The weekend TV programmes seem to mix and match the narratives on these two main platforms, following the general line dictated by official communications and generally avoiding the detailed discussions on Telegram.

Chapter 5: ‘Liberated Areas’ Dimension—Case Studies Analysis

After reviewing and labelling the results of thematic clustering returned by BERTopic, we found that the following narrative-based clusters prevailed in the report period:

- Telegram:
 - Allegations of War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity Against Ukrainians
 - Russian Air Attacks
 - Reports from the Frontlines
- the Official Communication:
 - Patriotic Education
 - Trainings/Readiness in the Central Military District
 - Trainings/Readiness Across Russian Military

A case study was selected from each dataset for qualitative analysis of irregularities in communication volume. Similar to the approach in previous chapters, a comparative analysis across all three communication channels (Telegram channels, official communications, and selected television shows) was conducted to identify correlations in how the subject was covered across different platforms.

On Telegram, the cluster titled *Allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity against Ukrainians* was the most distinctive when it comes to forming irregular peaks of data flow (Figure 79). We examined how it unfolded from 11 September to 30 October 2022.



FIGURE 79. Major narrative-based clusters, the 'Liberated Areas' dimension on Telegram

For the Official Communication dataset, we investigated a major spike in the ‘*Patriotic*

education’ cluster in the full month of February 2023 (Figure 80).



FIGURE 80. Major narrative-based clusters, the 'Liberated Areas' dimension in the official communication

Case Study 1: Accusations of War Crimes Against Ukrainians

The thematic cluster, labelled as *Accusations of war crimes against Ukrainians*, saw its highest activity during the initial stage of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022. The number of Telegram posts on this topic gradually diminished over the following months, but notable surges were

observed in autumn 2022 (Figure 81). We decided to focus on the period from mid-September to late October, as topic modelling revealed shifts in the semantic characteristics of the cluster during this time.

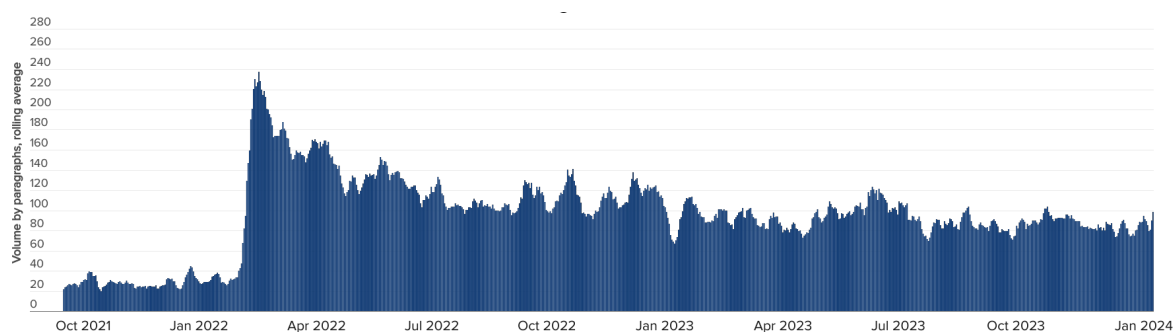


FIGURE 81. Accusations of War Crimes against Ukrainians cluster over time

At several points during the study period (October 2021–December 2023), additional keywords surfaced alongside the core markers of the thematic cluster— ‘житель’, ‘дом’, ‘гуманитарный’, ‘мирный’, ‘жилой’, ‘местный’, ‘пострадавших’, ‘мариуполь’, ‘город’, ‘днр’ (Figure 82). These supplementary terms shifted with real-world events; for example, words linked to Kherson appeared around the time of

Russia’s sham referendums on the annexation of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia (23–27 September 2022), as well as an order of evacuation from the city of Kherson by Russian-installed occupational authorities on 22 October in the face of Ukrainian counteroffensive or the whole timeframe of the analysis (October 2021 to December 2023).



FIGURE 82. Temporal shifts in keywords of the Accusations of War Crimes against Ukrainians cluster

The semantic mix of topic keywords suggests a deliberate overarching narrative strategy: to reframe the conflict as one where Russia is the defender of civilian lives and homes, while Ukraine is portrayed as the perpetrator of violence, thus legitimising Russian aggression and framing it as necessary to protect civilians. It reflects a calculated blend of humanitarian messaging and accusatory rhetoric, aimed at legitimising Russia's actions while undermining Ukraine's moral position:

- Highlighting the plight of *дом* (home) and *житель* (resident) damaged during the conflict aimed to depict Ukraine as the aggressor, responsible for harming civilians.
- Phrases like *гуманитарный* (humanitarian) and *мирный* (peaceful) are used to contrast alleged Ukrainian atrocities with Russia's self-portrayal as a humanitarian force helping 'peaceful' residents. By focusing on *дом* (home) and *житель* (resident), the Kremlin shifts the focus to the destruction of civilian infrastructure, framing Ukraine as culpable for the suffering (*пострадавших*) of ordinary people. This plays into the Kremlin's allegations that Ukrainian forces target civilians or use residential areas as shields.
- The inclusion of place names like *мариуполь* (Mariupol), *днр* (Donetsk or 'DPR') (and Kherson [*Херсон*] in the particular time period of the case study), highlights key battlegrounds in the conflict.

Stories about alleged Ukrainian cruelty (e.g., 'targeting hospitals,' 'killing families,' or 'executing civilians,' 'who do not care about children, the elderly and human beings in general'¹¹⁵) were frequently associated with the 'Nazi' label (Figure 83). Since atrocities attributed to Ukraine were framed as a natural outcome of their supposed Nazi ideology, audiences were primed to expect cruelty from those labelled as such (as in an allegation that 'People are dying every day. Zelensky wants there to be no people left on this land').¹¹⁶ The label 'Nazi' taps into Russia's well-established 'Great Patriotic War' victory narrative, which frames the conflict as a continuation of that moral battle and suggests a 'special mission' or 'responsibility' of Russia to eliminate the 'supported-by-the West nazification' of Ukraine. For instance, Russia-installed authorities in Kherson likened street warning signs during shelling to those used in the Siege of Leningrad, implying a historical parallel and justifying Russian actions.¹¹⁷

The usage of 'Nazi' labels invoked moral outrage, creating a black-and-white worldview where Russia 'is morally justified in its actions, no matter the cost. Thus, when in early October 2022 Russia launched large-scale missile and drone attacks targeting Ukraine's critical civilian infrastructure, causing significant harm to civilians, raising allegations of violations of international humanitarian law, Kremlin-aligned channels were able to claim that 'the strikes on Ukraine's critical infrastructure have raised the spirit of Russian soldiers. They saw that the Russian army has started to work 'for real', making Ukrainians feel what 'the residents of Donbass have felt for eight years.'¹¹⁸

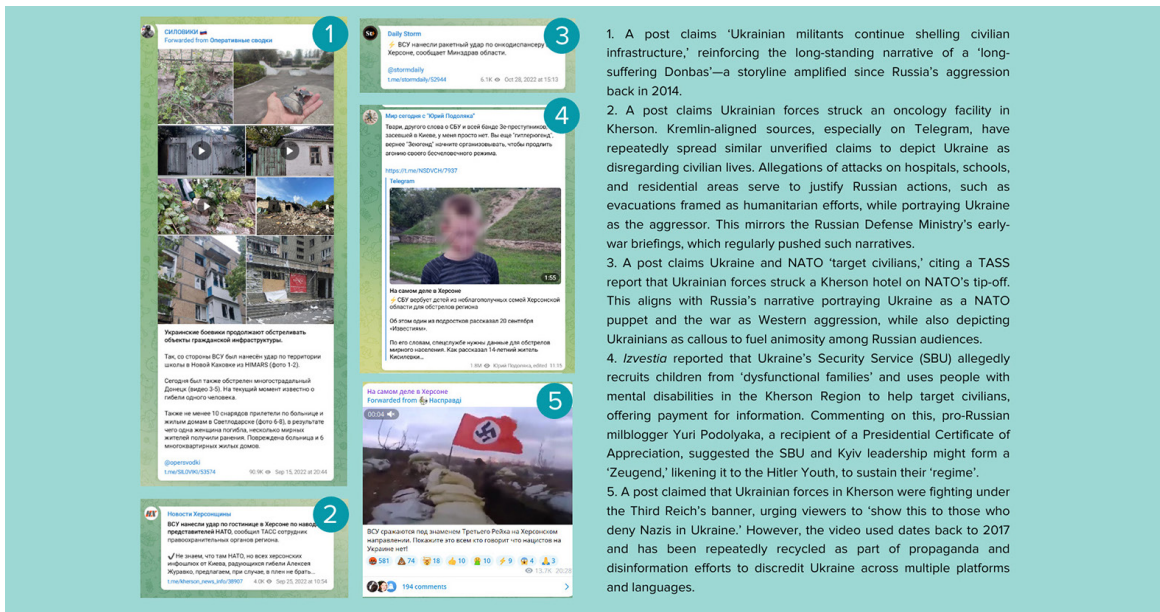
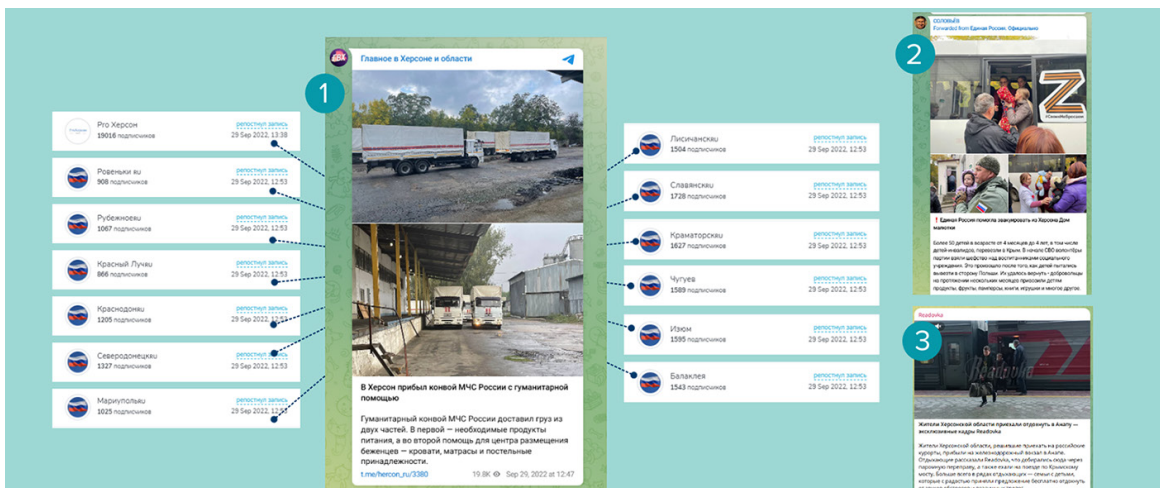


FIGURE 83. Framing of alleged Ukrainian atrocities through the 'Nazi' label

Accusations against Ukrainian forces were frequently contrasted with the narratives highlighting Russian humanitarian aid to the 'liberated areas' (Figure 84). The channels, which were used by the Kremlin to legitimise the occupation of specific villages and cities and to establish control over the information environment there, showed signs of inauthentic behaviour while sharing content on 'Russian

humanitarian aid' or posting the same messages simultaneously. Major Telegram channels, such as *Solovyov* and *Readovka*, appeared to have been tasked with amplifying claims that the evacuation of Kherson residents was a demonstration of Russian authorities' humanitarianism—a narrative that also dominated the official messaging around the retreat from Kherson.



1. Multiple Telegram channels involved in Russia's information operations targeting both occupied and intended territories in Ukraine simultaneously post about a 'Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations convey delivering humanitarian aid' to Kherson.
- 2 and 3: Russian narratives portray the occupation of Ukrainian territories as 'liberation', also framing evacuations as protection rather than forced displacement. A post by *Solovyov* depicts Putin's United Russia party as a savior, claiming it evacuated over 50 foster children from Kherson to Crimea after stopping their alleged transfer to Poland. Similarly, *Readovka* reports on Kherson residents traveling to Russian resorts, justifying the move as a security measure to protect civilians.

FIGURE 84. Framing of Russian occupation as humanitarian aid and protection

In the Official Communication, the peak in articles (61 in total) referring to alleged Ukrainian war crimes and crimes against humanity corresponded with the imposition of martial law in four partially occupied and annexed regions of Ukraine, declared by the

Russian president on 19 October 2022 at a meeting of the Security Council of Russia on migration (please refer to Figure 85 for further details and to Appendix 10 for complete list of content pieces).

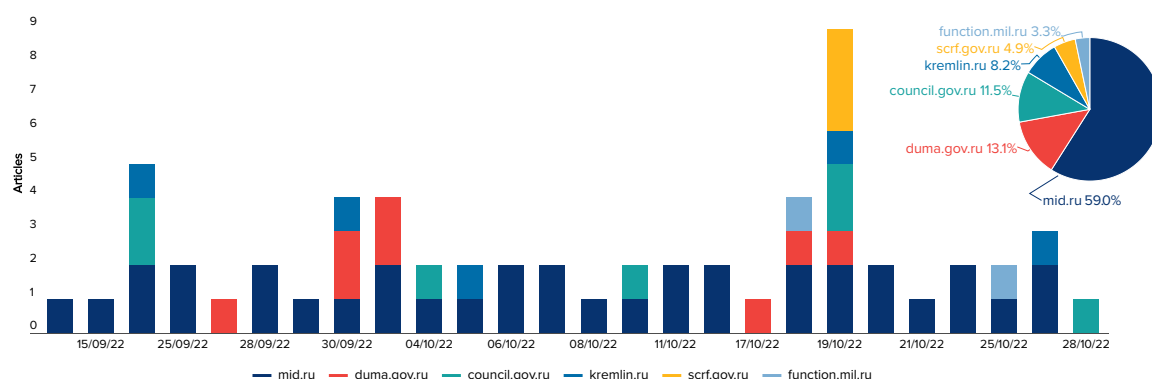


FIGURE 85. Daily dynamics the articles alleging Ukrainian war crimes and crimes against humanity and the share of sources in the official communication

During the meeting, Putin explained the invocation of the law due to the ‘Kyiv regime’ refusing to ‘recognise the will and choice of the people’ (the results of the sham referendums), continuing the shelling of civilians:

‘The neo-Nazis are using plainly terrorist methods, plotting sabotage at critical infrastructure, attempting to murder members of local authorities. Just like their ideological predecessors – Bandera’s followers and Hitler’s accomplices, they are trying to create a criminal underworld, sending sabotage groups to our territories.’¹¹⁹

Commenting on the results of the meeting, the head of the Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev framed Russia’s war as just, claiming five million people fled ‘neo-Nazi Kyiv’s genocide’ to seek refuge in Russia¹²⁰. He also reassured Russian audiences of Kremlin control, promising government assistance for their return once ‘safe conditions’ were established. Meanwhile, the Russian MoD aimed to downplay Russian military failures while rallying domestic support by framing Ukraine as reckless and aggressive, allegedly following NATO’s orders to launch attacks in Kherson

without regard for casualties. Ukraine’s ‘criminal regime’—forcing untrained troops into ‘suicidal’ assaults and committing war crimes—was contrasted with Russia’s supposed moral restraint, portraying its ‘slower advances’ as efforts to minimise civilian casualties and protect soldiers, despite evidence of civilian harm in occupied areas.¹²¹

Most articles from both chambers of Russia’s parliament focused on legislation and procedures for the four annexed Ukrainian regions. As the Council voted to approve Putin’s martial law decree, Chairwoman Valentina Matvienko endorsed it, claiming it would accelerate the regions’ return to ‘peaceful life’ free from fear, shelling, and bombing, enabling residents to rebuild and resume normal life.¹²²

The Russian MFA was the leading promoter of the narrative alleging Ukrainian war crimes while portraying Russia’s actions as ‘humanitarian missions’ (Figure 86). Its statements, often intended for UN Security Council and OSCE meetings, aimed to shape global perceptions, particularly in the Global South, where Russia seeks support or neutrality. As Russian forces transferred ammunition, equipment, and units across the Dnipro River, Russia’s

OSCE representative, Maksim Buyakevich, accused Ukraine of planning a ‘dirty bomb’ provocation while claiming Kyiv ‘continues its terrorist attacks on the civilian population and carries out targeted strikes against exclusively civilian objects.’¹²³ Meanwhile, at the UN

General Assembly, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov justified the invasion as a mission to ‘protect Russians and Donbas residents’ and counter NATO’s alleged threats, accusing Ukraine’s leadership of waging ‘war against its own people.’¹²⁴



FIGURE 86. Russian MFA's framing of Ukraine as war criminal and Russia as humanitarian actor

On TV, a medium that broadly reaches the ‘ordinary people’ of Russia, the morally charged narrative was promoted, emphasising how residents of the ‘liberated areas’ suffer from the terror by ‘Ukrainian Nazis’— a framing that sought to legitimise Russia’s actions while galvanising emotional support among domestic audiences. Every single show

tracked for the research that aired during the timeframe of the case study (11 September to 30 October 2022), included elements of the narrative alleging Ukrainian war crimes and crimes against humanity (Figure 87). The intensity in the rhetoric accusing Ukrainians of atrocities on the two monitored TV programmes was moulded to follow the events

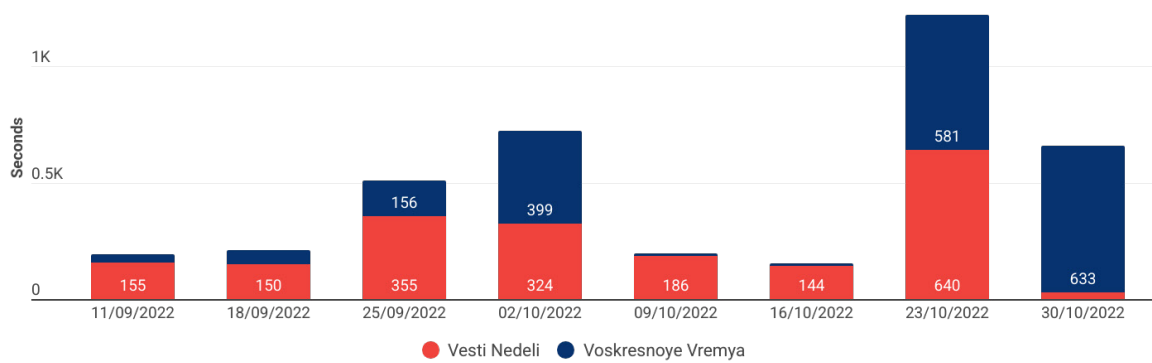


FIGURE 87. TV coverage of alleged Ukrainian war crimes (September–October 2022)

on the battleground, such as the annexation referendums, as well as Ukrainian counteroffensive in the Kherson region.

Quite expectedly, the narrative, as a core element of the Kremlin official justification of the war it launched against Ukraine in 2022 as ‘saving the people of the DNR and LNR’, was woven into coverage of the annexation referendums, turning Kherson and Zaporizhzhia into the project ‘Suffering of Donbas’ 2.0.¹²⁵ The Ukrainian government was portrayed as indifferent to civilians, its own people,¹²⁶ while annexation was depicted as a path to security and prosperity. Russian control was credited with rebuilding homes, schools, and hospitals, allegedly destroyed by ‘Ukrainian nationalists’ over the years.¹²⁷

Around mid-October, TV programmes shifted focus, reducing coverage of allegations of Ukrainian war crimes and crimes against humanity, and starting to emphasise the stability and functionality of life in Russian-occupied areas, with open cafes and shops, paid salaries and pensions, and ‘good’ local governance, which was intended to contrast with the alleged chaos and destruction caused by Ukraine (See Figure 88 for a visualisation of how the alleged ‘Ukrainian atrocities’ narrative evolved in Russian TV coverage). The Ukrainian ‘boeviki’ (militants) were accused of engaging in indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas, and yet the local population was portrayed as unwilling to

evacuate because of their loyalty to and faith in Russian forces, which served to validate the legitimacy of the occupation.¹²⁸

Against the backdrop of the withdrawal from Kherson (episodes of 23 October), the narrative turned to highlighting alleged Russian competence, portraying efforts to maintain order and infrastructure while presenting the administration as responsible and capable despite ongoing ‘Ukrainian aggression’. Meanwhile, Ukrainian forces were depicted as ruthless ‘Nazis’, who disregarded civilian lives, used the population as human shields, targeting evacuation routes and critical infrastructure like hospitals and dams.¹²⁹

The 30 October episode of *Vesti Nedeli* only briefly echoed the narrative, instead emphasising Russia’s ‘high-precision’ strikes in Kherson, advanced military gear, and captured Ukrainian POWs—framing the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) as unprepared and weak.¹³⁰ It also claimed the Pentagon’s plans for bases in Sevastopol and Kherson had failed. Similarly, *Voskresnoye Vremya* presented Kherson and Zaporizhzhia as a Russian launchpad for further ‘liberation and denazification’,¹³¹ while portraying evacuated Kherson residents as safe and happy in Russian-occupied Crimea.

18 September 2022

Ukraine is portrayed adopting 'terrorist tactics' in the absence of military success. Alleged attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure were emphasised, likening these actions to those of historical and contemporary adversaries, such as the Nazis and Syrian terrorists.

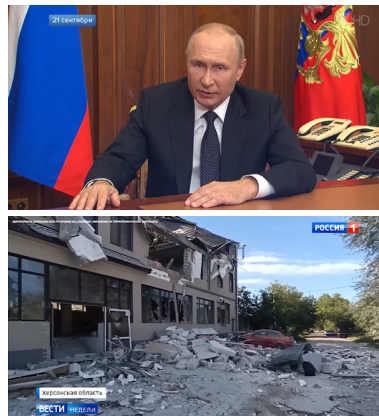


'In the absence of serious successes on the fronts, Kyiv relies on terrorising civilians. The same thing was practised by the Nazis so revered in the current Ukraine and terrorists in Syria. But it did not save either of them.' *Voskresnoye Vremya*, 18 September, 2022.

'In the absence of serious successes on the fronts, Kyiv relies on terrorising civilians. The same thing was practised by the Nazis so revered in the current Ukraine and terrorists in Syria. But it did not save either of them.' *Voskresnoye Vremya*, 18 September, 2022.

25 September 2022

During the 23–27 September 2022 'referendums' on the annexation of four Ukrainian regions to Russia, the TV shows intensified claims of alleged atrocities by 'Ukrainian Nazis,' depicting the regions as a legitimate choice for 'liberation' while framing Ukraine and its allies as aggressors attempting to sabotage the process through terror.

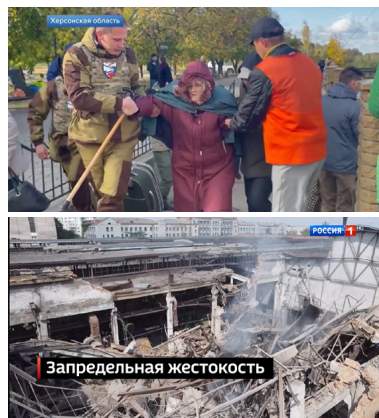


'In Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Luhansk, and Donetsk, neo-Nazis have committed atrocities. The heirs of Bandera kill, torture, imprison, and abuse civilians.' *Voskresnoye Vremya*, 25 September, 2022

Reporting on a hotel shelling in Kherson: 'Authorities of the region have already called it a terrorist attack to disrupt the voting. But Kyiv and its Western curators failed to achieve their goal.' *Vesti Nedeli*, 25 September, 2022

23 October 2022

TV shows sought to justify the evacuation of Kherson—propagandised as voluntary—while deflecting attention from violations of international law, such as forced civilian transfers, by highlighting alleged Ukrainian atrocities. Frequent references to 'Nazis,' 'prohibited warfare methods,' and claims about Ukraine's plans to destroy the Kakhovka dam aimed to delegitimise Ukraine.

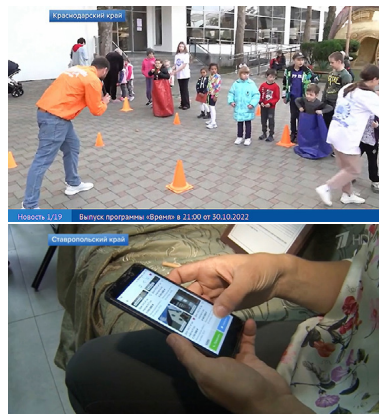


'The Nazis aim to prevent people from leaving and use civilians as human shields. This week, they targeted the dam and attacked civilians, including journalists, with NATO HIMARS.' *Voskresnoye Vremya*, 23 October, 2022

'Using American weapons against civilians: Kyiv is attacking the new Russian territories. "We have information about the possibility of the Kyiv regime using prohibited methods and means of warfare in the area of the city of Kherson"'. *Vesti Nedeli*, 23 October, 2022

30 October 2022

With imminent retreat in early November, Russian forces though were depicted as heroically defending civilians and gaining strategic control. The narrative of Ukrainian atrocities helped framing Russia as a saviour and moral authority amid reports of military setbacks.



[Evacuees from Kherson region are shown settling in Russia, with promises of housing certificates to help them buy homes]: "The houses you like, are they comparable to the one you have in Kherson? "They are better. Indeed better, much better!"

For those who have lived in Ukraine for the last 30 years, such support is unusual.' '...the liberation of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions has also created a powerful defensive frontier, which ...will become a springboard for the further liberation and denazification of Ukraine.' *Voskresnoye Vremya*, 30 October, 2022

FIGURE 88. Alleged Ukrainian atrocities narrative justifying annexations and retreat from Kherson

By 2023, the narrative focus experienced shifted from the reflections on the events in the occupied territories to events within Russia's internationally recognised borders, although no greater irregularities in the communication flow were observed. With occupation and annexation no longer requiring justification and Ukrainian forces

operating on Russian soil, the discourse adapted accordingly. The flexible framework of war crime accusations against Ukraine enabled a seamless narrative across Telegram, official state communications, and television, reinforcing claims in a manner consistent with Kremlin messaging.

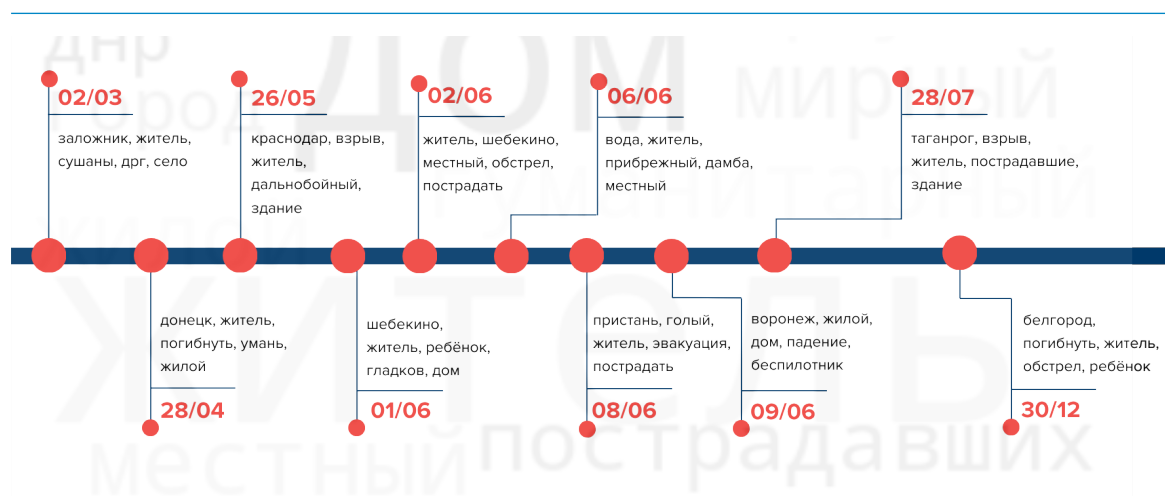


FIGURE 89. Main keywords of the top 10 occurrences of the Accusations of War Crimes against Ukrainians cluster in 2023

In seven of the ten peak periods when the *Accusations of War Crimes Against Ukrainians* cluster received the most coverage (as measured by paragraphs) on Telegram, key terms centred on incidents within Russian border regions, particularly in towns like Shebekino (Belgorod) or Taganrog (Rostov), (Figure 89). Thus, in early June of 2023, an increase in the number of posts narrating alleged war crimes by Ukrainians was generated by Telegram channels reporting on the shelling of Shebekino. ‘Ukrainian militants’ and ‘terrorists’ were accused of ‘fiercely shelling civilians’ and ‘carrying out brutal persecution against Russians on their own territory’.¹³² Similar to occurrences in 2022, attacks by Ukrainian were described as ‘terrorism’ for ‘not pursuing any military objectives with these strikes’, yet opting to ‘terrorise civilians and sow chaos’.¹³³

This narrative was also present in official Russian communications, with the MFA targeting international audiences to delegitimise Kyiv and discredit its allies. Claims depicted Ukraine as a junta ‘at war with civilians,’ allegedly seeking to exterminate Russians, with terrorist acts, such as blowing up nuclear storage facilities.¹³⁴ Meanwhile, state television reinforced this narrative for domestic audiences, portraying Ukrainian forces as weakened yet waging a terrorist war against Russia’s morally righteous army: ‘If there’s one thing they excel at, it’s waging war against civilians—Ukrainian Nazis have been doing this since Donbas. But is this even a war? Firing artillery at women and children?’¹³⁵

Case Study 2: Patriotic Education

For the analysis of the thematic cluster labelled as *Patriotic Education*, which was the leading narrative-based topic within the dimension of the ‘Liberated Areas’ in the Official Communication, we chose the full month of February 2023, when the volume of communications was the highest throughout the period of the research.

After reviewing the data, we found that the increase in the volume of official communications was affected by three major events within the timeframe of the case study—all three memorable days in Russia’s national calendar (Figure 90):

- 2 February: Day of the Victory of the Soviet troops in the Battle of Stalingrad;

- 15 February: the Day of Remembrance of Russians Who Performed Military Service Outside the Fatherland;

- 23 February: Defender of the Fatherland Day.

This finding is consistent with the line-up of the official communication sources by the number of articles that were posted on the monitored websites of the government/regulatory institutions: the share of the Ministry of Defence’s *function.mil.ru* stood at almost 80%, which is a reflection of the multidimensional and extremely pervasive militarisation of life in Russia and, even more so, in the occupied territories, as well as the Kremlin regime’s abusive relationship with history.¹³⁶



FIGURE 90. Peaks in Patriotic Education cluster in the official communication aligned with Russia’s February commemorations

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 only added a stronger emphasis and more layers to that: Russia has been developing a comprehensive strategy to militarise upcoming generations, ensuring readiness for military service and willingness to give their lives away for the Kremlin regime (‘mother Russia’ on billboards and in textbooks). It has been investing significantly in militarising children and youth, allocating substantial funds for patriotic education programmes, youth movements, and competitions, glorifying military service across all levels of education, emphasising the defence of the homeland and preparing students for potential conflicts.¹³⁷ The ideological indoctrination—under the banner of ‘patriotic education’—of young people in Russia

and the ‘liberated areas’, has been carried out both in the classroom (e.g. via weekly lessons called ‘Conversations About What’s Important’ to tell children about, for instance, the ‘goals and heroism’ in Ukraine) and in extracurricular activities.

Hence, when Putin met with representatives of patriotic and youth public organisations on 2 February 2023, at the Battle of Stalingrad Panorama Museum, at one of the events designed to mark the Day of the Victory of the Soviet troops in the Battle of Stalingrad (Figure 91), he claimed that the protections of historical memory was at the core of the struggle for Russia:

*'Our main task is to ensure the preservation of Russia, to create conditions for its progressive development, for its strengthening. And this task will certainly be accomplished. But one of the components of the work to achieve this common goal is, of course, revival, preservation of historical memory, which is what we have been talking about and what you are doing.'*¹³⁸

He referred to Russian youth as the most vulnerable targets on the 'battlefield of the information sphere,' following the narrative of Russia, promoted by the Kremlin, as a victim of perpetual external aggression, where Russia is a target not because of its actions, but due to its inherent status as a major global power:

*'Russia is a large country (...). And someone has always fought against it. (...) And this has always been accompanied by a struggle or a sphere of confrontation in information, in the media (...). Therefore, what is happening to-day around the special military operation is only an escalation of this struggle, which, I repeat, has always been waged. And it was always necessary to provide appropriate counteraction to this attempt to disorientate our people, our nation. Almost always, the main target audience of this influence has been young people, who cannot remember what happened in the past, and they cannot, perhaps, appreciate the present. But this is possible for our enemy, to put it bluntly, only if we ourselves sit and do nothing.'*¹³⁹

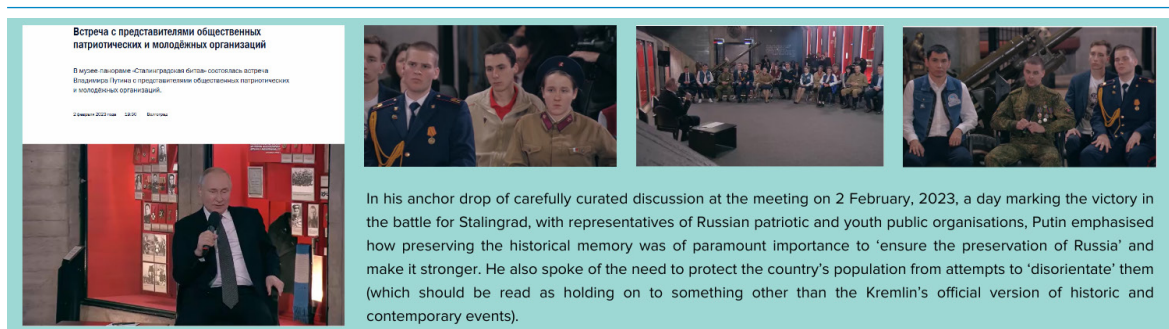


FIGURE 91. Instrumentalisation of historical memory through patriotic education narratives in support of Russia's war propaganda

The website of the Russian Ministry of Defence (function.mil.ru) produced the highest volume of coverage on the theme of patriotic education. The content was dominated by Yunarmiya (the All-Russia Young Army National Military Patriotic Social Movement Association) related articles (Figure 92). The organisation, which was officially created in 2016 'at the initiative of the Ministry of Defence with the support of the President,¹⁴⁰ actively participates in the military-patriotic education of youth in Russia, preparing Russian children for war:

'A patriotic lesson was held for the members of the Yunarmiya unit "Molniya" from the Omsk region. Within the framework of the lesson, Denis Kalchitsky, the head of the regional headquarters of Yunarmiya, demonstrated to

*the kids the elements of formation training, the order of disassembling/assembling a machine gun and equipping a magazine. In addition, the younger generation was shown how to put on gas masks and military protective suits.'*¹⁴¹

On function.mil.ru, articles involving Yunarmiya focused on commemorations of heroic deeds in the Great Patriotic War (marches, conferences and museum visits)¹⁴² or their equivalents in the 'special military operation' (taking part in such initiatives as 'Letter to the Defender of the Fatherland' or 'Letters to Soldiers on the Front Line'). The widespread merging of the two wars leverages the memory of the Great Patriotic War—a cornerstone of Russian identity, remembered

through countless memorials, celebrations, and omnipresent cultural reverence—as a way to frame the current events and as an imperative to act. Hence, Russian soldiers waging a war of aggression against Ukraine are referred to as ‘defenders of homeland’ to whom Russian children, including those in Yunarmiya, record and send their greetings, expressing admiration ‘for the courage of the modern defenders of the Fatherland.’¹⁴³

The goal of the Russian patriotic education is also to teach school students that loving your country means readiness to sacrifice your life whenever it is required by the state.

Members of Yunarmiya and similar organisations took part in a conference to mark the 80th anniversary of the death of Alexander Matrosov, a Soviet soldier who blocked a German machine-gun with his body in 1943, and who was posthumously celebrated as a hero, extensively in the Stalinist era:

‘His life was short and fleeting, but he performed a feat—a heroic deed. The star of his self-sacrifice burns in our hearts, the feat is not forgotten and can never be forgotten!’¹⁴⁴

Through a targeted search employing

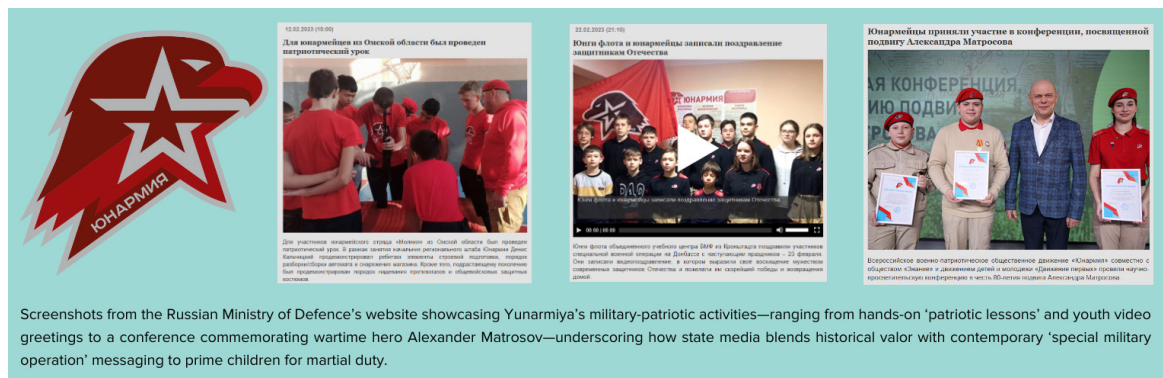


FIGURE 92. Instrumentalisation of historical heroism and memory in Patriotic Education narratives to prime youth for sacrifice and justify Russia's aggression against Ukraine

keywords aligned with those identified by BERTopic on the theme of patriotic education in the Official Communication, we analysed the content within the Telegram dataset from 1 to 28 February 2023. This examination yielded insights into the framing of patriotic education, highlighting its distinctive characteristics and (rhetorical) strategies. Channels targeting Ukrainian audiences led in the volume of articles mentioning patriotic education, with *Luganmedia* [2], *What is Really Going on in Kherson*, and *News of Kherson Region* ranking highest. This focus appears to underscore the Kremlin's efforts to erode Ukrainian identity among children and youth in the so-called ‘liberated areas.’ The promotion of the topic emphasises fostering a new generation aligned with ‘Russian values,’ potentially preparing them for militarisation and future war, i.e. a source of recruits for the Russian army.¹⁴⁵

Russian authorities and their proxies worked to replace the Ukrainian education system in occupied Ukrainian territories with the Russian education system, teaching an openly imperialist Russian curriculum that justifies the invasion, falsely portraying Ukraine as a ‘neo-Nazi state,’ and strictly limits instruction in the Ukrainian language, violating Ukrainian children’s right to an education that develops respect for the child’s ‘own cultural identity, language and values,’ as well as the ‘national values’ of the child’s country and country of origin.¹⁴⁶ The content of posts on Telegram channels targeting Ukrainian audiences can be categorised into several key themes (see Figure 93 for a detailed visualisation):

- Commemorative practices: posts that emphasise events and initiatives commemorating the Great Patriotic War

(GPW), with active participation by children and young people. These include ceremonies, school projects, and public commemorations aimed at merging the GPW and the so-called ‘special military operation.’

- Youth Organisation activities: posts highlight the activities of, and membership in, military-patriotic youth organisations, such as Yunarmiya and Dvizhenie Pervykh. These posts often showcase events, training, and similar efforts involving children and teenagers.

In general, rhetorically and stylistically, these posts were similar to the ones published by the Ministry of Defence on its official website, especially those on commemorations, be it ‘a musical and sporting event dedicated to the Day of Defender of the Fatherland’ at a Melitopol kindergarten,¹⁴⁷ or the installation of a ‘hero desk’ in a local school classroom. These ‘hero desks,’ part of a broader effort to cultivate youth loyalty to militarised chauvinism, typically

feature images of Russian soldiers who died during the war against Ukraine.¹⁴⁸ The consistent alignment of messaging underscores a coordinated strategy to embed patriotic and militaristic values into everyday educational and cultural practices, presenting these initiatives as both natural and necessary. Some of the posts were forwards from/quotes by the Russia-installed local officials, such as the news about representatives of the occupational Ministry of Youth Policy and Sport of Kherson Oblast meeting with ‘pupils wishing to join the Yunarmiya’ and their parents¹⁴⁹ or Suvorov-named cadet classes opening in Kherson regional schools to allegedly sustain knowledge of the ‘home-land’s’ history.¹⁵⁰ Posts praised military-patriotic education in the region by claiming that ‘members of Yunarmiya in the Kherson region have a unique opportunity to visit shooting ranges and practice with combat weapons. Here, servicemen give children skills that children from other regions of Russia cannot always get.’¹⁵¹

The content shared on Telegram channels aimed at Russian domestic audiences

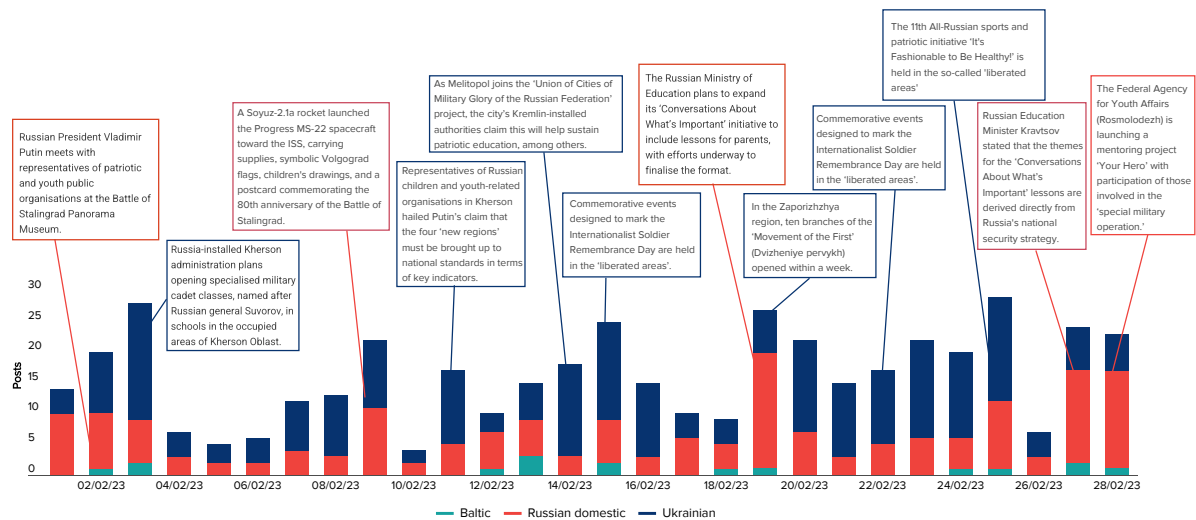


FIGURE 93. Mentions of patriotic education over time by Telegram posts and target audiences

demonstrated a notable difference to that of channels targeting Ukrainian audiences. The channels directed at Russian audiences were either reacting and further amplifying main news concerning patriotic education or

giving some comments on ways to improve it. The first group included announcements of Putin’s meeting with members of public patriotic and youth organisations in Volgograd, as well as an initiative in the Duma that

proposed the Russian Ministry of Education hold ‘Conversations about What’s Important’ not only for schoolchildren but also for their parents.¹⁵²

Among the posts that featured suggestions or comments as to how to update or improve the patriotic education in Russia, there was a suggestion on the *Vladlen Tatarsky* channel, underlining a preference for instilling martial values, toughness, and a rejection of softer or more inclusive approaches to character-building as an obstacle in raising those ready to wage war:

‘Today in Omsk, speaking to schoolchildren, I proposed to start the school day in the gym. There all boys would be divided into two teams, put on helmets, gloves and fight wall to wall for ten minutes. The hall liked the idea, judging by the reaction. It’s time to start raising warriors, and not tolerant pink pony lovers.’¹⁵³

Readovka, meanwhile, advocated for engaging youth in practical contributions to

the war effort through building UAVs in school aircraft modelling clubs:

‘Artisanal UAVs are easy to make and cheap—any aircraft modelling club can make dozens of such ‘flying bombs’ a day. As part of patriotic education, why not involve teenagers in active assistance to the front? It is possible to equip drones with defeat elements and explosives in the army, but an eighth-grader can assemble the ‘aeroplane’ himself.’¹⁵⁴

This idea extends patriotic education beyond ideological indoctrination to hands-on participation in military preparation. By involving teenagers in creating tools of war, it seeks to fuse education with direct support for military operations, normalising war as a collective and national endeavour.

On TV shows, the topic of patriotic education centred around two memorable days in Russia’s official calendar: 2 February, the Day of Military Glory, marking the end of the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943, and 23 February, the Defender of the Fatherland Day (Figure 94).

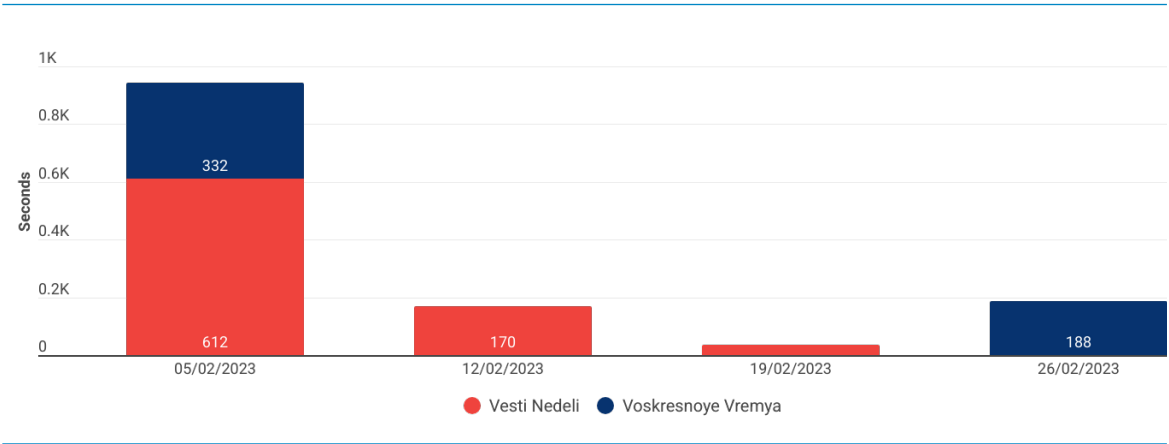


FIGURE 94. TV coverage of the patriotic education

In the first case, both TV programmes reported on Putin meeting representatives of patriotic and youth public organisations at the Battle of Stalingrad Panorama Museum (Figure 95). In the coverage of his discussion

with the young people, *Vesti Nedeli* provided a context that involved war merging and a more nuanced search for contemporary heroes. The programme contextualised the discussion by drawing parallels between the Great

Patriotic War and the current ‘special military operation,’ portraying it as another instance of Russia defending itself against ‘the collective West.’ The show claimed that, just as in World War II, when ‘all of Europe supported fascist Germany,’¹⁵⁵ Russia is now confronting modern aggressors and celebrating new heroes.

On *Voskresnoye Vremya*, meanwhile, the focus was on the threats the young people face from ‘psychological warfare’, as Kyiv was allegedly actively recruiting saboteurs on Russian soil, including teenagers. Putin was cited speaking about the ever-lasting war with the West that also concerned the info-sphere, whereas:

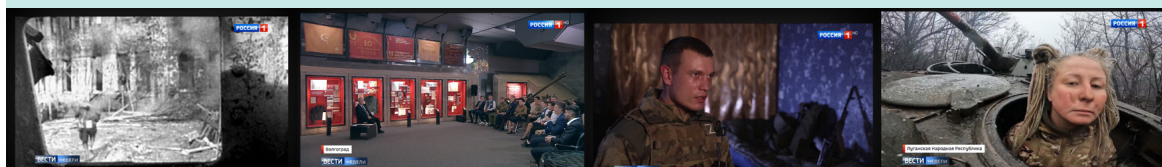
‘Faced with the obvious fact that Russian society widely supports the special military

operation, Ukrainian security services have concentrated their efforts in two areas—direct sabotage on Russian territory and psychological attacks. (...) Acting primarily on social networks, they have launched a full-scale war to destabilise the situation inside the Russian Federation.(...) They are working with foreign specialists who are versed in human psychology, neuro-programming, who know modern social techniques, manipulation technologies, game techniques. And that’s why they organise so-called flash mobs, challenges, involving young people and children in destructive activities.’¹⁵⁶

Both TV programmes reported on Putin meeting representatives of patriotic and youth public organisations at the Battle of Stalingrad Panorama Museum on 2 February, the Day of Military Glory, marking the end of the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943.

A Heroic Continuum

Vesti Nedeli framed the event as a seamless continuation of Russia’s historical fight against Western aggression. The narrative juxtaposed GPW heroism with contemporary military figures like Alexander Troshin, described as the ‘liberator’ of Marinka, Donetsk, and Sofia Kleimyonova, an IFV driver and icon of determination (killed in Ukraine later the same month). The implied message was clear: just as the USSR triumphed over Nazi Germany, modern Russia will prevail against its adversaries.



The Threat Within

Voskresnoye Vremya centered on perceived contemporary threats to Russian society, particularly targeting its youth. The show highlighted Putin’s comments on the ‘psychological warfare’ waged by Kyiv, allegedly in collaboration with Western specialists. The narrative alleged that Ukrainian forces were recruiting teenagers for sabotage and destabilisation efforts within Russia, warning of sophisticated techniques like manipulation, neuro-programming, and social media challenges. The alarming picture of an ongoing internal and external war may serve to justify increased surveillance, censorship, and anti-dissent measures.

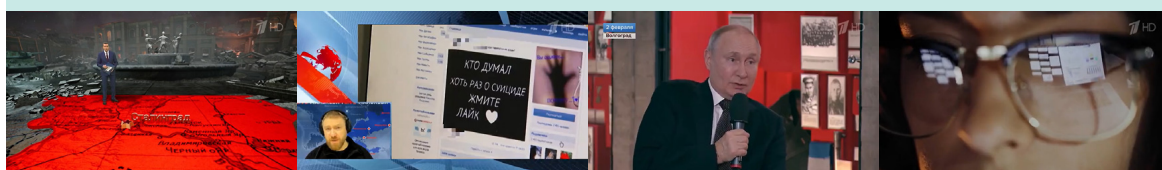


FIGURE 95. Patriotic education narratives framing the Stalingrad commemoration as historical continuity and as a struggle over youth in TV coverage

Reporting on the rally at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium that gathered tens of thousands of people to celebrate the Defender's Day, *Voskresnoye Vremya* made sure to convey the main idea Putin told the crowd about Russian soldiers in Ukraine: 'they fight heroically, courageously, bravely' defending the Fatherland and 'are supported by the whole country.' The narrative framed contemporary military actions, including the war in Ukraine, as a continuation of past struggles on Russia's 'historical frontiers.' It also drew a direct line between the Great Patriotic War and current armed conflicts, portraying them as part of an ongoing defence of Russian sovereignty and heritage. A colonel of the Russian army, who 'fought in both Chechen wars and in Syria,' was quoted as saying:

*'Do you remember how Crimea came to us? Vladimir Vladimirovich said it returned to the homeland. That should come back too. Real patriotic education must return to the homeland, must return to school, must return to universities.'*¹⁵⁷

The messaging emphasised societal unity and collective responsibility, encouraging active support for the war effort. References to volunteers and community involvement illustrated an attempt to foster a culture where every citizen plays a role in advancing Russian interests. Thus, a child, interviewed for the show, claimed he was there to:

'...support the servicemen. They're protecting us right now. And if I were just lying on my bed at home right now, my family would not consider me a relative at all.'

This chapter analysed two different information campaigns orchestrated by the Kremlin in the 'Liberated Areas' dimension. The first was the promotion of war crime allegations against Ukrainians on Telegram, and the second was the information campaign in the official communication intended to promote the narrative of patriotic education both in Russia and the 'liberated areas.' Similar to other chapters, the collected data offers evidence about potential narrative overlap between Telegram, Official Communication and the weekend TV programmes. The narratives of 'denazification' on Telegram got comparatively little friction in the official communication and on TV. However, the narrative of patriotic education, popularised in the official communication, was generally echoed on both Telegram and TV programmes.

Conclusions: Understanding the Collage of the Kremlin's Communication Strategy

The previous two reports already indicated the interactive nature of the Kremlin communication strategy on weekend TV shows, Telegram channels and the official communication. The 2023 report observed that the Kremlin's media strategy cannot be explained as a top-down exercise of control through ownership, censorship, and propaganda, as 'the Kremlin finds a way between a plethora of narratives independently created by power-seeking actors, the character of which has been shaped and curated for over two decades.'¹⁵⁸ The following report, published in 2024, pointed towards a balance between 'the tightly controlled official media and the fairly independent Telegram media system.'¹⁵⁹

Following these qualitative observations, this study focused on producing a data-driven analysis of the relations between Russian communication campaigns on Telegram, the official communication of Russian government institutions and weekend TV shows. This analysis offered four important insights. First, it revealed that the Kremlin information campaigns on Telegram, TV and official communications represent three different (though carefully orchestrated by the Kremlin) pieces that must be analysed together to get the full picture. Moreover, due to the different nature of each communication platform (Telegram, TV and official communications), it is important to approach this picture not as a puzzle to be assembled (as all pieces of a puzzle have similar characteristics), but as a collage—a result of assembling different forms, textures and materials to create a new whole. Each one of the analysed platforms represents a different part of the Kremlin's collage-style communication strategy with different levels of controllability and institutionalisation, different audiences and different narratives.

As demonstrated in the analysed case studies across four different dimensions, the communication campaigns on Telegram have the capacity to operate independently in forming and projecting strategic narratives, provided that they do not contradict the overarching narrative framework determined by the Kremlin. For example, in the cases of 'Patriotic Education' (1–28 February 2023) and the International Military Games (1–31 August 2022), the Kremlin created a very clear overarching strategic narrative through its official communications. In both cases, Russia's MoD staged carefully designed information campaigns. The first exploited a series of national military-oriented holidays that occurred in February to glorify military service across all levels of education and promote the activities of the MoD-led *Yunarmiya* organisation. The second was staged to promote the international stance of Russia in general and its armed forces in particular. Yet, as discussed in the analysis, despite the visible importance of these narratives to the MoD, the Telegram channels were reluctant to echo them on the same scale, adopting a more nuanced approach tailored to their audiences. The general engagement of the channels with these narratives on Telegram was insignificant, as these narratives were too propagandistic to be engaging enough in the user-generated, contested, online environment.

It does not mean that the Telegram ecosystem never echoes official communications. For example, as discussed in the case of the destruction of Western armoured vehicles in Ukraine (1 June–15 July 2023), the initial release by the MoD that set up the narrative framework was quickly picked up by Telegram channels. Directed towards different audiences, in a much more dynamic information environment, the campaign on Telegram took on a life of its own, significantly overshadowing the following

official communications on the subject. In other words, operating within a larger strategic narrative framework, Telegram channels also exhibit the capacity to shape the Kremlin's communication.

This capacity is best seen in the ability of Telegram channels to amplify content generated by the Kremlin that would otherwise enjoy a very limited engagement. The best example of such amplification was discussed in the case of explaining the Russian 'special military operation' in the international arena (1–28 February 2023). This communication campaign led by the Russian MFA focused on a sequence of interviews given by Russian diplomats in reaction to a series of decisions in support of Ukraine that were made by several Western countries. But even when amplifying the MFA's campaign in the Telegram ecosystem, the channels did not strictly follow the MFA's official communications, demonstrating a degree of independence in their choices of content that they felt would resonate best with their audiences—the diplomat most amplified on Telegram was the Russian ambassador to the US, Anatoly Antonov, who was not included in the MFA's official communications.

This leads to the second important insight of this study. All three analysed Telegram ecosystems (Baltic, Ukrainian and Russian domestic) are shaped by a high volume of amplifiers—accounts with a large number of posts with a very low average viewership, when the majority of the posts are links to posts published by other Telegram channels. While briefly discussed in Chapter 1, this phenomenon requires further investigation for two main reasons:

- (a) Most Telegram accounts managed by media outlets have relatively small viewership, and, therefore, usually disregarded in research as insignificant. For example, *IZ.RU* (*Izvestiya* newspaper) has 19,937 views per post and *Zvezdanews* (TV channel of Russia's MoD) has 21,580. These numbers are incomparable to *Soloviev* (251,803 views per post) or *Мир сегодня с "Юрий Подоляка"* (channel of milblogger Yuri

Podolyaka with 1,525,858 views per post). However, the amplification evidence suggests that posts published by these media channels enjoy significantly larger viewership than indicated on their posts only. For example, from 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2023, *Igors Kuzmuks* (a pro-Russian blogger targeting Baltic audiences) published 226,556 posts (an average of 276 posts per day)—15% of these posts amplified Russian media channels—*Baltnews*, *Zvezdanews*, *Anna_news*, *Izvestia*, *Lentadnya*, and *NTVnews*.

- (b) Many of these amplifiers maintain presence on other social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). Since they are not currently sanctioned as Kremlin-associated channels, they freely amplify Russian narratives on other social media platforms to propagate and popularise messages created by the Kremlin.

The third insight is about Russian official communications about Ukraine. The level of coverage of the War in Ukraine on the Kremlin's official channels of communications is surprisingly low for a country involved in a bloody war of attrition (even if it calls it a 'special military operation') and facing international sanctions on an unprecedented scale. The attention given to Ukraine or the 'special military operation' on the websites of Russia's MoD and MFA, two main ministries responsible for communicating this 'special military operation' to domestic and international audiences, rarely exceeded 20% (throughout the whole analysed period from 1 October 2021, to 31 December 2023), while the majority of their communications were about 'business as usual', such as military exercises and overseas deployments for the MoD, and international conferences and bilateral relations for the MFA. This means that the Kremlin 'subcontracted' the coverage of the war in Ukraine to Telegram, keeping official communications vague and general, while TV programmes selectively choose between the narratives from Telegram

and official communications, presenting TV-only audiences with a carefully curated mixture of both.

This leads to the fourth and final insight offered by this study—the role of TV programmes in the Kremlin’s communications strategy. First, it is important to acknowledge that the study focused only on the weekend programmes broadcasted on national networks that play a very particular role. Hence, this insight cannot be generalised for other types of broadcasts, such as daily news or news on regional networks.

Throughout all analysed case studies, it becomes evident that, due to their purpose to summarise and reflect on the events that took place across a whole week, their ability to allocate enough time to a certain narrative is limited. This was one of the main reasons why the topic clustering software struggled to identify clear clusters of narratives in TV programmes. To put it simply, they talk about everything, focusing more on the host’s (and guests’) interpretation of the events, rather than on the events themselves. Moreover, enjoying certain independence, they mix and match different narratives originating from Telegram and official communications. For example, in the first two weeks during the case of the supply of Western MBT’s to Ukraine (1 January–15 February 2023), TV programmes followed the discussions on Telegram, as there were no clear communications on official channels. However, following the clear official reaction to the decision of the US and Germany to supply

their MBTs to Ukraine, the TV hosts quickly aligned with the official narrative. Another interesting example is the reluctance of weekend TV shows to echo the campaign of the MoD surrounding the International Army Games (1–31 August 2022). This lack of attention can be probably explained by the fact that the events were covered in detail on the MoD-run TV network *Zvezda* and were less appealing to the general public.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasise the holistic nature of the Kremlin’s media strategy. Similar to collages in art, it is an assemblage of different parts that might make sense on their own, but when put together they create a completely new whole. The interactions between these parts (Telegram, the Official Communication and TV) are neither linear nor clear. As suggested in our 2024 report, the parts in this collage have different levels of controllability that depend on different conditions, principles, norms and rules, created by the Kremlin with the aim of streamlining and regulating its communications.¹⁶⁰ Building upon previous reports, this report offered an additional layer of important insights based on data-driven analysis. However, further investigations are required to fully understand (and counter) the whole collage of the Kremlin’s interactive communication strategy. For example, a systematic investigation of Russia’s official communications on Telegram and X conducted by its diplomatic representations worldwide suggests an existence of an additional part of the Kremlin’s overall communication collage that requires further attention.¹⁶¹

Appendices

Appendix 1: Keywords Used to Divide the Telegram Dataset into Four Dimension-Focused Subsets

No.	Military	Count	Economic	Count	Foreign	Count	Liberated	Count
1	военный	572064	миллион	143320	сша	525627	херсон	2892222
2	всу	547917	принять	141019	запад	331863	территория	279062
3	война	311733	экономика	132527	европа	271902	житель	276787
4	сила	284399	правительство	119672	мир	270315	помощь	271328
5	удар	265948	рубль	114650	глава	265574	ребёнок	204118
6	направление	265391	санкция	111577	сторона	242295	регион	188316
7	противник	220747	цена	107363	нато	154366	дом	185727
8	войско	208315	деньга	99974	поддержка	142881	запорожский	165254
9	работать	205274	поставка	97100	отношение	139151	донецк	163952
10	пункт	203579	газ	85847	мирный	129068	республика	159427
11	боевой	195124	стоять	79922	безопасность	126161	днр	158128
12	уничтожить	191811	производство	79054	граница	121382	местный	133559
13	армия	185801	развитие	78109	представитель	120457	донбасс	130350
14	оружие	181016	программа	70429	латвия	110784	харьков	122536
15	ракета	161907	социальный	70427	конфликт	109019	лнр	119967
16	оборона	160902	рынок	66382	победа	108858	население	102840
17	бой	152347	банк	62216	международный	101097	гуманитарный	93011
18	техника	151443	млрд	62212	польша	97490	мариуполь	88082
19	фронт	151050	доллар	59912	участие	96762	школа	86735
20	подразделение	149519	тыс.	58243	иностраный	88025	пострадать	60827

Appendix 2: Labels of Telegram Topics in Each Dimension

2. 1. Labels in the Military Dimension on Telegram:

Total Number of Paragraphs	Label	Description	Examples
18064	Western support to Ukraine	Paragraphs that refer to economic or military support of Ukraine provided by the West, including transfer of hardware and trainings	['белый дом объявить новый пакет военный помощь'; 'сша передать два первый зенитный ракетный комплекс зрк nasams украина'; 'германия передать украина дальнo-бойный крылатый ракета taurus'; 'сша продать украина большой ударный бпла mq-1c gray eagle reuters'.]
16339	References to Western media	Paragraphs that refer to articles/statements/opinions published in Western media	['the new york times опубликовать карта скопление войско россия граница украина'; 'financial times писать россия уничтожить склад западный ракета украинских тыл'; 'the wall street journal утверждать всу готовить наступление херсон'; 'forbes сообщить новый серьёзный угроза воору-жённый сила украина'.]
14541	Reports from the frontlines	Paragraphs that refer to developments on the front and within the 'liberated areas'	['карта военный действие ситуация фронт вечер 6 март'; 'отбой тревога'; 'военный хроника главный событие день'; 'фронтной сводка херсонский направление'.]
7505	Western Hardware for/in Ukraine	Paragraphs that specifically refer to reports on the destruction of Western equipment	['уничтожение танк leopard запорожский направление'; 'боец русский армия уничтожить бмп bradley запорожский фронт'; 'днр уничтожить два радиолокационный станция контрбатарейный борьба производство сша an tpq-50'; 'российский военный уничтожить пусковой установка американский противокорабельный ракетный комплекс harpoon одесский область'.]
6734	Russian air defence	Paragraphs that refer to reports on the successes and failures of Russian air defence in intercepting Ukrainian air attacks	['средство пво сбить 8 ракета storm shadow крым'; 'свато-во применение рсзо himars 1 ракета'; 'ракета зрк patriot'; 'мост обстрелять ракета storm shadow'.]
3821	Russian air attacks	Paragraphs that refer to reports on the successful Russian missile/drone attacks on Ukrainian targets	['кадр поражение российский frv дрон позиция против-ник'; 'frv дрон уничтожить машина враг'; 'frv дрон уничто-жить танк всу запорожский направление'.]
2236	References to other (pro)Russian sources	Paragraphs that make reference to Russia's MOD, milbloggers, military experts, and other sources	['военный эксперт борис рожин'; 'специально канал воен-кор котенок'; 'брифинг минобороны россия'.]
1892	Ukrainian attacks	Paragraphs that refer to reports on the successful Ukrainian missile/drone attacks on Russian targets	['всу атаковать белгородский область несколько беспил-лотник shot'; 'очередной видео удар бпла bayraktar tb2 украина'; 'bayraktar tb2 разведывательный ударный беспилотник'.]
849	Western military drills	Paragraphs that refer to military drills conducted by NATO/ Western militaries	['стартовать крупный история нато военно воздушный учение air defender 23'; 'нато объявить военный учение air defender 23'.]
793	Starlink	Paragraphs that refer to the services provided by Starlink to Ukrainian military	['компания спарсех ограничить доступ военный беспилот-ник украина сеть спутниковый связь starlink'; 'компания илона маска спарсех отключить услуга интернет starlink'; 'украинские военный использовать starlink наступатель-ный цель'.]

2. 2. Labels in the Economic Dimension on Telegram:

Total Number of Paragraphs	Label	Description	Examples
14252	References to Western media	Paragraphs that refer to articles/statements/opinions published in Western media	['власть сша вводить санкция против уран россия сообщить агентство reuters ссылка источник', 'reuters цена нефть подняться 2', 'the wall street journal экономика европа падать сша расти', 'сша планировать сегодня ввести санкция против путин говорить источник спн'.]
11701	Western financial support to Ukraine	Paragraphs that refer to economic support provided by the West to Ukraine and its potential detrimental effects on the Western economy	['сша выделять украина очередной пакет военный помощь сумма \$ 500 млн сообщить пентагон', 'С этого года Европа будет жить без российской нефти потолка цен 60\$ за баррель', 'Минфин США \$14,5 млрд прямой финансовой поддержки Украины'.]
7347	Western military support	Paragraphs that refer to the volume and types of military equipment received by Ukraine and reports on its deployment on the battlefield	['лондон планировать поставить украина танк challenger 2', 'сша допустить поставка истребитель f-16 украина', 'днр уничтожить радиолокационный станция контрбатареинный борьба производство сша an tpq-50', '6,5 тысяча противотанковый система javelin', 'вс рф уничтожить запорожский область пять пусковой установка рсзо mlrs производство сша', 'турция отказаться поставлять украина ударный беспилотник bayraktar tb2'.]
4925	Western sanctions against Russian industry sectors	Paragraphs that refer to the Western sanctions against retail, aviation, banking, car and other sectors of Russian industry	['Bank of China с 13 июня прекратил прием от российских банков платежей', 'российский авиакомпания использовать самолёт airbus boeing несмотря санкция', 'цб заявить карта visa mastercard российский банк продолжить работать рф', 's7 airlines частично отменить международный рейс airbus авиакомпания арестовать санкция'.]
4286	Restrictions on online/social media/streaming content	Paragraphs that refer to restrictions by Russian authorities or online/streaming channels imposed on politically sensitive content	['apple подтверждать возможность отключение устройство apple санкция', 'facebook instagram исключить реестр социальный сеть рф', 'приложение тинькофф банк пропасть app store', 'блокировка youtube канала дума'.]
3098	Russia's response to Western economic sanctions	Paragraphs that refer to successful Russia's response to Western economic sanctions	['отключение swift три российский банк сбербанк московский кредитный банк россельхозбанк белорусский банк развитие реконструкция', 'Импорт российских товаров в Японию в апреле вырос на 67,3%'.]
2202	Western companies withdrawing from Russia	Paragraphs that refer to Western companies that withdrew from Russia or halted their operations in the country	['газпром назвать поставка турбина siemens россия невозможный санкция', 'nike закрывать магазин россия', 'ikea приостанавливать работа магазин россия', 'компания mcdonald's заявить уходить российский рынок'.]
1030	European dependency on Russian gas	Paragraphs that refer to reports on potential damage to European economies due to its dependency on Russian gas	['nord stream 2 ag подавать банкротство сообщить компания', 'siemens energy уходить россия терять 400 млн евро выручка', 'данным gas infrastructure европе уровень газ подземный хранилище европа опуститься'.]
667	Starlink	Paragraphs that refer to the services provided by Starlink to Ukrainian military	['spacex поставка starlink украина', 'спутниковый сеть starlink отказаться требование правительство блокировать интернет доступ российский сми', 'компания spacex управлять система спутник starlink'.]
515	Ineffectiveness of Western sanctions	Paragraphs that refer to reports on the ineffectiveness of Western economic sanctions	['запад страны санкции Россия не дают эффект', 'сша ждать мощный экономический кризис антироссийский санкция', 'американский банк jpmorgan chase goldman sachs group приостановить операция долг россия bloomberg'.]

2. 3. Labels in the Foreign Policy Dimension on Telegram:

Total Number of Paragraphs	Label	Description	Examples
27916	References to Western media	Paragraphs that refer to articles/statements/opinions published in Western media	[‘мнение поделить автор американский издание forbes’; ‘писать new york times ссылка американский западный официальный лицо’; ‘украина угрожать западный банк писать газета financial times’; ‘зеленский заявить интервью американский газета the wall street journal’.]
17057	Western military support	Paragraphs that refer to the volume and types of military equipment received by Ukraine and reports on its deployment on the battlefield	[‘всу нанести удар мост граница крым ракета storm shadow’; ‘источник место писать ракета storm shadow крым’; ‘удары ракета storm shadow “выдают” западная разведка’.]
13763	References to other (pro)Russian sources	Paragraphs that make reference to Russia’s MOD, milbloggers, military experts, and other sources	[‘спикер госдума Вячеслав Володин написать telegram канале’; ‘тема мирный договор япония россия закрыть заявить мид рф’; ‘путин выступать обращение атака беспилотник московский регион’; ‘украинские сми сообщать ракета одесса львов подписаться zvezdanews’.]
5792	Denazification	Paragraphs that refer to ‘denazification’ and achieving victory	[‘денацификация’; ‘могилизация’; дапобеде россия украина госдума сво закон z’; ‘победа победа’.]
4343	Western sanctions against Russian industry sectors	Paragraphs that refer to the Western sanctions against retail, aviation, banking, car and other sectors of Russian industry	[‘национализировать отправить запад самолёт boeing airbus летать российский авиакомпания’; ‘samsung удалить буква Z’; ‘UBS Credit Suisse следствие власти США’.]
3233	Restrictions on online/social media/streaming content	Paragraphs that refer to restrictions by Russian authorities or online/streaming channels imposed on politically sensitive content	[‘meta запретить рф ресурс’; ‘представитель мид рф захаров информация google заблокировать youtube канал госдума дума тв’; ‘блокировка’; ‘контент’.]
2436	Destruction of Western equipment	Paragraphs that specifically refer to reports on the destruction of Western equipment	[‘уничтожить два украинских беспилотный летательный аппарат’; ‘уничтожить боевая машина живая сила’.]
1987	G20 summit	Paragraphs that refer to the 2023 G20 Summit	[‘министр иностранный дело россия сергей лавров саммит g20’; ‘зеленский планировать принять участие саммит g20’; ‘проблема участие путин саммит g20 лавров’.]
1831	Ukrainian attacks	Paragraphs that refer to reports on the successful Ukrainian missile/drone attacks on Russian targets	[‘район одесса сбить ударный бпла bayraktar tb2’; ‘беспилотник’; ‘разведывательный’.]
1757	Western companies withdrawing from Russia	Paragraphs that refer to Western companies that withdrew from Russia or halted their operations in the country	[‘mcdonald’s решить окончательно уйти россия’; ‘starbucks’; ‘сеть’; ‘бренд’.]

2. 4. Labels in the ‘Liberated Areas’ Dimension on Telegram:

Total Number of Paragraphs	Label	Description	Examples
78117	Accusations of war crimes against Ukrainians	Paragraphs that refer to reports about Ukrainian forces conducting war crimes	[‘семь человек ранить результат удар всу донецк глава днр’; ‘в результат обстрел всу новый каховка пострадать мирный житель’; ‘лнр сутки мирный житель погибнуть результат обстрел сторона всу’; ‘всу целенаправленно бить по гражданским объектам’.]
77377	Russian air attacks	Paragraphs that refer to reports on the successful Russian missile/drone attacks on Ukrainian targets	[‘подтвердить данным ракетный удар вкс рф запорожье поразить объект военный инфраструктура противник’; ‘многочисленный повреждение получить жилой дом объект гражданский инфраструктура пострадать два человек’; ‘воздушный тревога объявить пять регион украина’.]
19865	Reports from the frontlines	Paragraphs that refer to developments on the front and within the ‘liberated areas’	[‘в харьков’; ‘запорожье’; ‘дапобезде украина россия денацификация мариуполь’; ‘утренний сводка обстрел левобережье херсонский область’.]
14723	Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant	Paragraphs that refer to reports on the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant	[‘решение безопасность запорожский аэс найти конец год глава магатэ’; ‘миссия магатэ запорожский аэс’.]
48396	Integration of the ‘liberated areas’	Paragraphs that refer to ‘support’ and integration of ‘liberated areas’ into Russian Federation	правительство россия направить регион 8 млрд рубль цель новый территория’; ‘власть принять бюджет херсонский область 2023 год’; ‘эвакуация’; ‘пенсионный’; ‘социальный’; ‘гуманитарнаямиссия’.]
6702	References to Western media	Paragraphs that refer to articles/statements/opinions published in Western media	[‘reuters зеленский посетить херсон’; ‘украинские военный нести тяжёлый потеря донбасс писать the new york times’; ‘украина ждать республиканский зима the washington post’; ‘российский военный начать наступление харьковский область писать the guardian’.]
6027	References to other (pro)Russian sources	Paragraphs that make reference to Russia’s MOD, milbloggers, military experts, and other sources	[‘местный telegram каналы’; ‘источник telegram канал министерство здравоохранение херсонский область’; ‘сводка представительство лнр’.]
3767	Ukrainian attacks	Paragraphs that refer to reports on the successful Ukrainian missile/drone attacks on Russian targets	[‘житель севастиополь сообщать громкий взрыв’; ‘удар мост херсонский область нанести ракета storm shadow’; ‘первый применение bayraktar tb2 донбасс’; ‘за пройти сутки информация представительство сцкк днр противник выпустить двести боеприпас рсзо град ствольный артиллерия калибр 155 152 122 мм 120-мм миномёт’.]
2955	Destruction of Western equipment	Paragraphs that specifically refer to reports on the destruction of Western equipment	[‘вс рф уничтожить танк leopard всу запорожский направление’; ‘уничтожение бмп bradley подразделение запорожский направление’; ‘вс рф уничтожить днр радиолокационный станция контрбатарейный борьба производство сша an tpq-50 an tpq-36’.]
2254	Restrictions on online/social media/streaming content	Paragraphs that refer to restrictions by Russian authorities or online/streaming channels imposed on politically sensitive content	[‘херсон область отключить instagram facebook’; ‘деятельность facebook instagram запретить территория рф’; ‘закрывать youtube территория рф’; ‘роскомнадзор потребовал от Google прекратить’.]

Appendix 3: Keywords Used to Divide the Official Communication Dataset into Four Dimension-Focused Subsets

No.	Military	Count	Economic	Count	Foreign	Count	Liberated	Count
1	военный	90056	экономический	21086	международный	36595	республика	45958
2	военнослужащий	51299	отечественный	10973	безопасность	30335	состав	25202
3	боевой	35674	технический	10919	отношение	24591	ребёнок	22922
4	подготовка	27761	строительство	10860	сторона	23026	помощь	20932
5	пункт	27393	качество	10696	сотрудничество	19375	город	18508
6	округ	24768	экономика	10593	мир	18600	режим	17317
7	подразделение	23224	производство	9240	иностраннй	18331	операция	15651
8	техника	22954	компания	9033	сша	18079	гуманитарный	15258
9	обеспечение	20789	рубль	8375	западный	13952	народный	14129
10	войско	19492	рынок	8364	оон	13043	защита	14128
11	флот	19329	бюджет	8257	угроза	6986	житель	10409
12	служба	19146	технология	7846	нато	6880	контроль	10241
13	оборона	17658	предприятие	7519	договор	6797	население	10134
14	противник	17204	финансовый	7419	европа	6754	гражданский	9402
15	морской	16635	повышение	7219	соглашение	6609	беженец	8588
16	операция	15651	бизнес	6380	диалог	6577	дом	8482
17	война	14429	объём	6331	двусторонний	6431	донецкий	7901
18	защита	14128	отрасль	6282	американский	6261	восстановление	7600
19	вооружить	13538	оборудование	6126	конфликт	6137	местный	6737
20	армия	11554	рост	6031	требование	5993	конфликт	6137

Appendix 4: Labels of the Official Communication Topics in Each Dimension

4. 1. Labels in the Military Dimension in the Official Communication:

Total Number of Paragraphs	Labels	Description	Examples
15857	Trainings/ readiness across Russian military	Paragraphs that refer to military training and readiness activities across the Russian armed forces, including details about exercises, participation of personnel, use of equipment, etc.	['ход занятия военнослужащий выполнить норматив'; мероприятие боевой подготовка принять участие 100 военнослужащий задействовать 10 единица техника'; 'завершение занятия военнослужащий сдать норматив применение средство индивидуальный защита'.]
9850	Trainings/ readiness in the Central Military District	Paragraphs that refer to training and readiness activities within the Central Military District, such as combat training involving motorised rifle units and simulated enemy engagement, or anti-terrorism exercises	['соединение связь центральный военный округ цво дислоцировать новосибирский область состояться тренировка противодействие терроризм', 'военнослужащий мотострелковый соединение центральный военный округ цво дислоцировать кемеровский область уничтожить бронетехника условный противник ход практический занятие боевой подготовка'.]
4460	International military trainings/ games	Paragraphs that refer to international military training and events, such as the Army-2022 International Games, featuring the participation of Russian Armed Forces personnel in competitions and activities	['сборная команда вооружить сила российский федерация рамка участие международный этап конкурс воин мир армейский международный игра арми-2022 прибыть место проведение конкурс армения', 'военнослужащий гражданский персонал вс рф принять участие мотопробег посвятить международный военный технический форум мвф армия-2022 армейский международный игра 2022 год арми-2022'.]
2895	Trainings/ readiness in the Eastern Military District	Paragraphs that refer to training and readiness activities in the Eastern Military District, including engineering exercises, live-fire exercises conducted by various military units and combined arms formations etc.	['авиационный подразделение объединение', 'военнослужащий общевойсковой объединение восточный военный округ вво дислоцировать приморский край провести занятие инженерный подготовка', 'военнослужащий подразделение связь общевойсковой объединение восточный военный округ вво дислоцировать приморский край состояться тренировка организация связь пройти пункт постоянный дислокация соединение воинский часть армия'.]
2735	Destruction of Ukrainian forces	Paragraphs that describe the reported destruction of Ukrainian forces and equipment, including personnel losses, armoured vehicles, artillery systems, and ammunition depots, in various regions such as Donetsk and Kharkiv	['потеря противник сутки направление составить 60 украинских военнослужащий два боевой бронированный машина три пикап три автомобиль гаубица д-20 населить пункт водяное донецкий народный республика уничтожить склад боеприпас 72-й механизировать бригада всу', 'сутки направление уничтожить 60 украинских военнослужащий два боевой бронированный машина три автомобиль гаубица д-20 самоходный артиллерийский установка гвоздика район населить пункт киевская харьковский область уничтожить склад боеприпас 14-й механизировать бригада всу'.]

Total Number of Paragraphs	Labels	Description	Examples
1466	Trainings/ readiness of the Baltic Fleet	Paragraphs that refer to training and readiness activities within the Baltic Fleet, including missile strike exercises, tactical and special drills, planned live-fire exercises conducted by various units stationed in the Kaliningrad region etc.	['подразделение ракетный соединение армейский корпус балтийский флот дислоцировать калининградский область провести тренировка управление ракетный удар полигон регион', 'полигон калининградский область подразделение связь армейский корпус балтийский флот провести тактико специальный учение', 'военнослужащий мотострелковый полк армейский корпус балтийский флот провести плановый боевой стрельба полигон калининградский область'.]
1285	Trainings/ readiness of electronic warfare/ air defence forces	Paragraphs that refer to training and readiness activities of electronic warfare and air defense forces, including exercises on protecting military targets from drone attacks and drills on deploying modern EW systems in regions like the Sverdlovsk and Eastern Military Districts	['специалист подразделение радиоэлектронный борьба рэб восточный военный округ вво отработать вопрос прикрытие военный объект удар беспилотный авиация условный противник', 'полигон свердловский область военнослужащий подразделение радиоэлектронный борьба рэб центральный военный округ цво провести тренировка применение современный комплекс рэб'.]
1164	Trainings/ readiness in the Southern Military District	Paragraphs that refer to training and readiness activities of electronic warfare (EW) and air defense forces, including exercises on protecting military targets from drone attacks and drills on deploying modern EW systems	['военный база южный военный округ юво состояться полевой сбор командир подразделение', 'военный база южный военный округ юво армения провести единый день специалист медицинский служба', 'военнослужащий военный база южный военный округ юво армения провести занятие военно политический подготовка'.]
860	Russian humanitarian/ peacekeeping missions	Paragraphs that refer to claimed Russian humanitarian and peacekeeping missions, including medical assistance to soldiers and civilians, the distribution of humanitarian aid to local populations etc.	['военный медик эвакуировать военнослужащий мирный житель невозможный оказать медицинский помощь место санитарный вертолёт автомобильный транспорт', 'местный житель поблагодарить российский военный медик оказать медицинский помощь', 'гуманитарный груз распределить передать нуждаться житель очередь местный житель поблагодарить российский военнослужащий оказать помощь'.]
811	Russian humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in Syria	Paragraphs that refer to claimed Russian humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts in Syria, including the return of refugees from other countries, with details on the number of people crossing through border points	['пройти сутки сирийский арабский республика территория иностранный государство вернуться 100 беженец число ливан пункт пропуск дждайdet ябус тель калах 97 чел. число женщина 29 ребёнок 50 иордания пункт пропуск насиб три чел. число женщина 1 ребёнок 2', 'пройти сутки сирийский арабский республика территория иностранный государство вернуться 43 беженец число ливан пункт пропуск дждайdet ябус тель калах 29 чел. число женщина 9 ребёнок 15 иордания пункт пропуск насиб 14 чел. число женщина 5 ребёнок 9'.]

4. 2. Labels in the Economic Dimension in the Official Communication:

Total Number of Paragraphs	Labels	Description	Examples
14206	Economy planning and development	Paragraphs that refer Russia's strategic goals and economic planning, including the achievement of key objectives such as strengthening technological and financial sovereignty, advancing infrastructure, reducing poverty etc.	['история учить россия сдаваться условие достигать цель выполнить шесть стратегический задача президент поставить система публичный власть россия напомнить первый вывод новый уровень взаимодействие ключевой партнёр второй задача укрепление технологический суверенитет третий цель обеспечение финансовый суверенитет страна четвёртый опережать развитие инфраструктура регион пятый цель снижение бедность неравенство шестой поддержка материнство детство важный независимо очередность предложить выполнение задача обеспечить выход страна качественно новый уровень экономический технологический развитие благосостояние граждан']
11004	Development of domestic projects and related international cooperation	Paragraphs that discuss the development of domestic projects in Russia, in such areas as demographics, social support, family housing	['субъект российский федерация вместе реализовать сложный проект демография социальный поддержка семья строительство объём строительство упомянуть достаточно большой число строительство социальный объект регулярный основа вице премьер компетенция марат шакирянович хуснуллин проводить соответствующий совещание срок строительство выполнение показатель закрепить ваш указ сожаление ряд субъект российский федерация время возникать тема связать перенос объект вправо']
3683	Official discourse on the state of Russian economy	Paragraphs that refer to discussions about Russia's economic performance and development focusing on presenting statistical achievements, regional economic dynamics, and government measures aimed at market expansion, attracting investment, etc.	['согласно статистический данным 2021 год объём рынок составить 9,2 млрд рубль первый полугодие 2022 год рост агрострахования господдержка продолжиться прогноз объём рынок итог 2022 год 10,5 млрд рубль', 'объём инвестиция основной капитал 2021 год экономика архангельский область составить 106,2 млрд рубль снижение сравнение 2020 год составить 7,8 процент сопоставимый цена порядок 2,0 млрд рубль']
1841	Energy security	Paragraphs that refer to energy security as the key sector in the economics and highlighting efforts to ensure technological independence, develop unified energy markets, strengthen infrastructure. They emphasise these measures as vital to safeguarding Russia's economic sovereignty and advancing strategic goals	['российский федерация намеренный уделить особый внимание содействие реализация стоить еазс масштабный задача обеспечение технологический независимость ключевой сектор экономика продовольственный безопасность цифровой трансформация формирование общий энергетический финансовый рынок развитие транспортный инфраструктура наращивание научный молодёжный обмен поощрение инвестиционный деятельность подчёркиваться текст заявление']
884	Development of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)	Paragraphs that refer to the development of the EAEU, focusing on issues like Russia's priorities during its 2023 chairmanship, key issues on the EAEU's international agenda	['ход беседа основной внимание планироваться уделить приоритет председательство российский федерация 2023 год орган евразийский экономический союз еазс вопрос международный повестка еазс', 'развитие евразийский экономический союз еазс евразэс']

Total Number of Paragraphs	Labels	Description	Examples
861	Development of civilian infrastructure	Paragraphs that refer to efforts to improve essential public services, such as housing, utilities, and education facilities, including the maintenance of heating systems, construction and repair of schools and kindergartens	['специалист жилищно коммунальный служба № 6 г. ставрополь филиал федеральный государственный бюджетный учреждение фгбу центральный жилищный коммунальный управление цжжу минобороны россия южный военный округ юво завершить отопительный период объект находится обслуживание'.]
809	Development of military infrastructure	Paragraphs that refer to efforts to assess and maintain buildings and facilities within military towns. These include inspections of communal services, barracks, and housing stock, ensuring the functionality of engineering systems and equipment	['ход осмотр совместно представитель воинский часть специалист обследовать здание сооружение наличие повреждение трещина объект коммунальный хозяйство объект казарменный жилищный фонд военный городок дать оценка состояние инженерный система оборудование'.]
764	(Accounts on) adopted regulations and implemented projects	Paragraphs that discuss the implementation of regulations, highlighting the adoption of important legislative measures and the execution of key projects. These sections focus on how these regulations and projects contribute to the country's development and operational progress	['в.путин новый качество понимать', 'в.путин качество управление', 'в.путин оборудование'.]
637	Russian economy in the context of Western sanctions	Paragraphs that discuss the steps taken by Russian authorities to mitigate the effects of sanctions imposed on the country, focusing on the resilience of the Russian economy and addressing topics such as the performance of industrial enterprises, the push for import substitution, etc.	['обсудить социально экономический ситуация регион работа промышленный предприятие апк обеспечение импортозамещение учёт реалия находится страна', 'разный компания владимир владимирович небольшой региональный компания относиться сегмент мсп предприятие 20 год лидер отрасль суть крупный экспортёр входит список крупный частный компания'.]
263	State support and benefits	Paragraphs that discuss financial assistance and benefits provided to citizens, including support for families, aid for participants in the so-called 'special military operation,' and funding allocated to regional initiatives	['поправка бюджетный кодекс расширить возможность регион финансирование социально значимый проект отметить председатель гд вячеслав володин', 'ключевой приоритет бюджет социальный поддержка гражданин семья ребёнок отметить председатель гд вячеслав володин'.]

4. 3. Labels in the Foreign Policy Dimension in the Official Communication:

Total Number of Paragraphs	Label	Description	Examples
16942	Explaining the Russian 'special military operation' in the international arena	Paragraphs that refer to Russia's attempts to justify the 'special military operation' in Ukraine on the international stage, including diplomatic efforts in bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, as well as within international organisations	['украина донбасс продолжаться специальный военный операция цель задача защита днр лнр демилитаризация денацификация украина устранение угроза безопасность россия достигнуть союзный сила россия республика донбасс делать избежать жертва мирный население наносить удар исключительно военный цель высокоточный оружие']
13359	Russia's efforts to sustain international cooperation	Paragraphs that describe Russia's efforts to maintain and strengthen international cooperation, particularly in response to the economic sanctions and efforts to isolate the country; these include activities through various international and regional platforms, promotion of a new 'multipolar world order'	ход беседа состояться обмен мнение актуальный вопрос российско японский отношение число контекст продвижение политический диалог развитие торгового экономического сотрудничество взаимодействие международный арена', 'ход беседа обсудить практический вопрос дальнейший развитие российско израильский отношение поддержание регулярный политический диалог актуальный международный региональный проблематика расширение взаимодействие торгового экономического гуманитарный научный иных сфера']
6210	Development of (bilateral) relations	Paragraphs that refer to the ongoing bilateral talks and cooperation in various sectors such as defence, security, trade, culture, and humanitarian affairs, including preparation for high-level meetings and engagements	['сторона подробно обсудить актуальный вопрос двусторонний отношение развитие взаимодействие торгового экономического культурный гуманитарный сфера ход подготовка предстоять контакт высокий высокий уровень в т.ч. многосторонний площадка']
5083	International military trainings/ games	Paragraphs that focus on Russia's participation in and organisation of international military trainings and games, including events like the Army International Games (such as the 2022 edition) and the Army-2022 Military-Technical Forum	['армейский международный игра 2022 год пройти период 13 27 август с.г ход игра планироваться провести 36 международный конкурс', 'принять участие открытие международный военно технический форум армия-2022', 'сборная команда вооружить сила российский федерация рамка участие международный этап конкурс воин мир армейский международный игра арми-2022 прибыть место проведение конкурс армения']
1446	Russian humanitarian/ peacekeeping missions in Syria	Paragraphs refer to claimed Russian humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts in Syria, with particular focus on the return of displaced individuals to Syrian territory (data on the number of people who have been repatriated)	['30 сентябрь 2015 г. сирия территория иностранный государство вернуться 1 037 313 чел. число женщина 311 337 ребёнок 528 775', '30 сентябрь 2015 г. сирия территория иностранный государство вернуться 1 044 100 чел. число женщина 313 385 ребёнок 532 241', '30 сентябрь 2015 г. сирия территория иностранный государство вернуться 1 057 109 чел. женщина 317 305 ребёнок 538 892']

Total Number of Paragraphs	Label	Description	Examples
1311	Russian diplomatic efforts in Africa & the Middle East	Paragraphs that refer to Russia's diplomatic efforts in Africa and the Middle East, focusing on high-level meetings and visits by Russian Foreign Ministry officials to various countries in these regions	['20 март состояться переговоры министр иностранных дел российский федерация с.в.лаврова министр иностранных дел республика армения а.с.мирзояном посетить москва рабочий визит', '15 сентябрь заместитель министр иностранных дел российский федерация с.а.рябков встретиться посол арабский республика египет российский федерация н.нагари', '24 январь заместитель министр иностранных дел российский федерация с.в.вершинин принять посол арабский республика египет москва н.нагари просьба'.]
1096	Activities/ initiatives of Russian officials	Paragraphs that refer to the activities and initiatives of Russian officials, focusing on their participation in various committees and meetings in the area of international affairs across different sectors	['мероприятие принять участие сенатор член комитет сф оборона безопасность первый заместитель председатель комитет сф международный дело владимир джабаров джабаров', 'заседание принять участие представитель комитет сф оборона безопасность комитет сф наука образование культура', 'заседание комитет сф оборона безопасность'.]
913	Military trainings/ education	Paragraphs that refer to the preparation of Russian military personnel through exercises and specialised training programmes (combat training in different regions, participation of engineering and sapper units in tactical and special exercises aimed at neutralising hypothetical adversaries etc.)	['3 тыс. военнослужащий гвардейский краснознамённый общевойсковой армия западный военный округ зво приступить боевой подготовка полигон воронежский белгородский брянский смоленский область', 'военнослужащий инженерно сапёрный подразделение гвардейский краснознамённый общевойсковой армия западный военный округ зво рамка тактико специальный учение уничтожить условный противник воронежский область'.]
908	Russia and energy security	Paragraphs that refer to Russia's communication on energy security issues, such as the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), in the international arena	['ответ ожидать запланировать июнь с.г международный миссия магатэ запорожский аэс состояться находится постоянный контакт вопрос руководство агентство известный гендиректор магатэ собираться посетить станция лично', 'обеспечение безопасность запорожский аэс', 'подготовка международный миссия магатэ запорожский аэс'.]
895	Russian legislation (planned and adopted)	Paragraphs that refer to Russian legislation, both planned and adopted, highlighting amendments to existing laws, including updates to regulations on (biological) security, education, social and other areas	['владимир путин подписать федеральный закон внесение изменение статья 5 федеральный закон биологический безопасность российский федерация', 'владимир путин подписать федеральный закон внесение изменение статья 19 федеральный закон внесение изменение отдельный законодательный акт российский федерация', 'владимир путин подписать федеральный закон внесение изменение федеральный закон образование российский федерация'.]

4. 4. Labels in the ‘Liberated Areas’ Dimension in the Official Communication:

Total Number of Paragraphs	Label	Description	Examples
13061	Patriotic education	Paragraphs that refer to initiatives aimed at fostering patriotic education among youth in Russia and the ‘liberated’ arrears, including military-patriotic training programmes, youth engagement in military-themed clubs, events like drawing competitions in relation to (military) history	[‘центральный музей вооружить сила российский федерация пройти торжественный церемония награждение победитель конкурс детский рисунок мирный небо россия ребёнок военнослужащий гражданский персонал вооружить сила российский федерация юнармейцев воздушно космический сила год конкурс посвятить 60-летию первый полёт человек космос организатор конкурс центральный офицерский клуб вкп поддержка главный командование воздушно космический сила’, ‘курсант центр стать участник юнармейского движение член региональный военно патриотический клуб занятие центр проводиться профессиональный инструкторами военнослужащий цво рамка обучение ребят сформировать программа учебный сбор основа начальный военный подготовка военно патриотический смена знание история отечество’.]
7392	Trainings/ readiness in the Central Military District	Paragraphs that refer to a variety of military trainings and combat readiness within the Central Military District	[‘поражение цель зафиксировать средство объективный контроль’, ‘цель успешно поразить зафиксировать средство объективный контроль’, ‘средство объективный контроль подтвердить цель успешно поразить’.]
5652	Trainings/ readiness across Russian military	Paragraphs that refer to military training and readiness activities across various branches of the Russian Armed Forces, including live-fire exercises, engineering tasks, and radiation, chemical, and biological defense drills	[‘организовать занятие огневой тактический инженерный медицинский подготовка рхб защита ход военнослужащий выполнить норматив применение средство индивидуальный защита’, ‘военнослужащий проводиться практический занятие медицинский подготовка радиационный химический биологический защита’, ‘тренировка проходить руководство опытный инструктор получить боевой опыт ход проведение специальный военный операция сво украина’.]
3758	Trainings/ readiness in the Southern Military District	Paragraphs that refer to a variety of military trainings and combat readiness within the Southern Military District	[‘дом офицер южный военный округ юво состояться военно патриотический акция день призывник’, ‘военный база южный военный округ юво армения провести занятие личный состав перевод вооружение военный специальный техника зимний режим эксплуатация’, ‘специалист радиационный химический биологический рхб защита военный база южный военный округ юво принять участие общий тренировка военнослужащий соединение’.]
3278	Russian humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in Syria	Paragraphs that refer to claimed Russian humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in Syria, with focus on communicating organisation and delivery of humanitarian aid, efforts to rebuild infrastructure, and the facilitation of the return of Syrian citizens to their homeland	[‘организовать провести 3 150 гуманитарный акция сирийский гражданин доставить распределить 5 758,3 т продовольствие бутилированной вода предмет первый’, ‘алеппо самосвал экскаватор 18 окно 10 куб.м кирпич 6 куб.м цемент 950 кг отделочный материал 10 т строительный арматура восстановление четыре жилой дом’, ‘пройти сутки сирийский арабский республика территория иностранный государство вернуться 100 беженец число ливан пункт пропуск джиддет ябус телль калах 97 чел. число женщина 29 ребёнок 50 иордания пункт пропуск насиб три чел. число женщина 1 ребёнок 2’.]

Total Number of Paragraphs	Label	Description	Examples
3130	Russian humanitarian 'support' in the 'liberated' areas	Paragraphs that describe Russian humanitarian 'support' in the 'liberated' areas, including the distribution of essential goods to local residents and evacuation to Russia	[‘населить пункт житель раздавать продовольствие предмет первый первый очередь необходимый помощь обеспечиваться семья ребёнок местный житель поблагодарить российский военнослужащий оказать помощь’, ‘очередь местный житель поблагодарить российский военнослужащий оказать помощь’, ‘военнослужащий оказывать гуманитарный помощь житель населить пункт находится донецкий область’.]
2438	Destruction of Ukrainian forces	Paragraphs detailing the destruction of Ukrainian forces and military equipment during the ‘special military operation,’ including claims of eliminating Ukrainian personnel, armoured vehicles, artillery systems, drones, and other military assets, as well as repelled attacks and strikes on Ukrainian military targets	[‘проведение специальный военный операция уничтожить 125 самолёт 93 вертолёт 408 беспилотный летательный аппарат 227 зенитный ракетный комплекс 1987 танк боевой бронированный машина 216 установка реактивный система залповый огонь 862 орудие полевой артиллерия миномёт 1888 единица специальный военный автомобильный техника’, ‘район населить пункт новомихайловка донецкий народный республика уничтожить склад боеприпас подразделение всу’.]
1161	Trainings/ readiness of electronic warfare/air defence forces	Paragraphs that refer to the training and readiness of Russian electronic warfare (EW) and air defence forces, including their operations during the ‘special military operation’ (training of mobile EW groups, tasks related to electronic suppression of enemy communication and control systems etc.)	[‘мобильный группа радиоэлектронный борьба рэб объединить российский военный база киргизия ход тренировка защитить военный аэродром беспилотный летательный аппарат бла условный противник’, ‘войско радиоэлектронный борьба рэб вооружить сила российский федерация ход проведение специальный военный операция продолжать успешно выполнять задача радиоэлектронный подавление система управление войско оружие противник’.]
472	State support and benefits	Paragraphs that refer to Russian state support and benefits available to citizens both within the country and in the ‘liberated’ areas (including child support, pensions, assistance to participants in the ‘special military operation,’ etc.)	[‘комплексный совместный работа направление продолжить добавить первый заместитель председатель гд’, ‘просить продолжать работа число местный региональный орган власть говорить встреча коллега работать разный направление деятельность’.]
417	References to Russian officials speaking about ‘liberated areas’	Paragraphs that refer to statements made by Russian officials, such as the Chairman of the State Duma, regarding ‘liberated areas’ in relation to ‘the special military operation’, their occupation and annexation	[‘вячеслав викторович председатель государственный дума федеральный собрание российский федерация восьмой созыв подчеркнуть позиция россия вопрос специальный военный операция защита донбасс’, ‘вячеслав викторович председатель государственный дума федеральный собрание российский федерация подчеркнуть город представлять угроза’.]

Appendix 5: Keywords Used to Divide the Television Dataset into Four Dimension-Focused Subsets

No.	Military	Count	Economic	Count	Foreign	Count	Liberated	Count
1	военный	5207	европа	2498	сша	3589	военный	5207
2	мир	3541	газ	1653	мир	3541	ребёнок	2733
3	война	3354	власть	1646	американский	2707	дом	2664
4	оружие	2431	санкция	1436	европа	2498	место	2614
5	противник	2334	программа	1435	запад	2265	территория	2209
6	территория	2209	техника	1360	германия	1996	область	2043
7	боевой	2205	европейский	1279	западный	1949	донбасс	1813
8	позиция	1903	экономика	1159	глава	1712	житель	1669
9	нато	1767	производство	1131	отношение	1704	регион	1508
10	удар	1736	план	1122	власть	1646	донецк, донецкий	1380
11	армия	1668	проект	1068	безопасность	1529	район	1320
12	ракета	1650	компания	1047	китай	1412	пункт	1289
13	оборона	1550	развитие	948	граница	1337	погибнуть	1127
14	операция	1543	экономический	943	европейский	1279	план	1122
15	безопасность	1529	иностранный	919	победа	1173	дорога	1073
16	фронт	1529	рынок	913	американец	1165	население	828
17	боец	1458	комплекс	869	друг	1157	местный	786
18	бой	1436	угроза	810	встреча	1153	мариуполь	783
19	группа	1427	миллион	776	байден	1137	поддерживать	777
20							гражданский	767

Appendix 6: Official Communication— *Supply of Western MBTs to Ukraine (1 January– 15 February 2023)*

Date	Source	Title (translated from Russian)
18/01/2023	mid.ru	Interview of the Ambassador of Russia to Germany S.Yu. Nechaev with Rossiyskaya Gazeta
20/01/2023	mid.ru	Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE M.V. Buyakevich at a meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
25/01/2023	mid.ru	Interview of the Russian Ambassador to Poland S.V. Andreev with Izvestia
25/01/2023	mid.ru	Speech by the Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation to the Vienna Negotiations on Military Security and Arms Control K.Yu. Gavrillov at the 1033rd Plenary Session of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation
27/01/2023	mid.ru	Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE M.V. Buyakevich at a meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
27/01/2023	mid.ru	Briefing by the official representative of the Russian MFA M.V. Zakharova, Moscow
02/02/2023	duma.gov.ru	Vyacheslav Volodin predicted the fate of the German “Leopards” as the fascist “Tigers”
02/02/2023	mid.ru	Speech by the Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation to the Vienna Negotiations on Military Security and Arms Control K.Yu. Gavrillov at the 1034rd Plenary Session of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation
02/02/2023	kremlin.ru	Speech by The President of Russian Federation V.V. Putin at Gala concert on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the defeat of the Nazi troops in the Battle of Stalingrad
07/02/2023	duma.gov.ru	Vyacheslav Nikonov: Russia is a catalyst that makes the world better and turns it into a multipolar and fair one
08/02/2023	mid.ru	Interview of the Russian Ambassador to Germany S.Yu. Nechaev with Izvestia

Appendix 7: Official Communication—*Destruction of Western Armoured Vehicles to Ukraine (1 June–15 July 2023)*

Date	Source	Title (translated from Russian)
06/06/2023	function.mil.ru	Statement by the Russian Ministry of Defense
06/06/2023	function.mil.ru	Statement by the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, General of the Army Sergei Shoigu
06/06/2023	duma.gov.ru	Vyacheslav Volodin: The Kyiv regime’s counteroffensive is in its second day, with no success
21/06/2023	kremlin.ru	President V.V. Putin answers to a journalist’s question about the situation on the front
08/07/2023	mid.ru	Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE M.V. Buyakevich at the OSCE Permanent Council meeting
13/07/2023	kremlin.ru	President V.V. Putin answers to questions from media representatives
15/07/2023	mid.ru	Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE M.V. Buyakevich at a meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

Appendix 8: Official Communication—*Military Support to Ukraine* (15 January–28 February 2023)

Date	Source	Title (translated from Russian)
15/02/2023	council.gov.ru	539th meeting of the Federation Council
01/02/2023	mid.ru	Briefing by the official representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 1 February 2023
10/02/2023	mid.ru	Briefing by the official representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 10 February 2023
17/02/2023	mid.ru	Briefing by the official representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 17 February 2023
22/02/2023	mid.ru	Briefing by the official representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 22 February 2023
27/01/2023	mid.ru	Briefing by the official representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 27 January 2023
27/01/2023	mid.ru	Speech by the deputy permanent representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE, M.V. Buyakevich, at the OSCE Permanent Council, 26 January 2023
10/02/2023	mid.ru	Speech by the deputy permanent representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE, M.V. Buyakevich, at the OSCE Permanent Council, 9 February 2023
25/01/2023	mid.ru	Speech by a member of the Russian Federation delegation to the Vienna negotiations on military security and arms control, Y.D. Zhdanova, at the 1033rd plenary meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, 25 January 2023
08/02/2023	mid.ru	Interview with the Russian Ambassador to Germany, S.Yu. Nechayev, to “Izvestia Media Centre,” 8 February 2023
06/02/2023	mid.ru	Interview with the Russian Ambassador to Denmark, V.V. Barbin, to “Rossiya Segodnya” news agency, 5 February 2023
10/02/2023	mid.ru	Interview with the Russian Ambassador to Italy, S.S. Razov, to “Rossiya Segodnya” news agency, 9 February 2023
04/02/2023	mid.ru	The official representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M.V. Zakharova, answers a media question regarding the EU-Ukraine summit in Kyiv on 3 February
20/01/2023	mid.ru	The official representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M.V. Zakharova, answers a media question about the Ukrainian crisis
03/02/2023	mid.ru	The official representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M.V. Zakharova, answers a media question regarding statements by Ukrainian government representatives on the prospects of the country’s EU membership
28/02/2023	scrf.gov.ru	Article by the deputy chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, D.A. Medvedev, for the Natsionalnaya Oborona magazine

Appendix 9: Official Communication—‘Denazification’ (17 April–25 May 2022)

Date	Source	Title (translated from Russian)
17/04/2022	duma.gov.ru	Vyacheslav Volodin: Zelensky’s statements aim to buy time while appealing to NATO for military assistance
18/04/2022	mid.ru	Meeting between the Russian Consul General in Hurgada and the Governor of the Qena Province
18/04/2022	function.mil.ru	Yunarmiya members in Makhachkala expressed support for Russian servicemen engaged in the special military operation
20/04/2022	mid.ru	Briefing by Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 20 April 2022
20/04/2022	function.mil.ru	An expanded session of the Presidium of the Admiralty Coordination Council of Navy Veterans’ Organisations was held in St. Petersburg
20/04/2022	kremlin.ru	Meeting of the Supervisory Board of the “Russia – Land of Opportunities” organisation
20/04/2022	mid.ru	Interview with Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov by the Indian channel India Today, Moscow, 19 April 2022
20/04/2022	mid.ru	On the telephone conversation between Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov and African Union Commission Chairman M. Faki Mahamat
21/04/2022	mid.ru	Interview with the Director of the Second CIS Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry, A.A. Polischuk, by TASS news agency, 21 April 2022
21/04/2022	mid.ru	On a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister of Mauritius
22/04/2022	mid.ru	Remarks and answers to media questions by Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov following talks with Kazakhstan’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister M.B. Tileuberdi, Moscow, 22 April 2022
22/04/2022	mid.ru	Interview by the Russian Ambassador to Bulgaria E. Mitrofanova to the FAKTI portal
25/04/2022	mid.ru	On the meeting of the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots in Mauritius
25/04/2022	mid.ru	Press briefing by the Russian Embassy in Laos, 22 April 2022, on the situation in Ukraine
28/04/2022	mid.ru	Meeting in Hurgada with a bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church
28/04/2022	mid.ru	Remarks and answers to media questions by Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov following talks with Eritrean Foreign Minister O. Saleh, Moscow, 27 April 2022
29/04/2022	mid.ru	Briefing by Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 28 April 2022
29/04/2022	function.mil.ru	Northern Fleet servicemen participated in the “Z for a World Without Nazism” campaign
29/04/2022	scrf.gov.ru	Interview with Russian Security Council Secretary N.P. Patrushev in Rossiyskaya Gazeta
30/04/2022	mid.ru	Interview with Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov by China’s Xinhua News Agency, 30 April 2022

Date	Source	Title (translated from Russian)
01/05/2022	mid.ru	Interview with Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov by Italian media company Mediaset, Moscow, 1 May 2022
04/05/2022	mid.ru	Remarks by the Head of the Russian Delegation on Arms Control and Security Talks, K.Y. Gavrillov, at the 1008th Plenary Meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, 4 May 2022
04/05/2022	mid.ru	Interview with Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson M.V. Zakharova by the Spanish newspaper ABC
04/05/2022	mid.ru	On an interview with the Russian Ambassador to the Netherlands for the Dutch newspaper De Andere Krant on Ukrainian issues
05/05/2022	duma.gov.ru	State Duma Speaker dismisses allegations of looting by the Russian army as rumours
05/05/2022	duma.gov.ru	State Duma Speaker: Russia will overcome all challenges and emerge stronger; faith in our country is essential
06/05/2022	mid.ru	Briefing by Deputy Director of the Information and Press Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry A.A. Zaitsev, Moscow, 6 May 2022
06/05/2022	scrf.gov.ru	Interview with Russian Security Council Assistant Secretary N.M. Mukhitov for the journal National Defence
08/05/2022	duma.gov.ru	Vyacheslav Volodin: G7 countries acknowledge the successes of Russia's special military operation
09/05/2022	function.mil.ru	Russia's Ministry of Defence publishes documents on Ukraine's attempts to erase the heroism of Red Army fighters and commanders
11/05/2022	mid.ru	On Victory Day events in Romania, 9 May 2022
11/05/2022	mid.ru	On the "Immortal Regiment" campaign held in Cotonou
12/05/2022	mid.ru	Remarks by Russian Deputy Permanent Representative to the OSCE M.V. Buyakevich at the OSCE Permanent Council meeting, 12 May 2022
17/05/2022	scrf.gov.ru	Comment by Security Council Assistant Secretary Alexey Pavlov following a meeting of the Scientific Council under the Russian Security Council
18/05/2022	mid.ru	Briefing by Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 18 May 2022
18/05/2022	mid.ru	On articles by the Russian Ambassador published in the Mauritian press
19/05/2022	mid.ru	Remarks by Konstantin Gavrillov at the 1010th Plenary Meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, Vienna, 18 May 2022
20/05/2022	mid.ru	Remarks by Russian Permanent Representative to the OSCE A.K. Lukashevich on Ukraine's ongoing crimes against civilians with support from Western alliance states, Vienna, 19 May 2022
24/05/2022	function.mil.ru	Meeting of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers' Council held in Moscow
25/05/2022	mid.ru	Briefing by Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 25 May 2022
25/05/2022	scrf.gov.ru	Interview with Russian Security Council Secretary N.P. Patrushev in Argumenty i Fakty weekly

Appendix 10: Official Communication— *Allegations of War Crimes Against Ukrainians* (11 September–30 October 2022)

Date	Source	Title (translated from Russian)
14/09/2022	mid.ru	Address by the head of the delegation of the Russian Federation at the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, 1021st plenary meeting, Vienna, 14 September 2022
15/09/2022	mid.ru	Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE, M.V. Buyakevich, at the OSCE Permanent Council meeting on Ukraine's ongoing crimes against civilians with support from the Western alliance, 15 September 2022
21/09/2022	mid.ru	Interview of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Newsweek, 21 September 2022
21/09/2022	mid.ru	Address by the head of the delegation of the Russian Federation at the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, 1022nd plenary meeting, Vienna, 21 September 2022
21/09/2022	kremlin.ru	Address by the President of the Russian Federation
21/09/2022	council.gov.ru	Valentina Matvienko: Our country can overcome the most serious challenges
21/09/2022	council.gov.ru	529th meeting of the Federation Council
25/09/2022	mid.ru	Press conference by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the outcomes of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly High-Level Week, New York, 24 September 2022
25/09/2022	mid.ru	Speech by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the general debate of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 24 September 2022
27/09/2022	duma.gov.ru	Olga Timofeyeva: We will not abandon the Russian world in trouble
28/09/2022	mid.ru	Address by the Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation at the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, 1023rd plenary meeting, Vienna, 28 September 2022
28/09/2022	mid.ru	Statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry on referenda in the DPR, LPR, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions
29/09/2022	mid.ru	Briefing by Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova, Moscow, 29 September 2022
30/09/2022	duma.gov.ru	Faction leaders: the Russian world is being restored
30/09/2022	duma.gov.ru	Ceremony for signing agreements on the accession of the DPR, LPR, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions to Russia
30/09/2022	kremlin.ru	Signing of agreements on the accession of the DPR, LPR, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions to Russia
30/09/2022	mid.ru	Speech by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE, A.K. Lukashevich, at an expanded meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, 30 September 2022
03/10/2022	mid.ru	Speech by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the State Duma on the ratification of treaties on the accession of new entities to Russia, Moscow, 3 October 2022

Date	Source	Title (translated from Russian)
03/10/2022	duma.gov.ru	Vyacheslav Volodin: the decision was unanimous – Russia now has 89 regions
03/10/2022	duma.gov.ru	Faction leaders supported laws on the accession of the DPR, LPR, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions to Russia
03/10/2022	mid.ru	On the lecture of Russian Ambassador to Turkey, A.V. Erkhov, at Sakarya University
04/10/2022	mid.ru	Speech by the official representative of the president of the Russian Federation, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, at the Federation Council plenary session on ratifying treaties for the accession of the DPR, LPR, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions as new Russian subjects, Moscow, 4 October 2022
04/10/2022	council.gov.ru	530th session of the Federation Council
05/10/2022	mid.ru	Speech by K.Y. Gavrillov, Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation to the Vienna Negotiations on Military Security and Arms Control, at the 1024th plenary session of the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, 5 October 2022
05/10/2022	kremlin.ru	Meeting with laureates and finalists of the “Teacher of the Year” competition
06/10/2022	mid.ru	Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the OSCE, M.V. Buyakevich, at the OSCE Permanent Council, 6 October 2022
06/10/2022	mid.ru	Briefing by Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 6 October 2022
07/10/2022	mid.ru	Participation of Russian Ambassador to the OPCW, A.V. Shulgin, in a discussion on “Overcoming the Threat of Chemical Weapons Use” at the 101st OPCW Executive Council session, The Hague, 5 October 2022
07/10/2022	mid.ru	Statement by Deputy Head of the Russian Delegation, K.V. Vorontsov, exercising the right to reply during general political debates at the First Committee of the 77th UN General Assembly, New York, 6 October 2022
08/10/2022	mid.ru	Interview with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Argumenty i Fakty newspaper, Moscow, 8 October 2022
10/10/2022	mid.ru	Interview with A.A. Polischuk, director of the Second CIS Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for TASS news agency, 9 October 2022
10/10/2022	council.gov.ru	Senators facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to residents of the Donetsk People's Republic
11/10/2022	mid.ru	Speech by Russia's Permanent Representative to the OSCE, A.K. Lukashevich, at a special OSCE Permanent Council session on Kyiv regime's terrorist attacks against critical infrastructure supported by Western allies, 11 October 2022
11/10/2022	mid.ru	Briefing by Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 11 October 2022

Date	Source	Title (translated from Russian)
13/10/2022	mid.ru	Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the UN General Assembly resolution "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine: Protection of UN Charter Principles"
13/10/2022	mid.ru	Speech by K.Y. Gavrillov, Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation to the Vienna Negotiations on Military Security and Arms Control, at the 1025th plenary session of the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, 12 October 2022
17/10/2022	duma.gov.ru	Chairman of the State Duma: All efforts must be made to protect residents of Kherson
18/10/2022	function.mil.ru	Interview with General Sergey Surovikin, Commander of Joint Groups of Troops (Forces) in the area of the special military operation
18/10/2022	mid.ru	Statement by Deputy Head of the Russian Delegation, K.V. Vorontsov, exercising the right to reply during a thematic discussion on "Nuclear Weapons" at the First Committee of the 77th UN General Assembly, New York, 17 October 2022
18/10/2022	duma.gov.ru	State Duma takes control of the issue of relocating Kherson residents
18/10/2022	mid.ru	Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the OSCE, M.V. Buyakevich, at a special session of the OSCE Permanent Council, 13 October 2022
19/10/2022	scrf.gov.ru	On security in the migration sphere
19/10/2022	scrf.gov.ru	President Vladimir Putin held a video conference meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation
19/10/2022	scrf.gov.ru	Comment to the media by Security Council Secretary N.P. Patrushev following the Security Council meeting
19/10/2022	mid.ru	Speech by K.Y. Gavrillov, K.Y. Gavrillov, Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation to the Vienna Negotiations on Military Security and Arms Control, at the 1026th plenary session of the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, 19 October 2022
19/10/2022	mid.ru	Overview of publications on Russian topics in Italian media containing false or misleading information (12–18 October 2022)
19/10/2022	duma.gov.ru	Chairman of the State Duma participated in the Security Council meeting
19/10/2022	kremlin.ru	Meeting of the Security Council
19/10/2022	council.gov.ru	The Federation Council approved the presidential Decree On Introducing Martial Law in the Donetsk People's Republic, Lugansk People's Republic, Zaporozhye and Kherson Regions
19/10/2022	council.gov.ru	531st meeting of the Federation Council
20/10/2022	mid.ru	Briefing by Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson M.V. Zakharova, Moscow, 20 October 2022

Date	Source	Title (translated from Russian)
20/10/2022	mid.ru	On the conversation of Russian Ambassador to Slovakia, I. Bratchikov, with the leadership of the opposition party "Direction – Social Democracy"
21/10/2022	mid.ru	Briefing by the Russian Embassy in Cambodia on the situation around Ukraine
22/10/2022	mid.ru	Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the OSCE, M.V. Buyakevich, at the OSCE Permanent Council, 20 October 2022
25/10/2022	mid.ru	Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on countermeasures to anti-Russian decisions by the European Union and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
25/10/2022	function.mil.ru	The Officers' House and the Central Military District Song and Dance Ensemble conduct a patriotic action "Cultural Mobilisation" to support soldiers participating in the special military operation and mobilised citizens
27/10/2022	mid.ru	Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the OSCE, M.V. Buyakevich, at the OSCE Permanent Council on the dangerous provocations by the Kyiv regime with Western support and ongoing crimes by Kyiv against civilians, 27 October 2022
27/10/2022	kremlin.ru	Meeting of the Council for Interaction with Religious Associations
27/10/2022	mid.ru	Interview with O.V. Syromolotov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, to the Rossiya Segodnya news agency, 27 October 2022
28/10/2022	council.gov.ru	M. Pavlova proposed presenting the photo exhibition "Strength in Truth" at the Federation Council

Endnotes

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