
INFLUENCING POLICYMAKERS WITH FAKE MEDIA OUTLETS

An investigation
into a pro-Indian
influence network

Final report

December 2019



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Abbreviations

EESC: European Economic and Social Committee
EOPM: European Organization for Pakistani Minorities
ICIRC: International Council For Inter-Religious Cooperation
IINS: International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies
IFFRAS: International Forum for Rights and Security
SADF: South Asia Democratic Forum
WESTT: Women's Economic and Social Think Tank

Executive Summary

In early October, the European External Action Service's East StratCom (the EU Disinformation Task Force) revealed that – eptoday.com – the website of a self-proclaimed magazine for the European Parliament in Brussels – had been re-publishing a large amount of news directly from Russia Today and Voice of America¹. Among this syndicated content, we unexpectedly found a large number of articles and op-eds related to minorities in Pakistan as well as other India-related matters.

EU DisinfoLab quickly discovered that EP Today is managed by Indian stakeholders, with ties to a large network of think tanks, NGOs, and companies from the Srivastava Group. We also found that the IP address of the Srivastava Group is also home to the obscure online media “New Delhi Times” and the International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies (IINS), which are all based at the same address in New Delhi, India.

A few weeks later, 27 Members of the European Parliament were invited by IINS to visit Kashmir and to meet with Prime Minister Modi. This was covered by the press, and journalists began to link our discovery to the funders and organisers of this “controversial visit”, the International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies (IINS), and the direct entourage of EP Today.

Using OSINT (Open-Source Intelligence) techniques, we continued our investigation into this network, and this led us to Geneva, where the United Nations has its headquarters. There, we discovered timesofgeneva.com – an online “newspaper” that is “approaching 35 years in business”. Strangely enough, Times of Geneva publishes the same type of content as EP Today and produces videos covering events and demonstrations criticising Pakistan’s role in the Kashmir conflict.

We found hard evidence that both EP Today and Times of Geneva have extremely strong ties with a network of NGOs and think tanks, such as the European Organization for Pakistani Minorities (EOPM), and Pakistani Women’s Human Rights Organization. Specifically, the websites of these NGOs and think tanks are hosted on the same servers and/or staff have worked for one of these previous organisations while publishing articles for EP Today. We also proved that the two influence networks (Brussels and Geneva) were interconnected by discovering links between website registration addresses, email addresses, and domain names.

In view of this, both networks serve lobbying interests, with Brussels towards the European Union, and Geneva towards the United Nations – all achieved while

¹ <https://euvdisinfo.eu/how-to-get-the-european-parliament-to-read-russia-today/>

providing extended visibility to former MEPs and MPs. These organisations have been active for several years (at least since 2010 for EP Today).

Digging further into servers, IP Addresses, and Twitter accounts led us to 4newsagency.com, which presents itself as a “synergy between 4 news agencies from Switzerland, Belgium, Thailand, and Abu Dhabi (UAE)”, with “teams located in 100 countries”. Once more, we observed the same *modus operandi* as EP Today and Times of Geneva:

- Content syndication (republishing content already available);
- Contact address located in a co-working space/office;
- Extensive coverage of Indian-related matters.

Tipped off by 4newsagency.com itself and the presence of Canadian and American (now offline) NGOs and think-tanks on the same servers as EP Today and Srivastava Group, we discovered an additional network of over 265 resurrected media in more than 65 countries, following a similar *modus operandi*.

Here are some findings from these websites:

- Most of them are named after an extinct local newspaper or spoof real media outlets;
- They republish content from several news agencies (KCNA, Voice of America, Interfax);
- Coverage of the same Indian-related demonstrations and events;
- Republication of anti-Pakistan content from the described Indian network (including EP Today, 4NewsAgency, Times Of Geneva, New Delhi Times);
- Most websites have a Twitter account as well.

One may wonder: why have they created these fake media outlets? From analysing the content and how it is shared, we found several arguments to do so:

- Influence international institutions and elected representatives with coverage of specific events and demonstrations;
- Provide NGOs with useful press material to reinforce their credibility and thus be impactful;
- Add several layers of media outlets that quote and republish one another, making it harder for the reader to trace the manipulation, and in turn (sometimes) offer a “mirage” of international support;
- Influence public perceptions on Pakistan by multiplying iterations of the same content available on search engines.

EP Today: Disinformation at the heart of the EU

A strategy to hide Indian ownership

In October 2019, EU vs Disinfo discovered EP Today – a website appearing as though it was an information service from the European Parliament. The story immediately grabbed the attention of the EU bubble in Brussels. A fake European website that shares Russia Today content; this is exactly the kind of story interests Brussels.

EP Today used the process of content syndication to increase the web visibility of EP Today and their Facebook page. As the image shows, much of this content was from BOTH Russia Today and Voice of America.

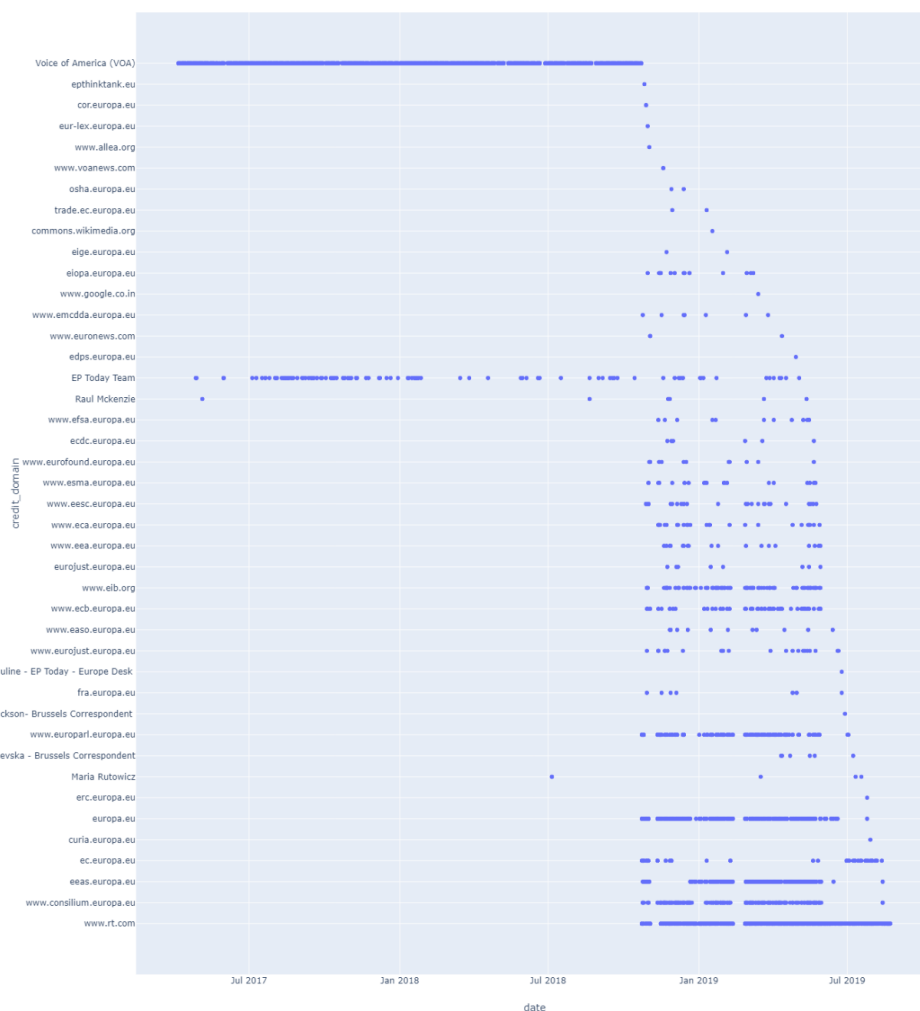


Figure 1 - Screenshot from EUvsDisinfo's investigation²

² <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/how-to-get-the-european-parliament-to-read-russia-today/>

Before using Russia Today, EP Today syndicated much of their content from Voice of America, and EUvsDisinfo did draw attention to the fact that...

“Both, Voice of America and Russia Today, have very permissive terms of use, explicitly allowing the reuse of their content on other websites. While bbc.com for example, with a global rank of 81, requires a case-by-case permission to embed their content, Voice of America’s content is in the public domain, allowing reuse – however, with exceptions to content not produced by them. RT.com even goes as far as to “encourage free re-use of its materials for non-commercial purposes”, under the condition to link to the original page. VOA only requires subscribing sites to credit them.”

In essence, this illustrates how easy it is for websites to syndicate content from news sites, regardless of the type of narratives pushed.

Interestingly, EP Today content has, for instance, been shared in the past by Dr Pramila Srivastava – head of the Srivastava Group and publisher of the New Delhi Times newspaper.



Figure 2 - Screenshot of Dr Pramila Srivastava’s Twitter account retweeting an EP Today tweet of a report written by MEPs about the ill treatment of minorities in Pakistan

Pro-Indian content produced by policy makers

To understand what was lying beneath this news content, we performed a content analysis of the op-ed articles and all of EP Today’s original content. In doing so, we found that much of EP Today’s original content related to topical issues in India and promoted India’s interests. We also noticed the reoccurrence of some names

who had authored articles related to the Modi government's interests, long-term Indian geopolitical interests and/or were critical towards Pakistan.

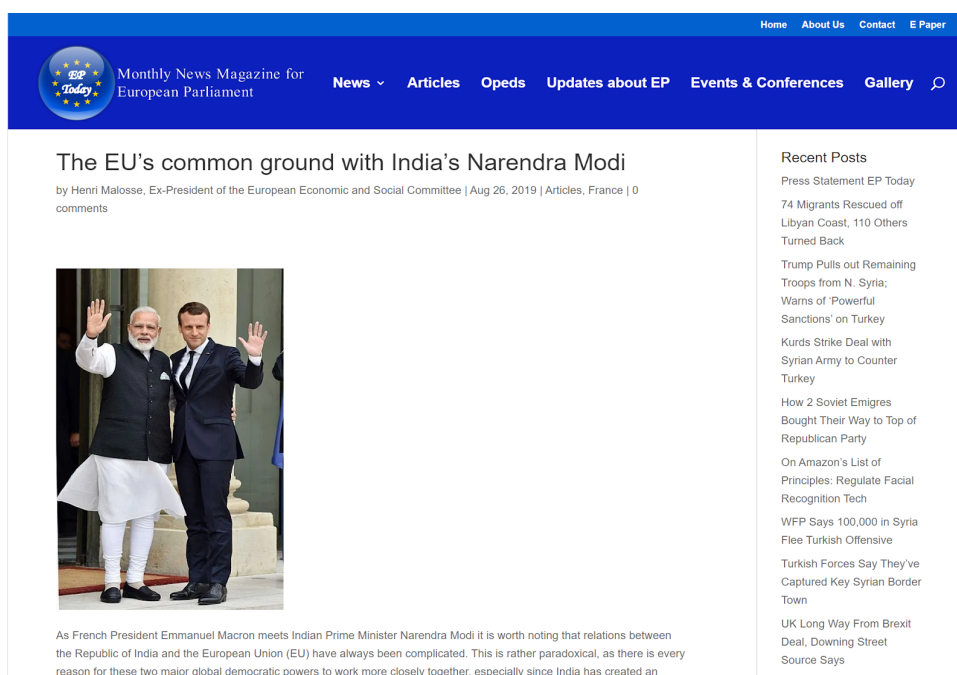


Figure 3 - EP Today op-ed promoting Indian PM Narendra Modi written by Henri Malosse

For instance, we found the following op-eds:

- "The common interests between the EU and Narendra Modi" (see figure 3) (by Henri Malosse)
- "Employers Group European Economic and Social Committee"³ (by Madi Sharma)
- "India arriving on the World stage"⁴ (by Fulvio Martusciello)
- "India fighting terrorism in Kashmir"⁵ (by Ryszard Czarnecki)

These names continuously reappeared during our investigation.

We also looked at the amplification of EP Today's content on Twitter (over 30 days), and noticed that this content was very popular in both India and Belgium.

³ <https://eptoday.com/entrepreneurship-fuels-democracy-and-development-for-india/>

⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20180521221701/https://eptoday.com/india-has-arrived-on-the-world-stage/>

⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20191126155657/https://eptoday.com/kashmir-indias-fight-against-terrorism/>

LOCATIONS

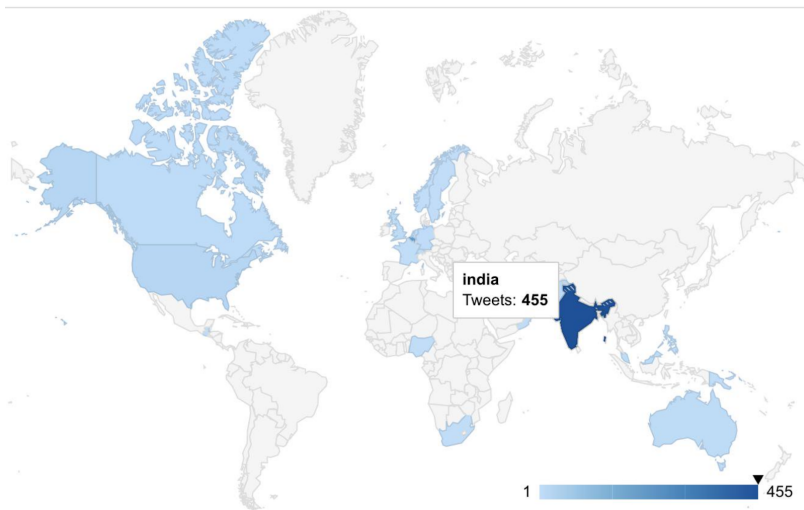


Figure 4 - Map of shares of EPToday content on Twitter

Online traces leading back to India

In looking at the web archive of EPToday.com, we found a previous version of the page from 2014 that mentioned the same email address as EP Today’s current one, but had a different phone number listed.⁶



Figure 5 - An older version of EP Today from 2014

⁶ <https://web.archive.org/web/20140218190104/http://eptoday.com/>

A Google reverse search on this Belgian landline phone number returned two websites: Srivastava Group (srivastavagroup.com) and International Trading Corporation (itcmsch.com).

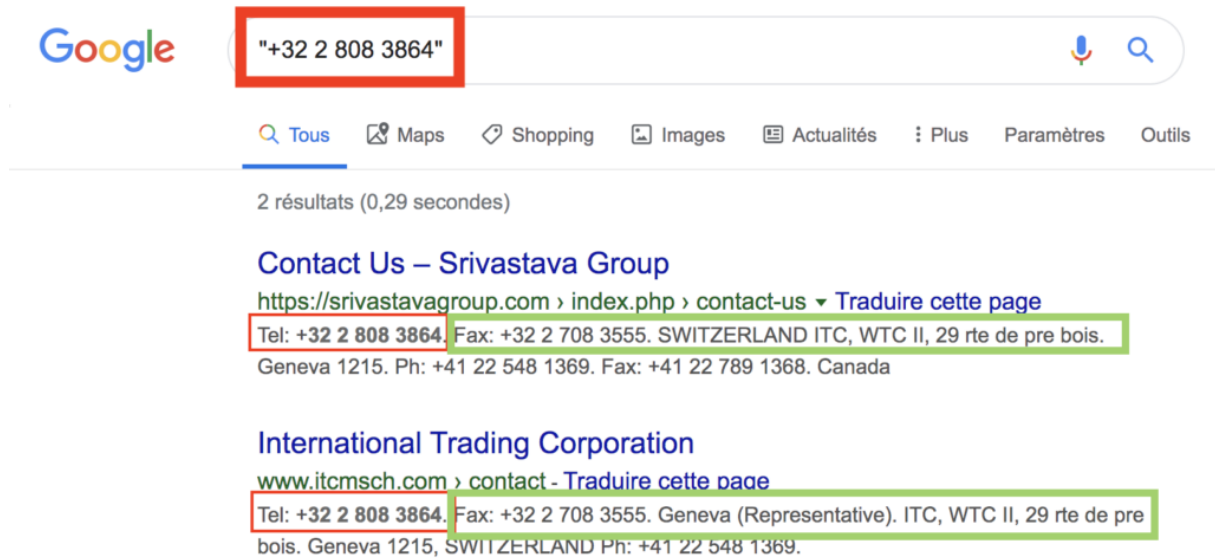


Figure 6 - Reverse Google search of the phone number indicated on the 2014 version of EP Today.

We also found that Srivastava Group's office is located at Square de Meus in Brussels, which is the same office address as EP Today (we later discovered other organisations listed at this very address).

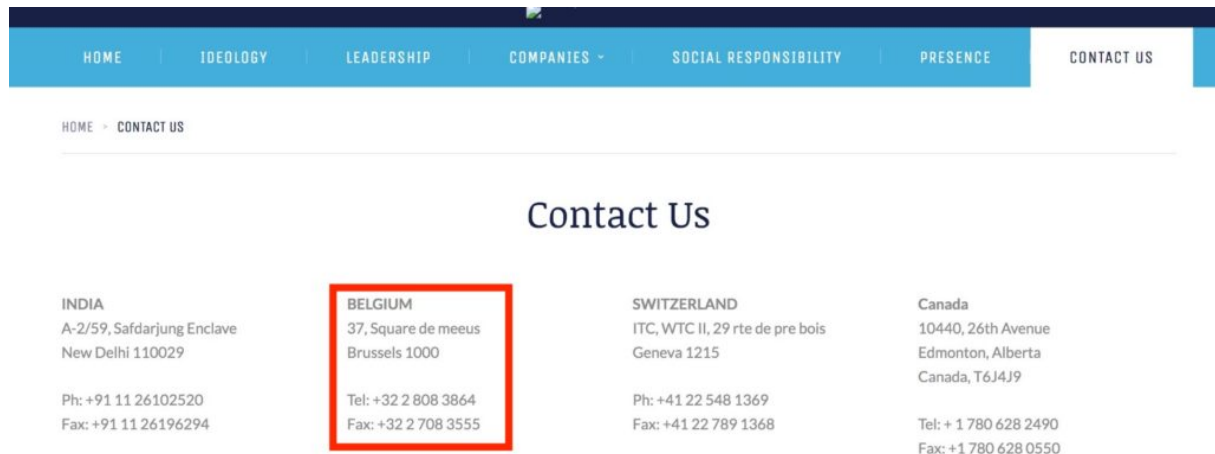


Figure 7 - Screenshot of the Srivastava group contact webpage



Figure 8 - Screenshot of EP Today contact webpage

We searched the IP history of EP Today’s website using the viewdns.com service, and found that eptoday.com was previously hosted on the same server as the srivastavagroup.com.

We then sought to find out which servers these domains were hosted on, and found that both srivastavagroup.com and itcmsch.com were hosted on the same server together with another significant one – uiwnet.com.

IP history results for eptoday.com.

IP Address	Location	IP Address Owner	Last seen on this IP
104.27.163.19	United States	Cloudflare, Inc.	2019-10-08
104.27.162.19	United States	Cloudflare, Inc.	2019-10-08
162.241.190.149	Provo - United States	Unified Layer	2019-07-29
45.60.25.207	United States	Incapsula Inc	2019-05-19
45.60.22.207	United States	Incapsula Inc	2019-05-19
162.241.190.149	Provo - United States	Unified Layer	2019-02-20
45.60.22.207	United States	Incapsula Inc	2019-02-19
192.185.167.145	Houston - United States	WEBSITEWELCOME.COM	2018-12-03
74.54.129.40	Dallas - United States	SoftLayer Technologies Inc.	2013-11-08
66.96.146.80	Burlington - United States	The Endurance International Group, Inc.	2012-11-12

Figure 9 - EP today's IP History

Reverse IP History

Find domains hosted in the past on a particular IP address.

Enter hostname or IP address (IPv4 and IPv6). Example: 176.9.89.55 or 2a01:4f8:200:1354::2

Reverse IP history lookup for: 45.60.22.207

Found 35 domains hosted in the past on IP address 45.60.22.207.

IPv4: 45.33.114.154 (used by 1 domain) 45.60.23.207 (used by 68 domains)

28	srivastavagroup.com	Search	Typos	History	Whois
<p>Last seen on IP address 45.60.22.207: 2019-05-07</p> <p>DomainRank: 0.6/10</p> <p>Name servers: ns2.uiv.net (used by 22 domains) ns1.uiv.net (used by 22 domains)</p> <p>Mail servers: aspmx1.google.com (used by 10,958,672 domains) alt2.aspmx1.google.com (used by 10,608,306 domains) alt1.aspmx1.google.com (used by 10,685,577 domains)</p> <p>aspmx3.googlemail.com (used by 5,569,238 domains) aspmx2.googlemail.com (used by 5,695,669 domains)</p> <p>IPv4: 45.60.25.207 (used by 18 domains) 162.241.171.19 (used by 20 domains)</p> <p>srivastavagroup (found 7 exact matched domains on different TLDs)</p>					

Figure 10 - Reverse IP look up for EP Today

EP Today’s online presence seemed to have both physical (phone number, office address) and online (same servers, official registration email) links with Indian stakeholders in Brussels.

A Brussels-based lobby network behind the MEP visit to Kashmir

We decided to recast our attention towards EP Today’s content and the stakeholders who had contributed regularly to EP Today. It was quickly apparent that Madi Sharma was central to this network. Madi Sharma is the founder of the Women Economic and Social Think Tank (WESTT) – a feminist organisation based in the UK, but with lobbying activities in Brussels.

It was found that WESTT was behind the visit of 27 MEPs to Kashmir in late October 2019 – a move that was largely seen as beneficial to Narendra Modi.⁷ It was supported by the far-right, since 22 of the 27 MEPs were from European far-right parties.⁸ Later, we found that WESTT has an historical record of visits linked to Indian interests, which are tied to EP Today. This leads us onto our next section.

⁷ <https://www.newslaundry.com/2019/10/29/whos-behind-the-obscure-ngo-sponsoring-the-european-union-delegation-to-kashmir>

⁸ <https://www.thequint.com/news/india/eu-parliamentary-panel-visit-kashmir-on-29-october>

How to lobby MEPs and the controversial 2018 trip to the Maldives

In December 2017, WESTT wrote to European Parliament Secretary General Klaus Welle to ask for his advice on how to lobby MEPs before their official EU delegation visits to non-EU countries.

From: [REDACTED]@kent.ac.uk>
Sent: 18 September 2017 14:51
To: WELLE Klaus
Cc: [REDACTED]@madisharma.org
Subject: RE: Request for Information
Attachments: SGKlausWelle-WESTTRequestforinformation.docx

September 18th, 2017

SUBJECT: Identifying and contacting MEPs prior to official visits to non-EU countries

Dear Secretary General, Dear Mr. Klaus Welle

Human rights have become the corner-stone of the European Union. From protecting EU citizens to promoting rights at the international level, human rights are ingrained in both EU domestic and foreign policy. In circumstances where the discussion of human rights is a delicate task, Members of the European Parliament have a particular interest and advantage in communicating with academics, experts and civil society organisations.

As a civil society organization working to promote human rights (addressing in particular inequalities towards women and children in developing states), we are interested in understanding how we can successfully contact EP members prior to their official visits to non-EU countries. In the past we have been unable to identify which MEPs will be participating in foreign trips (prior to their departure), thus limiting our ability to raise concerns we believe the MEPs should be aware of.

Considering this,

1. What is the procedure by which MEPs are appointed to EP missions as part of a delegation to non-EU and/or developing states?
2. Where is the delegation list published for civil society organizations?
3. What is the best way to raise issues about human rights abuses in non-EU states prior to the commencement of the EP missions?

I greatly look forward to your response.

Kinds Regards,

WESTT (Women's Economic and Social Think Tank)

Founder & CEO: Madi Sharma

[REDACTED]@madisharma.org

+44 [REDACTED]

Human Rights Adviser: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@kent.ac.uk

+32 [REDACTED]

Figure 11 - Letter from WESTT to Klaus Welle dated from 10th September 2017 asking about how to identify MEPs

With this knowledge in mind, Madi Sharma and Henri Malosse were behind a controversial 2018 trip to the Maldives, which was presented as an official delegation, but it was in fact organised by the South Asian Democratic Forum, an organisation chaired by Paulo Casaca, who's another regular contributor to EP Today.⁹

The Maldivian Ambassador to the EU, Ahmed Shiaan, complained to the European Parliament President Antonio Tajani, arguing that the group “was on a privately sponsored visit under a tourist visa and engaged in their ‘investigation’, in utter disregard and violation of the rules and laws of Maldives Immigration”.¹⁰ After this backlash, David McAllister, Chair of the European Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee, reaffirmed that, “as a result of his previous unofficial activities, Mr Czarnecki has already been prohibited from participating in any official European Parliament election observation missions during the current mandate”.¹¹ As previously explained, Czarnecki participated in the October 2019 trip to Kashmir and he's also a regular contributor to EP Today.¹²

The Maldives trip centred on discrediting Abdullah Yameem’s reelection¹³. As NewsLaundry puts it: “*The delegation’s visit took place just before the island nation was to vote in the presidential election. It was feared that the incumbent, Abdullah Yameem, would rig the election to stay in power. That would have been disastrous for India*”. Prior to the trip, Madi Sharma – on behalf of her organisation WESTT – had directly wrote to MEP Tomáš Zdechovský in August 2018 to ask him to participate in the trip to the Maldives. What’s striking is the line “*The trip must occur before the Maldivian elections*”.

⁹ <https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/politico-eu-influence/politico-brussels-influence-presented-by-europe-for-creators-state-of-disunion-british-lobbying-grows-adventures-in-the-maldives/>

¹⁰ <https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/politico-eu-influence/politico-brussels-influence-presented-by-europe-for-creators-state-of-disunion-british-lobbying-grows-adventures-in-the-maldives/>

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² Google search for site:eptoday.com Ryszard Czarnecki:

https://web.archive.org/web/20191129161148/https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1CHBF_frFR698FR698&ei=20LhXZeJK4P5wAKzul-gAQ&q=site%3Aeptoday.com+Ryszard+Czarnecki&oq=site%3Aeptoday.com+Ryszard+Czarnecki&gs_l=p sy-ab.3...92781.93568..94613...0.0..1.411.730.2j1j4-1.....0....1j2..gws-wiz.nTMhDhf75vw&ved=0ahUKEwjX4rOz54_mAhWDPFAKHTPcBxQQ4dUDCAs&uact=5

¹³ <https://www.newslandry.com/2019/10/29/whos-behind-the-obscure-ngo-sponsoring-the-european-union-delegation-to-kashmir>

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@westt.eu>
Sent: 13 July 2018 10:04
To: ZDECHOVSKÝ Tomáš
Cc: Madi Sharma
Subject: URGENT: Visit to the Maldives

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear Mr. Zdechovsky,

Thank you again for all of your help with the situation in the Maldives. We value and appreciate your unique perspective on the situation, and your insights into the possibilities for moving forward.

I am writing to you to inquire if you would be willing to visit the Maldives to meeting with senior members of the current Maldivian Government and assess the situation first-hand. We will be sending a small group of diverse MEPs on a three-day visit (flight and accommodations will be covered), where they will meet with administration members in an unofficial capacity. If you are willing to participate, please, can you let us know which dates would be acceptable for you? The trip must occur before the end of August (before the Maldivian elections).

The situation in the Maldives is deteriorating. As you are well aware, civil liberties and freedom of expression are at an all-time low. This progressive Muslim-majority country is at risk of losing its democratic integrity. It is imperative that Europeans show solidarity with the Maldivian people, in order to give them hope about the future. We would greatly appreciate your participate in these efforts.

I urgently await your response and look forward to your further insights on this subject.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Policy Adviser - Women's Economic and Social Think Tank
LLM Human Rights Law - University of Kent (BSIS)
 [REDACTED]@westt.eu - +32 [REDACTED]

Figure 12 - WESTT letter to MEP Tomáš Zdechovský asking him to join the Maldives trip

In the coverage of the trip, EP Today falsely claimed that the visitors were a part of an “EU Delegation” visiting Maldives.¹⁴ Consequently, the European External Action Service’s Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka and Maldives had to issue a press release, stating “*Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) Tomáš Zdechovský, Maria Gabriela Zoana, and Ryzsard Czarnecki, together with the former President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Henri Malosse and EESC Member Madi Sharma, were visiting the Maldives in their private – not official – capacity*”.¹⁵

¹⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20181009163424/https://eptoday.com/the-edge-of-the-chasm-threats-to-maldivian-democracy/>

¹⁵ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/sri-lanka/49624/eu-delegation-response-media-coverage-ep-today-article_en

The 2019 trip to Kashmir

In October 2019, on behalf of WESTT and the Madi Group, Madi Sharma wrote a letter to MEPs, inviting them to join a trip to Kashmir where they would meet India's PM Narendra Modi. One of the MEPs, Chris Davies, released the letter he received.¹⁶ The letter reveals that the International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies (IINS) would sponsor the trip.

On 7 Oct 2019, at 21:19, Madi Sharma <madi@ [REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear MEP Davies,

I am organising a prestigious VIP meeting with the Prime Minister of India, His Excellency Narendra Modi and it is my privilege to offer this invitation to you.

As you will be aware Prime Minister Modi had a land slide victory in the recent elections in India and is planning to continue on his path of growth and development for India the country and its people.

In that respect, he would like to meet influential decision makers from the European Union. I am therefore inquiring if you would be interested to visit Delhi, India, to meet with the Prime Minister. The meeting with the Prime Minister is scheduled for 28th October, with a visit to Kashmir on 29th and a press conference on 30th. (draft agenda at base).

The visit will be of a small group of cross party, pan European politicians on a three-day visit (flight and accommodations will be covered and are sponsored by the **International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies**). Your participation will be as our VIP guest and not in an official capacity as a delegation of Members of the European Parliament.

My organisation, WESTT (Women's Economic and Social Think Tank) has been working with the European Parliament and governments and non-governmental organisations across the world, mainly in South Asia in various capacities focussed on the empowerment of women. WESTT is on the transparency register of the European Parliament and I am also a Member of the European Economic and Social Committee.

I will be accompanying you on the visit and would be very happy to meet with you or your assistant anytime this week.

Due to the short time scale, I would appreciate it if you could confirm your interest as soon as possible so that we can confirm travel bookings.

DELHI VISIT

DRAFT AGENDA 26 - 30 October

DRAFT PROGRAMME

** 27 October is Diwali - The Hindu Festival of lights , everything will be open but the streets will be full and there will be fireworks and celebrations.

26-7/10 DELEGATES ARRIVAL - ACCOMMODATION HOTEL

27/10 DIWALI

28/10 MEETINGS WITH PRIME MINISTER

29/10 VISIT KASHMIR

30/10 PRESS CONFERENCE AND FINAL MEETINGS

30/10 NIGHT DEPARTURES

Kind regards

Sincerely

<image001.png>

Ms Madi Sharma
Madi Group

Figure 13 - Madi Sharma's letter proposing to join the trip to Kashmir, indicating IINS' sponsorship

IINS is a direct emanation of the Srivastava Group; it actually one of their very first organisations. This is evidence of the close links between the Srivastava Group and WESTT.

¹⁶ See Sreenivasan Jain's investigation

<https://twitter.com/SreenivasanJain/status/1189158256528117761> and

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/tracking-madi-sharma-from-brussels-to-delhi/cid/1715571>.

The links between WESTT and EP Today

As the screenshots below demonstrate, WESTT has previously published content in EP Today. It has also previously quoted and republished content from New Delhi Times and Times of Geneva. In addition, WESTT shared an EP Today article on their blog, which was written by Benjamin Blanchard, the founder of the far-right SOS Chrétien d'Orient.¹⁷

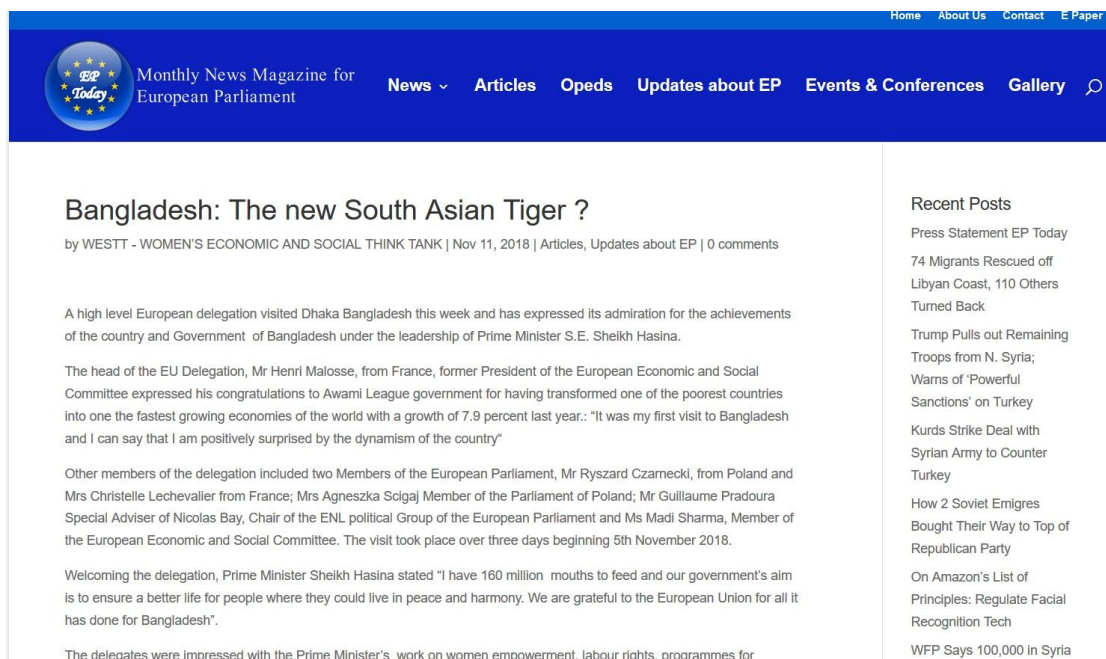


Figure 14 - A piece by WESTT (Madi Sharma's think tank) for EP Today

¹⁷<http://web.archive.org/web/20191031102105/https://westteu.wordpress.com/2018/12/21/asia-bibi-a-symbol-of-persecution-against-the-christians/>

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

October 2, 2018
 Leave a comment

Originally published by the New Delhi Times on 2018/09/27. Written by Madi Sharma. Chinese citizens of all religious backgrounds live in a culture of permanent fear, with the increasingly high religious intolerance policies. But, why is Europe silent on this issue, why is it not condemning this persecution? The answer is because of trade but ... [Continue reading](#)

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PAKISTANI CHRISTIANS MARCH TO THE UN TO DEMAND ENDING OF STATE-SPONSORED HUMAN RIGHTS AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN PAKISTAN

September 28, 2018

Originally published by Times of Geneva on 09/22/2018. Written by TOG Bureau.

Figure 15 - Screenshot from WESTT's website that quotes Madi Sharma for the New Delhi Times (Srivastava Newspaper), as well as content from Times of Geneva

Our investigation found that WESTT has actually shared many staff with EP Today, which was discovered by looking at the Our Team section of WESTT's website.¹⁸ For instance, both Briana K. and Alexandra O. have links to WESTT and EP Today (see figure 16 and 17). Alexandra O. is also a Europe Correspondent for EP Today.¹⁹

Briana K. [REDACTED]'s Biography | Muck Rack

[https://muckrack.com/brianak\[REDACTED\]](https://muckrack.com/brianak[REDACTED]) bio ▾

Writing and reporting as Europe Desk Correspondent for EP Today, Human Rights Advocate at the Women's Economic and Social Think Tank (WESTT), and ...

Figure 16 - Screenshot from a Google search of "Briana K" - a name that appeared on the Our Team section of the WESTT website

¹⁸ <https://archive.is/9Pk55>

¹⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20191106162530/https://eptoday.com/indias-triple-talaq-billa-victory-for-muslim-women/>



COMMISSION PRESIDENT-ELECT URSULA VON DER LEYEN IS THE WOMAN FOR THE JOB

July 22, 2019
Leave a comment

Written by Briana K... The European Commission (EC) has officially elected a new president. Having served as Germany's defence minister since 2013, Ms Ursula von der Leyen will fill the office come November. Born in Brussels and raised speaking French and English, Ms von der Leyen will become the first woman to occupy the EC presidential ... Continue reading

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THE 2019 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP SHONE A SPOTLIGHT ON GENDER POLITICS AND HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF DISMANTLING TOXIC MASCULINITY

July 18, 2019
Leave a comment

Written by Alexandra C... World Cup is an event that brings people of different being, colors, ethnicities, and nationalities together, on and off the field. In Pacific Beach, California, hundreds of Americans gathered in local bars to watch France take home a World Cup win in 2018, and promptly took to the streets afterwards in celebration despite the ... Continue reading

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A PARADOXICAL PRIDE MONTH: CELEBRATIONS OF IDENTITY IN JUXTAPOSITION WITH PERSISTENT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBT INDIVIDUALS IN THE US AND THE UK

July 3, 2019
Leave a comment

Written by Alexandra C... Every June, thousands of individuals gather in their respective countries for parades that celebrate the LGBT identity. This year's events were particularly significant because they marked the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, which took place in Manhattan, New York in response to a police raid of the Stonewall Inn in ... Continue reading

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WHY THE TEHRAN-TRUMP IMPASSE IS DANGEROUS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST...AND EUROPE TOO

July 1, 2019
Leave a comment

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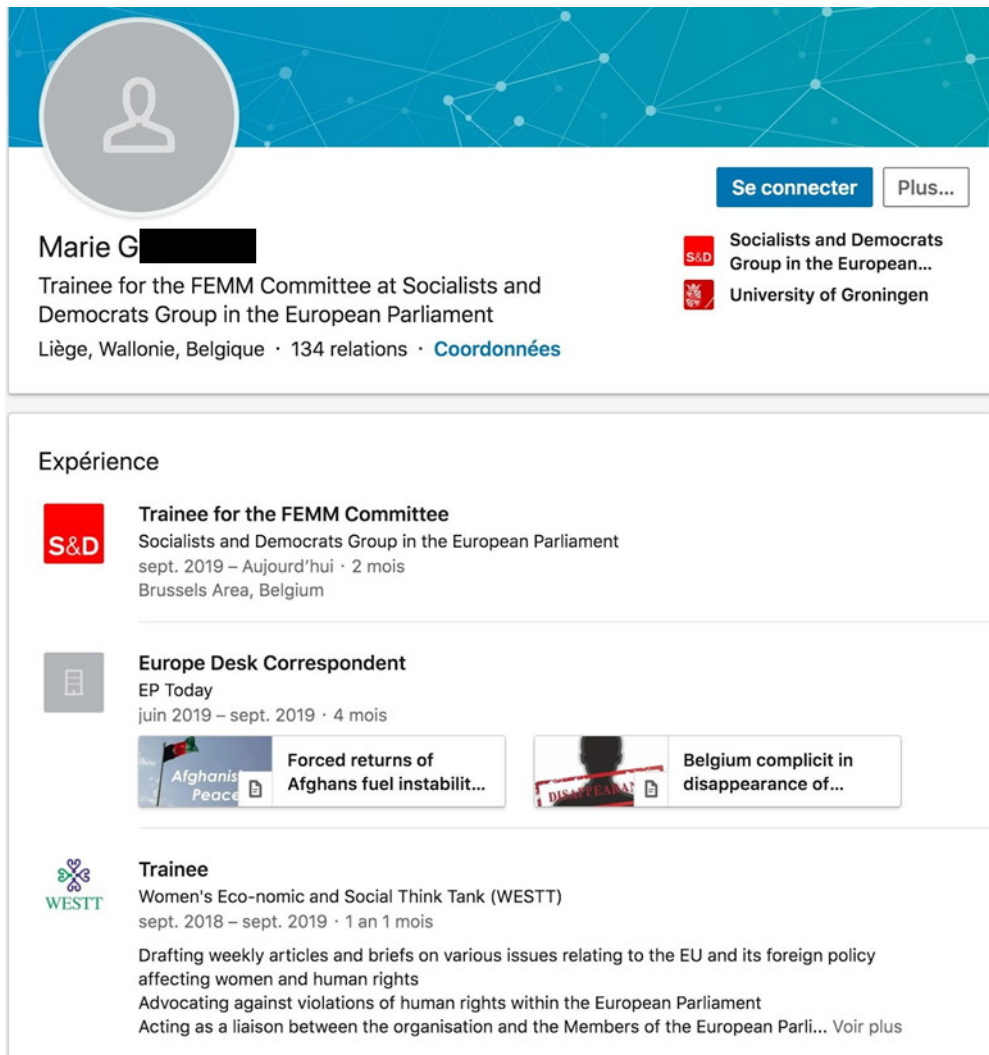
Jul 18, 2019

Embed View on Twitter

Advertisements

Figure 17 - Screenshot of WESTT's website, which shows op-eds complete with their authors, whom have also written for EP Today

In addition, Julia M. is Head of Commerce and Execution at Madi Group,²⁰ which is of course affiliated with WESTT, but she's also the Brussels Correspondent for EP Today and writes about Pakistan's human rights abuses in Baluchistan.²¹ Furthermore, Marie G. also worked for WESTT until September 2019, while as a Trainee at EP Today.



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn profile of Marie G. The profile header includes a placeholder for a profile picture, the name 'Marie G.', and the title 'Trainee for the FEMM Committee at Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament'. It also shows the location 'Liège, Wallonie, Belgique' and '134 relations'. The 'Expérience' section lists three roles:

- Trainee for the FEMM Committee** at Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament (Sept. 2019 – Aujourd'hui · 2 mois). This role is associated with the S&D group logo.
- Europe Desk Correspondent** at EP Today (juin 2019 – sept. 2019 · 4 mois). This role is associated with two article thumbnails: 'Forced returns of Afghans fuel instabilit...' and 'Belgium complicit in disappearance of...'.
- Trainee** at Women's Eco-nomic and Social Think Tank (WESTT) (sept. 2018 – sept. 2019 · 1 an 1 mois). The description for this role includes: 'Drafting weekly articles and briefs on various issues relating to the EU and its foreign policy affecting women and human rights', 'Advocating against violations of human rights within the European Parliament', and 'Acting as a liaison between the organisation and the Members of the European Parli... Voir plus'.

Figure 18 - Screenshot of Marie G.'s LinkedIn profile, which illustrates the links between EP Today and WESTT

²⁰ As stated in her profile on the Madi No Excuse website, a website dedicated to Madi Sharma's book http://madinoexcuses.com/#team_mne

²¹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20191127104812/https://eptoday.com/pakistans-continues-its-kill-and-dump-policy-in-balochistan/>

Fake media outlets and think tanks lobbying the UN Times of Geneva

Times of Geneva was brought to our attention in a number of ways. As mentioned previously, WESTT had republished an article from Times of Geneva on their website, but we also came across Times of Geneva by further looking into the people who had written original content for EP Today. This was supported Times of Geneva’s large presence on Twitter²² and YouTube.²³

From looking at the content, Henri Malosse, a figure who had regularly written for EP Today, promoted his interviews with Times of Geneva on his Facebook page.²⁴ Moreover, the MEPs that had visited Kashmir and Maldives, as well as experts from SADF expressing opinions on Baluchistan, could also all be found on Times of Geneva.²⁵

Times of Geneva’s YouTube channel is unfortunately now disabled, but beforehand we found videos of interviews with all the MEPs and experts whose names had appeared in earlier parts of our investigation.

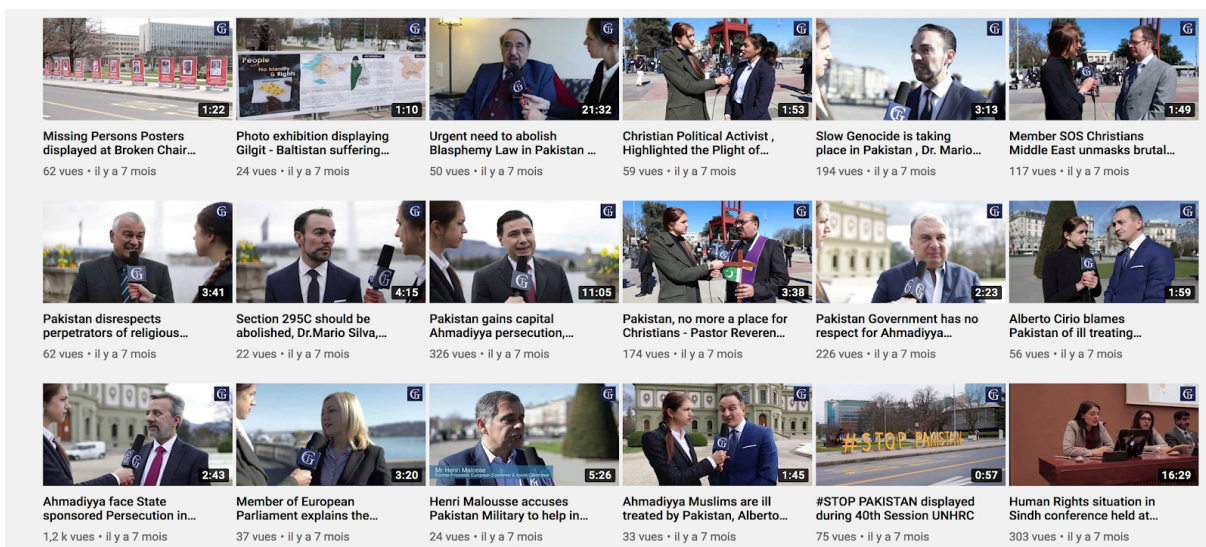


Figure 19 - Screenshot of Times of Geneva’s YouTube channel

Presenting itself as “reporting from Canton de Genève with the latest news,”²⁶ Times of Geneva had been very active during demonstrations around minorities

²² <https://web.archive.org/web/20191112123053/https://twitter.com/timesofgeneva?lang=en>

²³ <https://web.archive.org/channel/UCWzlbh8t2NuIz5XcxQwJLWg/videos>

²⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20191119093218/https://www.facebook.com/hmalosse/posts/10214244447697986>

²⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20180906223723/http://timesofgeneva.com/category/opinion/>

²⁶ Description from their Twitter account

issues in Pakistan. Its YouTube account²⁷ was a testament to this, as it was filled with coverage of related demonstrations in Geneva.

On the same server as Times of Geneva, we discovered the website of an NGO “pakistaniwomen.org”.

4 **timesofgeneva.com** Search Typos History Whois

DomainRank: 1/10
 Name servers: **ns2.oneplusonemedia.com** (used by 4 domains) **ns1.oneplusonemedia.com** (used by 4 domains)
 Mail servers: **mail.timesofgeneva.com** (used by 1 domain)
 IPv4: **162.214.64.201** (used by 4 domains)

Reverse NS History lookup for: **ns1.oneplusonemedia.com**

Found 3 domains using name server ns1.oneplusonemedia.com in the past.

#	Domain ↓	Tools
1	eopm.org	Search Typos History Whois
	Last seen on name server ns1.oneplusonemedia.com: 2019-08-28 . DomainRank: 0.8/10 Name servers: verify1.domainpeople.com (used by 9,734 domains) verify2.domainpeople.com (used by 9,734 domains) IPv4: 98.124.204.16 (used by 75,036 domains) eopm (found 23 exact matched domains on different TLDs)	
2	pakistaniwomen.org	Search Typos History Whois
	Last seen on name server ns1.oneplusonemedia.com: 2019-10-23 . DomainRank: 1.3/10 Name servers: ns11070.ztomy.com (used by 13 domains) ns21070.ztomy.com (used by 13 domains) IPv4: 209.99.64.70 (used by 16,321 domains) pakistaniwomen (found 4 exact matched domains on different TLDs)	

Figure 20 - Screenshots showing that Times of Geneva and EOPM/Pakistaniwoman are hosted on the same server

Pakistaniwomen.org led us to the Twitter account of the European Organisation for Pakistani Minorities (EOPM) - another NGO focused on the same issues. We found this by hovering over Pakistaniwomen.org’s (PWHRO) link to its Twitter account, which actually displayed a link to EOPM’s Twitter account, and reversely, on EOPM’s website, the link to its Twitter account actually displayed PWHRO’s Twitter account.

²⁷ <https://web.archive.org/channel/UCWzIbh8t2NuIz5XcxQwJLWg/videos>

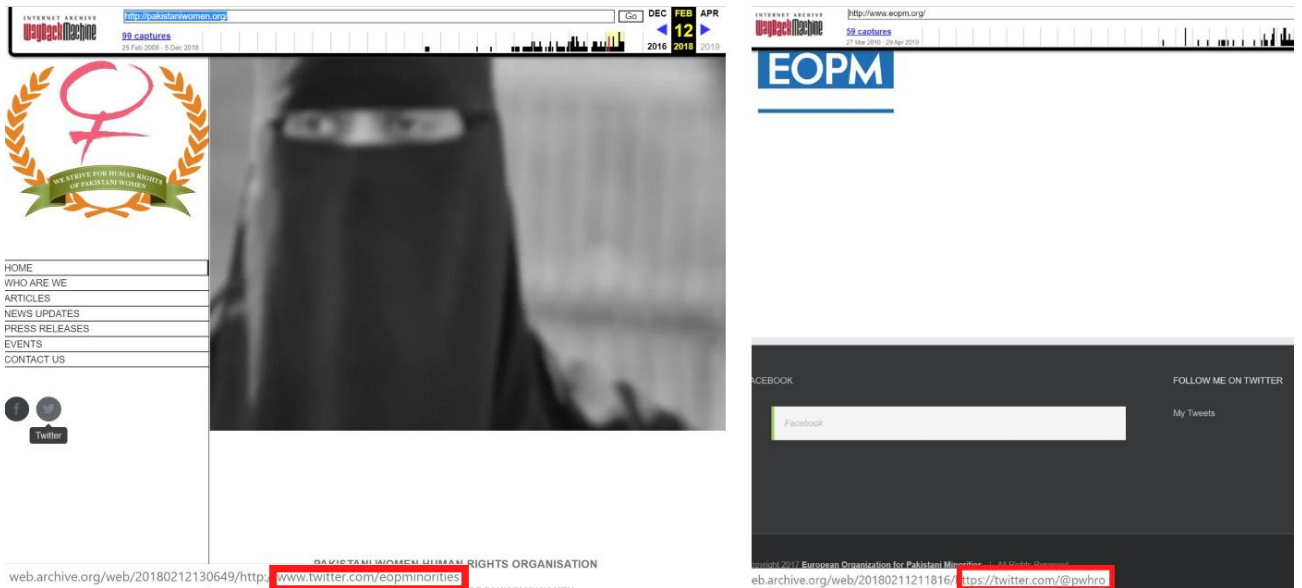


Figure 21 - Screenshots from Web Archives of PWHRO and EOPM websites, demonstrating the links to one another's Twitter accounts

EOPM has also previously retweeted Times of Geneva. Furthermore, EOPM was registered in Brussels at the same address as EP Today, Srivastava Group, and ICIRC (the International Council For Inter-Religious Cooperation). The EOPM website was registered with an email address containing CSOPUS.

Attribute	Value
WHOIS Server	whois.publicinterestregistry.net
Registrar	DomainPeople, Inc. (R30-LROR)
Email	csopus[REDACTED]
Name	[REDACTED]
Organization	European Organization for Pakistani Minorities (registrant, admin, tech)
Street	37, square de meuus (registrant, admin, tech)
City	Brussels (registrant, admin, tech)
State	be (registrant, admin, tech)
Postal	1000 (registrant, admin, tech)
Country	BELGIUM (registrant, admin, tech)

Figure 22 - EOPM WHOIS server details showing same address and CSOPUS email

We therefore decided to investigate all of these organisations, but before doing so, we looked the content promoted by EOPM and Times of Geneva, and sought to find out more about which campaigns and demonstrations they had organised.

Demonstrations in Geneva about Minorities in Pakistan

From studying the content of Times of Geneva, we noticed that the themes and style of the demonstrations that they covered were very similar. We also found similarities in the content and coverage of the demonstrations themselves. To illustrate this, here are some themes and styles of the demonstrations:

- Campaigns to “stop [insert minority] genocide”;
- Demonstrations at the Broken Chair in Geneva;
- Criticism towards Pakistan.

Below you will find a selection of images and coverage of the demonstrations held over the past few years.



Figure 23 - Pakistan Stop Genocide campaign in Geneva - picture sourced via searching the hashtag on Twitter²⁸

²⁸ https://twitter.com/vasu_m/status/1178339954772058114




Figure 24 - Stop Pashtun Genocide campaign in Geneva - picture sourced via searching the hashtag on Twitter²⁹



Figure 25 - Stop Pakistan campaign - a post from Baluch Freedom Front's Facebook page (2017)

²⁹ <https://twitter.com/arifaajakia/status/1174331950523457537>

 **Voice of Pakistan Minority**
@voice_minority

Two hundred Pakistani Christians gathered at the Broken Chair, Geneva before United Nations to raise their voice in protest of #Pakistan Government's human rights abuses against Pakistani #Christians.
#HRC42
@RitaPanahi @ctrlamb @AP @iamthedrifter
@ShahidQuetta @bilalfqi

Traduire le Tweet



3:26 PM · 25 sept. 2019 · Twitter Web App

Figure 26 - A tweet from Voice of Pakistan Minority's Twitter account, using a video from 4NewsAgency to promote a demonstration about Christians in Pakistan in front of the Broken Chair in Geneva in September 2019



Figure 27 - A tweet from Voice of Pakistan Minority's Twitter account, using a video from Times of Geneva to promote a demonstration about Christians in Pakistan in front of the Broken Chair in Geneva in September 2018³⁰

³⁰ <https://ghrd.org/2018/09/29/ghrd-protest-22-september-2018/>



Figure 28 - A tweet from Voice of Pakistani Minority's older Twitter account, promoting a demonstration on Christians in Pakistan in front of the Broken Chair in Geneva in September 2018³¹



Figure 29 - A post from Times of Geneva's Twitter and YouTube account, promoting the campaign about Pashtuns and the protest in front of the Broken Chair in Geneva

³¹ Ibid.



Figure 30 - A tweet from Voice of Pakistani Minority's older twitter account with a picture of high profile participants of the protest about Christians in Pakistan (2018) (in front of the same tent used for all events)

On the side-line of these demonstrations, Times of Geneva interviews were conducted with the same reoccurring figures. The content of the interviews supported the demonstrations' causes, focusing on the unfair treatment of minorities in Pakistan, whereby Pakistan was always the target of criticism. As an example, below is an interview from September 2018 with former MEP Alberto Cirio about trade sanctions against Pakistan.

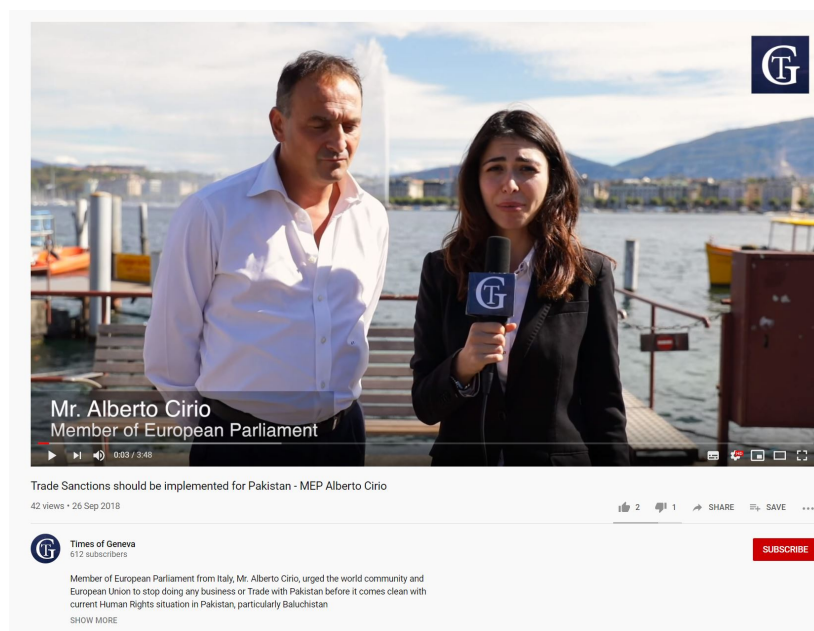


Figure 31 - Times of Geneva's interview with Alberto Cirio from the 28th September 2018

Here is another on the ill treatment of minorities by Pakistan from March 2019.

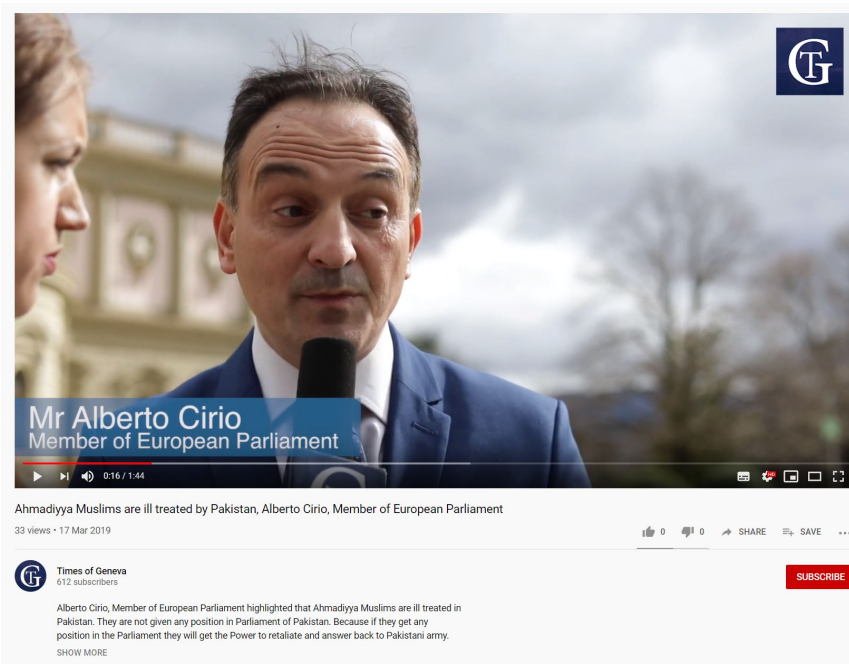


Figure 32 - Times of Geneva's interview with Alberto Cirio from the 17th March 2019

Here is an interview from March 2019 with Benjamin Blanchard – founder of far-right SOS Chrétien d'Orient, who was interviewed about Christians in Pakistan.

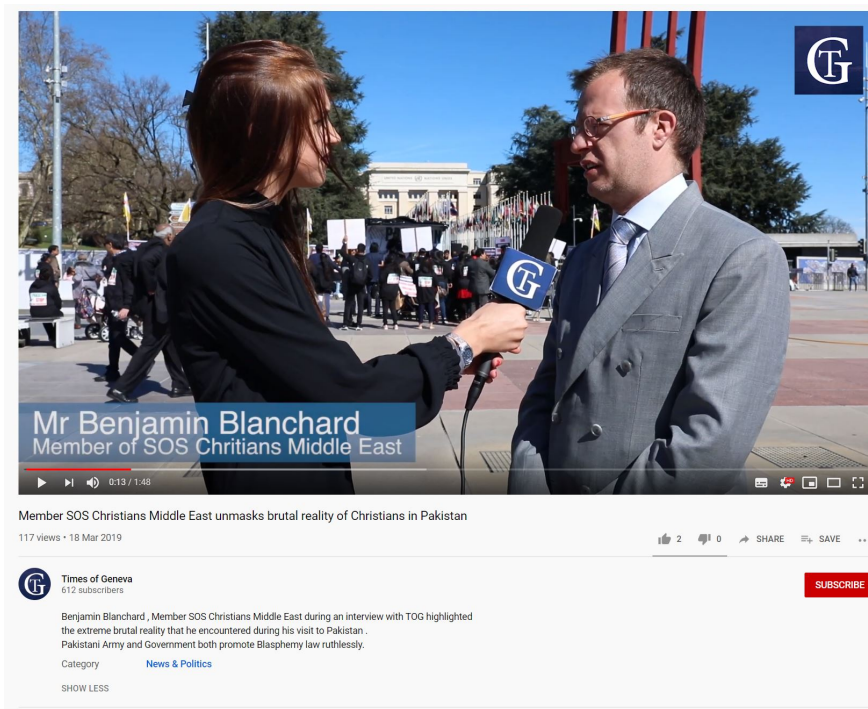


Figure 33 - Times of Geneva interview of SOS Chrétiens d'Orient Benjamin Blanchard from the 18th March 2019

He was also interviewed in September 2018:

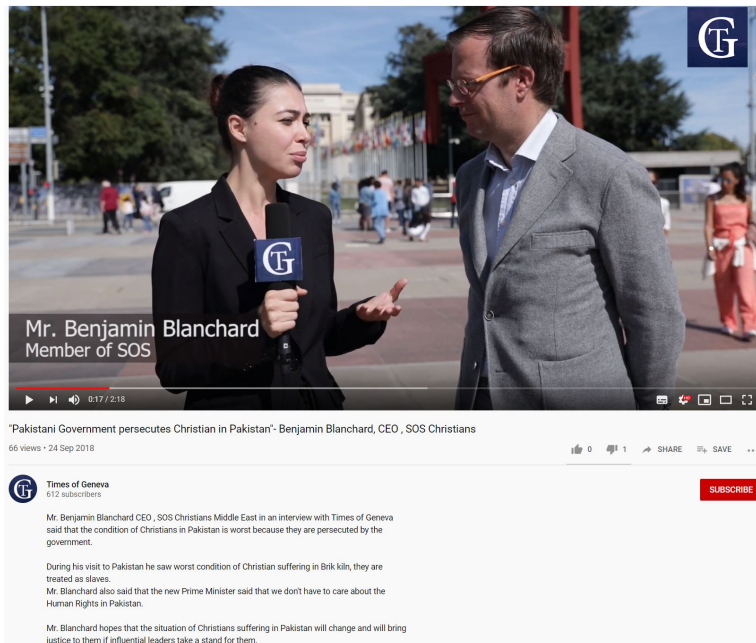


Figure 34 - Times of Geneva interview with Benjamin Blanchard from the 24th September 2018

Director of the SADF Paulo Casaca was interviewed in September 2018 on Baluchistan and how the One Belt Road initiative, which would reinforce economic ties between China and Pakistan, would affect the Baluchistan people.

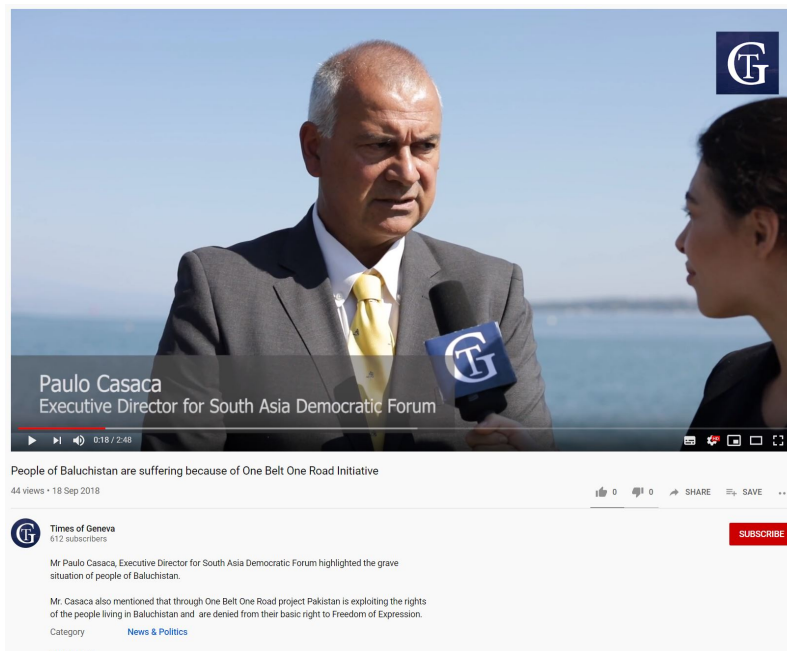


Figure 35 - Times of Geneva's interview with Paulo Casaca from the 18th September 2018

In March 2019, Paulo Casaca was again interviewed by Times of Geneva, where he argued that Pakistan disrespects all religions.

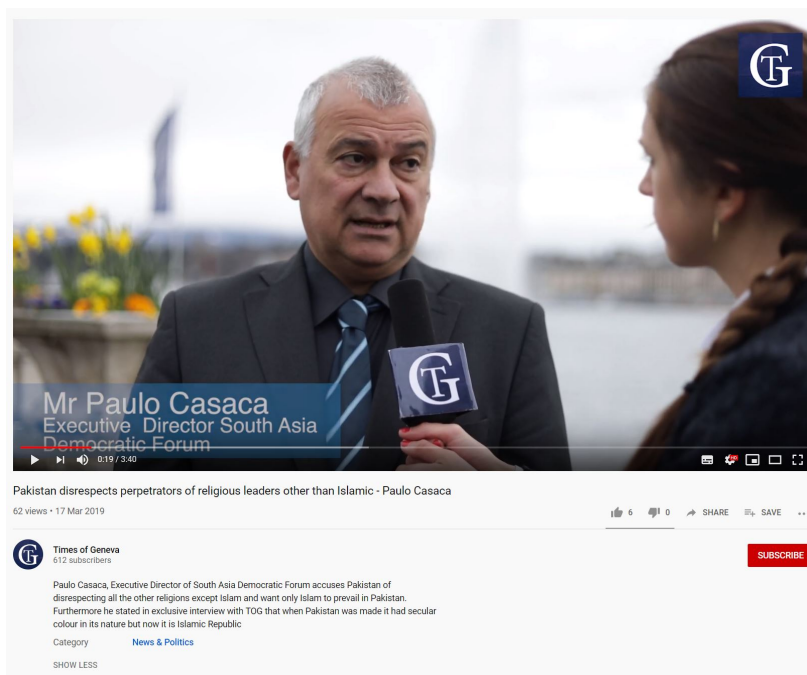


Figure 36 - Times of Geneva's interview with Paulo Casaca from the 17th March 2019

In addition to these instances, we discovered even more Times of Geneva interviews with the same people on varied – albeit related – subjects:

Name	Topic	Date
MEP Fulvio Martusciello	On Baluchistan	September 2018
MEP Fulvio Martusciello	Ahmadiyya Muslims	17 March 2019
Henri Malosse	Pakistan is not a democracy	September 2018
Henri Malosse	Accusations of Pakistan's fostering of Islamic Radicalisation	17 March 2019
Mario Silva (Director of IFFRAS)	Christians in Pakistan	September 2018
Mario Silva (Director of IFFRAS)	The treatment of Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan	17 March 2019
MEP Ryszard Czarnecki	On Baluchistan	September 2018

Przemyslaw Czarnecki (Ryszard Czarnecki's son)	On Baluchistan	September 2018
Siegfried O Wolf (SADF expert)	On Baluchistan	September 2018
Siegfried O Wolf (SADF expert)	Ahmadiyya Muslims	17 March 2019

There is arguably a pattern here:

- Stylistically and thematically similar demonstrations to discredit Pakistan;
- Held at the same time as UN Human Rights Council sessions;
- Complemented by Times of Geneva side-line interviews on the demonstrations with the same reoccurring figures.

A Worldwide network of artificial media coverage

This section explains how we discovered a network of obscure fake media. Firstly, we conducted a reverse search on IP Address of timesofgeneva.com (see figure 37), which returned other websites, such as Timesofabu Dhabi.com, Mapplenews.com, and foreignaffairstoday.com. From there, by using RiskIQ's WhoIs tool on foreignaffairstoday.com, we found that this site shares the same registrant as TimesofGeneva.com (see figure 38).

- 1 **foreignaffirstoday.com** Search Typos History Whois

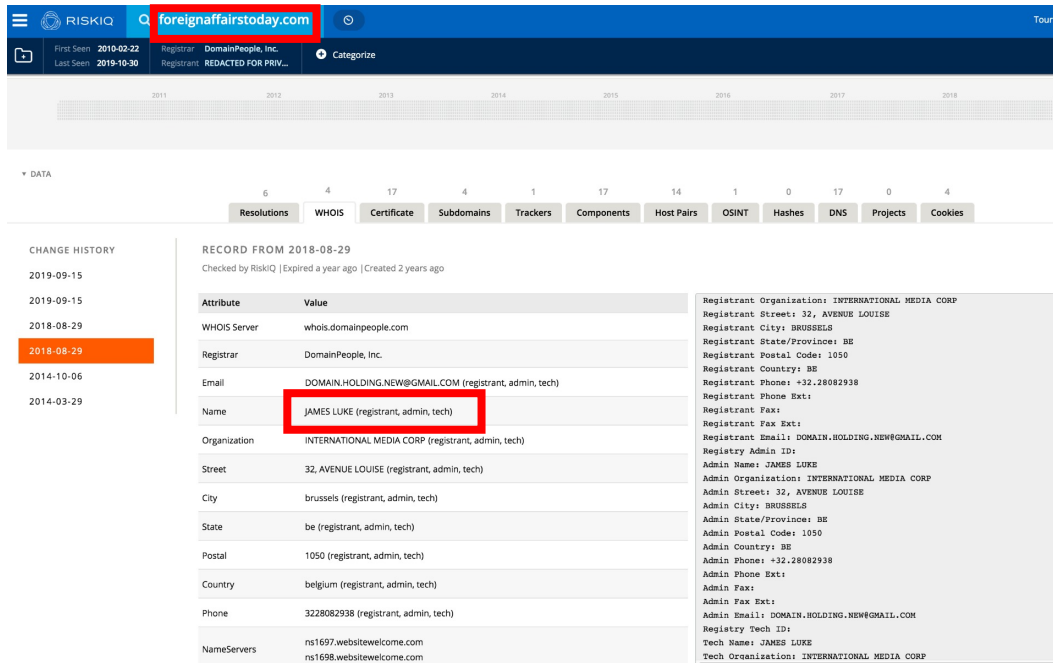
Name servers: **ns2.oneplusonemedia.com** (used by 5 domains) **ns1.oneplusonemedia.com** (used by 5 domains)
 Mail servers: **mail.foreignaffirstoday.com** (used by 1 domain)
 IPv4: **162.214.64.201** (used by 4 domains)
- 2 **mapplenews.com** Search Typos History Whois

Alexa ranking: **172,660**
 Name servers: **ns2.oneplusonemedia.com** (used by 5 domains) **ns1.oneplusonemedia.com** (used by 5 domains)
 Mail servers: **mapplenews.com** (used by 1 domain)
 IPv4: **162.214.64.201** (used by 4 domains)
- 3 **pakistaniwomen.org** Search Typos History Whois

DomainRank: 1.3/10
 Name servers: **ns2.oneplusonemedia.com** (used by 5 domains) **ns1.oneplusonemedia.com** (used by 5 domains)
pakistaniwomen (found 4 exact matched domains on different TLDs)
- 4 **timesofabudhabi.com** Search Typos History Whois

DomainRank: 0.1/10
 Name servers: **ns2.oneplusonemedia.com** (used by 5 domains) **ns1.oneplusonemedia.com** (used by 5 domains)
 Mail servers: **mail.timesofabudhabi.com** (used by 1 domain)
 IPv4: **162.214.64.201** (used by 4 domains)
timesofabudhabi (found 3 exact matched domains on different TLDs)

Figure 37 - Reverse IP search for Timesofgeneva.com



RISKIQ foreignaffirstoday.com

First Seen: 2010-02-22 | Last Seen: 2019-10-30 | Registrar: DomainPeople, Inc. | Redacted for privacy

▼ DATA

Resolutions: 6 | WHOIS: 4 | Certificate: 17 | Subdomains: 4 | Trackers: 1 | Components: 17 | Host Pairs: 14 | OSINT: 1 | Hashes: 0 | DNS: 17 | Projects: 0 | Cookies: 4

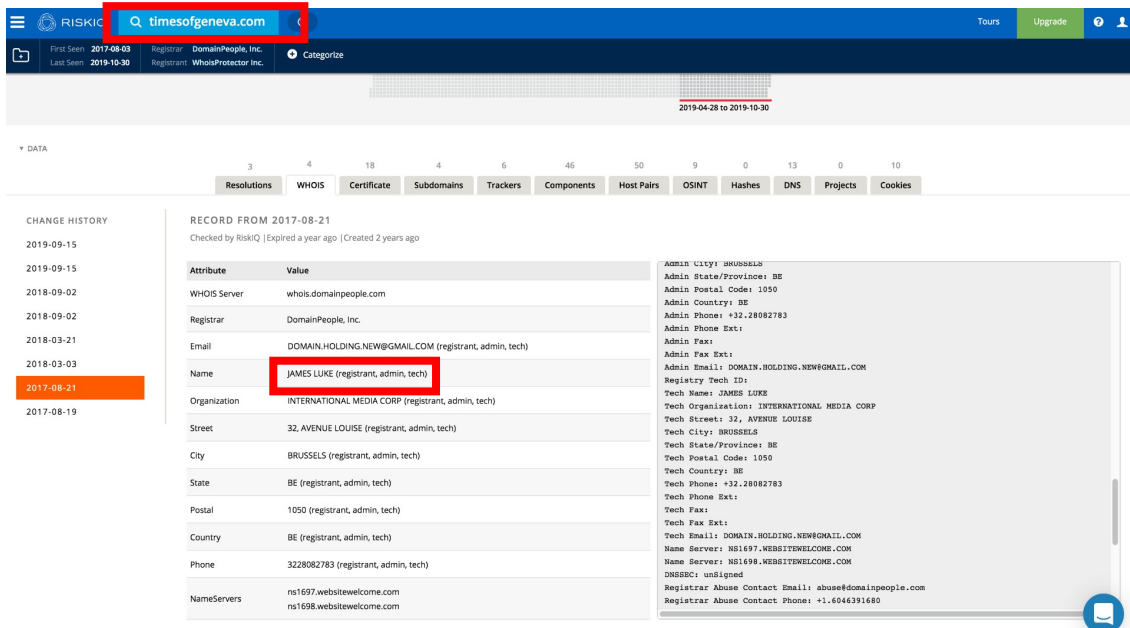
CHANGE HISTORY

- 2019-09-15
- 2019-09-15
- 2018-08-29
- 2014-10-06
- 2014-03-29

RECORD FROM 2018-08-29
Checked by RiskIQ | Expired a year ago | Created 2 years ago

Attribute	Value
WHOIS Server	whois.domainpeople.com
Registrar	DomainPeople, Inc.
Email	DOMAIN.HOLDING.NEW@GMAIL.COM (registrant, admin, tech)
Name	JAMES LUKE (registrant, admin, tech)
Organization	INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CORP (registrant, admin, tech)
Street	32, AVENUE LOUISE (registrant, admin, tech)
City	brussels (registrant, admin, tech)
State	be (registrant, admin, tech)
Postal	1050 (registrant, admin, tech)
Country	belgium (registrant, admin, tech)
Phone	3228082938 (registrant, admin, tech)
NameServers	ns1697.websitewelcome.com ns1698.websitewelcome.com

Registrant Organization: INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CORP
 Registrant Street: 32, AVENUE LOUISE
 Registrant City: BRUSSELS
 Registrant State/Province: BE
 Registrant Postal Code: 1050
 Registrant Country: BE
 Registrant Phone: +32.28082938
 Registrant Phone Ext:
 Registrant Fax:
 Registrant Fax Ext:
 Registrant Email: DOMAIN.HOLDING.NEW@GMAIL.COM
 Registry Admin ID:
 Admin Name: JAMES LUKE
 Admin Organization: INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CORP
 Admin Street: 32, AVENUE LOUISE
 Admin City: BRUSSELS
 Admin State/Province: BE
 Admin Postal Code: 1050
 Admin Country: BE
 Admin Phone: +32.28082938
 Admin Phone Ext:
 Admin Fax:
 Admin Fax Ext:
 Admin Email: DOMAIN.HOLDING.NEW@GMAIL.COM
 Registry Tech ID:
 Tech Name: JAMES LUKE
 Tech Organization: INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CORP



The screenshot shows the RiskIQ interface with a search for 'timesofgeneva.com'. The search results are displayed under the 'WHOIS' tab. A table lists various attributes and their values, with 'Name' highlighted in red. The 'Name' attribute is 'JAMES LUKE (registrant, admin, tech)'. The table also includes details like 'Organization', 'Street', 'City', 'State', 'Postal', 'Country', 'Phone', and 'NameServers'.

Attribute	Value
WHOIS Server	whois.domainpeople.com
Registrar	DomainPeople, Inc.
Email	DDMAIN.HOLDING.NEW@GMAIL.COM (registrant, admin, tech)
Name	JAMES LUKE (registrant, admin, tech)
Organization	INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CORP (registrant, admin, tech)
Street	32, AVENUE LOUISE (registrant, admin, tech)
City	BRUSSELS (registrant, admin, tech)
State	BE (registrant, admin, tech)
Postal	1050 (registrant, admin, tech)
Country	BE (registrant, admin, tech)
Phone	3228082783 (registrant, admin, tech)
NameServers	ns1697.websitelwelcome.com ns1698.websitelwelcome.com

Figure 38 - Screenshots of the results when you use the RiskIQ's WHOIS tool for Timesofgeneva.com and foreignaffairstoday.com

4 News Agency

Another media outlet that had actively covered these campaigns and seemed very interested in the same topic as EP Today and Times of Geneva was 4NewsAgency. According to 4NewsAgency's Twitter account, which was only created in August 2019, 4NewsAgency is "an independent not-for-profit news cooperative headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland". From looking at their tweets and YouTube videos, we also noticed that they, too, seem interested in covering events and demonstrations in Geneva about minorities in Pakistan. They also cover press conferences on these topics. Funnily enough, the only other media interested in covering these conferences is India-based ANI and Times of Geneva This is evident from looking at the microphones' logos, which belong to Times of Geneva and 4NewsAgency, respectively.



Figure 39 - Photo from a conference at Club Suisse de la Presse with Mario Silva, Paulo Casaca, Thierry Mariani, with the microphones of 4 News Agency and Times of Geneva³²



Figure 40 - Photo from another conference – complete with the microphones of 4 News Agency and Times of Geneva³³

The content from 4newsAgency also looks similar to Times of Geneva's as they both interviewed often the very same people, at the same events.

³² <https://4newsagency.com/press-conference-on-kashmir-during-un-human-rights-council/>

³³ <https://4newsagency.com/minority-democratic-processes-in-pakistan-conference-held-in-geneva-during-united-nations-human-rights-council/> and <https://www.dnaindia.com/india/video-muslim-clerics-meps-address-media-in-geneva-on-jammu-and-kashmir-2791738>

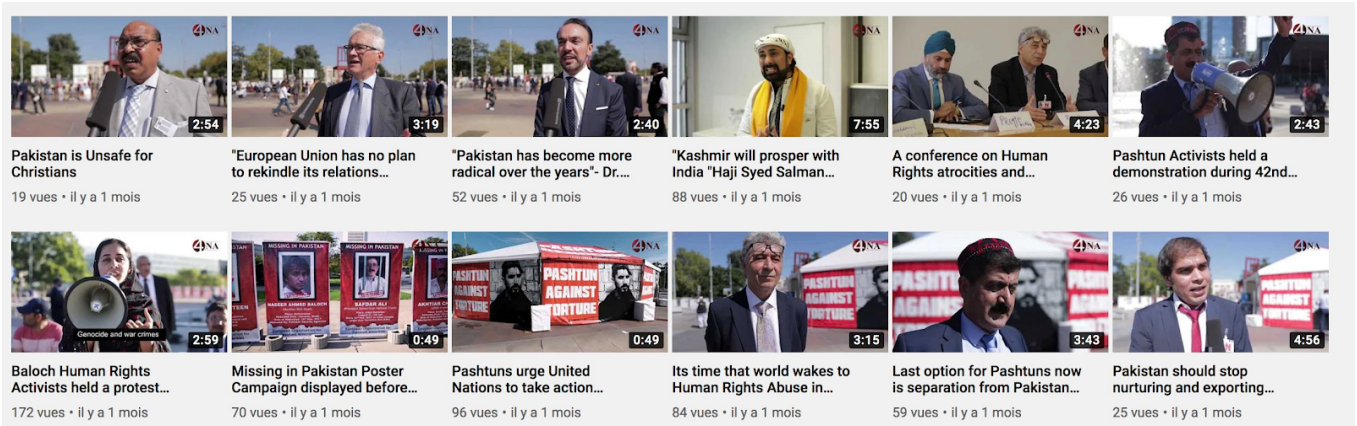


Figure 40 Screenshot of 4 News Agency's YouTube account

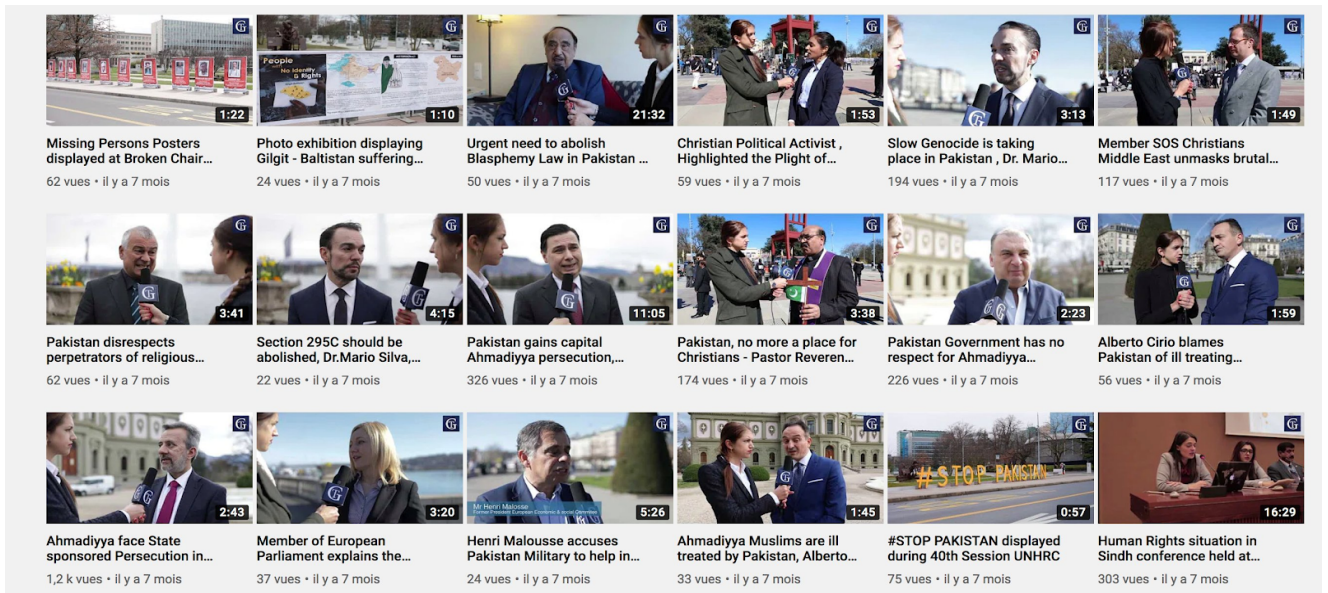


Figure 41 - Screenshot of Times of Geneva's YouTube account

4NewsAgency is a “synergy” between four news agencies from Belgium, Switzerland, Thailand, and Abu Dhabi. They claim to have teams located in 100 countries. Still, they only actually give information about two offices based in Brussels and Geneva, which turn out to be Regus co-working/virtual office locations.

A network of zombie and fake media outlets

We attempted to assess how the campaigns in Geneva were spread online by conducting an exact search on Google, and in doing so, we found that these campaigns were shared by plenty of obscure media outlets. In fact, all of these websites had copy-pasted the same content from the very same sources, with those being EP Today, Times of Geneva, 4newsAgency, and New Delhi Times.

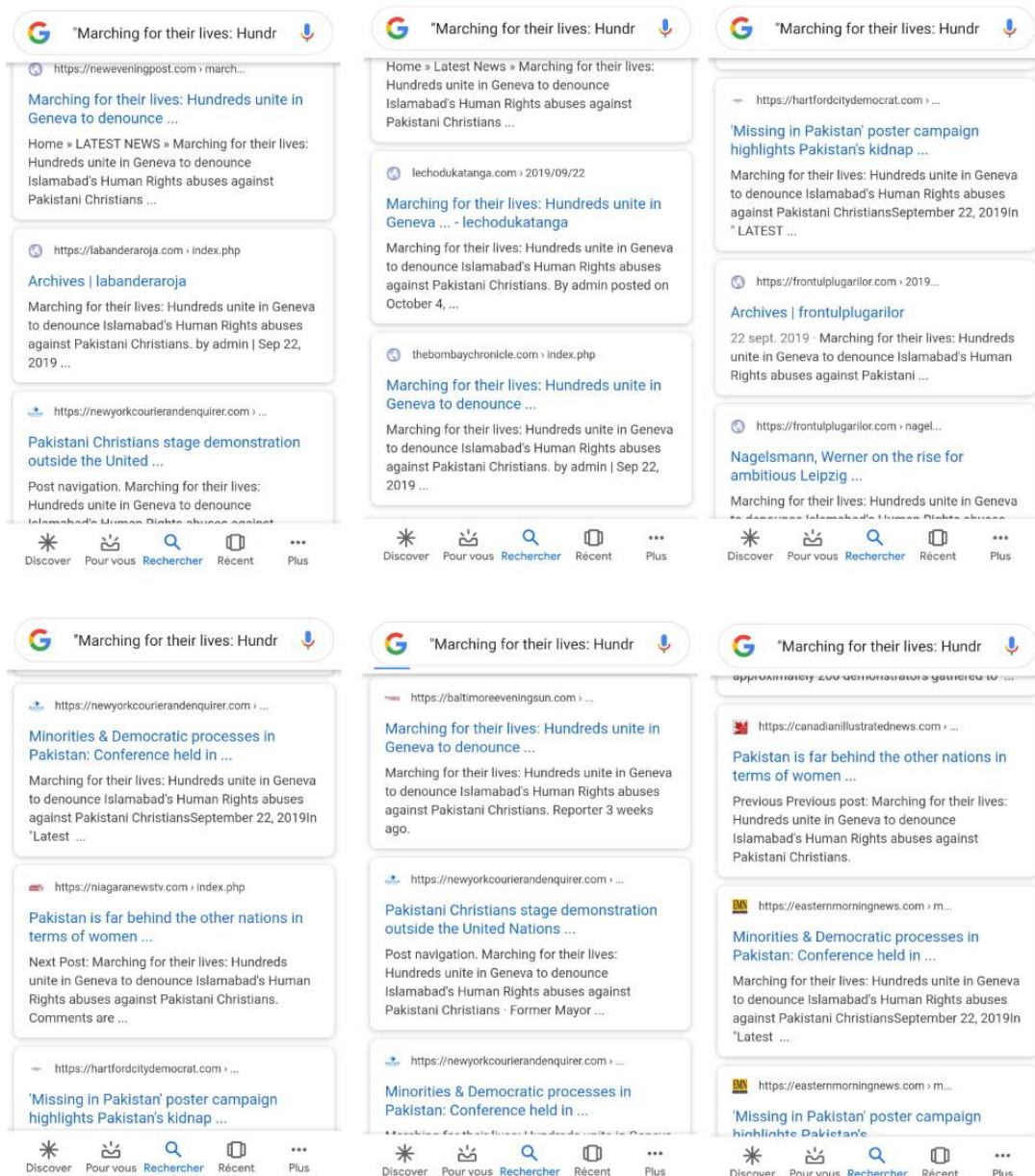


Figure 42 - Screenshots from a google exact search of the 'Marching for their lives' campaign, revealing it was copy-pasted on many fake media websites

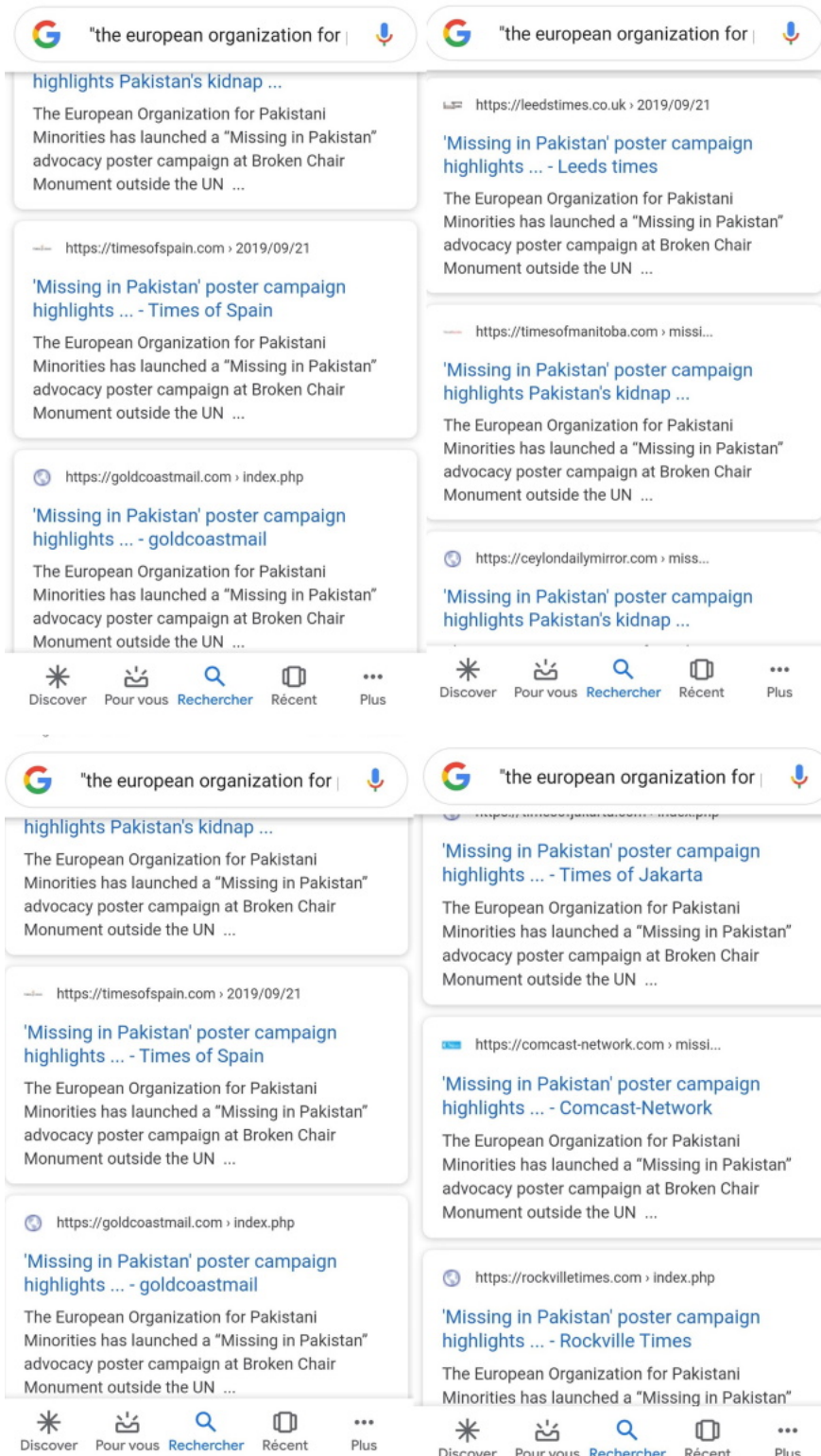


Figure 43 - Screenshots of a google exact search of the 'Missing in Pakistan' campaign, revealing it was copy-pasted on many fake media websites

In looking at the servers of these obscure websites, we found that they were all hosted on one of three servers: threemediagroup.com, fourmediagroup.com, or

internalmedia.org. We also found that these three servers also hosted 4NewsAgency.

Reverse NS lookup for: ns1.fourmediagroup.com

Found **79** domains using name server ns1.fourmediagroup.com. This name server is monitored since 2019-08-22.

Premium Tip: There are more name servers hosted on the same IP address as ns1.fourmediagroup.com. Try the Reverse NS tool for IP Address [209.99.64.70](#)

Found total of **78** unique domains.

Name servers: ns1.fourmediagroup.com (used by 79 domains) ns2.fourmediagroup.com (used by 79 domains) Mail servers: almustaqilla.com (used by 1 domain) IPv4: 162.214.64.200 (used by 82 domains)	
15	alqaidah.com Search Typos History Whois Name servers: ns1.fourmediagroup.com (used by 79 domains) ns2.fourmediagroup.com (used by 79 domains) Mail servers: alqaidah.com (used by 1 domain) IPv4: 162.214.64.200 (used by 82 domains)
16	badischesvolksecho.com Search Typos History Whois Name servers: ns1.fourmediagroup.com (used by 79 domains) ns2.fourmediagroup.com (used by 79 domains) Mail servers: badischesvolksecho.com (used by 1 domain) IPv4: 162.214.64.200 (used by 82 domains)
17	baltimoreeveningherald.com Search Typos History Whois Name servers: ns1.fourmediagroup.com (used by 79 domains) ns2.fourmediagroup.com (used by 79 domains) Mail servers: mail.baltimoreeveningherald.com (used by 1 domain) IPv4: 162.214.64.200 (used by 82 domains)
18	baltimoreeveningsun.com Search Typos History Whois Name servers: ns1.fourmediagroup.com (used by 79 domains) ns2.fourmediagroup.com (used by 79 domains)

Figure 44 - One of the server's reverse lookup ("fourmediagroup.com"), revealing 78 fake media websites

Globally, on these servers we identified 265 fake media outlets operating in 65 countries.



Figure 45 - Map showing the location of the 265 fake media outlets

By scraping the content of one of these websites, we found republished content from the following sources, including EP Today, Times of Geneva, New Delhi Times, and 4NewsAgency.

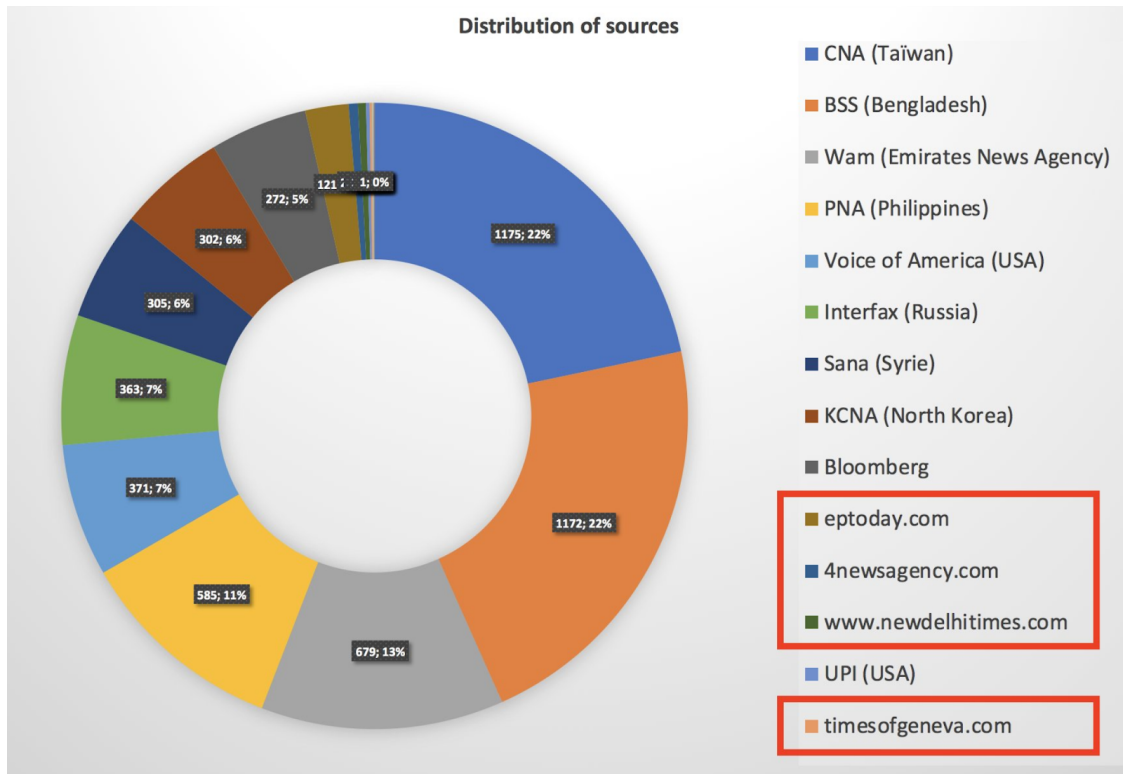


Figure 46 - Repartition of the content republished by one of the 265 fake media outlets

From assessing the media outlets, we found that nearly all were created with the same techniques, and we were able to classify them as follows:

- **Zombies:** Resuscitation of dead newspapers, such as the Deutsche Shanghai Zeitung [deutscheshanghaizeitung.com](https://web.archive.org/web/2019112111839/https://twitter.com/DS_Zeitung),³⁴ whose Wikipedia page affirms its extinction.³⁵
- **New:** Invention of new media named e.g. Times of + *name of city or country* - an example being Times of Portugal.
- **Misleading:** Use of misleading and ambiguous titles and domains that establish a false reference to real news outlets. For instance, The Albany Democrat at albanydailydemocrat.com is the fake website, whereas The Albany Democrat Herald at democratherald.com is the real news outlet.

Many of these media outlets have their own logo and 78 have their own Twitter account.

³⁴ The now defunct Twitter of Deutsche Shanghai Zeitung: https://web.archive.org/web/2019112111839/https://twitter.com/DS_Zeitung

³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche_Shanghai_Zeitung

Top 8 countries	Number
United States	66
Canada	20
United Kingdom	18
Switzerland	12
Australia	9
China	8
India	6
Russia	5

Type	Number
Misleading	10
New	87
Zombie	164
Total	261³⁶

³⁶ Other related fake media outlets spotted on other IP addresses, or pointed out by volunteers, are not included in this count as they originate from outside sources.

Call to Action :

Disinformation and information operations are designed to infiltrate democratic and transparent institutions, with the final aim of hijacking and maliciously disrupting the public debate. To mitigate the impact of such information operations, EU DisinfoLab recently released a policy vision³⁷, detailing a series of approaches that should be implemented at both the state and EU level. With this specific case, we call for:

1. Understanding the platform's digital architecture and ensuring the transparency of algorithmic content curation and acceleration. In order to reduce the impact of these campaigns, the amplification of these campaigns (on social networks, on search engines, through advertisements, etc.) needs to be more transparent and the accompanying data needs to be investigated.
2. Favouring collective intelligence with agile regulation empowering civil society and the research community. Disinformation and information operations can be used for a multitude of reasons, from covering up both illegal activities and foreign interference in democratic processes to funding hate speech and promoting illegal medicines, etc. In order to examine the phenomena and mitigate their impact, cross-expertise cooperation between civil society practitioners, researchers, and policymakers is crucial.
3. A proactive approach for building resilience by anticipating the future informational landscape. As long as these information operations remain effective from a cost/impact perspective, we expect to see their numbers and sophistication grow in the next few years. Civil society will have to be reflexive to these circumstances and build resilience rather than doubt into the information landscape.

³⁷ <https://www.disinfo.eu/2019/12/02/the-way-forward-to-tackle-disinformation-regulatory-proposals-for-the-online-information-ecosystem/>