

RIGHT OF REPLY

On 9 December 2020, a publication entitled “Indian Chronicles: deep dive into a 15-year operation targeting the EU and UN to serve Indian interests” was published on EU Disinfo Lab website. It refers to an investigation made by Gary Machado, Alexandre Alaphilippe, Roman Adamczyk and Antoine Grégoire (<https://www.disinfo.eu/publications/indian-chronicles-deep-dive-into-a-15-year-operation-targeting-the-eu-and-un-to-serve-indian-interests/>).

Both an “Executive Summary” and a “Full Report” of this investigation were made accessible through a link in this publication.

These publication and documents quote me several times by name, as well as the non-profit associations SADF et ARCHumankind which I direct. They contain a mix of groundless misinterpretations (I), false allegations (II), and vague accusations (lacking any specific content; III). Not at any time was my point of view solicited regarding the published statements – an obligation required by journalistic deontology.

I thus addressed two consecutive letters to the authors, on 17 December 2020 and 5 January 2021. These concerned (1) why I (or any of the above-mentioned organisations) had not been consulted previously to the publication of these insulting and defamatory allegations ; (2) on what basis said allegations were made; and (3) a request to correct the false statements listed.

As no reaction was witnessed to these letters, I am forced to rectify and answer these allegations as follows:

I. Groundless misinterpretations

1. The payment by SADF of a MEP's travel expenses

SADF is mentioned as having financed MEP Thierry Mariani's trip to Geneva (p. 28 of the Report). This information is erroneous and has been rectified by the European Parliament (see https://www.europarl.europa.eu/mepdat/197623_TRAV_LEG9_1007425_FR.pdf, p. 2). Although I reported this error to the authors, the Report has yet to be corrected on this point.

2. First location

The Report points out that SADF once had its first headquarters at the same location as the Srivastava Group Belgian offices (p. 27 of the Report), without mentioning that this location houses a business centre where dozens of other institutions were located. In fact, was this location was so meaningful, why would SADF have changed its location after a few months? The Report is silent on this point.

It is obvious that the value and independence of an organisation must be analysed through its (widely available and publicised) publications and actions instead of issues such as website locations and headquarters.

II. False allegations

1. My connection with an operation called “Indian Chronicles” or “Indian Chronicle”

Both SADF and I are accused several times in the Report of being part of an operation interchangeably referred to as “Indian Chronicles” or “Indian Chronicle”.

The only concrete source of information mentioned is the following: “In our previous investigation, we highlighted the ties between the founder of the South Asia Democratic Forum, former MEP Paulo Casaca, and the Indian Chronicles”. However, the link leads to a group of tweets referring to a series of - very worthy - actions wherein I was present, without any mention of the expression “Indian Chronicles”/ “Indian Chronicle”.

As far as necessary, I formally deny that SADF, ARCHumankind or myself act according to such conspiracy you designate as “Indian Chronicles” / “Indian Chronicle” operation.

2. “SouthAsiaPeaceForum.com, a former MEP informal group chaired by then-MEP Paulo Casaca’ (p.75 of the Report)

I never heard of an informal group with this name; I do not know whether it even exists; and I of course was never a member - much less a chair.

III. Vague accusations lacking any specific content

1. Partisan reports

SADF is accused of producing “partisan reports” on “Indian-related topics” (p. 71 of the Report). However, among the hundreds of publications SADF has produced, not a single line is quoted to substantiate this claim. One may also note that the terms “partisan” or “Indian-related” remain largely undefined.

SADF vigorously contests these accusations.

Our work does focus on South Asia (reason why the association was named “*South Asia Democratic Forum*”). We focus on all countries in the region and have produced hundreds of publications on them all – all of which easily accessible and available for analysis. (see <https://www.sadf.eu/category/publications/>)

We of course consider Europe’s partnership with the largest democracy on earth – India – to constitute a most crucial, strategic policy to be pursued. We do, however, fail to understand why there would be a problem with this strategic incline. The Report contains no specific or reasoned objection to the point of view in question.



2. Malicious actors

The entities referred to in the Report - including ARCHumankind, SADF and myself - are qualified as “malicious”, without a single fact or evidence being provided to sustain this accusation. Quite on the contrary, the Report refers to several of our valuable publications and initiatives - while being unable to present the slightest shred of substantiated criticism.

This accusation is utterly insulting since it lends us harmful intentions and seriously damages our reputation. Furthermore, the fact that this accusation is so vague and not supported by any evidence prevents us from properly defending ourselves.

3. Economic and Social Committee

I, as well as many other people (European officials, for instance), were present in a debate on the consequences of preferential trade in the context of GSP+ (I indeed have written extensively on the subject of the political and economic impact of the European trade preferences). This has been hinted to constitute some sort of conspiracy – again, without any argument sustaining this accusation.

4. Green Ray over Iraq

The Report states that the address of the organisation having commissioned the report I co-authored under this title would not be correct, although the authors acknowledge that the United Nations refer to the same address so that I cannot bear any responsibility for this (p. 14 of the Report).

Moreover, this report is wrongly attributed to ARCHumankind – an organisation that did not exist yet at the time the report was published (p. 5 of the Report).

Once again, we deplore the fact that the Report fails to specify in what way our actions or publications would be open to criticism. On our side, we are extremely proud of our uncompromising denunciation of terrorism and of the Jihadi strategies that lie at its source.

5. Education for global peace

The Report also refers to this paper, which focusses on the issue of hate indoctrination of children in the name of “religion”, one of the tragedies across the world we do our best to publicly denounce and counter. Again, no precise and well-argued criticism is formulated that would discredit our message.

6. Terrorism revisited

Among the several books published by Springer in the series I am responsible for – ‘Contemporary South Asian Studies’ – the Report focusses on this book that I co-edited and co-authored (p. 28). It centres on Islamic fanaticism’s terrorist strategies and presents a strong criticism of both terrorism and of the Jihadi strategies lying behind it. The theses developed in this book can obviously not be seriously qualified as a form of “maliciousness”.



The targeting of these three works in particular among hundreds of others (points 4, 5 and 6), all three focusing on various forms of terrorism and Jihadism most in particular, seems questionable to us in more than one way.

May we conclude by ensuring that the unfounded accusations and false allegations contained in the publications in question – ironically originating from an association claiming to counter disinformation and to make deep investigations - have made ARCHumankind, SADF and myself more determined than ever to continue to do our best, through our publications and activities, to contribute to a better fate for mankind. We intend to continue to do this in a fully transparent manner, yet also in an utterly uncompromising one. More specifically, we will continue our fight against terrorism and jihadism and the unspeakable tragedies these engender, through all South Asia, which represents an extremely populous and significant world region. Finally, we will maintain and foster a productive relationship between Europe and India – a crucial emerging power, the largest democracy on earth, and doubtlessly an influential player in the world our children will live in.

January 15, 2021

Paulo Casaca

