



University of  
**Sheffield**

# **Geopolitics of Disinformation, Information Infrastructure & National Security**

Dani Madrid-Morales

16 March 2023

A WORLD  
**TOP 100**  
UNIVERSITY

# A note on terminology



**Foreign  
(dis/ill/mis)  
information**



**Influence  
Operations**



**Foreign  
Information  
Manipulation and  
Interference (FIMI)**

# Disinformation citizens care about, but few political actors do

Source: <https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/meta-programme-fact-checks/beware-scams-facebook-page-and-blog-impersonating-kenyan>

**Ramtons Appliances Kenya**  
16 June at 11:30 · 🌐

FLASH SALES! Up to 50% DISCOUNT! LIMITED Stocks!

RAMTONS 2 Gas Burners, Non Stick Complete Cooker with 13Kg TOTAL Gas + Free LPG Gas Pipe & Gas Regulator Ksh. 6500

✓ Complete Ramtons 2 Burners Cooker with 13kg K-Gas Cylinder @ Ksh 6,500... See more



**COMPLETE RAMTONS 2 BURNERS + K-GAS 13KG**  
KSH 12,995 **KSH 6,500**

**KES 6,500**  
KES 12,595

**2 GAS BURNERS NON STIC COMPLETE COOKER WITH 13KG TOTAL GA**

**Ramtons Appliances Kenya**  
Product/service

Send Message

**Tuskys Supermarkets Recruitment**  
22 June at 18:08 · 🌐

Over 3010+ Jobs available in our supermarket branches across Kenya. To apply; kindly follow >> <https://bit.ly/3hNqzpa>



**TUSKYS SUPERMARKETS OFFICIAL JOB APPLICATION FORM**

TUSKYS Supermarket Stores is one of the largest superstore across Kenya. TUSKYS Stores are in need of more employees in current and new online-shop branches across Kenya in the following towns: Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombasa, Malindi, Kisumu, Eldoret, Kapsabet, Machakos, Ktun, Lodwar, Kakamega, Nyeri, Kiambu, Meru, Isiolo, Murang'a, Bungoma, Kisii, Homa-Bay, Krinyanga, Iten, Kericho, Narok, Lamu, Busia, Vihiga, Siaya, Nanyuki, Makeni, Kitale and many more.

We target to employ 3020 employees, internship positions included.

The job opportunities available include:

- Cleaners and guards (1228)
- Delivery personnel (1018)
- Receptionists (449)
- Store keepers & Cooks (68)

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

**TUSKYS SUPERMARKETS OFFICIAL JOB APPLICATION FORM**

# Disinformation most political actors care about

Source: <https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/meta-programme-fact-checks/no-image-doesnt-show-nigerian-presidential-hopeful-tinubu>

**Kennedy Nosa**  
@KennedyNosa2

Happening now: [@officialABAT](#) on a courtesy visit to US President Joe Biden as part of his US on international engagements. Obidiots say Tinubu cannot visit US based on his indictment. He is there right now live with the US President. Let your Obi visit too. Mumu pipo.

Tradueix el tuit



8:44 p. m. · 29 de nov. de 2022

14:32

+234 802 621 0650 >

Text Message  
Today 14:32

\*PDP\* ATIKU FOR PRESIDENT 2023  
VOTE ATIKU ABUBARKAR FOR CHANGE  
PDP SUPPORT WITH NGN 85,000 AS AN  
APPRECIATION TO ATIKU SUPPORTERS  
FOR- PAYMENT CALL: [07042231502](tel:07042231502)

# Disinformation all political actors should care more about



Source: <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/12/removing-coordinated-inauthentic-behavior-france-russia/>

A living room scene with a television in the center displaying a news anchor. The room is dimly lit and has a blue color overlay. A sofa is on the left and an armchair is on the right. A coffee table is in the foreground. The text is centered over the television and the sofa area.

**Foreign  
disinformation & the  
(excessive) focus on  
narratives**

# Clash of “Truth(s)” – Contemporary Emphasis

Source: <https://cyber.fsi.stanford.edu/io/news/prigozhin-africa>

**rfi AFRIQUE**

DIRECT

RCA | RUSSIE | DROITS DE L'HOMME | ONU

## RCA: enquête de l'ONU sur des accusations de torture portées contre des Russes

Republier </>

En Centrafrique, des forces militaires et/ou paramilitaires russes, étroitement liées aux forces armées nationales (photo), se seraient rendues coupables de tortures à l'égard d'au moins un civil centrafricain. L'ONU va mener une enquête.  
© ISSOUF SANOGO / AFP

Agence de Nouvelles Béafrika  
- March 18 -

Le mensonge de la France sur les activités des Russes en RCA est découvert  
L'Édition pro-française RFI a publié une des premières les informations qui proviendraient du rapport de l'ONU sur les tortures réalisées par des instructeurs russes.  
Cependant, un vrai rapport a été publié il y a quelques jours. Après sa lecture on se rend bien compte que l'article de RFI est complètement faux et rédigé afin de dénigrer la Russie.

7 1 Comment 1 Share

Like Comment Share

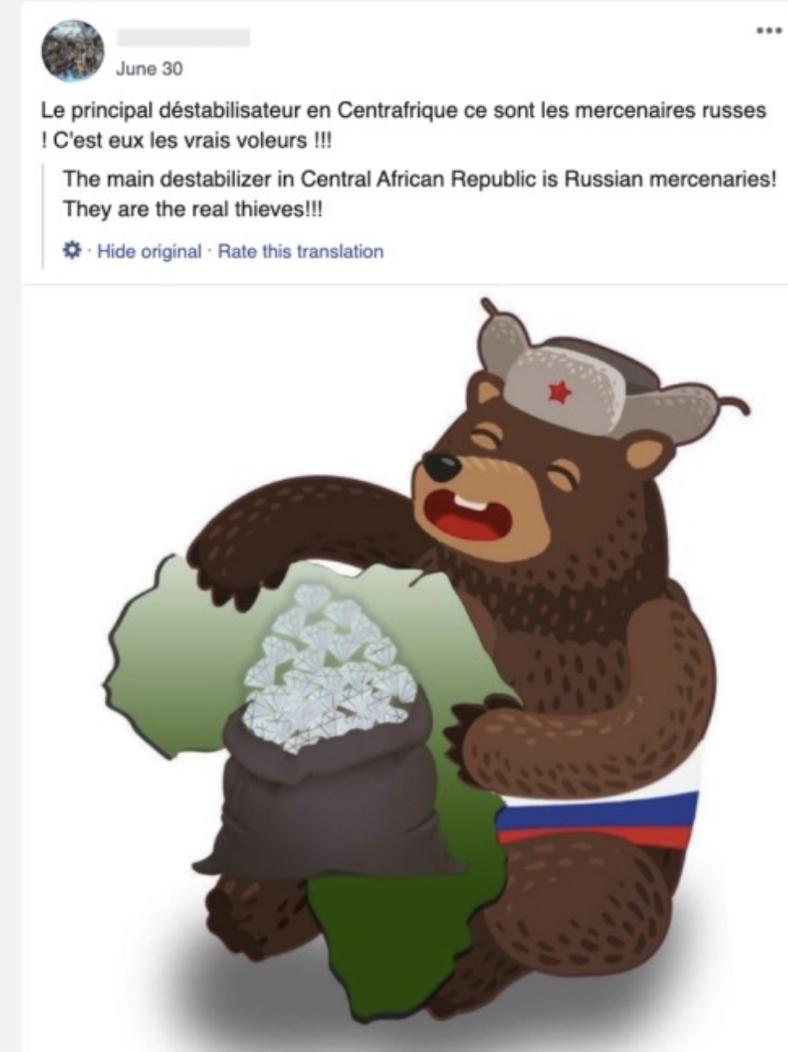
Most Relevant ▾

Thouliot Mironde Zoumale Donc c'est maintenant que vous êtes au courant des fausses informations que RFI diffusent chaque fois ? Radio de blablaba, juste pour perturber les ordres politiques des pays d'outre-mer.  
Like · Reply · 31w · Edited

Write a comment...  
Press Enter to post.

# Clash of “Truth(s)” – Contemporary Emphasis

Source: <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/12/removing-coordinated-inauthentic-behavior-france-russia/>



# Clash of Narratives – Nothing New

## China Reconstructs

VOL. XXI NO. 9

SEPTEMBER 1972



1972



Chileans rally to protest U.S. imperialist plunder and exploitation of their country and support the nationalization of the copper mines.

### The Third World's Struggle Against Imperialist Economic Plunder

THE developing countries can win victory and freedom only by persisting in their struggle. Though the speaker, an Iraqi delegate interviewed after the third session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, was speaking from his personal experience and convictions, it was the voice of the entire third world.

At the U.N.C.T.A.D. session, which met in Santiago, the Chilean capital, from April 13 to May 21, the oppression, plunder and ruthless exploitation of the third world by colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism came in for a broad-sided exposure from representatives of the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. They waged a sharp face-to-face struggle on issues of trade, sea-bed resources, payment of debts, financial aid, international shipping, commodity markets, international currency and other questions.

Under the guise of "aid" and "cooperation", through export of capital, dumping of goods, grabbing of important raw materials and

strategic resources of the developing countries, controlling their economic lifelines, undermining their national industries and shifting their own monetary and economic crises onto them, the United States and other imperialist countries have continually obstructed the economic growth of the vast majority of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

#### Exchanges at Unequal Values

One of the traditional ways the imperialist countries employ to exploit the developing nations is to monopolize the international market, force down the prices of raw materials exported from the developing countries and raise the prices of processed products, that is, buying low and selling high.

The developing countries depend chiefly on the export of their raw materials to exchange for industrial processed goods, a situation created by long-term imperialist domination. Today the export of primary commodities (fuel, farm and mineral products) still accounts for 80 percent of their total exports. Quite

a few of these countries still have a "monoculture economy" and can only export one or two kinds of products to get foreign exchange. This enables the imperialist countries, with their control of the international market, to exploit them through trade and run their economies.

According to data published by the United Nations, world prices of raw materials in 1963 were more than 38 percent below what they were in 1951, and after that fluctuated at levels below the 1963 prices. In 1970 there was again a big drop in prices of some raw materials; the price of wool stood at 14.5 percent below the 1963 figure, copper 3.1 percent, wheat 3.2 and cocoa 24.4 percent.

During the same period, however, the United States and a few other "developed" countries raised prices on their industrial products sold to the regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

According to U.N. figures, taking prices of manufactured goods in 1950 as the base figures, by 1963 these prices had risen 23 percent,

SEPTEMBER 1972

33

Yemen - the world's least known tragedy  
Is the world heading for a new ice age?  
China missile theft row flares  
A revolution in food production?  
Scant hopes as disarmament talks reopen

No. 6 March (2)

Tanzania's road to socialism  
Moscow thinks again on Africa  
Do influenza epidemics originate in China?  
Hopeful developments in Rhodesian African opposition  
Focus on: Malta - an island in trouble.

No. 7 April (1)

Now racketeers move in on Rhodesia's ailing economy  
The fight for wild life preservation  
Lebanon regrets hosting afro-Asian writers conference  
Divided attitudes on Vietnam peace talks  
The riddle of Soviet military expenditure

No. 8 April (2)

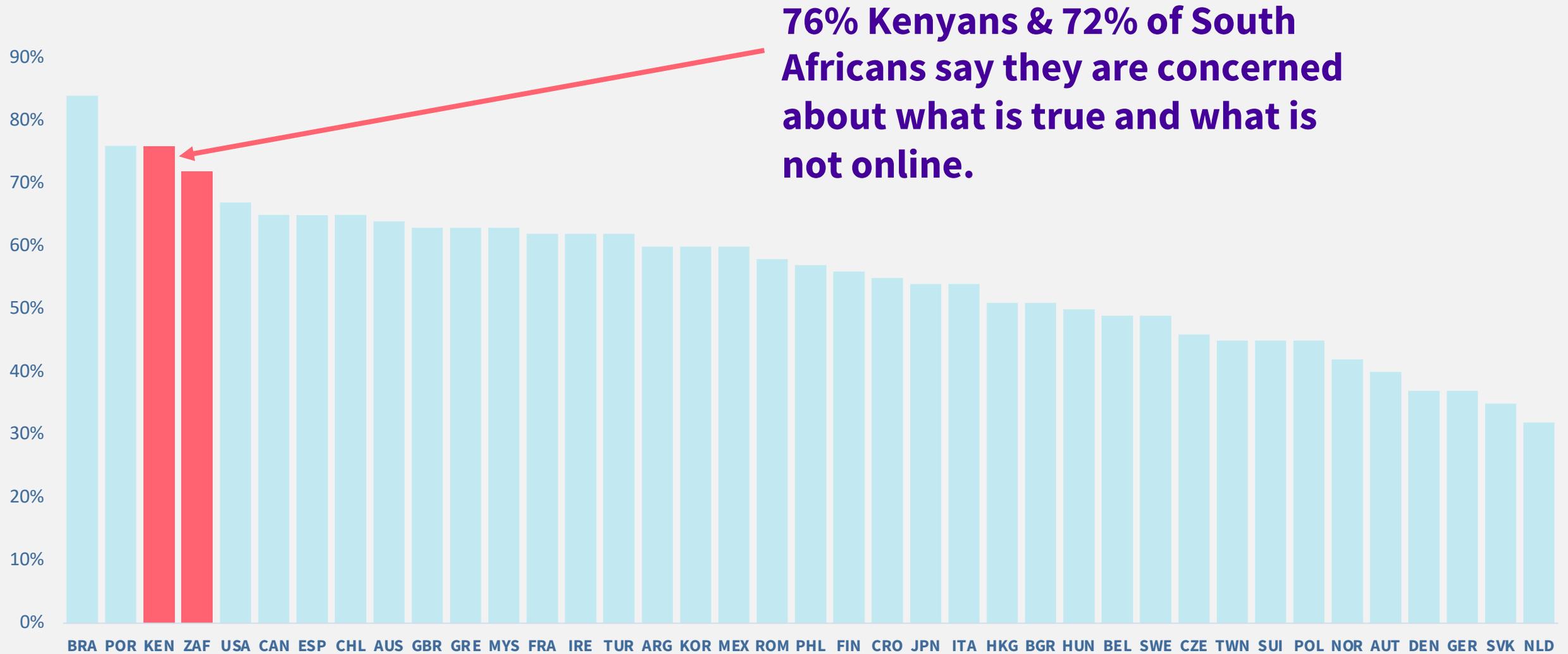
Nasser's huge debts worry international Monetary Fund.  
Sanctions against Rhodesia also hit Mozambique  
New Chinese theory of diplomacy

SECRET

1968

Fuente: <https://twitter.com/RoryCormac>

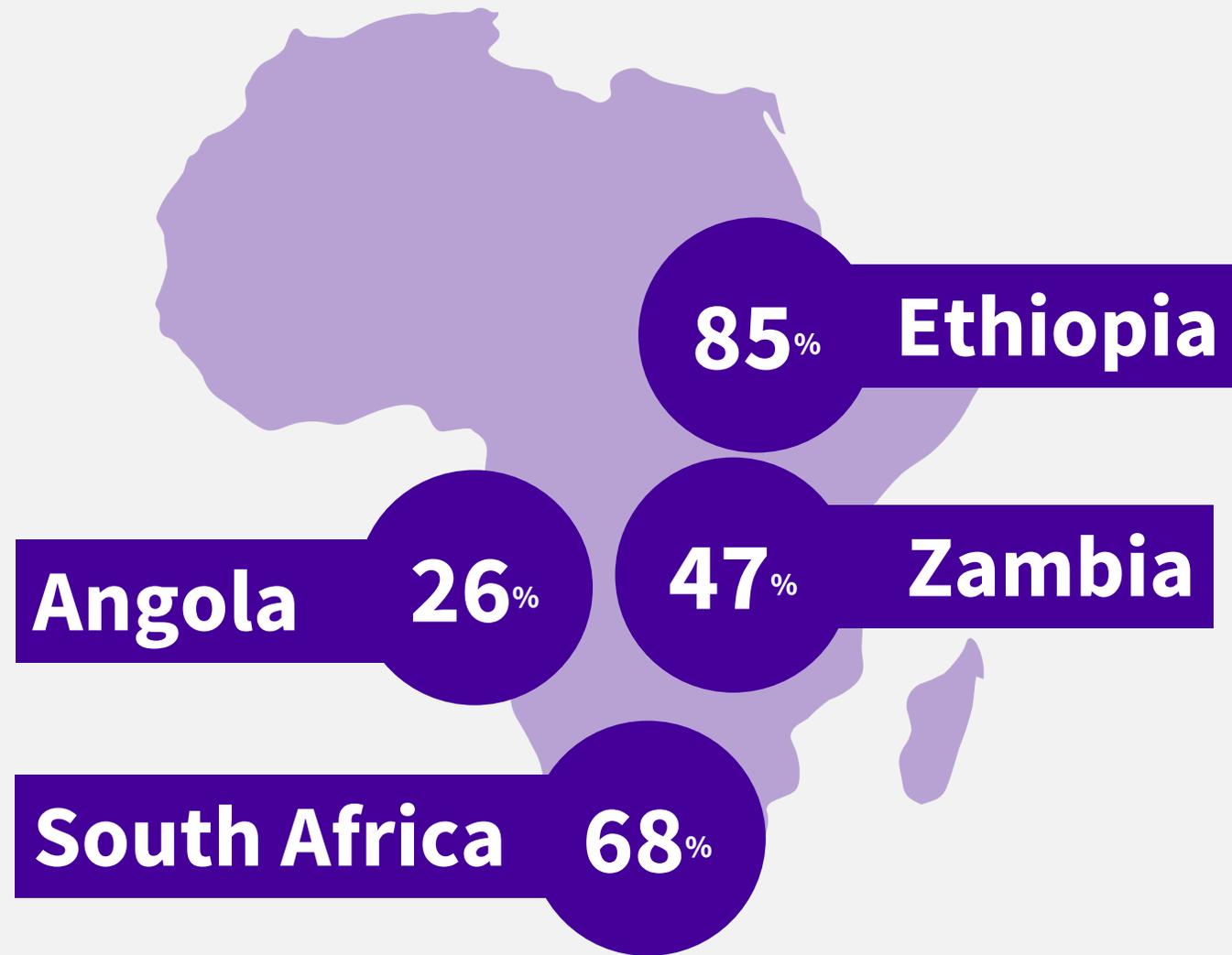
# Concerned about what is true and what is not



**76% Kenyans & 72% of South Africans say they are concerned about what is true and what is not online.**

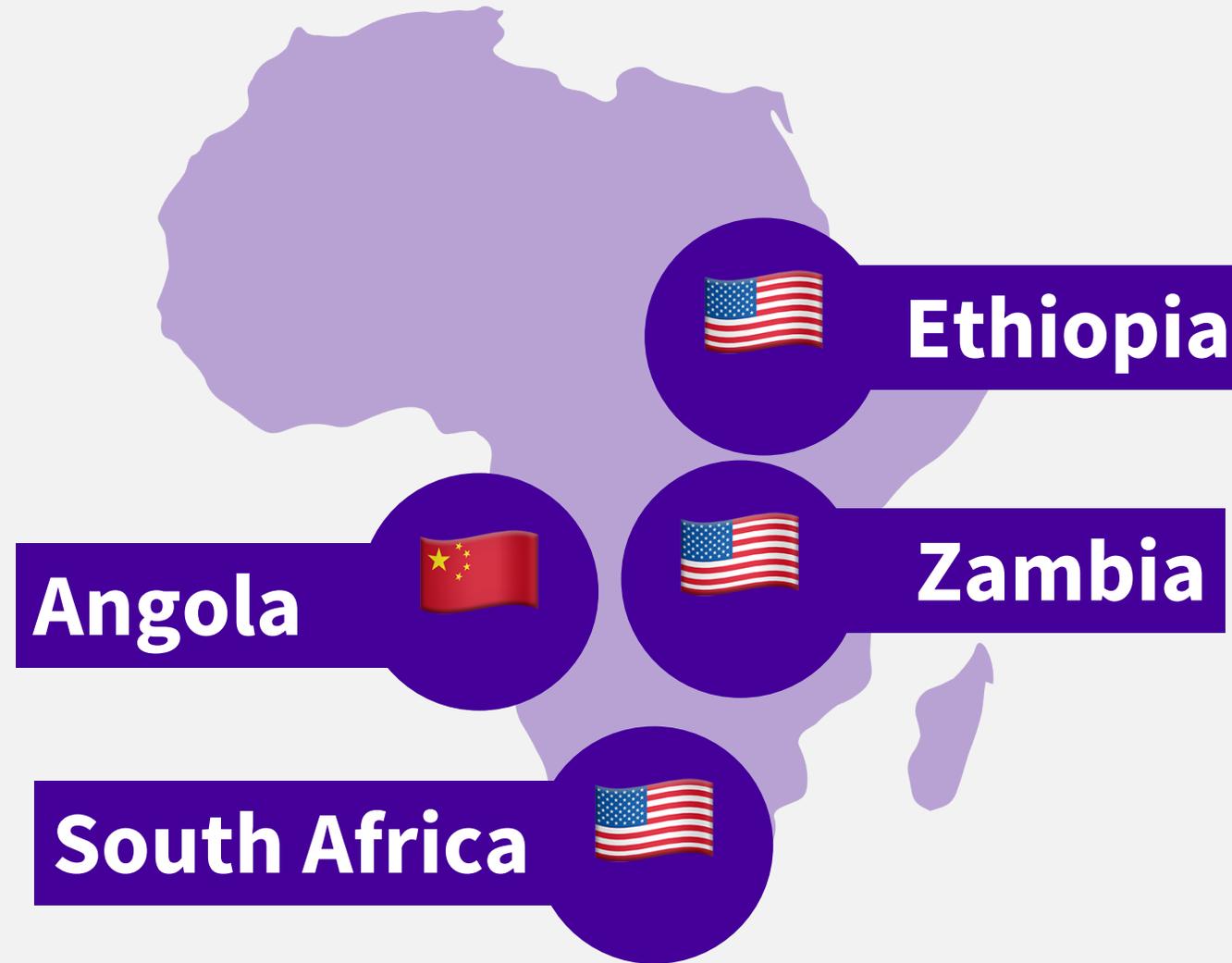
Source: <https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2020/overview-key-findings-2020/>

# How worried are you about foreign propaganda?



Madrid-Morales & Wasserman (In-progress)  
Sample size: 4,200

# What country is the main source of foreign propaganda?





# **FIMI and the importance of infrastructure(s)**

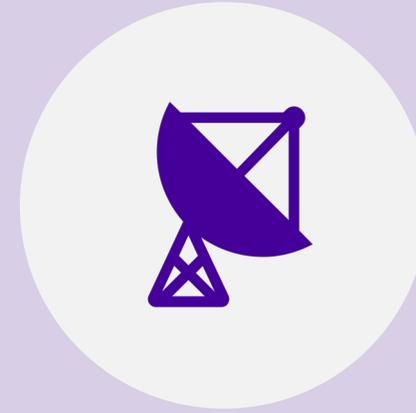
# New technologies, new media ecosystems



**New consumption habits coupled with multiple new information sources**



**Mobile technology has created dynamism in the domestic media environment**

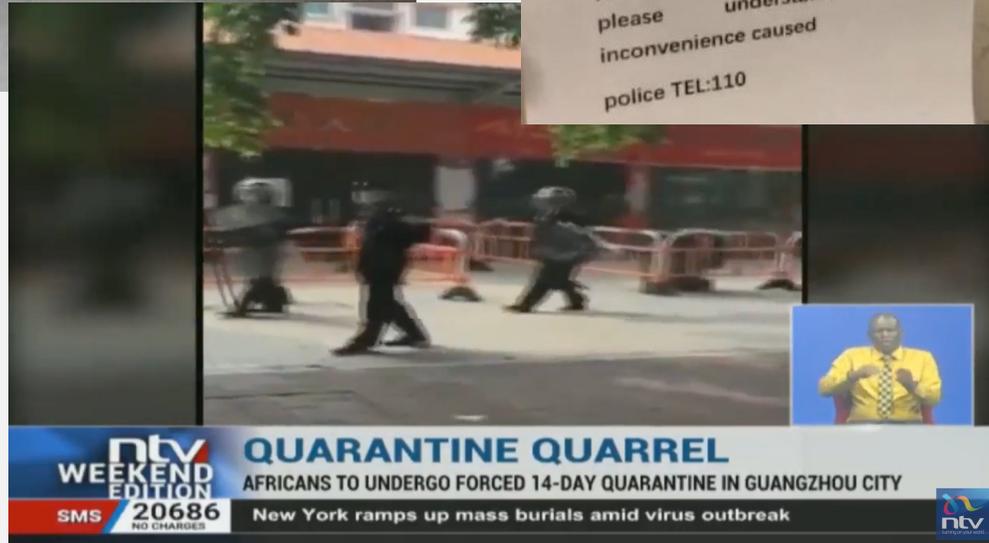
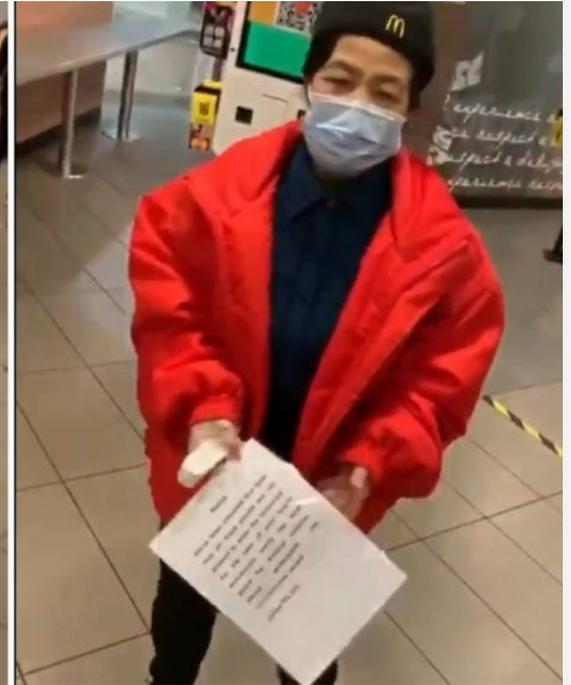


**Some States have begun losing the ability to control information flows domestically**

# StarTimes as prototype



# Infrastructural affordances 1 – Cause



# Infrastructural affordances 1 – Effect



# Infrastructural affordances 1 – Response

Opinion 09:19, 13-Apr-2020



## Alleged harassment of Africans in China based on misinformation

Stephen Ndegwa



An African expat (R) learns the Chinese language at a service center for foreigners in Dengfeng Street of Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, July 27, 2018. /Xinhua

**Editors Note:** Stephen Ndegwa is a Nairobi-based communications consultant and international affairs columnist. The article reflects the author's views, and not necessarily those of CGTN.

Society 18:42, 20-Apr-2020



## The inside story of Africans in Guangzhou amid COVID-19 outbreak

Updated 12:25, 21-Apr-2020

Li Ruikang



Guangzhou, a metropolis in southern China, was caught in the global limelight after reports of Africans "being discriminated against and forced into quarantine" surfaced. The capital of south China's Guangdong Province is now trying to find a balance between preventing the recurrence of a second COVID-19 outbreak and staving off claims that it is acting against what is believed to be the core principle of international norms.



Minister Counsellor Zhao  
@zhaobaogang2011

my friend in Guangzhou sent me video showing normal life of Africans. no racism in China and not believe distorted video on social media.



## Rumor Buster: Videos showing discrimination in China's anti-epidemic measures are fake

Source: Xinhua | 2020-04-24 17:23:07 | Editor: huaxia

BEIJING, April 24 (Xinhua) -- Certain videos recently circulated online purport to show discrimination towards foreign nationals, particularly Africans, in China in its anti-epidemic measures. However, these are just groundless rumors.

French television France 24 in an article posted on its website debunked some fake videos, reproaching the disinformation that had nothing to do with the pandemic.



AmbChenXiaodong  
@ChinaAmbSA

The truth behind the videos once again exposed the hidden agenda of cooking up the so called "discrimination on Africans in Guangzhou".



ervers.france24.com  
 debunked: Fake videos purport to show violence against Africans in  
ina

AM · Apr 28, 2020

97 Reply Copy link

Read 28 replies

# Infrastructural affordances 2 - Alliances



Home > Newsroom > Top Stories > Kyiv tried to urgently conceal traces of military biological program funded by U.S. Defense Dept - Russian Defense Ministry

6 Mar 2022 18:59

## Kyiv tried to urgently conceal traces of military biological program funded by U.S. Defense Dept - Russian Defense Ministry



MOSCOW. March 6 (Interfax) - Facts of the urgent concealment by the regime in Kyiv of the traces of a military biological program funded by the United States Department of Defense and implemented in Ukraine were exposed during the special military operation, Russian Defense Ministry spokesperson Igor Konashenkov said at a briefing on Sunday.

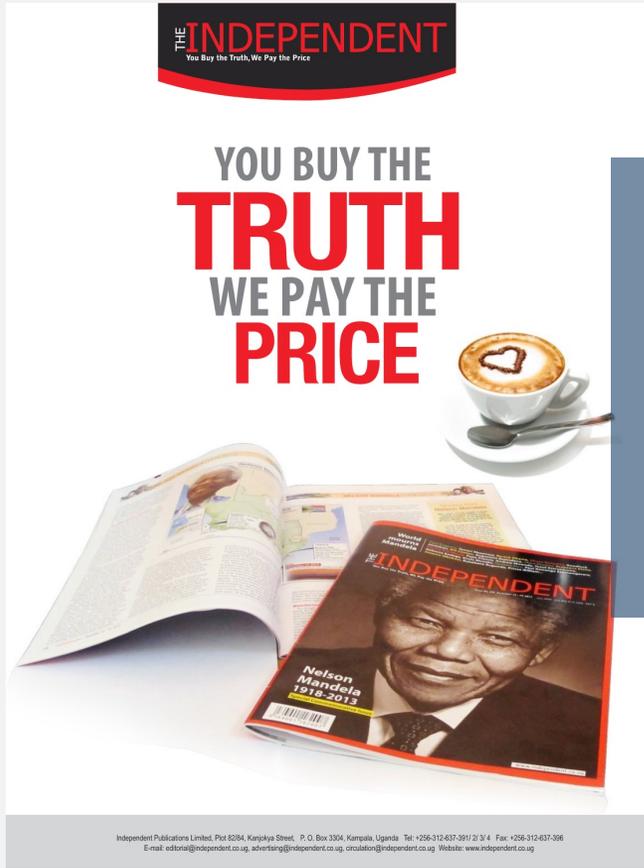
"We have obtained documents from employees of Ukrainian bio laboratories that the especially dangerous pathogens of plague, anthrax, Tularemia, cholera and other deadly diseases were urgently destroyed on February 24," Konashenkov said.

"Russian expert of the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection Troops are now analyzing the documents," he said.

The screenshot shows the Xinhua website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with categories like 'Accueil', 'Chine', 'Monde', 'Photos', 'Vidéos', 'Afrique', 'Europe', 'Amérique du Nord', 'Xinhua Multimédia', 'Plus', and 'Éditions'. Below the navigation bar is the Xinhua logo and the date 'Vendredi 29 avril 2022'. The main headline reads: 'Kiev a détruit des échantillons mortels provenant de laboratoires de guerre biologique financés par les Etats-Unis (MAE russe)'. Below the headline are social media sharing icons and the text 'French.xinhuanet.com | Publié le 2022-03-09 à 13:52'. The article text begins with: 'MOSCOU, 8 mars (Xinhua) -- Les autorités de Kiev ont détruit des agents pathogènes dangereux de maladies mortelles stockés dans des laboratoires en Ukraine financés par les Etats-Unis, a confirmé mardi le ministère russe des Affaires étrangères. Le ministère a reçu des documents d'employés de laboratoires biologiques ukrainiens confirmant la destruction en urgence d'agents pathogènes dangereux tels que la peste, l'anthrax, la tularémie, le choléra et d'autres maladies mortelles le 24 février, selon une déclaration de la porte-parole du ministère, Maria Zakharova. Elle a ajouté que ces laboratoires étaient financés par le Pentagone et faisaient partie d'un programme d'armes biologiques. Selon le ministère, ces agents pathogènes ont été immédiatement détruits pour dissimuler les preuves indiquant que les Etats-Unis et l'Ukraine ont violé l'article I de la Convention sur l'interdiction des armes biologiques. Mardi également, le ministère chinois des Affaires étrangères a appelé les Etats-Unis à publier les détails de leurs laboratoires biologiques en Ukraine et a exhorté les parties concernées à assurer leur sécurité. Fin'. At the bottom, there is a 'Nous contacter' button and social media icons, along with the Xinhua logo and copyright information: 'Sponsored by Xinhua News Agency. Copyright © 2000-2022 XINHUANET.com All Rights Reserved.'

The screenshot shows the website 'PROVINCES 26 RDC' with the URL 'www.provinces26rdc.net'. The site features a map of the 26 provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Below the map is a navigation menu with categories: 'ACCUEIL', 'POLITIQUE', 'SOCIÉTÉ', 'CULTURE', 'ENVIRONNEMENT', 'SPORT', 'DIASPORA', 'PROVINCES', 'INTERNATIONAL', 'ECONOMIE', 'SANTÉ', and 'SECURITE'. The main headline reads: '« Kiev a détruit des échantillons mortels provenant de laboratoires de guerre biologique financés par les Etats-Unis » (Min Aff russe)'. Below the headline is a photo of a laboratory with a biohazard sign and the text 'БИОЛОГІЧНА НЕБЕЗПЕКА'. At the bottom, there is a social media sharing bar and the text: '« Les autorités de Kiev ont détruit des agents pathogènes dangereux de maladies mortelles stockés dans des laboratoires en Ukraine financés par les Etats-Unis », a affirmé mardi 8 mars 2022 le ministère russe des Affaires étrangères. Le ministère a reçu des documents d'employés de laboratoires biologiques ukrainiens confirmant la destruction en urgence d'agents pathogènes dangereux tels que la peste, l'anthrax, la tularémie, le choléra et d'autres maladies mortelles le 24 février, selon une déclaration de la porte-parole du ministère, Maria Zakharova.'

# Infrastructural affordances 2 - Influence



164 news stories about Ukraine in 3 months

75% of these stories is written by China's Xinhua



Vaccine-preventable diseases outbreaks on the rise in Africa: W  
Home / WORLD / Russia begins second phase of special military operation in Ukraine: Lavrov

## Russia begins second phase of special military operation in Ukraine: Lavrov

The Independent April 19, 2022 WORLD Leave a comment



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. File Photo

Moscow, Russia | Xinhua | The second phase of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine has begun, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday.

The operation in eastern Ukraine is aimed at "completely liberating" the populations of Donetsk and Lugansk, Lavrov said during an interview with India Today.

"This operation will continue, the next phase of this operation has now begun. There will now be an important moment during this special operation," he added.

Fuente: Elaboración propia



# Consequences



**Contributes to  
deminishing trust  
in institutions,  
media included**



**Reduces quality of  
democracy, and  
weakens electoral  
processes**



**Facilitates  
reordering of  
public opinion and  
foreign policy**



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