ATAFIMI Monitoring Report - January 2026

Cross-border Disinformation Targeting the Ukrainian Army and Foreign Volunteers Was the Most Prevalent in Late 2025

1. Introduction and Key Findings

This report compiles the results of monitoring conducted between September 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025, as part of the ATAFIMI project, which aims to identify and analyze incidents of information manipulation and interference (FIMI) **originating from Russia in various countries and languages**. The monitoring covers the following participating countries: Spain, Ukraine, Lithuania, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela.

Highlights:

- The most prominent narrative backed by disinformation claims during this period targeted the Ukrainian Army and the **foreign soldiers** fighting for Ukraine, with posts containing false claims collecting over 2 million views.
- Unfunded claims targeting Volodímir Zelensky and **accusations of corruption** also regained traction and were **detected in 9 out of 10 countries**. For example, tweets accusing him of owning a Russian passport or of buying Bill Cosby's house in New York were viewed over 3 and 1 million times, respectively.
- The **use of AI-generated content** to support disinformation claims was widespread. Most viral posts were labeled with debunks by independent fact-checkers on Facebook and, at times, showed platform warnings on TikTok identifying the content as AI-generated. In contrast, only one Community Note was shown on X, and no warnings appeared on Telegram channels.
- Several users sharing disinformation claims on X had blue checks, which was formerly used to indicate an account was verified and now means the user is paying a subscription and normally gets more visibility.

2. Cross-border narratives

The last quarter of 2025 was characterized by the leveraging **of existing narratives supported by disinformation claims** targeting Ukrainian authorities, but also by the emergence of new narratives that had greater impact in Latin America.

New narratives

Prominent narratives have surfaced during this monitoring period focusing on **the Ukrainian army recruitment** and the **human cost of the war**.

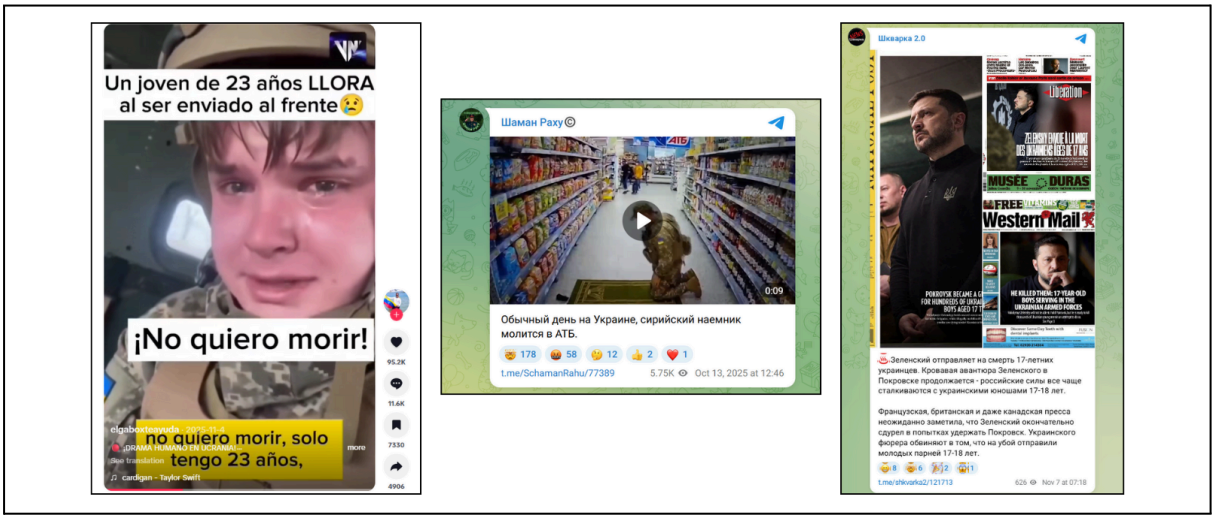
On the one hand, there is disinformation about drafting and troop mobilization, and about Ukraine suffering massive losses within its armed forces. These narratives are reinforced by disinformation alleging the **kidnapping of young people or the elderly, emotional depictions of soldiers** crying, and supposed internal confrontations or acts of violence. Some of the posts had over 3 million views. Examples of disinformation claims detected in relation to these narratives:

Debunked claim:	Claim detected in:
A Ukrainian soldier records a video crying after being forcibly recruited to go to war: “I don't want to die.”	Spain, Lithuania, Serbia, Venezuela, Ukraine, Georgia, Mexico and Argentina
Ukraine is sending 17-year-olds to defend Pokrovsk	Ukraine, Mexico and Spain
Ukrainian soldiers killed two civilians carrying a white flag and a dog with a drone	Lithuania and Mexico

These narratives appear alongside another strand that specifically targets foreign soldiers or potential volunteers fighting in the Ukrainian army. Disinformation claims alleging the mistreatment of foreign volunteers have circulated widely in both Europe and Latin America with the apparent aim of discouraging enlistment. This narrative trend has been documented in a joint investigation conducted under this project and it seems particularly relevant that the pieces of content focus sometimes on Latin American volunteers and are disseminated in the region.

Debunked claim:	Claim detected in:
Brazilian soldier fighting in Ukraine: "For God's sake, I shouldn't have come”	Spain and Mexico
Syrian mercenary seen praying in Ukrainian grocery store	Ukraine and Georgia
As a result of the Russian attack on the airfield in Starokostyantinov "an American serviceman was killed"	Ukraine

Additionally, partners have detected the repeated use of AI-generated media to support narratives of human losses and mistreatment, including videos of alleged soldiers claiming they were forcibly recruited or expressing regret about going to war. That is a relevant aspect when it comes to the **Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) identified as instrumental in supporting those narratives.**



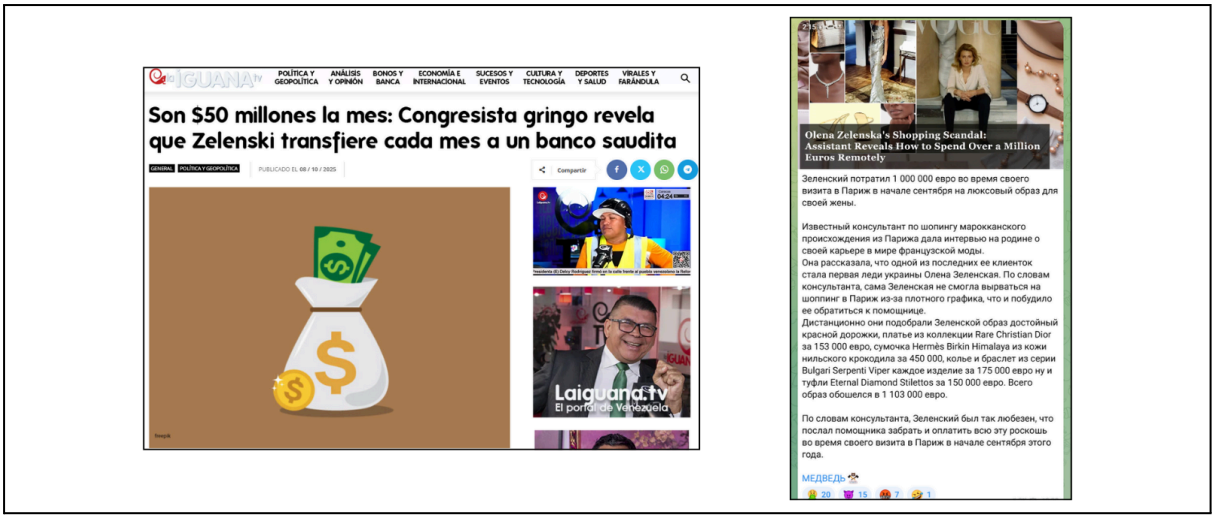
Examples of posts detected pushing the narrative

Recurrent narratives

Existing narratives undermining president Zelensky's credibility and leadership, particularly those alleging the misuse of wartime resources and corruption among political elites and authorities, have been leveraged during this period. Their impact appears to be **stronger in European countries that are providing financial assistance to Ukraine.**

New claims, similar to those previously identified under this project, have been detected across multiple countries. For instance:

Debunked claim	Claim detected in:
Zelensky transfers $50 million to a bank in UAE every month	Lithuania, Mexico, Spain, Venezuela, Georgia, Ukraine
Zelensky bought ranches valued at $79 million and became one of the 10 largest landowners in the United States	Spain, Lithuania and Serbia
Olena Zelenska spent over a million euros on designer clothes, says her stylist	Ukraine, Lithuania and Georgia



Examples of posts detected pushing the narrative

3. **Country by country trends**

Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Several of the detected disinformation claims were clearly tailored to resonate with audiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina **by exploiting local history, institutions, and ethnic sensitivities**. These included false warnings that Putin planned to send troops to unite Serbia and Republika Srpska (one of the two political entities that make up Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), and assertions that Serbia and Croatia are the true guarantors of the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995). Particularly tailored was a story framing alleged drone incidents in Poland and Estonia as a "false flag" comparable to claims associated with the Markale and Vase Miskina Street massacres during the 1990s Bosnian war. Much of this content has been published by the Russian state news agency, Sputnik, which has a strong presence in Bosnia. Most viral disinformation claims were circulating on Facebook and later labeled by independent fact-checking organizations.

Serbia

The most viral disinformation claims in the region circulated in Facebook and Instagram. Over 6,600 users liked a post falsely claiming that Russian soldiers had captured NATO officers, debunked by fact-checkers in August and labelled in the platform. Other viral posts targeted president Zelensky falsely claiming he owned an Israeli passport, an apartment in Russia or a ranch in the US, collecting hundreds of likes. 98,000 times was viewed an AI-generated video of an Ukrainian woman calling for the continuation of the war while her children are living in Poland and Germany, video which was also detected in Georgia.

Georgia

Viral Facebook posts, viewed almost 2 million times, featured AI-generated videos showing Ukrainian soldiers and male employees of the police and the Territorial Center for Recruitment and Social Support kissing each other. This content fits the same identity-based narrative as another debunked claim, in which Georgian and Russian-language Facebook accounts circulated a survey allegedly **ranking Ukrainians as the most homosexual people in the world.** AI was also used to create false content supporting the claim that Ukrainian commanders had fled the battlefield.

Lithuania

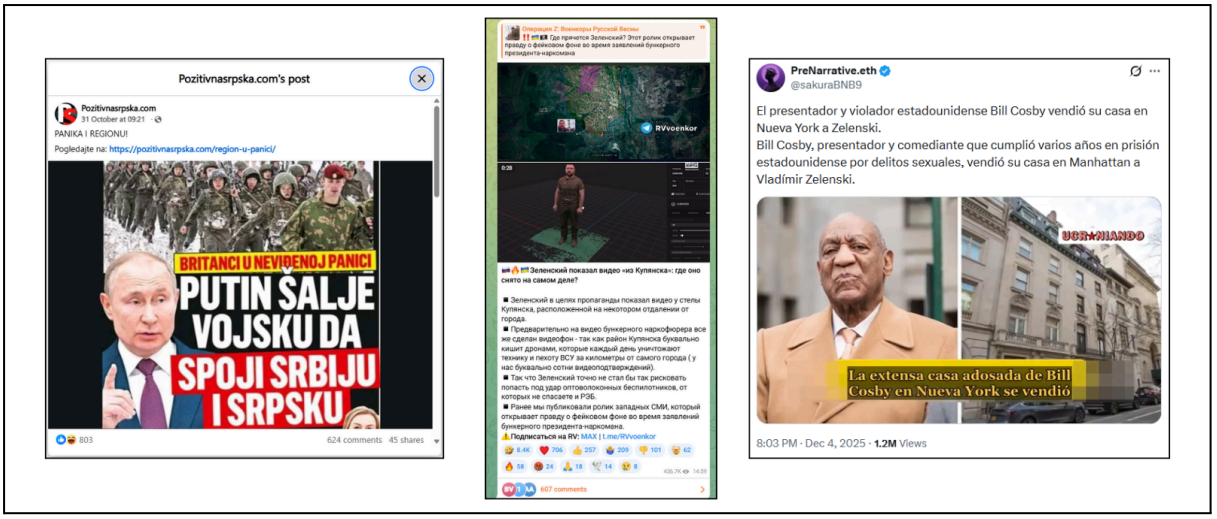
A post on Facebook with over 980 reactions and 189 reshares claiming 'Lithuania sends weather balloons into its own territory to restrict transit to Kaliningrad' while national authorities confirmed that the balloons are coming into Lithuanian territory from Belarus.
A conspiracy theory shared on Facebook with over 60,000 impressions attempts to suggest that Jews have "taken over" Ukrainian President Volodímyr Zelensky's cabinet and that it is only because of their desire to restore a medieval state of Khazaria. On the contrary, a post collected 465 reactions in the same online platform falsely claiming that Ukrainian soldiers wear Nazi symbols in their uniforms, a narrative that Russia tries to perpetuate over time.

Ukraine

Telegram hosted the most prominent disinformation claims in the country. Pro-Kremlin channels cast doubt on President Volodímyr Zelensky's visit to Kupiansk, in the Ukrainian Kharkiv region, on December 12, 2025 (over 430,000 impressions), as well as on the size of the audience during his speech at the UN General Assembly, held at the end of 2025, falsely alleging that Ukrainian broadcasters had digitally manipulated the footage. Overall, these narratives accused Ukraine of information manipulation. On the same platform, a staged video allegedly showing Ukrainian soldiers threatening Erika Kirk, the widow of the late American activist Charlie Kirk, was detected following her statements on Ukraine. In addition, disinformation claims concerning the legal status of Ukrainian refugees circulated widely.
Separately, historical propaganda garnered over 11,000 views on VK, the most popular social network in Russia, featuring a video of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov claiming that Odessa and Mykolaiv were "created by Russian people," reinforcing existing historical disinformation narratives. This content also claims that both Ukrainians regions have expressed desire to become part of Russia.

Spain

X hosted most of the viral disinformation posts in the country, with only one of them being labeled through a Community Note. Two posts falsely claiming that Zelensky had purchased Bill Cosby's townhouse in New York for $29 million and ranches valued at $79 million together accumulated 2 million views on the platform. The same level of reach was observed for an unlabeled AI-generated video depicting an alleged Brazilian soldier crying and expressing regret over having enlisted in the Ukrainian army.



Examples of posts detected in the region

Latin America

Argentina

An AI-generated TikTok video circulated in Argentina collecting over 170,000 impressions claiming that the war in Ukraine was over depicting civilians and soldiers celebrating. A very similar video was posted in Ukrainian reaching 373,700 views. The first one was labeled as AI-generated automatically by the platform while the second one was labeled by the user.

Colombia

The most viral content in the region focused on the narrative around the large number of **Colombian mercenaries and volunteers fighting in the Ukrainian army.** Different disinformation claims revolve around this narrative which aligns messaging from Colombian President Gustavo Petro and the Russian Embassy, as illustrated by a tweet that received over 153,000 impressions. In addition, a video generated with Sora, a social network that allows you to create hyper-realistic videos and audios with AI, and posted by a now-deleted TikTok account "Ukraine is Death" falsely depicted Colombian soldiers being captured by Russia and reached 1.6 million views. On a different note, a very viral post by a verified 'Gustavo Petro (president of Colombia) Fans' profile on Facebook claimed that Putin supports Colombia and Venezuela, warning he would prevent Trump's invasion in the Caribbean. Facebook did not moderate this post with over 82,000 likes.

Mexico

Two TikTok videos featuring AI-generated content, one depicting **a Ukrainian soldier crying** after being recruited and another showing a volunteer soldier expressing regret over going to war, surpassed 3 million views without any warning. Two additional viral posts on Facebook promoted narratives of **Ukrainian soldiers surrendering,** with only one carrying a debunking label. On X, no warnings were displayed alongside disinformation claims alleging that Zelensky holds a Russian passport or that he staged a visit to a city he never visited.

Venezuela

A Telegram channel called Venezuela News, belonging to a Venezuelan website that regularly shares pro-Russian disinformation, which has over 56,000 followers, shared an article claiming that a 23-year-old Ukrainian soldier was crying after being forcibly recruited. This same article was also shared on X by several accounts with X's Premium blue check and circulated in various countries.



Examples of posts detected in the region

Information about the project

This report is part of the ATAFIMI project. Through the creation of a pioneering technological tool for the study of FIMI (Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference) and cross-border disinformation campaigns, the system centralizes and serves as a repository for disinformation content detected in the participating countries. The use of a common methodology allows the identification of cross-border disinformation campaigns, as well as the narratives that circulate simultaneously in Europe and Latin America.

The following organizations take part in the project: Maldita.es (Spain), StopFake (Ukraine), Delfi (Lithuania), Myth Detector (Georgia), Zašto ne (Bosnia and Herzegovina), RasKRIKavanje and FakeNews Tragač (Serbia), Chequeado (Argentina), La Silla Vacía (Colombia), Verificado.mx (Mexico), and Cazadores de Fake News (Venezuela).