

Indian Chronicles

15-year
operation,
since 2005

Direct control
of +10 NGOs
accredited to
the UN Human
Rights Council

+550 website
domain names
registered

Fake media
in Brussels
and Geneva

Resurrection of dead
people, media and
NGOs

+750 fake
media in 116
countries

Impersonation of
EU institutions

Identity
theft

Maximisation of
negative content
about Indian
adversaries

Fake
journalists

Involvement
of Members of
the European
Parliament

SUBSEQUENT
INVESTIGATION: DEEP
DIVE INTO A 15-YEAR
OPERATION TARGETING
THE EU AND UN TO
SERVE INDIAN INTERESTS

“Learn about the news in a way you never have before. Walk into a world of knowledge, wisdom and truth”- EUChronicle.com¹

¹ <http://euchronicle.com/join-us-support-us/> / <https://perma.cc/5T89-E82A>

This report is dedicated to the memory of Professor Louis B. Sohn (1914-2006), considered as the “grandfather of international human rights law in the United States”, whose name has been usurped by the malicious actors depicted in this report.

“Professor Thomas Buergenthal, former Judge and President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has described Sohn’s teaching style:

“As a teacher, Louis Sohn never imposed his views on us, except his belief that legal scholarship had to be rigorous, sound, and imaginative. He would send us back to the library with that twinkle in his eye “to do more library detective work”, as he called it, citing from memory at least a dozen more sources we had overlooked. Oh, how many a time since then have I rechecked my sources one more time!”²

We also would like to thank our colleagues, friends and families who bear with us once we go down the rabbit hole, mornings, afternoons, evenings, nights, and weekends. Thank you for your never-ending support.

With Graphika's agreement, we reproduce here a message that was shared in their must-read report on “Secondary Infektion”.³

Dedication

The authors dedicate this report to the growing community of online investigators of information operations on social media around the world. Whether working as journalists, researchers, analysts, and site integrity/trust and safety teams at the tech platforms, as academics, or as private citizens, their dedication, creativity, enthusiasm, courage, and humour are a constant inspiration to dig deeper and document rigorously. Thank you for going down the rabbit hole with us: knowing that you’re reading and riding along makes the pursuit worthwhile!

² *Louis Sohn: Grandfather of International Human Rights Law in the United States*, Jo M. Pasqualucci , citing Professor Thomas Buergenthal: - https://www.jstor.org/stable/762794?seq=12#metadata_info_tab_contents / <https://perma.cc/2S6S-PFFA>

³ <https://secondaryinfektion.org/report/secondary-infektion-at-a-glance/>

Executive Summary

INDIAN CHRONICLES: Subsequent investigation into a massive online and offline 15-year ongoing influence operation supporting Indian interests and discrediting Pakistan internationally

In 2019, the EU DisinfoLab uncovered a vast network of 265 coordinated fake local media outlets in 65 countries serving Indian interests, as well as multiple dubious think tanks and NGOs. This network was active in Brussels and Geneva in producing and amplifying content designed to, primarily, undermine Pakistan. This study reopens and continues to investigate this work, as documented in our report "Influencing policymakers with fake media outlets, an investigation into a pro-Indian influence network". While we encourage readers to consult that investigation before diving into this report, we provide a short summary below.

Note: the information provided in this executive summary is detailed in our full report here and in our previous report. If it is not, it is available upon request. We encourage you to read it for a full comprehension of this investigation.

Foreword

Throughout this investigation, we have been astonished by the multiplication of layers of fake, something we had never encountered in other investigations. "Indian Chronicles" – the name we gave to this operation - resurrected dead media, dead think-tanks and NGOs, as well as dead people. The actors behind this operation hijacked the names of others, tried to impersonate regular media and press agencies such as the EU Observer, the Economist and Voice of America, used the letterhead of the European Parliament, registered websites under avatars with fake phone numbers, provided fake addresses to the United Nations, created publishing companies to print books of the think-tanks they owned. They organised supposedly multistakeholder events where – in essence – everyone speaking were tied to "Indian Chronicles". They misappropriated the picture of a former UK Government Minister and BBC Director on Facebook, registered the names of deceased persons to attend events five years after their death, invented dozens of journalist identities. They used layers of fake media that would quote and republish one another. They used politicians who genuinely wanted to defend women or minority rights to ultimately serve geopolitical interests and gave a platform to far-right politicians when convergent objectives could be reached.

We believe this astounding level of fakery is the reason why the operation could last for so long: how can a human being suspect or imagine that this is possible?

Even our full report does not mention everything we uncovered, and it is with regret, but for the sake of legibility, that we had to leave aside many other fakes.

In every investigation, disinformation researchers are faced with similar questions: "why did you work on disinformation from *this* country and not on disinformation from *that* country? Are you funded by the enemy of my country? Do you realise that when investigating this matter, you are considering only one side of disinformation? Why don't you study the other side? (etc)". At first, we never intended to work on South-Asia related matters; it all began when we read a publication by the European External Action Service (EEAS) about EP Today syndicating content from RT. And this led us to publish these two investigations.

We are well aware – as it is the case for every investigation – that it will be used and recuperated by those who have an interest in seeing this investigation published – in this case, probably Pakistani authorities. Let us bear in mind that it is not because one side uses dodgy influence campaigns that the other side does not

– and a simple Google search will lead you to read about inauthentic behaviours supporting Pakistani interests.

More importantly, our investigation is in no way a judgement about the situation of human rights in Pakistan, nor should it serve to undermine the credibility of minority movements in Pakistan. Our report simply shines a light on how Indian stakeholders have used these struggles to serve their own interests. We are convinced that “there is no such thing as good disinformation”, and we would agree with a key actor of Indian Chronicle - namely Madi Sharma - who recently tweeted: “Your ethical muscle grows stronger every time you choose right over wrong.”

About our first investigation published in 2019

Last year, we uncovered a network of 265 fake media in 65 countries reproducing negative content about Pakistan online. This network was created by malicious actors who were behind “EP Today”, a fake European Parliament magazine active in Brussels since 2006 that was serving as a “honeypot” for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and other politicians who could publish their views, in particular views that would serve Indian interests and undermine Pakistan. Some of these MEPs and other politicians would then attend United Nations side-events, press conferences and demonstrations in Geneva with minority-rights NGOs set-up by the same actors, such as the European Organization for Pakistani Minorities. Another fake media - “Times of Geneva” – and a fake, allegedly Geneva-based press agency - 4 News Agency - would then produce written and video content that would be re-used online by NGOs, and disseminated via the global fake media network and/or via an Indian press agency (ANI). This operation was attributed to the New-Delhi based Srivastava Group that – in partnership with the Women’s Economic and Social Think-Tank (WESTT) - had sponsored the trip of 27 MEPs to visit Kashmir and had met with India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Reopening the case

During our previous investigation, we decided to leave some of the websites, domain names and associated email addresses that deserved a closer look at a later stage. These last months, we took a deeper look, specifically, at the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace (CSOP). We soon realised that this US-based NGO – accredited to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) – had become inactive in the late 1970s, and that it was resurrected, and its identity hijacked in 2005 by the same actors depicted in our first investigation. Shockingly, we discovered that not only had the organisation been resuscitated, but also its former Chairman and “grandfather of international law in the US”, Louis B. Sohn, who passed away in 2006 is listed as attending a UN Human Rights Council meeting in 2007 and participating in an event organised by “Friends of Gilgit-Baltistan” in Washington D.C. in 2011.

Advocacy in Geneva: outside and inside the United Nations’ Human Rights Council

From then on, we uncovered an entire network of coordinated UN-accredited NGOs promoting Indian interests and criticizing Pakistan repeatedly. We could tie at least 10 of them directly to the Srivastava family with several other dubious NGOs pushing the same messages.

These UN-accredited NGOs work in coordination with non-accredited think-tanks and minority-rights NGOs in Brussels and Geneva. Several of them like the *European Organization for Pakistani Minorities (EOPM)*, *Baluchistan House* and the *South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF)* were directly but opaquely created by the Srivastava group. In Geneva, these think-tanks and NGOs are in charge of lobbying, of organising

demonstrations, speaking during press conferences and UN side-events, and they were often given the floor at the UN on behalf of the accredited organisations.

Lobbying in Brussels: using Members of the European Parliament via an online EU affairs media honeypot

The organisations created by the Srivastava group in Brussels organised trips for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to Kashmir, Bangladesh and the Maldives. Some of these trips led to much institutional controversy as the delegations of MEPs were often presented as official EU delegations when they were not in fact travelling on behalf of the Parliament.

The actors orchestrating *Indian Chronicles* are directly tied – and again not at all transparently - to the creation of three informal groups in the European Parliament, namely the “South Asia Peace Forum”, the “Baloch Forum” and “Friends of Gilgit-Baltistan”.

They have organised press conferences and events within and in front of the European Parliament. Organisations like WESTT – the Women Economic and Social Think-Tank – drafted and suggested parliamentary questions to the European Commission and articles for fake EU magazines such as EP Today. This served as a honeypot to attract a growing number of MEPs into a pro-India and anti-Pakistan discourse, often using causes such as minorities rights and women’s rights as an entry point.

This is how we uncovered EU Chronicle – serving as the new “EP Today”, a new fake media with fake journalists supposedly covering European affairs but which essentially offers a platform for MEPs to sign pro-Indian articles. In less than 6 months of existence, already 11 MEPs, most of them already involved with EP Today, have written or endorsed op-eds at a remarkably high pace for EU Chronicle.

But that's not all...

While we could not cover all of it in this second investigation, *Indian Chronicles* also created a number of obscure companies in Canada, fake media targeting South-Asian populations in Canada, was involved in demonstrations in New York, created fake media in Bangladesh and in the Maldives. They impersonated a number of African human rights NGOs and created several lobbying agencies targeting EU institutions. Clearly, this 15-year operation was active on several continents.

The role of ANI: Repackaging and amplifying the content produced in Brussels and Geneva

Back to EU Chronicle, the only valuable coverage these op-eds are gaining comes from an immediate repackaging by an Indian press agency ANI (Asian News International), often quoting these op-eds as genuine articles from “independent media EU Chronicle”. Without Times of Geneva and 4 News Agency which stopped their activities following our previous investigation, ANI remains the only press agency to extensively cover the activities of dubious NGOs in Geneva.

The coverage – and often distortion - by ANI of the content produced in Brussels and Geneva led us to the Big News Network and the World News Network, an entire network of 500+ fake local media in 95 countries that helped reproduce negative iterations about Pakistan (or China).

In total, the media coverage of Indian chronicle operations has covered 116 countries and 9 regions. We also realised that the content produced was primarily targeted at Indian nationals with an extensive coverage of these barely known “media”, MEPs and “NGOs” in Europe.

Essentially, our investigation details how the activities of a fake zombie-NGO and that of a fake specialised media can then be repackaged, distorted and amplified by malicious actors to influence or disinform globally, using loopholes in international institutions and online search engines.

Summary of the 15-year influence operation

Overall, according to our open-source investigation, the operation led by the Srivastava Group and amplified by ANI began in 2005 and is still ongoing.

The operation's mission is to discredit nations in conflict with India in Asia, in particular Pakistan but also China to a lesser extent. Its long-term objective is:

- In India, to reinforce pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan (and anti-Chinese) feelings in India.
- Internationally, to consolidate the power and improve the perception of India, to damage the reputation of other countries and ultimately benefit from more support from international institutions such as the EU and the UN.

To do so, the operation consists of:

- The support to minority and human rights NGOs and think-tanks.
- The use of Members of the European Parliament to create a mirage of institutional support from the European institutions to these minority groups, in favour of Indian interests and against Pakistan (and China).
- An active presence in Geneva and the United Nations' Human Rights Council by:
 - organising side-events and demonstrations in support of minority rights;
 - impersonating extinguished UN accredited NGOs or using the speaking slots of various NGOs whose original missions seem totally unrelated.
- The creation of fake media in Brussels, Geneva and across the world and/or the repackaging and dissemination via ANI and obscure local media networks – at least in 97 countries - to multiply the repetition of online negative content about countries in conflict with India, in particular Pakistan.

***Indian Chronicles* and EP Today: the same modus operandi**

As in our first investigation, we could observe the same patterns:

- The extensive use of student interns, here speaking at the United Nations on behalf of one or more of these NGOs;
- The resurrection of shuttered organisations (NGOs, media) and deceased persons (Louis B. Sohn);
- The use of Regus virtual office addresses or simply fake addresses whenever an address was needed;
- The misleading representation of the views of individual MEPs as general support or official position from the European Union;
- The maximisation of negative content about Pakistan online, primarily using a network of fake local media across the world.

Indian Chronicles' massive online presence...

The actors behind EP Today and EU Chronicle registered +550 domain names of NGOs, think-tanks, media, European Parliament informal groups, religious and Imam organizations, obscure publishing companies and

public personalities. A non-negligible proportion of domain names were bought in the context of the cyberwarfare with Pakistan i.e. to cybersquat on domains that Pakistan might later wish to use.

...to support intense offline activities

Every researcher working on disinformation is faced with the issue of trying to measure the impact of a disinformation campaign. In Indian Chronicles, the 15-year operation supported several demonstrations in Brussels and Geneva, the display of "free Baluchistan" posters across Geneva, the organization of several events inside the European Parliament, the creation of groups of support within the European Parliament, the influencing of European and international policy making, the convocation of the Swiss ambassador in Pakistan by the Pakistani government, the trips of delegations of Members of the European Parliament to Bangladesh, the Maldives and Kashmir that led to much controversy in Brussels.

Policy recommendations

We are alarmed to see the continuation of Indian Chronicles, which despite our first report and wide press coverage, has pursued its 15-year operation and even recently launched EU Chronicle, a fake EU outlet. This should serve as a call to action for decision-makers to put in place a relevant framework to sanction actors abusing international institutions. It is possible that the absence of messages from the institutions affected by *Indian Chronicles* provided the space and opportunity for the operation to reinvent itself and to continue doing "more of the same".

It is also our belief that the possibility for malicious actors to abuse search engines by reproducing the same content hundreds of times should also be challenged.

Our investigation relied heavily on the analysis of websites and domain names, rather than online platforms. Much of what we uncovered could be done thanks to website domain names registration history and because many websites of *Indian Chronicles* were created at a time when malicious actors were less concerned with privacy. Nowadays, malicious actors register domain names and create websites anonymously, making detection more difficult. The regulatory discussion on data transparency from platforms now taking place should be broadened to include greater scrutiny of domain names. Domain name information is critical for disinformation researchers; we therefore advocate for sufficient transparency for researchers investigating malicious domains. We also urge the domain name industry to seriously reflect on this kind of fraudulent, disinforming behaviour as technical abuse of the domain name system.

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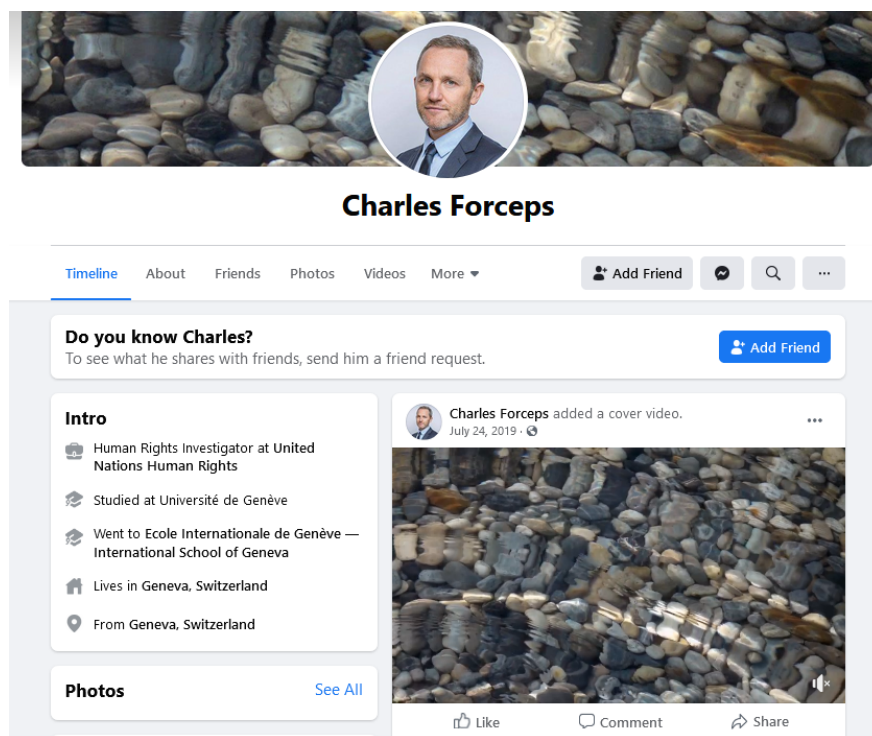
LIST OF ACCRONYMS

- MEP: Member of European Parliament;
- EP: European Parliament;
- UN HRC: United Nations Human Rights Council;
- UN ECOSOC: Economic and Social Committee of the United Nations;
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation;
- SADF: South Asia Democratic Forum;
- CSOP: Committee to Study the Organisation of Peace;
- ANI: Asian News International;
- BNN: Big News Network;
- WHOIS: Service indicating ownership of online domain names.

Chapter 1 - FROM OUR PREVIOUS EP-TODAY INVESTIGATION: CHARLES FORCEPS & THE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ORGANIZATION OF PEACE

I- Charles Forceps

In our previous investigation, we found the email address Charles.forceps@gmail.com (associated with servers hosting a large number of fake media outlets), which we did not investigate further at the time. After the publication of our investigation, we were tipped on Twitter by fellow investigators and directed to the Facebook profile of Charles Forceps.



Charles Forceps presents himself as “Human Rights Investigator” at the “United Nations Human Rights” in Geneva, who studied at the Geneva University and International School of Geneva.

Outside of Indian Chronicles, we could only find one occurrence of the name “Charles Forceps” online, in “The chronicles of Budgepore; or, Sketches of life in Upper India”, an Indian satire of British Ruling.

The picture used is that of James Purnell⁴. According to Wikipedia, “James Mark Dakin Purnell (born 2 March 1970) is a British broadcasting executive and former Labour Party politician who served as Work and Pensions Secretary and Culture Secretary in the Brown Government from 2007 to 2009. In late September 2016, he was appointed as the BBC’s Director of Radio, and took up his position in October that year, in addition to his other role as the BBC’s Director of Strategy and Digital, a job he has held since March 2013.”

⁴ You can his picture on this article from the BBC: <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-37517074> (archive available here: <https://perma.cc/3MW6-V3FF>)

Using a tip from someone who had read our first investigation (thank you!), we were also able to match Raul McKenzie's phone number to the domain names bought by Charles Forceps. In other words, Raul McKenzie, formerly Editor at "EP Today"⁵ is Charles Forceps.

The profile of Charles Forceps intrigued us for the following reasons:

- It clearly seemed to be a fake name;
- The use of a picture of a former Director of Strategy and Digital at BBC;
- The mention of "United Nations Human Rights";
- The mentions of two schools/universities in Geneva;
- The humorous and indirect reference to India, reminding us of the sense of humour used in many state intelligence operations.

As demonstrated in the next chapters of this report, all these elements were worth considering.


II- The Commission to Study the Organization of Peace

a- Open-source material: the resurrection of a prestigious NGO

On the servers used by the Srivastava Group behind our previous investigation, we could find three NGOs accredited to the United Nations Human Rights Council. Two of them were rather obviously connected to the Srivastava family: The International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies (IINS)⁶ and the Indian Council of Education (ICE)⁷. Both have websites and online presence. The third one is the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, which deserved a deeper look.

On the same servers used by the Srivastava Group, we could find traces of a website named csopus.com⁸. The email address csopus@yahoo.com was also used by the Srivastava network to register a large number of other domain names.

In the screenshot below we can see the connection between the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace and the email address csopus@yahoo.com in August 2005⁹.

Commission to Study the Organization of Peace A1 - ECOSOC Roster Consultative Status 1975	 The George Washington Univ. 720 20th Street NW, Washington DC 20052 United States of America	Tel: 1-202-994-7390 Fax: 1-415-598-1377 e-mail csopus@yahoo.com
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⁵ We are not sure if he exists or if he is an avatar, see the last chapter of this report (section ABC+D framework, in the part about Actors)

⁶ See archive of the website here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201109110638/https://iins.org/>

⁷ See archive of the website here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201109110428/http://www.ice-online.org/>

⁸ See archive of the website here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20130526171945/csopus.com>

⁹ <http://www.readbag.com/unpan1-un-intradoc-groups-public-documents-un-other-unpan014562/> / <https://perma.cc/JGV6-GRNH>

The Commission to Study the Organization of Peace was first formed in the 1930's and seems to have become inactive in the 1970's¹⁰. It was established "during World War II to promote the formation of a United Nations as successor to the failed League of Nations". Surprisingly, it has been accredited to the UN ECOSOC since 1975 and, since 2005, regularly speaks at the UN on Human Rights issues, including many interventions about Pakistan.

Commission to Study the Organization of Peace	
Profil	Statut consultatif
Vue Générale	
Nom de l'organisation:	Commission to Study the Organization of Peace
Adresse du siège permanent	
Adresse:	626, Ferney Drive, NEW MILFORD., New Jersey, 07646, USA États-Unis d'Amérique
Téléphone:	(1-201) 829 9274
Fax:	(1-201) 829 9274
Email:	csop.usa.ngo@gmail.com

The address provided by the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace to the UN¹¹ does not exist¹². The same address of the CSOP is mentioned in a report¹³ by the Alliance to Renew Co-operation among Humankind (ARCHumankind), an organization founded by former MEP Paulo Casaca.¹⁴ We believe this address also includes a reference to Geneva's "Route de Ferney", where the famous Geneva Press Club¹⁵ was located and where *Indian Chronicles* later displayed "Free Baluchistan" posters¹⁶.

The domain name csopus.com was hosted on the same IP address as several other websites owned by the Srivastava group, and was registered using the csopus@yahoo.com email address and another fake physical address – 113, Forest Hills, New York¹⁷.

The website of the CSOP states that the "Commission to Study the Organization of Peace is a New York based NGO affiliated with the ECOSOC of the United Nations. CSOP has been active since 1975 in the field of Human Rights and Reconciliation. It was founded in 1975 in response for International Peace. One of the main objectives of the organization is "promoting a U.S. foreign policy based on international cooperation, demilitarization and respect for human rights." As previously mentioned, the CSOP was in reality formed in 1939 and was active until the 1970s.

The UN Human Rights Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 15 March 2006, and we can find a list of participants representing the CSOP¹⁸ at the UNHRC in August 2006, with, noticeably, the participation of (already then) MEP Ryszard Czarnecki¹⁹. We can also find a presence of the CSOP at the UN

¹⁰ See the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace Wikipedia page: <https://perma.cc/4MXM-GPKE>

¹¹ See archive from the ECOSOC website: <https://perma.cc/FG8Z-ZVX3>

¹² This was confirmed on the phone by local authorities of New Milford (<https://www.newmilfordboro.com>)

¹³ See last page of this archived report: <https://perma.cc/3AJM-RK2P>

¹⁴ You will find more about the connections between MEP Casaca and Indian Chronicles in our first investigation and in this report

¹⁵ See here for the address of the Geneva Press Club: <https://perma.cc/K2B9-4SQ7>

¹⁶ On this controversy, see the article from RTS: <https://www.rts.ch/info/regions/geneve/8928150-le-pakistan-convoque-lambassadeur-suisse-a-cause-daffiches-a-geneve.html> (archive available here: <https://perma.cc/6997-6QVY>)

¹⁷ Forest Hills is a neighbourhood of New York City, we didn't find any traces of a Forest Hills street/avenue/boulevard

¹⁸ See the attendance list for the event on the UN archive website: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G06/137/34/PDF/G0613734.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁹ As our investigations show, MEP Czarnecki is regularly involved in activities from Indian Chronicles

Commission on Human Rights (before the creation of the UNHRC) in August 2005²⁰, which we believe is the beginning of the influence operation.

We could not find any meaningful activities of the CSOP from the 1980s to the early 2000s, between the dissolution of the former CSOP and the apparition of a new CSOP connected to Indian Chronicles.

b- From "Louis Shon" To "Louis Sohn": a shocking resurrection

The registrant of the csopus.com domain name is Louis Shon, a name we, at first, could not find any online traces about. However, we had noticed a repeated tendency in our network to invert letters in people's names (as exemplified further in this report).

"Louis Shon" refers to "Louis Sohn" or "Louis B. Sohn", a former Chairman of the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace²¹. Louis Sohn is considered to be a "Grandfather of International Human Rights Law in the United States"²² and this report is dedicated to him.

It should be noted that "Louis Shon" aka Louis Sohn is listed as a participant for the CSOP at the UNHRC in 2007, which he could not have attended as he had passed away in 2006²³. Similarly, "Dr. Louis B. Shon" is also listed as a participant to an event named "An Evening with MEP Jürgen Creutzmann, Chairperson of Friends of Gilgit-Baltistan in the European Parliament" organised by the Institute for Gilgit Baltistan Studies in July 2011 in Washington DC²⁴.

²⁰ See the attendance list on the UN archive website: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G05/156/07/PDF/G0515607.pdf?OpenElement>

²¹ See archive of a book mentioning his former role here: <https://perma.cc/3SVL-STWM>

²² See archive of an article for the Johns Hopkins University Press highlighting the key role of Louis Sohn in the development of international human rights law: <https://perma.cc/2S6S-PFFA>

²³ If you want to download the attendance list for this event click here:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi2rp_P88_sAhW0lhQKHQ_NC5sQFJAegQIBRAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdigitallibrary.un.org%2Frecord%2F595970%2Ffiles%2FA_HRC_4_INF.1-EN.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2qSj6mTj7YDRLUyseR-9kL

If you prefer to only see that this document exist in the UN Digital Library, have a look at the archived Google Query here:

<https://perma.cc/NLG2-8C4B>

²⁴ See archive of a report about this event mentioning the presence of "Dr Louis B. Shon" for the Commission to Study Peace: <https://perma.cc/8LDS-Y6P5>

Chapter 2 – UNITED NATIONS: a large network of zombies and misappropriated accredited NGOS

I- Accredited NGOs directly tied to the Srivastava Group

During our investigation, we found seven other accredited-NGOs directly controlled by the Srivastava Group, in addition to the International Institute of Non-Aligned Studies and the Indian Council of Education, which are openly managed by the Indian company and the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace that we described in the Chapter 1.

Before presenting them, it is important to keep in mind the modus operandi of the Srivastava Group, as presented in our first investigation:

- The regular use of Regus offices addresses to register fake media or proxy organisations.
- The extensive use of students as interns, with the perspective to work or speak about human rights in international organizations as a honeypot.

In the next paragraphs, we will refer to an IP address that was and is still used by the Srivastava Group to host many of its domain names.

Reverse IP lookup for: 208.73.210.140

Found **472** domains hosted on IP address 208.73.210.140.

allsolutionsinc (found 3 exact matched domains on different TLDs)

23 **ankit.eu**

[Search](#) [Typos](#) [History](#) [Whois](#)

Name servers: [ns2.domainpeople.com](#) (used by 3,607 domains) [ns1.domainpeople.com](#) (used by 3,470 domains)

IPv4: [208.73.210.140](#) (used by 470 domains)

ankit (found 105 exact matched domains on different TLDs)

439 **usinternational.net**

[Search](#) [Typos](#) [History](#) [Whois](#)

Name servers: [ns2.domainpeople.com](#) (used by 3,607 domains) [ns1.domainpeople.com](#) (used by 3,470 domains)

IPv4: [208.73.210.140](#) (used by 470 domains)

usinternational (found 9 exact matched domains on different TLDs)

145 **foreignaffairtimes.com**

[Search](#) [Typos](#) [History](#) [Whois](#)

Name servers: [ns2.domainpeople.com](#) (used by 3,607 domains) [ns1.domainpeople.com](#) (used by 3,470 domains)

IPv4: [208.73.210.140](#) (used by 470 domains)

147 **friendsofkashmir.eu**

[Search](#) [Typos](#) [History](#) [Whois](#)

Name servers: [ns2.domainpeople.com](#) (used by 3,607 domains) [ns1.domainpeople.com](#) (used by 3,470 domains)

IPv4: [208.73.210.140](#) (used by 470 domains)

Website is redirected to <http://www.searchinquire.com/?dn=friendsofkashmir.eu&pid=9PO3ZE5QH&&>

friendsofkashmir (found 10 exact matched domains on different TLDs)

148 **friendsofpakistan.eu**

[Search](#) [Typos](#) [History](#) [Whois](#)

Name servers: [ns2.domainpeople.com](#) (used by 3,607 domains) [ns1.domainpeople.com](#) (used by 3,470 domains)

IPv4: [208.73.210.140](#) (used by 470 domains)

friendsofpakistan (found 6 exact matched domains on different TLDs)

196	internationalheraldtimes.com	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Name servers: ns2.domainpeople.com (used by 3,607 domains) ns1.domainpeople.com (used by 3,470 domains) IPv4: 208.73.210.140 (used by 470 domains)</p>		
197	internationalimamorganization.eu	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Name servers: ns2.domainpeople.com (used by 3,607 domains) ns1.domainpeople.com (used by 3,470 domains) IPv4: 208.73.210.140 (used by 470 domains) internationalimamorganization (found 4 exact matched domains on different TLDs)</p>		
207	jammukashmir.eu	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Name servers: ns2.domainpeople.com (used by 3,607 domains) ns1.domainpeople.com (used by 3,470 domains) IPv4: 208.73.210.140 (used by 470 domains) jammukashmir (found 30 exact matched domains on different TLDs)</p>		
287	newdelhitimes.ca	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Name servers: ns2.domainpeople.com (used by 3,607 domains) ns1.domainpeople.com (used by 3,470 domains) IPv4: 208.73.210.140 (used by 470 domains) newdelhitimes (found 15 exact matched domains on different TLDs)</p>		
288	newdelhitimes.us	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Name servers: ns2.domainpeople.com (used by 3,607 domains) ns1.domainpeople.com (used by 3,470 domains) IPv4: 208.73.210.140 (used by 470 domains) newdelhitimes (found 15 exact matched domains on different TLDs)</p>		
457	whatthefatah.com	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Name servers: ns2.domainpeople.com (used by 3,607 domains) ns1.domainpeople.com (used by 3,470 domains) IPv4: 208.73.210.140 (used by 470 domains) whatthefatah (found 3 exact matched domains on different TLDs)</p>		
71	balochistanhouse.eu	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Last seen on IP address 208.73.210.140: 2018-10-20. Domain is dropped from the zone file.</p>		
72	balochistanhouse.net	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Last seen on IP address 208.73.210.140: 2015-12-23. Domain is dropped from the zone file.</p>		
73	baluchday.com	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Last seen on IP address 208.73.210.140: 2016-01-08. Domain is dropped from the zone file.</p>		
74	baluchday.org	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Last seen on IP address 208.73.210.140: 2016-01-22. Domain is dropped from the zone file.</p>		
75	baluchistantoday.com	Search Typos History Whois
<p>Last seen on IP address 208.73.210.140: 2015-12-15. Domain is dropped from the zone file.</p>		

International Club for Peace Research (ICPR): The International Club for Peace Research was created in 1995 in Cameroon. The ICPR seems to have had genuine activities about peace in Africa until 2004 and to have become inactive after 2004. From 2009, it has reappeared at the UNCHR regularly undermining Pakistan during plenary sessions. In 2012, the Indian media DNA India amplified a press release from ICPR where the NGO was presented as “Belgium-based” and demanded an “enquiry into genocide in Bangladesh by Pakistani Army”²⁵. Using the Stratfor leak, we could find a credit card under the email address icpr.eu@gmail.com and the name of Ankit Srivastava. This email address was used to register the website domain name icpr-eu.com.

The International Club for Peace Research (ICPR) had a consultative status with ECOSOC until 2012²⁶ and spoke regularly about human rights in Pakistan at the UN Human Rights Council, and during side events and organized demonstrations in Geneva and New-York²⁷. At the UNHRC, the organisation was represented either by Geneva-based students or by Pakistan minorities representatives²⁸, and most of the interventions are pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan.

It is interesting to note that the ICPR domain name is registered under the name of J. “MFoutie”, which refers to a former representative of the real International Club for Peace Research (J. MFouatie). According to his LinkedIn profile, J. MFouatie was working for ICPR in 1998-1999 and has been working at the United Nations since 2000. Considering the unlikelihood of badly spelling his own surname when registering a domain name, we consider that *Indian Chronicles* once again hijacked someone else’s identity.

It should also be noted that the archived ICPR website states that it was created in 2004, which is false. The website refers to promoting peace and to Mother Teresa in its “about us” section, lists past events and meetings related to peace and human rights in Africa, but its “news”, “pictures” and “demonstrations” sections²⁹ are entirely about human rights in Pakistan. In two press releases, the email address of the organisation resurrected by Ankit Srivastava is associated to two highly probable fake media contacts (“John Mathew” and “James Harper”)³⁰.

The core theme of the original NGO – peace - was hijacked by *Indian Chronicles* to undermine Pakistan.

World Environment and Resources Council (WERC): According to the Union of International Associations, the WERC has ceased to exist³¹ but as our investigation shows, it is still “represented” at the United Nations’ Human Rights Council. The WERC was created in the 1970’s in The Hague to “Promote the sciences, whether theoretical or applied, of environment improvement and resource utilization in whatever system or field they arise”. A physical address at the Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium is provided to the UN in 2005³² but no meaningful real activity in the 2000s can be found.

Using the United Nations’ search portal, we could also confirm that the World Environment and Resources Council (WERC) uses the same phone number at the UN as the one used to register the icpr-eu.com domain name, thus also tying ICPR to Ankit Srivastava. At the UNHRC, the organisation was represented either by

²⁵ See archive of the DNA India article here: <https://perma.cc/HC7S-W529>

²⁶ See the official document confirming the withdrawal of the ECOSOC status in 2012: <https://perma.cc/WDM7-FNFG>

²⁷ The press release amplified by DNA India also mentioned the organization of a demonstration in front of the UN in Geneva: <https://perma.cc/E5KP-5DBB>

²⁸ In this session of the Human Rights Council, ICPR was represented by Mr Sering, director of the Director of the Gilgit-Baltistan National Congress: <https://perma.cc/44QU-6UXZ>

²⁹ See for example the ICPR’s “Picture Gallery” here: https://web.archive.org/web/20160128190246/http://icpr-eu.com/?page_id=90

³⁰ See archives of the two press releases: <https://perma.cc/EC8V-RPEN> / <https://perma.cc/KZ9P-XEVA>

³¹ See the profile of the WERC on the UIA website: <https://perma.cc/8Y5J-M3UJ>

³² See archive here: <https://perma.cc/3URF-GBGV>

Geneva-based students or by Pakistan minorities representatives, and most of the interventions are pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan. In 2016, Senge Sering of the Institute for Gilgit Baltistan Studies - the organizer of the 2011 event that “Louis B. Shon” is supposed to have attended – spoke at the UNHRC on behalf of WERC³³. Interestingly, we also identified that the Editor of “New Age Islam” Sultan Shahin spoke at the UNHRC both for the ICPR in 2011³⁴ and for the WERC in 2014³⁵. The WERC also organized side events at the UN on “Peace and Security”³⁶ and “Human Rights in Pakistan”³⁷.

This European NGO, resurrected and misappropriated by *Indian Chronicles*, was also used to advance a specific agenda about the core theme of WERC - namely “environment”. At the UNHRC in 2018, the Word Sindh Congress, speaking on behalf of WERC, opposed the construction of a dam in Pakistan. This was covered by ANI both in an article³⁸ and on Twitter³⁹.

United Schools International (USI): Another accredited NGO that we can tie to the Srivastava Group is “United Schools International (USI)”. According to the Union of International Association, the association was created in 1961 in New-Delhi. This is the international branch of the United Schools Organization of India (USO), itself created in 1951⁴⁰. The USO is still active in New-Delhi⁴¹ and is “involved in enhancing the basic educational standard among schools in India, through the empowerment of students and educators”. On USO’s website, there is no mention any more of the USI or of any international activities at the United Nations.

At least until 2015 (and maybe after), the USO used an email address usousiindia@gmail.com and a website uso-usi-india.org. Surprisingly, another email address is used as contact for the USI on the United Nations portal. The physical address provided by USI also does not exist and reminds us of several other addresses used by *Indian Chronicles* with the word “Forest”, such as the fake address of the CSOP.

Organization's name:	United Schools International
Headquarters address	
Address:	38, forest hills United States of America
Phone:	1 202 558 65 98
Fax:	1 202 558 6598
Email:	uso.usi.in@gmail.com
Organization type:	Non-governmental organization

Reversing the phone number provided by USI to the UNHRC, we found the following organisation:

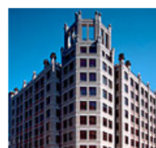
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Washington, DC, 20037 États-Unis

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Courriel :
dc@trustedtranslations.com



³³ See the “chapters” section on the right of this archive of the recording of the plenary session: <https://perma.cc/UG4P-7S94>

³⁴ Report made by New Age Islam (New Delhi-based thematic website) of the intervention of Sultan Shahin at the UNHRC on behalf of ICPR: <https://perma.cc/6ZQS-FVWS?type=image>

³⁵ See the “chapters” section on the right of this archive: <https://perma.cc/A55G-94TV>

³⁶ The program of the side events during the 35th Session of the Human Rights Council can be downloaded [here](#).

³⁷ The program of the side events during the 25th Session of the Human Rights Council can be downloaded [here](#)

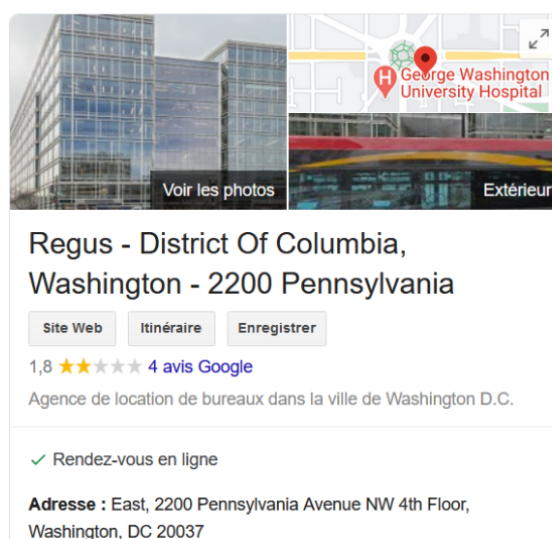
³⁸ Archive of the ANI’s article: <https://perma.cc/YQM6-7XP2>

³⁹ Archive of the ANI’s tweets: <https://archive.is/c0ImK>

⁴⁰ Archive of the profile of the USI in the UIA website: <https://perma.cc/CJ6N-4SCS>

⁴¹ See USO website here: <https://usoindia.org/> (archive website available here: <https://perma.cc/3652-5RAH>)

In the same address as this company, we found something in line with a well-known pattern of Indian Chronicles, namely a Regus office address in the US.



A domain name – usinternational.net was registered with the address, email address and phone number provided to the United Nations, using, probably, a fake persona. Going further, we found that usinternational.net is on the same IP address as several other domain names owned by the Srivastava Group⁴²:

Administrative Name: JIM JONES
Administrative Organization: UNITED SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL
Administrative Street: 38 FOREST HILLS
Administrative City: NEW YORK
Administrative State/Province: NY
Administrative Postal Code: 11101
Administrative Country: UNITED STATES
Administrative Email: USO.USI.IN@GMAIL.COM
Administrative Phone: 12025586598

439 **usinternational.net** Search Typos History Whois

Name servers: ns2.domainpeople.com (used by 3,607 domains) ns1.domainpeople.com (used by 3,470 domains)
IPv4: 208.73.210.140 (used by 470 domains)
usinternational (found 9 exact matched domains on different TLDs)

The domain name of the organisation's website was also registered on January 20, 2016, on the same day as the registration of other accredited NGOs domain names.

At the UNHRC, the organisation is represented either by Geneva-based students or by pro-Indian stakeholders, and most of the interventions are pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan. The USI also organized side events on "Human rights and education"⁴³ and "Growing Extremism in South Asia"⁴⁴ at the UN. We can safely confirm that the activities of United Schools International at the United Nations are organised by the Srivastava Group. This is particularly interesting as USI often delivered speeches undermining Pakistan and gave a regular platform to – among others – a think-tank named EFSAS (European Foundation for South Asian Studies), that will appear later in this report.

Center (or Centre) for Environmental and Management Studies (CEMS): While we do not know the year of creation of this organization, we know that it was created in New-Delhi and was already active in the 1980s

⁴² See the IP address mentioned at the beginning of this part.

⁴³ The program of the side events during the 25th Session of the Human Rights Council can be downloaded [here](#)

⁴⁴ See a report about the event organized by EFSAS and United Schools International: <https://perma.cc/8CVK-G5BB>

to promote seminars for industrialists and educationalists on environmental issues.⁴⁵ We can find traces of an address in New-Delhi⁴⁶. But the current address given to the UN is in Canada and leads us to a Regus office⁴⁷.

Center for Environmental and Management Studies	
	Profil Statut consultatif
Vue Générale	
Nom de l'organisation:	Center for Environmental and Management Studies
Adresse du siège permanent	
Adresse:	100 King Street West Toronto ON M5X 1C9 Canada
Téléphone:	+1 416 554 7252
Fax:	+1 416 554 7252
Email:	cemsngo@gmail.com
Type d'organisation:	Organisation non-gouvernementale
Langues:	• Anglais

The domain name⁴⁸ linked to the organisation was registered on January 20, 2016, on the same day as the registration of other accredited NGOs domain names, and it is also hosted on the same IP address with several other Srivastava-owned websites. We can confidently assume that this organisation had become inactive and was resurrected by *Indian Chronicles*.

At the UNHRC, the organisation is represented either by Geneva-based students or by Pakistan minorities representatives, and most of the interventions are pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan. The CEMS also organized side events on "human rights in South-Asia"⁴⁹ and "Democracy and secularism"⁵⁰ at the UN.

Interestingly, ANI and the network of fake local media outlets disseminating ANI's articles presents the Center for Environmental and Management Studies as a "UK-based rights group"⁵¹ headed by Amjad Ayub Mirza⁵², who is defined as an "activist from PoK" (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir). Amjad Ayub Mirza presents himself as the Executive Director of the NGO⁵³ and as a Consultant for the "Jammu Kashmir Peace and Development Institute." He is also featured in many articles of the ANI News agency⁵⁴.

The core theme of the original NGO – environment - was hijacked by *Indian Chronicles* to undermine Pakistan. Here is a solid example: "Under CPEC our rivers are being diverted for hydropower projects and these projects are causing water shortages. The projects would forever destroy the ecology of our region. Scores of young men from Gilgit-Baltistan are serving 70-90 years of imprisonment for protesting against the plunder of our national resources"⁵⁵

Canners International Permanent Committee (CIPC): According to the Union of International Associations, the organisation was founded on 8 May 1938 in Paris to "Assist the scientific, technical and practical progress

⁴⁵ Archive of a book about "Industrial Pollution management" from 199 mentioning the activities of the "Centre for Environmental and management studies (profile 57): <https://perma.cc/T2EX-FQSJ>

⁴⁶ See here: <https://perma.cc/3URF-GBGV>

⁴⁷ Regus offers offices to rent in 100 King Street, Toronto: <https://perma.cc/X3YE-E7N4?type=image>

⁴⁸ The domain name which was bought is Cemstudies.org. This is unclear if it has been ever used.

⁴⁹ The program of the side events during the 36th Session of the Human Rights Council can be downloaded [here](#)

⁵⁰ The program of the side events during the 25th Session of the Human Rights Council can be downloaded [here](#)

⁵¹ Despite the fact that the real NGO originated from Indian and the current one registered a Canadian adress in the UN.

⁵² See for example the article for the "Barbados News", a website posing as a "local media outlet" which is managed by the UAE-based company Big News Network (more information about this company later in this report) : <https://perma.cc/JCU2-MEDF>

⁵³ See his public LinkedIn profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/amjad-ayub-mirza-42039849/>

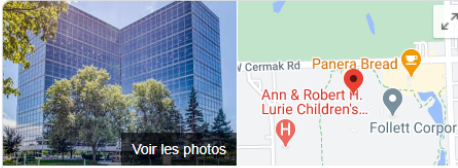
⁵⁴ A research for "Amjad Ayub Mirza" on ANI News website returns many results: <https://perma.cc/TPJ2-MYF3>

⁵⁵ See this article about an intervention of Amjad Ayub Mirza at the UN from the "Arizona Herald", another Big News Network's website who regularly reproduces content from ANI: <https://perma.cc/CWZ6-2QFF>

of the canning industry; promote consumption of canned foods" and it ceased to exist in 2007⁵⁶. The current address given to the UN is in the US and leads us to a Regus office.

Canners International Permanent Committee	
	Profil Statut consultatif
Vue Générale	
Nom de l'organisation:	Canners International Permanent Committee
Adresse du siège permanent	
Adresse:	One Westbrook Corporate Center Suite 300 États-Unis d'Amérique
Email:	cip.committee@gmail.com
Type d'organisation:	Organisation non-gouvernementale
Langues:	• Anglais

[Print](#)



Regus - Illinois, Westchester - Westbrook Corporate Center

[Site Web](#) [Itinéraire](#) [Enregistrer](#) [Appeler](#)

3,4 ★★★★★ 20 avis Google

Agence de location de bureaux à Westchester, Illinois

✓ Rendez-vous en ligne

Adresse : 1 Westbrook Corporate Center Suite 300, Westchester, IL 60154, États-Unis

The domain name of the organisation's website (cipcngo.com) was registered on January 20, 2016, on the same day as the registration of other accredited NGOs domain names, and it is hosted on the IP address with several other Srivastava-owned websites. Thus, this organisation had ceased to exist and was resurrected by *Indian Chronicles*.

At the UNHRC, the organisation is represented by Geneva-based students, and most of the interventions are pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan. The CIPC also organized side events on "Human rights defenders"⁵⁷ at the UN. The core theme of the original NGO – "canned foods" - was totally diverted by *Indian Chronicles* to undermine Pakistan at the Human Rights Council.

Pan African Union for Science and Technology (PAUFST): The organization was created in 1987 with headquarters in Brazzaville, Congo⁵⁸. Its name suggests a territorial focus on Africa and a focus on Science and Technology. The Pan-African Union for Science and Technology was headed in the past by some emblematic figures such as Professor Edward S. Ayensu⁵⁹ but we did not find any traces of meaningful activities from the real organization after 2005.

A domain name for the NGO (paufst.com) was registered on January 20, 2016, on the same day as the registration of other accredited NGOs domain names, and it is hosted on the IP address with several other Srivastava-owned websites. The name of Professor Edward S. Ayensu was hijacked to register the domain name even if he is not part of the organization anymore⁶⁰. We can confidently assume that this organisation had become inactive and was resurrected by *Indian Chronicles*.

At the UNHRC, the organisation is represented by Geneva-based students, and most of the interventions are pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan. The core themes of the original NGO – "science and technology" - were totally diverted by *Indian Chronicles* to undermine Pakistan at the Human Rights Council.

International Association for Democracy in Africa (IADA): According to the Union of International Associations, the NGO was founded in Atlanta GA (USA) in 1993, by African participants at a seminar organized by the United

⁵⁶ See the profile of the NGO on the UIA website: <https://perma.cc/X9KU-JM7Q>

⁵⁷ The program of the side events during the 36th Session of the Human Rights Council can be downloaded [here](#)

⁵⁸ See page 648 of the book "Africa since 1935": <https://perma.cc/4WDK-CXNS>

⁵⁹ See Professor Edward S. Ayensu's biography here: <https://perma.cc/9TQL-JWXY>

⁶⁰ See WHOIS information linked to the domain name paufst.com: <https://perma.cc/G594-X4MY>

States Agency for International Development (USAID) and then registered in Niger in January 1994⁶¹. Its mission is to defend and promote “democracy and human rights in a governance society for sustainable development in Africa”.

It is unclear whether the real International Association for Democracy in Africa is still active. One of its founders seems to still hold the title of President and was proposed recently by a university in Ivory Coast as a candidate for the Nobel Prize for Peace⁶². We definitely believe that this person is not involved with *Indian Chronicles*' affairs in Geneva, and we confidently assume that the name of organisation has been hijacked by *Indian Chronicles* at UNHRC.

As for other several other organizations, a domain name related to the NGO (iadafrica.com) was registered on January 20, 2016 and it is hosted on the IP address with several other Srivastava-owned websites.

At the UNHRC, the organisation is represented by Geneva-based students, and most of the interventions are pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan. The IADA also organized side events on “human rights in South-Asia” at the UN⁶³. The core themes of the original NGO – democracy in Africa - was totally diverted by *Indian Chronicles* to undermine Pakistan at the Human Rights Council.

Overall, there are at least 10 accredited-NGOs that we can directly attribute to the Srivastava Group:

1. The International Institute of Non-Aligned Studies - IINS (transparent ties)
2. The Indian Council of Education - ICE (transparent ties)
3. The Commission to Study the Organization of Peace - CSOP (hidden ties)
4. The International Club for Peace Research – ICPR (hidden ties)
5. The World Environment and Resources Council - WERC (hidden ties)
6. United Schools International - USI (hidden ties)
7. International Association for Democracy in Africa (IADA) (hidden ties)
8. Pan African Union for Science and Technology (PAUFST) (hidden ties)
9. Canners International Permanent Committee (CIPC) (hidden ties)
10. Center for Environmental and Management Studies (CEMS) (hidden ties)

To put this data into the context of the UN Human Rights Council: on 21 March 2016 at the UNHRC, 9 NGOs speaking are controlled by the Srivastava Group.⁶⁴

Indian Council of Education, Mr. Vadim Kalev

International Institute for Non-aligned Studies, Ms. Lubov Kurtadze

International Association for Democracy in Africa, Ms. Margarita Ovsepyan

Canners International Permanent Committee, Mr. Meirli Kenespek

United Schools International, Ms. Laura de Albuquerque

Center for Environmental and Management Studies, Ms. Aigerim Agibayeva

World Environment and Resources Council, Mr. Daniyar Tokbayev

Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, Ms. Akbota Kairken

Pan African Union for Science and Technology, Ms. Polina Belinskaya

⁶¹ See the profile of the NGO in the UIA website: <https://perma.cc/6JK2-QCMG>

⁶² See article from an African media here: <https://perma.cc/3ENW-6XRU>

⁶³ The program of the side events during the 36th Session of the Human Rights Council can be downloaded [here](#)

⁶⁴ See the list of participants on the right of this archive: <https://perma.cc/5VWE-9XS8>

II- A coordination with other NGOS at the UNHRC?

Using the Stratfor leak, we could also find evidence that csopus@yahoo.com (as well as csopus1@yahoo.com, csopus@gmail.com and csopus1@yahoo.com) were owned by Raul McKenzie, former editor of EP Today (probably a nickname) and his supposed superior, Rahul Malhotra.

In the same Stratfor leak, Raul McKenzie's physical address mentioned the "NGO Coordinating Committee on Human Rights", openly a creation of the IINS⁶⁵, and "29 rte de pré-bois, Geneva"⁶⁶. The domain name of the "NGO Coordinating Committee on Human Rights" (ncchr.org) was also registered by Maria Rutowicz with the same Srivastava Group office address in Geneva. The concept of a "Coordinating Committee on Human Rights" attracted our attention and led us to look deeper into the NGOs interventions at the UN human rights council.

a- The similarities and connections between the Srivastava network and other accredited NGOs

The Italian-based NGO European Union of Public Relations (EUPR) surprisingly delivered several interventions undermining Pakistan at the UNHRC. In 1998, we can find two participants during a session of the UNHRC which represented both the Srivastava-owned Indian Council of Education and the European Union of Public Relations⁶⁷. One of these is A.S. Narang⁶⁸, who later wrote a book with Pramila Srivastava – "Terrorism: the global perspective"⁶⁹. These last years, we also notice several rather anti-Pakistan interventions⁷⁰ by the EUPR with often the use of students (mostly from the Geneva Business School)⁷¹. As a reminder, Stephan Ciccoli, who spoke for several Srivastava-linked NGOs, also discussed Pakistan on behalf of the EUPR at a session of the UNHRC.⁷²

The African Regional Agricultural Credit Association (or African Rural and Agricultural Credit Association) is also an interesting case and seems to be tied to the same ecosystem of NGOs – undermining Pakistan repeatedly and using a similar pool of students. While there seems to be a real AFRACA active in Africa⁷³, the speeches given in Geneva by the alleged representatives of the NGO⁷⁴ seem to be totally disconnected with the original mission of the association which is to "foster cooperation among government and financial institutions in the field of rural and agricultural credit and *banking*".⁷⁵ Interestingly, we also see Pakistan minorities speaking on behalf of AFRACA, and notably Mehran Marri (Mehran Baluch)⁷⁶, who also served as the President of Baluchistan House, an organization created by Ankit Srivastava.

Generally, we found several other NGOs regularly covering the same issues around minorities in Pakistan, Balochistan, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. For a majority of these NGOs, these issues are not part of their original mission. For example, the International Seed Crushers' Committee whose original mission is to

⁶⁵ The IINS is openly linked to the Srivastava Group. For more details about the links between the NCCHR and the IINS, see here: <https://perma.cc/58RT-B4E6>

⁶⁶ This is the address of the Srivastava Group in Geneva: <https://perma.cc/64VT-7CQ8>

⁶⁷ You can download the attendance list for this UNHRC meeting [here](#)

⁶⁸ See archive here: <https://perma.cc/9HV7-MKY9>

⁶⁹ See archive here: <https://perma.cc/5C9M-6M8W>

⁷⁰ See archive of one of these interventions here: <https://perma.cc/6X2A-H6XX/>

⁷¹ In this session, both speakers for EUPR and the Srivastava-linked NGO United Schools International have similar family name and educational background (University of Geneva). We think that they are relatives who were recruited by the same person: <https://perma.cc/D57W-5FS2>

⁷² See archive of an article where Stephan Ciccoli's speech on behalf of the EUPR is mentioned: <https://perma.cc/3VAM-7CDJ>

⁷³ Website of what is for us the legitimate AFRACA association: <https://perma.cc/C6HT-3N8L>

⁷⁴ See for example this speech for Karima Baloch on behalf of the AFRACA NGO: <https://perma.cc/K9DJ-BGDD>

⁷⁵ See profile of the AFRACA in the UIA website: <https://perma.cc/BRH4-D8CQ>

⁷⁶ See the "chapters" section on the right of these archives: <https://perma.cc/MKK5-XZ33/> <https://perma.cc/26VP-SBZD>

"promote international commerce in oilseeds, oils and fats"⁷⁷. Some of these NGOs ceased to exist many years ago. For example, the International Seed Crushers' Committee ceased to exist in 2007⁷⁸.

b- Similar speakers and same human resources strategies

All the NGOs directly linked to the Srivastava Group and several other NGOs, that seem to work in coordination with these NGOs or at least have similar behaviours, are often represented by Geneva-based students (often from the Geneva Business School, but not only).

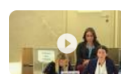
Some of these students and volunteers spoke for a number of these NGOs at different times. For example, Stephan Ciccoli spoke for the European Union of Public Relations⁷⁹, for the International Club for Peace Research⁸⁰, for the World Peace Council⁸¹ and for the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace⁸². Tatiana Pachova spoke for both the Pan African Union for Science and Technology and the Center for Environmental and Management Studies.

[UN Live United Nations Web TV -- Item:9 General Debate ...](#)



Pan African Union for Science and Technology, Ms. Tatiana Pachova The International Organisation for LDCs ...
24 sept. 2019

[Item:5 General Debate ... - UN Live United Nations Web TV](#)



Center for Environmental and Management Studies, Ms. Tatiana Pachova Kham Rehabilitation Center for ...
21 sept. 2018

A "volunteer" at the European Union of Public Relations declares on her LinkedIn she was responsible for "reading statements written by the organization, at the 27th Session of the Human Rights Council, in the United Nations Office at Geneva". Another one states that his role at the CSOP involved various administration tasks, including the drafting of reports and notes for top level management teams, budget management, and NGO networking". A former CSOP employee assert that she was in charge of "Interns training and Management, development of training programs for the United Nations Human Rights Commission", "Development of training modules for new recruits and interns to improve communication with country heads and international delegates" and "Liaising with international organisations to build awareness, integrate strategies and data sharing: lobbying with likeminded organizations to educate member Nations and create NGO support."

Additionally, we could find an incredibly high number of letter inversions, changes in names in surnames which, at first, looked like typos but eventually rather looked like an intent to hide traces.

4. Center for Environmental and Management Studies,
Ms. Caitlin Bengtsson

00:06:07

7. Center for Environmental and Management Studies,
Ms. Caitlin Victorie Deng Isson

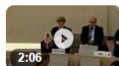
00:10:51

[United Schools International ... - UN Live United Nations Web TV](#)



Ms. Michaela SCHNEIDEROVA, United Schools International - General Debate Item:4 (Cont'd), 15th Meeting ...
17 sept. 2012

[United Schools International ... - UN Live United Nations Web TV](#)



Ms. Michiala Schneiderone, United Schools International - General Debate - Item: 3, 12th Meeting Human ...
14 sept. 2012

⁷⁷ On the "chapters" section of the right of this archive, you will see that the activist Taj Baloch represented this NGO at the UNHCR: <https://perma.cc/EDC3-EPH9>

⁷⁸ See profile of the NGO on the UIA website: <https://perma.cc/3RDH-U3JL>

⁷⁹ See reference in the previous part about the speech of Stephan Ciccoli for the EUPR.

⁸⁰ See the archive of this article mentioning that Stephan Ciccoli spoke on behalf of ICPR at the UNHCR: <https://perma.cc/GPN2-T4L3>

⁸¹ See the archive of this article mentioning that Stephan Ciccoli spoke on behalf of the World Peace Council at the UNHCR: <https://perma.cc/FXH8-AKAS>

⁸² See the archive of this article mentioning that Stephan Ciccoli spoke on behalf of the CSOP at the UNHCR: <https://perma.cc/76VJ-4U7X>

NGOs tied to this ecosystem are also often represented by official representatives of minorities in Pakistan, who can be seen to speak for different organizations.

For instance, Mehran Marri (or Mehran Baluch), spoke on behalf of United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation (Switzerland)⁸³, African Technical Association⁸⁴ (Zambia) and the African Regional Agricultural Credit Association⁸⁵ (Ghana).

Overall, there were several hundreds of pro-Indian interventions at the UN Human Rights Council connected to these dubious NGOs. A large number of organisations (NGOs, think-tanks, political parties...) were given the floor via these accredited-NGOs: Baloch Voice Association, European Foundation for South Asian Studies (EFSAS), the World Sindh Congress, the United Kashmir People's National Party (UKPNP), Jammu Kashmir Peace and Development Institute, Baloch People's Congress, World Baloch Women's Forum, Gilgit Baltistan Studies, Baloch Human Rights Council (BHRC), Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), Baloch Students Organisation, Baloch People's Congress, Baloch Republican Party, Baloch Voice Foundation, Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party ...

It is important to remember (please read the executive summary) that this investigation does not intend to undermine the credibility of these organizations, and the fact that they had to speak via proxy accredited NGOs does not mean that what these organizations are saying should not be heard.

III- NGOs outside of the United Nations linked to the Srivastava group

It is important to remember that the actions inside the United Nations Human Rights Council are supported by many side-events and demonstrations, and some of them are organised directly by organizations created by the Srivastava Group, such as the European Organization for Pakistani Minorities⁸⁶. In our first report, we also explained how these events were covered by fake medias/press agency created by the Indian company (Times of Geneva, FourNewsAgency...)

Continuing our investigation, we now have the evidence that the domain names of both the Baluchistan House (baluchistanhouse.com⁸⁷) and the South-Asia Democratic Forum⁸⁸ (sadf.eu) were registered by the Srivastava group. These two organisations have been very active in Geneva side-events, and the Baluchistan House is famous for the display of Free Baluchistan posters across Geneva, which led to much controversy⁸⁹. As a reminder from our previous report, we will also cover the links between the Srivastava group and the International Council For Inter-Religious Cooperation (ICIRC) and the Women's Economic and Social Think Tank (WESTT), two organisations which also contributed greatly to the efforts of lobbying from Indian Chronicles.

⁸³ See the "chapters" section on the right of this archive: <https://perma.cc/7JXC-JHUZ>

⁸⁴ See the "chapters" section on the right of this archive: <https://perma.cc/G549-9VLE/> <https://perma.cc/ELQ7-P9QJ>

⁸⁵ See references in the previous section about AFRACA

⁸⁶ See our tweet here:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20201122103054/https://twitter.com/DisinfoEU/status/1192381448042491904?s=20>

⁸⁷ We also found traces of other domain names linked to the Balochistan House on the same IP address as websites connected to the Srivastava group (balochistanhouse.eu, balochistanhouse.net...)

⁸⁸ The initial physical address of SADF in Brussels was also 37 Square Meeus, the same address as the Srivastava group: <https://perma.cc/KYT6-XB9V>

⁸⁹ See the article from RTS on this controversy here: <https://www.rts.ch/info/regions/geneve/8928150-le-pakistan-convoque-lambassadeur-suisse-a-cause-daffiches-a-geneve.html> (archive available here: <https://perma.cc/6997-6QVV>)

a- Baluchistan House

The Baluchistan House was founded in 2013 by Tarek Fatah⁹⁰, a mediatic figure in Canada⁹¹, who describes himself as a "an Indian born in Pakistan a Punjabi born in Islam; an immigrant in Canada with a Muslim consciousness, grounded in a Marxist youth". He is also a friend of Ankit Srivastava and told CBC, after our investigation in 2019, that the Srivastava Group pays him to reproduce his Toronto Sun op-eds in the Srivastava-owned New Delhi Times⁹².

The Baluchistan House, which is operated by Tarek Fatah (executive director) and another activist, Mehran Marri (President), has been organising demonstrations, conferences and other activities for a long time, in particular in Geneva⁹³. We can also find traces of these events by looking at those promoted by the Baluchistan House on PR Newswire⁹⁴ which were often linked to the email address baloch.secretariat@gmail.com.

We counted at least ten events: Demonstrations in front of the UN Broken Chair in Geneva, demonstration outside the UN in New York⁹⁵, event in Capitol Hill in Washington DC⁹⁶ or in front of "Pakistan Embassy" in Ottawa⁹⁷. The Balochistan House also organised conferences and events hosted in the European Parliament in Brussels⁹⁸ and Strasbourg⁹⁹ with the help of MEPs connected to Indian Chronicles, such as MEP Czarnecki, MEP Martucciello and former MEP Paolo Casaca (now head of the SADF think-tank). These events usually criticize Pakistan foreign policy, China's foreign policy or both.

b- SADF

In our previous investigation, we highlighted the ties between the founder of the South Asia Democratic Forum, former MEP Paulo Casaca, and the Indian Chronicles¹⁰⁰.

Created in February 2011, SADF had as a first physical address "37 Square de Meeus, Brussels", the same location as the Srivastava Group's Belgian offices and the think-tank's domain name was registered by the Indian company.

A bit more than one month after its creation, Paulo Casaca was invited as panellist to an event in the UN headquarters in Geneva, which was hosted by the resurrected Commission to Study the Organization of Peace¹⁰¹. On February 2012, it was SADF's turn to organize its first event at the UN Conference Centre in Geneva, which was presented as co-sponsored by the resurrected Commission to Study the Organization of Peace too and involved Mehran Baluch, President of the Baluchistan House, as a key speaker¹⁰².

⁹⁰ See the now down Balochistan House website here:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20171209190832/http://baluchistanhouse.com/about-us/>

⁹¹ See for example this article listing 20 false claims made by Tarek Fatah which were debunked by Indian fact-checkers:

<https://perma.cc/P977-Z92T>

⁹² See article from CBC here: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/india-fake-news-sites-canada-1.5366591> (archive here:

<https://perma.cc/YGM8-73VB>)

⁹³ See the event page of the former Balochistan House website here:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20180826115757/http://baluchistanhouse.com/category/events/>

⁹⁴ Archive of PRs from the Balochistan House are available here: <https://perma.cc/6PQC-W4LC>

⁹⁵ Coverage of the Balochistan House demonstration in New York by the Srivastava-owned New Delhi Times:

<https://perma.cc/9SXH-935G>

⁹⁶ See press release about the event here: <https://perma.cc/J8K9-JU45>

⁹⁷ See press release about the event here: <https://perma.cc/BNV9-AQ2Z>

⁹⁸ See Balochistan House's press release about an event in the European Parliament in Brussels: <https://perma.cc/TJ6Q-WUDW>

⁹⁹ See Balochistan House's press release about an event in the European Parliament in Strasbourg: <https://perma.cc/3XR4-G24W>

¹⁰⁰ See the EU DisinfoLab's Twitter thread here: <https://archive.is/jvEZO>

¹⁰¹ See article of the event on SADF website: <https://perma.cc/93YG-QMLM>

¹⁰² See the invitation published by another organization invited to this event: <https://perma.cc/G88R-QGC5>

SADF also contributed to lobbying events. We found traces of SADF participation to events managed by other organisations linked to the Srivastava Group such as the Baluchistan House¹⁰³. SADF also contributed to an event organised by the former president of the European Economic and Social Committee Henri Malosse, who is an important figure in Indian Chronicles. This event also involved a panellist from WESTT and was covered by Madi Sharma (founder of WESTT) in her role of EU reporter for the Srivastava-owned media outlet New Delhi Times. Her article was titled "EU Home textile industry completely destroy by Pakistan"¹⁰⁴.

SADF publishes books. As New Delhi Times' EU correspondent, Madi Sharma published a favourable review for the launch of SADF Executive director Paulo Casaca and SADF Director of Research Siegfried O'Wolf's common book on terrorism « "endorsing US President Donald Trumps recent comments on Pakistan's harbouring of terrorists »" ¹⁰⁵.

SADF was also the organisation that co-sponsored, among other trips¹⁰⁶, the controversial unofficial trip to the Maldives¹⁰⁷. It is also this organisation that paid for MEP Thierry Mariani's trip to Geneva¹⁰⁸ to attend a press conference about Jammu Kashmir. This press conference was covered by Srivastava Group's 4NewsAgency and Times Of Geneva¹⁰⁹.

c- WESTT

We started to become interested in WESTT - the Women's Economic and Social Think Tank – during our previous investigation about EP Today. WESTT had been publishing content in EP Today, quoting and republishing content from the New Delhi Times and Times of Geneva which we had officially tied to Srivastava. We had also showed how several interns working at WESTT were also working for EP Today at the same time¹¹⁰.

Madi Sharma, the founder of WESTT, also regularly appeared in our investigation. She was part of the controversial trip to the Maldives involving MEPs that her organisation organized. WESTT was also the organisation that, together with Srivastava's IINS, was behind the MEPs' visit to Jammu and Kashmir in October 2019, which was largely covered by the press¹¹¹. Madi is also an official EU correspondent for the New Delhi Times, Srivastava Group's newspaper. India Today newspaper investigated WESTT after the MEPs' trip to Kashmir and found that no NGO was known at the address in the UK that WESTT was advertising on its website¹¹².

Interestingly, WESTT was openly admitting its lobbying activities. Madi Sharma, on behalf of her organisation WESTT, directly wrote to the MEPs in August 2018 to ask them to participate to a trip to the Maldives, mentioning that "the trip must occur before the Maldivian elections"¹¹³. In December 2017, WESTT had also

¹⁰³ See press release about this event: <https://perma.cc/YK7W-YRR7>

¹⁰⁴ See archive of Madi Sharma's article for the New Delhi Times here: <https://perma.cc/XV2Q-8GUK>

¹⁰⁵ See the review made by Madi Sharma of the SADF book: <https://perma.cc/T398-GDG4>. NB: the typo is reproduced as it is in the original article.

¹⁰⁶ SADF also organised a trip to Bangladesh including as guests MEP Fulvio Martusciello, MEP Alberto Cirio and Madi Sharma: <https://perma.cc/D778-C4AD>

¹⁰⁷ See our previous investigation and this article: <https://perma.cc/P2FF-NHVA>

¹⁰⁸ Official document filled by MEP Mariani about this trip: <https://perma.cc/33RU-PPNF>

¹⁰⁹ See p.34 of our previous investigation and this archived twitter thread: <https://archive.is/0J75c>

¹¹⁰ See our previous investigation and this archived Twitter thread: <https://archive.is/ISjUk>

¹¹¹ See for example the article about WESTT from India Today: <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/eu-mp-kashmir-visit-j-k-ngo-westt-madi-sharma-1613878-2019-10-29> (archive version available here: <https://perma.cc/LVE6-D5JC>)

¹¹² See previous footnote

¹¹³ See p.14 of our previous investigation: <https://perma.cc/AU34-PYT6>

written to former EP President Antonio Tajani, but this time to ask for his advice on how to lobby MEPs before their official EU delegation visits to some non-EU countries.¹¹⁴ In our first report, we also shared evidence from several LinkedIn profiles that WESTT was involved in lobbying activities in the European Parliament, including the writing of articles for MEPs and the drafting of official parliamentary questions to be submitted by MEPs.

d- The International Council For Inter-Religious Cooperation (ICIRC)

This ICIRC was set up in Belgium in 2009 by Pramila and Ankit Srivastava at Square de Meeus 37, the address of EP Today and the Srivastava Group in Brussels¹¹⁵. ICIRC is the parent organization of the International Imam Organization¹¹⁶, another organization created by Ankit Srivastava in 2011 and still active today, defining itself as “a platform for Muslims who are involved in the preachings of Quran”¹¹⁷. On Facebook¹¹⁸, we can still find the pictures of an event organized in the European Parliament by these two organisations: “Inter-Islamic Cooperation with the West”. It is unclear to us whether there was a genuine intention to foster inter-religious dialogues or if the objective was less paved with good intentions. It is however hard not to find a sense of irony in knowing that *Indian Chronicles* worked closely with many far-right Members of the European Parliament, while *Indian Chronicles* had been publicly opposing the Ban on Burqa in Belgium and asking the Belgian government to “launch programs for integration of Muslims into Belgium and implement open door policy so that all religion get to keep their idea”.

e- The European Organization of Pakistani Minorities (EOPM)

EOPM is described in our first investigation. This organization was created by the Srivastava group and was mainly in charge of organizing demonstrations and events about Pakistani minorities. It worked closely with another Srivastava NGO – Pakistani Women Human Rights Organization¹¹⁹.

It should be noted that other NGOs and think-tanks have been active around the same network in Brussels and/or Geneva, such as the European Foundation for South Asian Studies (EFSAS).

From Stephan Ciccoli to...

As previously explained, one intern – “Stephan Ciccoli” spoke at the UNHCR both for the European Union of Public Relations (an organization that seems to have represented regularly Indian interests at the UN Human Rights Council at least since the 1990s)¹²⁰, for the International Club for Peace Research¹²¹, for the World Peace Council¹²² and for the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace¹²³:

¹¹⁴ See p.12 of our previous investigation

¹¹⁵ See the official document for the creation of ICIRC mentioning both Ankit and Pramila Srivastava: <https://perma.cc/JE4M-FKEQ>

¹¹⁶ See the official document for the creation of the International Imam Organization mentioning Ankit Srivastava: <https://perma.cc/492N-5YZH>

¹¹⁷ See archive of globalimam.com website: <https://web.archive.org/web/20170629074824/http://globalimam.com/index.php/about-us/>

¹¹⁸ Archive of ICIRC Facebook page: <https://perma.cc/P7PU-83VU>

¹¹⁹ About EOPM and PakistaniWomen, see tweets 4 to 8 in this Twitter thread: <https://archive.is/rDcCs>

¹²⁰ See archive of an article mentioning the intervention of Stephan Ciccoli for EUPR: <https://perma.cc/M4SE-3VKT>

¹²¹ See archive of an article mentioning the intervention of Stephan Ciccoli for ICPR: <https://perma.cc/GPN2-T4L3>

¹²² See archive of an article mentioning the intervention of Stephan Ciccoli for the World Peace Council: <https://perma.cc/FXH8-AKAS>

¹²³ See archive of an article mentioning the intervention of Stephan Ciccoli for the CSOP: <https://perma.cc/76VJ-4U7X>

The name “Stephan Ciccoli” – and the network’s habit to invert letters - reminded us of another name we had encountered in May 2020 we had stumbled across an obscure media covering EU Affairs: Stephen Ciccoli of EU Chronicle.

Chapter 2 - EU CHRONICLE: EP TODAY IS BACK

I- Website

a- Description

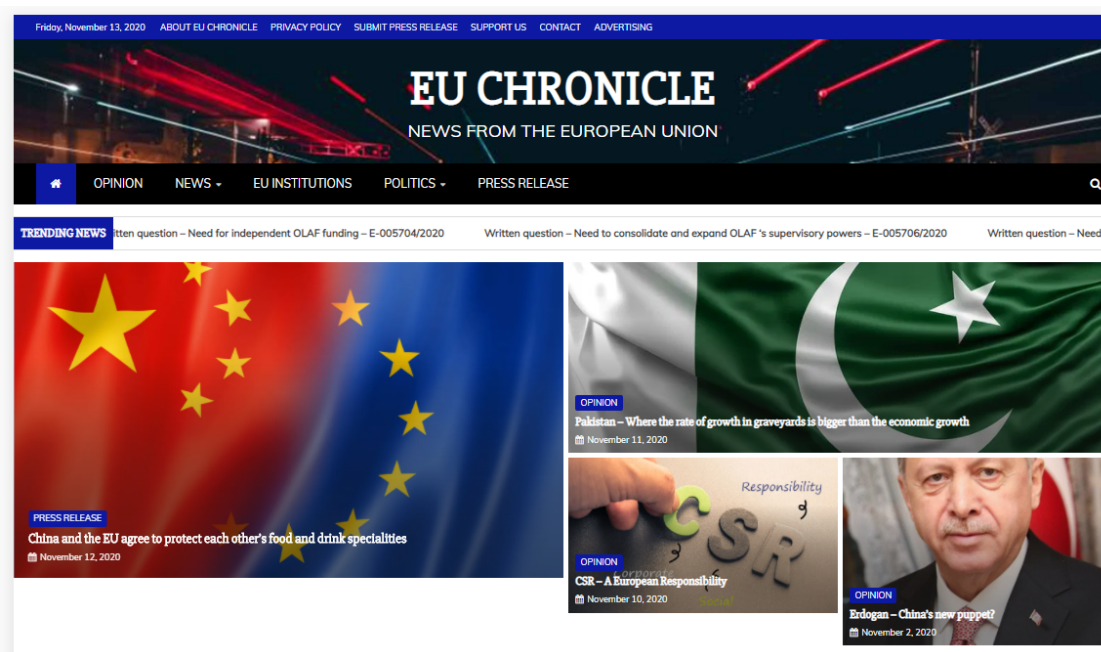
In May 2020, we noticed the emergence of a new European Union Belgium-based media outlet named EU Chronicle¹²⁴. Interestingly, EU Chronicle had been present on the same IP address 208.73.210.140 hosting NGOs and other websites attributed to the Srivastava group (See Chapter 2, part I). The first articles on EU Chronicle were published around May 6th¹²⁵ and that matches with an update of *euchronicle.com* domain

¹²⁴ Archive of euchronicle.com available here: <https://perma.cc/4RTA-HP8U>

¹²⁵ Archive showing that the first article on the section was published on May 6th: <https://perma.cc/9LCD-DQLE>

name's information which was made the same day¹²⁶. Identically to many other domain names of Indian Chronicles, EU Chronicle has been bought through the provider Domain People.

Disclaimer: EUChronicle.com should not be confused with eu-chronicle.eu, another conspiratorial website claiming to cover European Union news¹²⁷



Screenshot of EU Chronicle main page from November 2020

EU Chronicle presents itself as a media outlet which gives you "News from the European Union" and claims to be run by "a group of Freelance Expat Journalist based in Belgium. According to the website, the purpose of the media outlet is "to provide ethical and quality news to its readers"¹²⁸. The articles from the media outlets are distributed between different sections: Opinion, news, EU institutions, politics and press release.

Rapidly, we noticed that EU Chronicle often copy-pastes content from other sources (European Institutions, international organizations...). At the beginning of its existence, EU Chronicle did not hesitate to reproduce articles from a media outlet such as Politico without mentioning the original source of the content. This article from Politico titled "Poland withdraws from treaty to prevent violence against women"¹²⁹ was copy-pasted by EU Chronicle without crediting the original source¹³⁰. The pattern was similar for this article about Boris Johnson announcing "the merger of UK foreign and aid departments"¹³¹ (with some minor editions) or this article about a UN resolution concerning the Iran Nuclear deal¹³². As we will see later, EU Chronicle is now mostly syndicating content from institutional websites. This content syndication is likely automatized, but this automation is executed extremely poorly.

¹²⁶ Archive of the information linked to the WHOIS domain name: <https://perma.cc/W6JX-WJQ7>

¹²⁷ See archive of eu-chronicle.eu here: <https://perma.cc/Q6MD-VJN8>

¹²⁸ Archive of the "About Us" section on EU Chronicle website: <https://perma.cc/BME6-WTXY>

¹²⁹ Archive of the Politico article: <https://perma.cc/WB4J-AHMH>

¹³⁰ Archive of the EU Chronicle article: <https://perma.cc/8ZHL-Q7KN/>

¹³¹ Archive of the EU Chronicle article: <https://perma.cc/9H6Q-WD75/> Archive of the Politico article: <https://perma.cc/8XMK-ZQEP>

¹³² Archive of the EU Chronicle article: <https://perma.cc/C47W-H8UU/> Archive of the Politico article: <https://perma.cc/3XC3-CW3J>

More surprisingly, we observed that the unknown Brussels-based media outlet regularly publishes exclusive op-eds from MEPs. The first one written by MEP Julie Lechanteux was released on May 11th, which means only 5 days after the small website had started to be active¹³³.

Finally, we also noticed that it was difficult to associate the name of the alleged EU Chronicle journalists mentioned in the website's "Contact Us"¹³⁴ section to any real persona.

The absence of transparency about the ownership of the media outlet and its journalists, the heavy use of content syndication and the presence of MEP op-eds were 3 features already present in our last investigation about the fake European Parliamentarian magazine "EP Today". So, we decided to go deeper to understand who is behind this media outlet.

I- EU Chronicle's effort to appear as a legitimate European Union media outlet:

a- Content Syndication

As we mentioned in the introductory part, EU Chronicle relies on content syndication to build a false image of a legitimate media. In addition to the Politico examples, we could for instance find articles from brussels.be website, the official website of Brussels city, which are presented falsely as authored by the "Editor" on EU Chronicle¹³⁵.

Content also comes from a variety of authoritative sources such as the European Parliament, WHO or NATO but the content syndication is often badly executed. Our main hypothesis is that some automated processes of content syndication have been wrongly configured.

For example, fingerprints of this automation can be found by looking at the *Written Questions from MEPs'* articles which are available on the "news" section of EU Chronicle¹³⁶ and represent a big part of the content published by the website. These "written questions" are an attempt by EU Chronicle to reproduce the content directly from the RSS feed of the European Parliament written questions¹³⁷. The problem is that the written questions reproduced on EU Chronicle website are not copied properly. Only the "title" and the "description" of the written questions are kept in the EU Chronicle version of the written questions.

```
<item>
  <title>Written question - Concrete measures to tackle unacceptable abuses on the internet - P-005692/2020</title>
  <link>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2020-005692_EN.html</link>
  <description>Priority question for written answer P-005692/2020&lt;br/&gt;to the Commission&lt;br/&gt;Rule 138&lt;br/&gt;Geoffroy Didier (PP)&lt;br/&gt; &lt;br/&gt;
  /&gt;Source : &lt;a href="https://www.europarl.europa.eu/privacy-policy/en"&gt;0 European Union, 2020 - EP&lt;/a&gt;</description>
  <source url="https://www.europarl.europa.eu/rss/doc/written-questions/en.xml">Written questions - European Parliament</source>
  <category domain="type">Written question</category>
  <pubDate>Thu, 22 Oct 2020 09:30:11 GMT</pubDate>
  <guid isPermaLink="false">QE-P-9-2020-005692_EN</guid>
</item>
```

Therefore, this explains why articles allegedly authored by EU Chronicle on MEPs written questions do not make sense at all compared to what can be found on the European Parliament website¹³⁸.

¹³³ Archive of the first MEPs op-ed on EU Chronicle: <https://perma.cc/HCU6-A2P8>

¹³⁴ Archive of the "About US" section of EU Chronicle: <https://perma.cc/M8TM-EHES>

¹³⁵ Archive of EU Chronicle article: <https://perma.cc/6MFJ-JGG2> /Archive of the original article on Brussels.be: <https://perma.cc/PY6R-NJAU>

¹³⁶ Archive of EU Chronicle "news section" showing multiple articles about written questions originated from MEPs at the European Parliament: <https://perma.cc/222U-QP5V>

¹³⁷ Archive of the RSS feed for the Written questions of the MEPs at the European Parliament: <https://wr.perma-archives.org/public/ks5l-5fsr/im> /<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/rss/doc/written-questions/en.xml>

¹³⁸ Archive of the EU Chronicle article about a MEP written question on Turkey: <https://perma.cc/39JV-28UQ/> Same written question with more content on the European Parliament website: <https://perma.cc/DCE7-2CUN>

Archive of the EU Chronicle article about a MEP written question on Croatia: <https://perma.cc/58V9-82ZW>
Same written question with more content on the European Parliament website: <https://perma.cc/P5K5-JPDW>

You are Here Home » NEWS » Written question – Follow-up question to E-004612/2020: pre-accession assistance for Turkey – P-006125/2020

NEWS

Written question – Follow-up question to E-004612/2020: pre-accession assistance for Turkey – P-006125/2020

November 14, 2020 1 min read Paul Riley

Priority question for written answer P-006125/2020 to the Commission
Rule 138
Roman Haider (ID), Georg Mayer (ID)

Source : © European Union, 2020 – EP

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You are Here Home » NEWS » Written question – Control of EU funds in Croatia is non-existent in practice – E-005652/2020

NEWS

Written question – Control of EU funds in Croatia is non-existent in practice – E-005652/2020

November 14, 2020 1 min read Paul Riley

Question for written answer E-005652/2020/rev.1 to the Commission
Rule 138
Ivan Vilibor Sinčić (NI), Mislav Kolakušić (NI)

Source : © European Union, 2020 – EP

Share this: [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)

Poorly automated content syndication also happens for some other institutional websites. For examples, EU Chronicle reproduces only “titles” and “descriptions” for articles from NATO website¹³⁹.

 **NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION**

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Newsroom » News

The Chairman of the NATO Military committee visits key NATO assets in Latvia

07 Nov, 2020 - | Last updated: 13 Nov, 2020 12:46

The Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach travelled to Riga, Latvia on 6-7 November 2020 to meet with the Latvian Minister of Defence Dr Artis Pabriks and the Chief of Defence Lieutenant General Leonīds Kalniņš.



Following a memorial ceremony at the Riga Brethren Cemetery, Air Chief Marshal Peach thanked the Chief of Defence, Lieutenant General Leonīds Kalniņš and the General Staff for the contributions of Latvia to the Alliance's operations, missions and activities.

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EU INSTITUTIONS

The Chairman of the NATO Military committee visits key NATO assets in Latvia

November 14, 2020 1 min read Editor

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b- EU Chronicle fake journalists

Despite many efforts, we were not able to find any traces of “Freelance Expat Journalists based in Belgium” named Stephen Ciccoli, Paul Riley, Rita Storen or Tony Faber (the alleged staff of EU Chronicle).

A Google search about a “journalist” named “Rita Storen” returns for example almost no results, except for “euchronicle.com” website.¹⁴⁰

The production of articles by the alleged EU Chronicle journalist “Paul Riley” is uniquely composed of badly syndicated content from the European Parliament website¹⁴¹ (including the “MEP Written Questions” articles on EU Chronicle which are not understandable). He does not seem to have ever produced any original content for EU Chronicle.

¹³⁹ Archive of the full NATO article: <https://perma.cc/FN5Q-DNKU> /Archive of its truncated EU Chronicle version: <https://perma.cc/4Y8X-YCXC>

¹⁴⁰ Archive of the google query “Rita Storen” AND “journalist” showing only 4 results: <https://perma.cc/LB7E-WS6V>

¹⁴¹ Archive of Paul Riley's author page in EU Chronicle: <https://perma.cc/8MT5-DHBP>

Most of the content supposed to have been authored by Rita Storen seems in reality syndicated from “europa.eu” websites¹⁴².

The journalists Paul Riley and Rita Storen are producing articles day and night for EU Chronicle and if you look at the timestamps in the source codes of their author pages, you realize that there is an interesting pattern. All their articles are published at regular intervals and always at a time following a specific format: xx:x9 (00:09, 00:19, 02:19, 08:19, 18:39, etc...) .¹⁴³

As you start to understand, Paul Riley and Rita Storen are not only not real, but the articles attributed to them are also syndicated content published automatically. If this hypothesis is not true, this means that EU Chronicle journalists have particularly strange days at work.

Satirical content: EU Chronicle “journalist” Rita Storen’s daily routine

We used time stamps from the EU Chronicle source code to reconstruct as an example the day of Rita Storen on 29 October 2020.

- **00:09** Rita starts her shift in the middle of the night. First task of the day: publish a press release “MEPs warn of attempts by some EU countries to silence and subdue critical media”¹⁴⁴. As she is somewhat sleepy, Rita did not finish to write her article and unfortunately truncated it in the middle of a sentence.
- **00:19** Ten minutes later, Rita publishes a very brief piece about the “29th User Group Meeting at EUIPO”¹⁴⁵ composed in total of one sentence.
- **02:19** Having drunk a few cups of coffee, Rita is now fully awake and publishes another press release “European values: COVID-19 emergency measures pose a “risk of abuse of power”¹⁴⁶. Mission accomplished: this time the press release is entirely reproduced.
- **8:09** Rita publishes again a “Press release – ‘Not there yet’: Rule of law conditionality trilogues continue”¹⁴⁷. Four lines, and a sentence halved in the middle but let’s be honest, it was a rough night.
- **8:19** Frustrated by this new mistake, Rita reconvenes herself and publishes an article inviting to a “Video conference of economics and finance ministers of 4 November 2020” informing us of a press briefing that will take place on 30 October 2020 at 14:00. Unfortunately, she does not provide any links or useful information.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Sample of articles allegedly written by Rita Storen:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20201106102214/https://euchronicle.com/author/rita-storen/>

All the articles in this sample were reproduction of original content from websites linked to the European Institutions:

[Archive original article 1](#), [Archive original article 2](#), [Archive original article 3](#), [Archive original article 4](#), [Archive original article 5](#)

¹⁴³ In the source code, search (ctrl+f) for « datetime ».

This is the source code for Rita Storen’s author page:

view-source:<https://web.archive.org/web/20201101024914/https://euchronicle.com/author/rita-storen/>

This is the source code for Paul Riley’s author page:

view-source:<https://web.archive.org/web/20201101120506/https://euchronicle.com/author/paul-riley/>

¹⁴⁴ Archive of Rita Storen’s press release: <https://perma.cc/3HW9-GFVG>

¹⁴⁵ Archive of Rita Storen’s article: <https://perma.cc/KZ6V-399F>

¹⁴⁶ Archive of Rita Storen’s article: <https://perma.cc/3FPG-AJX2>

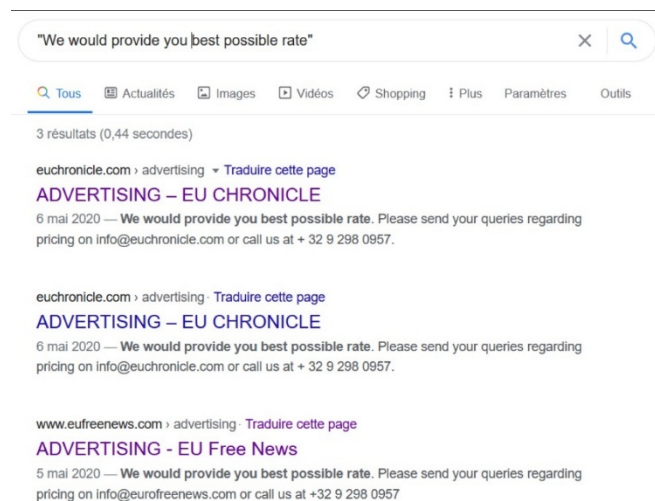
¹⁴⁷ Archive of Rita Storen’s press release: <https://perma.cc/5QAE-M48P>

¹⁴⁸ Archive of Rita Storen’s article: <https://perma.cc/V8B6-6LP9>

- **16:19** After getting some rest in the open space of the EU Chronicle newsroom (maybe playing table football, who knows?), Rita is back at her desk and publishing a very anti-clickbait story: “133/2020 : 28 October 2020 – Judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-321/19”¹⁴⁹. Proud of this title, she unfortunately forgets to put all the content and the article cuts in the middle of a sentence.
- **18:39** last stretch of the day, one article and Rita will be able to go home. She publishes her last story: “Latvia: EIB supports ALTUM to help Latvian businesses”¹⁵⁰. The piece is fully copy pasted and even contains a picture to illustrate the content. Good job Rita!

c- Hiding the “real objective” of the media outlet behind a “fake monetization objective”?

Looking further at some of the content, we did notice that people behind EU Chronicle could potentially include non-native English speakers. The advertising section for instance displays “We would provide you best possible rate” , omitting the article “the”. Moreover, a clearer syntax would be: “We can provide the best possible rates” Interestingly, this very same sentence has been used on one other website advertising page: eufreenews.com¹⁵¹.

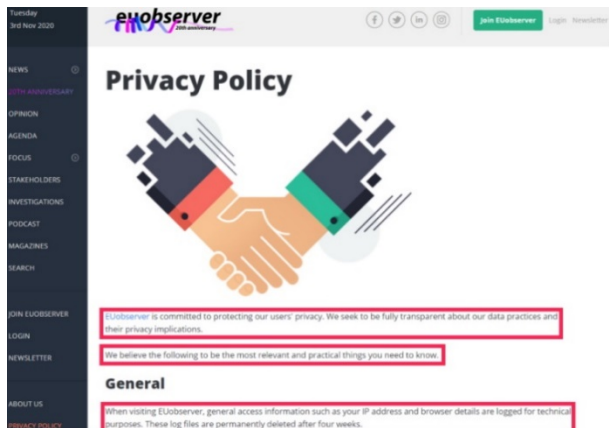


Concerning the short section detailing the Privacy Policies of EU Chronicle, it appears to be copy-pasted from the legitimate media EU Observer.

¹⁴⁹ Archive of Rita Storen’s article: <https://perma.cc/TK6F-DNJW>

¹⁵⁰ Archive of Rita Storen’s article: <https://perma.cc/SP3L-7KCR>

¹⁵¹ Eufreenews.com is not available anymore but this is interesting to see that the website also used the same phone number as EU Chronicle.



PRIVACY POLICY

EU Chronicle is committed to protecting our users' privacy. We seek to be fully transparent about our data practices and their privacy implications.

We believe the following to be the most relevant and practical things you need to know.

When visiting Our Website, general access information such as your IP address and browser details are logged for technical purposes. These log files are permanently deleted after four weeks.

We may display banners or other widgets from selected third parties containing non-intrusive cookies.

We welcome your questions regarding privacy. Please contact us in any mode. We will reply immediately.

EU Chronicle worked on the appearances to look legitimate. This includes an effort to promote the idea that the main objective of the new media outlet is monetisation. This effort is split between 3 sections: "Submit a press release", "Support us" and "Advertising".

For 500 euros, you can have your press release (800 words maximum) being distributed by EU Chronicle¹⁵².

Originally, the "support us" section, advertising a "Walk into a world of knowledge, wisdom and truth", a silver Membership was priced at 180 €/year and a gold membership at 240€/year.¹⁵³ In October 2020, the pricings evolved. Gold and silver membership are now priced at 600 and 300€/year respectively with the possibility to be invited to "events"¹⁵⁴ - we did not find any public traces of "EU Chronicle" events. The website does not provide any payment bridge and the "support us" web page does not display any contact details either.

The advertising section initially provided no prices but proposed to write to "Mr. Stephen Ciccoli Editor, Gaston Crommenlaan 8, 9050 Gent, Belgium". Stephen Ciccoli is similar to Stephan Ciccoli, a former intern who spoke for dubious organisations defending Indian-related positions at the United Nations Human Rights Council (see Chapter 2).

Currently, the advertising section displays no specific information except prices and an anonymous email/phone number to contact¹⁵⁵:

- EUR 5,000 per month for a Front Page Banner;
- EUR 2,500 per month for an Inside Pages Banner.

The low quality of the content syndication provided by EU Chronicle, the absence of transparency about who is behind this media outlet and the lack of proof that the journalists employed by EU Chronicle do in fact exist, lead us to strongly believe that these monetization efforts are not serious. One can say quite confidently that most of this is fake, as many of the services simply do not seem to exist (such as access to archives) and the prices are simply too high for such small traffic¹⁵⁶ and such poor content.

Our main hypothesis is that EU Chronicle uses "monetisation" as a way to appear like a legitimate media outlet and to hide the real purpose of the website.

¹⁵² Archive of the "Submit press release" section: <https://perma.cc/T638-CW44>

¹⁵³ Archive of the old "Support us" section: <https://web.archive.org/web/20200627131618/http://euchronicle.com/join-us-support-us/>

¹⁵⁴ Archive of the new "Support us" section: <https://perma.cc/36GB-27R9>

¹⁵⁵ Archive of the current advertising section: <https://perma.cc/D55V-6S4R>

¹⁵⁶ EU Chronicle's traffic is so small that Similar Web can't retrieve data about the website: <https://perma.cc/HRJ7-JH6M>

II- Behind the smoke screen: A media outlet designed to influence European policymakers and promote messages favourable to Indian interests

As for our first investigation with the fake European Parliament magazine called EP Today, the most telling sign to understand who is behind EU Chronicle was not to analyse what the website shares the most through content syndication but what it produces as original content.

a- MEPs op-eds hidden behind content syndication

Looking closely at the Opinion section, we notice that since the website started to be active on May 6th, it has published 16 op-eds which has been written by Members of European Parliament or of another European institution (4 other op-eds are only attributed to "Editor"). As we mentioned earlier in this report, the first op-ed was released on May 11th, only 5 days before the launch of this small new media outlet.

For an unknown reason, we also found 3 op-eds from MEPs in the "Press release" section. As a side note, EU Chronicle also amplified some content which could be almost considered as op-eds (e.g a letter of concerns from MEPs Gancia, Martusciello and Czarnecki about "the threats of terror emanating from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan" was fully reproduced by EU Chronicle¹⁵⁷).

The combination of bad content syndication and op-eds from MEPs looked a lot like what we observed with EP Today so we had a closer look at the themes and the authors connected to these op-eds.

Author of EU Chronicle Op-Ed	Topic	Participation in Kashmir visit
MEP Angel Dzhambazki	Beijing's accountability in the COVID-19 cover up	NO
MEP Grzegorz Tobiszowski	Pressure imposed on Pakistan to reconsider its actions	YES
MEP Gianna Gancia (x2 op-eds in EU Chronicle)	- Is Italy's ongoing and forthcoming crisis an opportunity for China? - A Call for Pakistan to Respect its Women and Girls	YES
MEP Ryszard Czarnecki (x2 op-eds in EU Chronicle)	- Jammu & Kashmir shows roadmap to curb Covid-19 and economy recovery - Pakistan commemorates 26 October as a "Black Day"	YES
MEP Marc Tarabella	- Khashoggi, Extrajudicial Killings and Independent Inquiries	NO
MEP Fulvio Martusciello (x2 op-eds in EU Chronicle)	- Mourning its failures on Black Day (about Pakistan) - Convenient to call out France on Islamophobia, but lips sealed for China	YES
MEP Dominique Bilde	Are Pakistani migrants using Bosnia as a gateway to the European Union?	NO
MEP Giuseppe Milazzo	- Can Imran Khan be made the saviour of Pakistan's Ahmadiyya?	NO
MEP Thierry Mariani (x2 op-eds in EU Chronicle)	- 6,500 Pakistanis among foreign terrorists fighting in Afghanistan - "Follow the money" – Pakistan's money laundering and terrorism financing trail	YES
MEP Julie Lechanteux	EU-China relations in 2020	YES
MEP Virginie Joron (x2 op-eds in EU Chronicle)	- Sri Lanka – From safety concerns to political crises. - The coronavirus in light of the "Chinese virus."	YES
Henri Malosse (x3 op-eds in EU Chronicle)	- A European Budget that is Not for Europeans. (article also talks about Pakistan)	YES

¹⁵⁷ Archive of the letter of concerns from MEPs about Pakistan reproduced on EU Chronicle: <https://perma.cc/H8SM-JY8L>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Erdogan – China's new puppet? - Killing for Organs – China's State Terrorism 	
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Surprisingly, almost all the topics of these op-eds are very close to topics of interests for the Indian State (treatment of minorities in Pakistan, the situation in Jammu and Kashmir region, the growing presence of China in the world...). They mostly echo positions that could be seen as favourable to Indian interests.

Moreover, Henri Malosse (former president of the European Economic and Social Committee), MEP Ryszard Czarnecki and MEP Fulvio Martusciello, who have already written several op-eds for EU Chronicle, were central figures during our previous investigation. They wrote multiple op-eds in EP Today, they participated to pro-Indian lobbying events and took part in some controversial unofficial visits in the Maldives¹⁵⁸ (but not MEP Fulvio Martusciello) and in Kashmir¹⁵⁹. More generally, out of the 12 MEPs or political figures who contributed to EU Chronicle, 9 have ties to our EP Today investigation (either because they participated to the Kashmir visit or they wrote for the fake European Parliament magazine).

All these similarities strongly suggest that we found once again the same network behind a fake media outlet designed to lobby policymakers and defend Indian interests.

b- [The activities around EU Chronicle Twitter accounts suggests connections with an information operation tied to India](#)

We could find traces of two different Twitter accounts connected to EU Chronicle website.

First Twitter account: @EuChronicle_

The 1st Twitter account of Eu Chronicle¹⁶⁰ (@EuChronicle_) was created back in January 2015 but no tweets could be retrieved from this date. This Twitter account only attracts one follower: Virginie Joron, far-right MEP¹⁶¹ (Joron was in the Kashmir visit¹⁶²). Virginie Joron already wrote two op-eds for EU Chronicle (one of her op-ed includes suggestions that the COVID-19 might be a “man-made virus” created by China¹⁶³, a claim which is not substantiated by any scientific evidences¹⁶⁴) but also appears on the website with coverage of at least one of her positions taken about Pakistan at the EU Parliament¹⁶⁵.

100% of the tweets published by the Twitter account @EuChronicle_ were posted from the Wordpress Twitter app, suggesting a complete automation¹⁶⁶, and curiously the account did not tweet one of the exclusive op-eds written by MEPs. On 20 June, this account stopped all activity.

Second Twitter account: @EU_Chronicle

¹⁵⁸ Archive of an article about the controversial visit in Maldives: <https://perma.cc/7WEQ-TM4F>

¹⁵⁹ Archive of an article about the controversial visit in India: <https://perma.cc/985A-9R9Z>

¹⁶⁰ Archive of @EuChronicle_ Twitter account: <https://archive.vn/RR88P>

¹⁶¹ Archive of the Twitter account available here: <https://archive.vn/APf2Q>

¹⁶² Archive of an article about the visit available here: <https://perma.cc/VF3B-2BK3>

¹⁶³ Archive of MEP Joron's EU Chronicle op-ed casting doubts on the origin of the virus: <https://perma.cc/9B5E-G4N3>

¹⁶⁴ Article from ABC News debunking the claim about a human origin of the COVID-19: <https://perma.cc/66MA-CBL3>

¹⁶⁵ Archive of an EU Chronicle article titled “Members of the European Parliament condemns Pakistani Government for its participation in the Pulwama attacks”: <https://perma.cc/S8YG-LWN4>

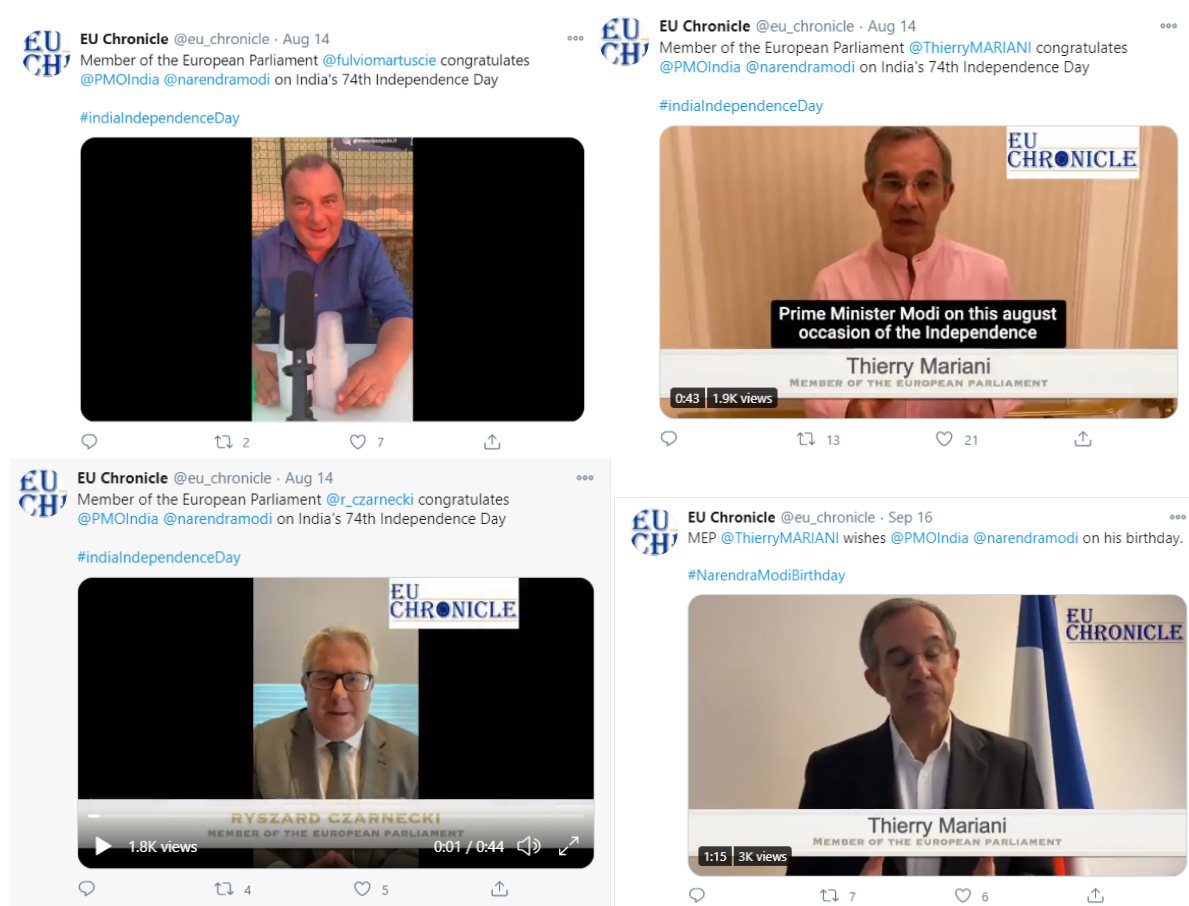
¹⁶⁶ Data obtained thanks to the Truthnest app: <https://app.truthnestAr.com/analysis-results/user/euchronicle>

In July 2020, a new Twitter account is created: @eu_chronicle. This new account also uses synchronisation thanks to Wordpress to automatically repost articles on Twitter. Its number of followers remains limited (250 followers in November¹⁶⁷).

More interestingly, we found that EU Chronicle Twitter account only posted two types of videos, reinforcing our inner conviction that this information operation is connected to India:

- Videos of MEPs congratulating Narendra Modi for the Independence Day of India (MEP Martusciello/MEP Czarnecki/MEP Mariani) or for the Indian Prime Minister birthday (MEP Mariani);
- A campaign of videos about alleged abuses against minorities and terrorism in Pakistan¹⁶⁸.

i- Videos of MEPs congratulating Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi



Screenshots of EU Chronicle tweets showing MEPs congratulating Narendra Modi for the Independence Day of India or his birthday¹⁶⁹

The videos also reproduce the “Eu Chroncile” typo already spotted on EUChronicle.com website.

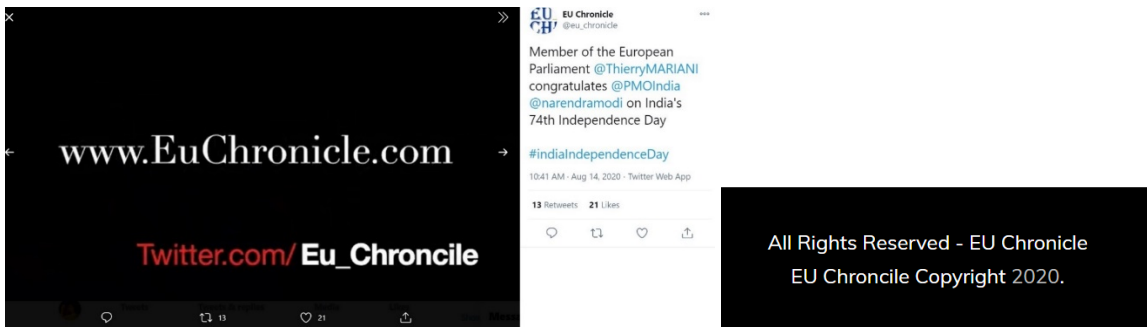
¹⁶⁷ Archive of EU_Chronicle Twitter account: <https://archive.is/GY2UP>

¹⁶⁸ Archive of EU_Chronicle Twitter account's video section: <https://archive.is/CzXG6>

¹⁶⁹ Archive of the EU Chronicle tweet including a video of MEP Martusciello: <https://archive.vn/NGY0b>

Archive of the EU Chronicle tweet including a video of MEP Czarnecki: <https://archive.vn/PaQGR>

Archive of EU Chronicle tweets including videos of MEP Mariani: <https://archive.is/RHnAe> / <https://archive.is/okBZ5>



ii- Videos from EU Chronicle talking about Pakistan

EU Chronicles Twitter account also posted exclusive videos targeting Pakistan (see for example the screenshot below¹⁷⁰).



Some of the footage including in videos tweeted by EU Chronicle were very similar to those we could find on videos for "4News Agency", a Geneva-based organization that we connected to the Srivastava group during our last investigation.

One video, specifically, uses footages of a demonstration organised last year in front of UNHRC offices in Geneva. This demonstration was part of the lobbying activities targeting Pakistan organised by the Srivastava Group, covered by some Srivastava fake media outlets (Times Of Geneva and 4 News Agency) and disseminated on some social media accounts they control such as the Voice of Pakistan Minority¹⁷¹. Investigating further one of the original video produced by the EU Chronicle twitter account¹⁷², we noticed that the Indian press agency ANI was also covering this rather confidential event and also produced specific

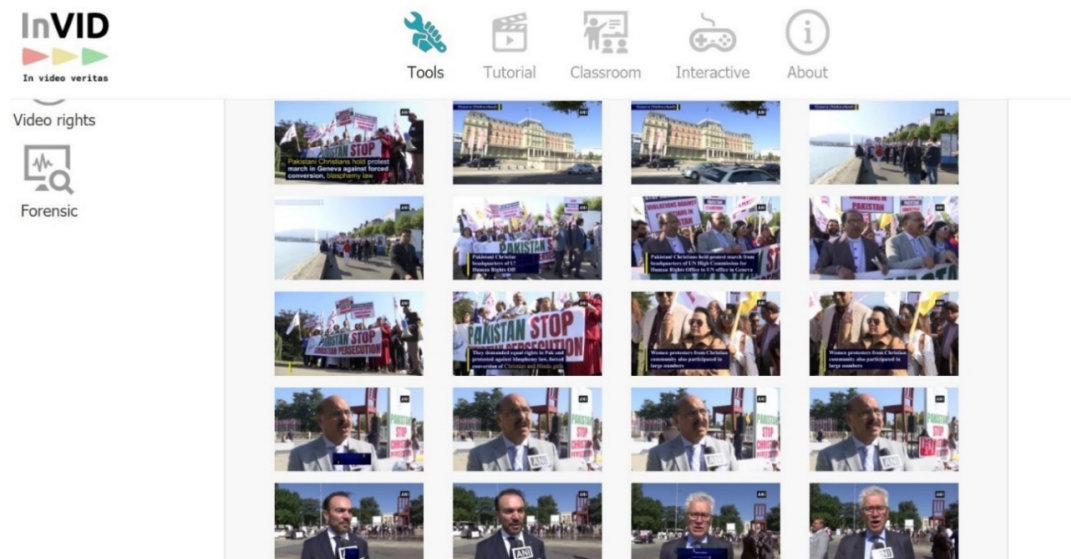
¹⁷⁰ Archive of the first video posted by EU Chronicle about Pakistan: <https://archive.vn/EpJ2t>

¹⁷¹ Archived of a tweet made by the Voice of Pakistan Minority account about the demonstration: <https://archive.vn/RF101>

¹⁷²Archive of the EU Chronicle including the video we investigated: <https://archive.vn/Uh7rF>

footages about the demonstrations with specific angles (as shown by the top right watermark logo and the logo displayed on the microphones)¹⁷³.

Using the InVid/WeVerify tool, we were able to obtain a frame by frame analyse of the footage from ANI.



As you can see, some extracts of the EU Chronicle video look quite similar, without all the watermarks, to the images shot by the ANI Press agency. But we were not able to find online the exact footage used by EU Chronicle, which has no watermarks and includes some very specific angles.

EU CH EU Chronicle
@eu_chronicle

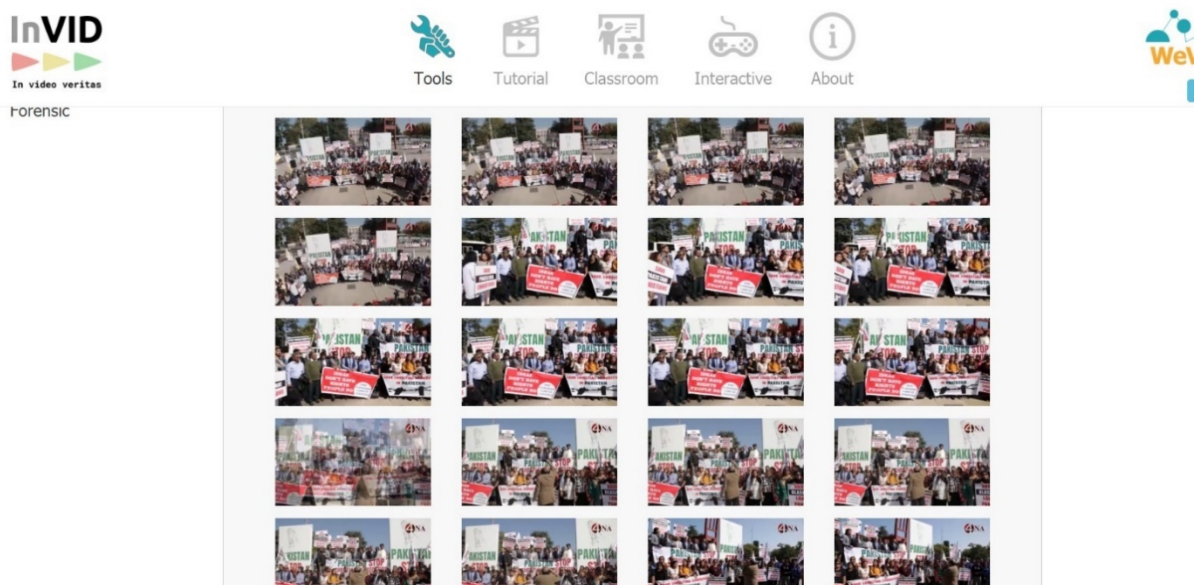
Dirty Jobs are reserved for #Christians. Churches are burnt. #Pakistan persecutes + oppresses Christians #PakistanHorrors

@CTurnerFCDO @VaticanNews @CDU @CardinalDolan

#PakistanHorrors Video Series

¹⁷³ <https://youtu.be/O3sSf881D9M> Archive of the original video from ANI available here: <https://archive.vn/kRSYy>

A specific coverage of the same event made by the Srivastava-linked 4newsAgency organization (including footage from a drone) can also be found back on the Voice of Pakistani Minority account¹⁷⁴.



A search on google image for the exact slogan and logo shows only results of footage from ANI or 4NewsAgency¹⁷⁵. A similar search on twitter for the footage of the event gives us the same angles¹⁷⁶. From our previous investigation, we knew Times of Geneva also covered the demonstration but we do not have access to this material as it has been removed in December 2019 from YouTube.

In the EU Chronicle video, no watermark either from ANI or 4NewsAgency can be seen and the videos were taken with very specific angles. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

1. Either EU chronicle was already present at this rather confidential event (the ANI video about this event got only 329 views) one year before the website was created, and in that case, it is highly possible it is linked to the original network we exposed in 2019;
2. Or, EU Chronicle has access to original footage about the demonstration, without any watermark visible. Despite an extensive open-source research, we could not find any fingerprint of this clean footage online, according to our open-source research. In that case, it is possible that EU Chronicle got in touch with ANI or the managers of 4NewsAgency to get this content back online, and then rebranded it as EU Chronicle.

Both hypotheses are suggesting real ties between the newly-born EU Chronicle and the original entities connected to the Srivastava information operations (4News Agency/Times of Geneva...)

c- Was EUOutlook.com a Srivastava Group's prototype website of EU Chronicle?

During our investigation, we discovered a website called EUOutlook.com which has the same IP address and same Google AdSense code as the New Delhi Times, the Indian media outlet owned by the Srivastava Group.

¹⁷⁴ https://twitter.com/voice_minority/status/1176850415020912640. Archive of the tweet including the video is available here: <https://archive.vn/I3swb>

¹⁷⁵ Results of the Google Search: <https://archive.vn/NX2vi>

¹⁷⁶ Results of the Twitter Search: <https://archive.vn/TKGGw>

EUOutlook.com and EUChronicle.com also shared the same IP address between January and April 2020. The website did not have any content, but its design attracted our attention.

We listed some similarities between the version of EU Chronicle website (October 12th) and the version of EU Outlook website (October 9th)¹⁷⁷:

- There is a “Watch online” button on both websites despite the fact that none of these websites had any videos. Why would EU Chronicle add this button to its layout if the website never publishes any videos?
- Black on white in the banner, with similar messages “News from the European Union” / “News from Europe”;
- Same colours and text for “breaking news” and “exclusive”;
- Similar colours in the rest of the website: black / red / yellow.

We do not have definite evidences that EUoutlook.com and EUChronicle.com are linked but the similarities we found lead us to think that EUoutlook.com might have been a test website to prepare changes of design for EU Chronicle website. EUoutlook.com’s website - subtitled “News from Europe” - clearly suggests that the Srivastava group had the intention to return to “covering” EU affairs.

On the other side, the registration of EUChronicle.com on 25th January 2020 showed that *Indian Chronicles* was ready to rebuild its information operation in Brussels only one month after shutting down “EP Today”, following our first investigation.

Beyond the attribution we made through shared servers between EU Chronicle and other assets of the Srivastava group, our findings show an extremely high number of similarities (modus operandi, actors involved, topics covered) with the first information operation (“EP Today”). And, as the amplification part will reinforce, the multiple evidence connecting EU Chronicle to an effort to influence policymakers and promote Indian interests are overwhelming.

¹⁷⁷ See different templates described on these archives:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20201005100816/http://euchronicle.com/>
<https://web.archive.org/web/20201012153132/http://euchronicle.com/>
<https://web.archive.org/web/20201009132555/https://euoutlook.com/>
<https://web.archive.org/web/20201012153526/https://euoutlook.com/>

Chapter 3 – How the content from EU Chronicle and the rest of the information operation is amplified: the role of ANI & several digital marketing companies

Looking at the amplification, we discovered that some MEP op-eds and articles from the small fake European media outlet EU Chronicle were used as a base by the Indian news agency ANI to create news reports. We also found that the Indian press agency covers the lobbying efforts taking place under the cover of fake NGOs, with sometimes quite dubious practices.

Once it is changed into ANI news agency's article, the content from EU Chronicle thereby acquires a new legitimacy that can be disseminated to a larger audience through major Indian media outlets.

Finally, we will show how poor practices from some PR and Digital Marketing companies contribute to the amplification of the ANI versions of EU Chronicle's articles and op-eds.

I- The role of ANI in the amplification of op-eds and articles from EU Chronicle

a- Articles and op-eds repackaging

As shown by the WHOIS information linked to euchronicle.com, the new version of the website EU Chronicle started to be active around May 6th.

Extremely quickly, EU Chronicle published its 3 first op-eds attributed to 3 different MEPs (May 11th). One op-ed attacking China's lack of transparency during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was written by the Bulgarian MEP Angel Dzhambazki, attracted our attention.



Screenshots: On the left, the op-ed from MEP Angel Dzhambazki in EU Chronicle¹⁷⁸. On the right, a news report from ANI mentioning the EU Chronicle article and copy-pasting some of the Bulgarian MEP's op-ed content¹⁷⁹.

We found that ANI News agency published on May 12th an article about the lack of transparency from “the Chinese authorities during the pandemic” which was based on the op-ed from the Bulgarian MEP in EU Chronicle. For an unknown reason, the article does not mention the name of MEP Dzhambazki but openly

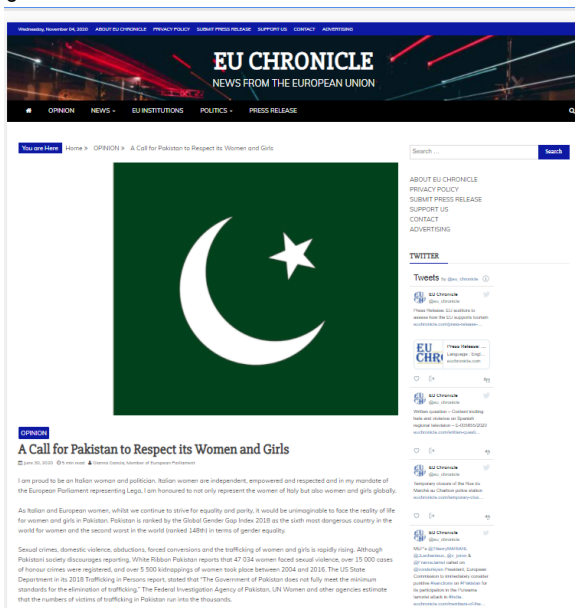
¹⁷⁸ Archive of the EU Chronicle op-ed: <https://perma.cc/AQ2K-53ZQ>

¹⁷⁹ Archive of the ANI news report: <https://perma.cc/9QMZ-DWPA>

quotes large part of his op-ed as coming from an “EU Chronicle” article. For example, the title of ANI’s news report is the first sentence used in the EU Chronicle op-ed. The ANI News Agency even amplified this article on one of its Twitter accounts¹⁸⁰.



Going further, we found other MEPs’ op-eds in EU Chronicle being re-used by ANI to create some news reports. Here, the call for better treatment of women in Pakistan by MEP Gianna Gianca in EU Chronicle led to a ANI News article quoting heavily her op-ed and highlighting the role of the Italian European parliamentarian to denounce “Pakistan’s failure to respect its international obligations, protect women equivalent to facing global sanctions”.



Screenshots: On the left, the op-ed from MEP Gianna Gianca in EU Chronicle¹⁸¹. On the right, a news report from ANI mentioning EU Chronicle op-ed, MEP Gianca and copy-pasting part of her op-ed¹⁸².

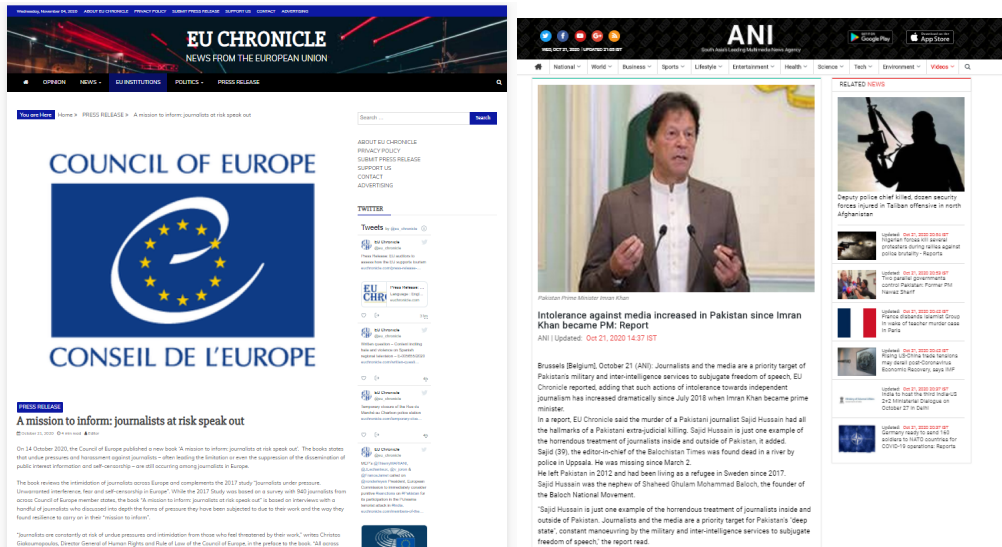
The MEP op-eds in EU Chronicle are not the only pieces of content being recirculated by the ANI News agency. On October 21st, ANI re-used an article from EU Chronicle talking about a Council of Europe’s report on

¹⁸⁰ Archive of the ANI Digital’s tweet: <https://archive.is/yphew>

¹⁸¹ Archive of the EU Chronicle op-ed: <https://perma.cc/2RN3-MYUW>

¹⁸² Archive of the ANI news report: <https://perma.cc/U8LL-Z2WZ>

“journalist safety”. The Indian press agency changed the fairly neutral EU Chronicle article into a direct attack against Pakistan Prime Minister.



Screenshots: On the left, the article from EU Chronicle¹⁸³. On the right, the adapted article from ANI press agency¹⁸⁴.

At the end, we were able to identify at least 13 occurrences of EU Chronicle’s MEP op-eds and articles being rewritten and amplified by ANI. Most of the topics of these articles were linked to Pakistan or China. For EU Chronicle, being quoted by ANI is a way to gain some legitimacy and to try to appear as a legitimate media outlet¹⁸⁵.

b- From EU Chronicle/ANI news reports to Indian mainstream media

The repackaging of EU Chronicle op-eds and articles into ANI news reports means that the content from the fake European media outlet can reach a wider audience, in particular in India.

ANI reports using EU Chronicle content are, for example, systematically reproduced on Yahoo News India (in.news.yahoo.com), a website attracting a sizable audience¹⁸⁶.

Some Indian media outlets, which re-use content from ANI News Agency, become a *de facto* regular amplifier from the fake European media outlet EU Chronicle. For example, BW Business World, which was a magazine previously owned by the ABP Group (owner of the Telegraph India), reproduced at least 8 articles from ANI that were based on some EU Chronicle articles¹⁸⁷. Likewise, the Indian on-demand video service ZEE5, which has 2.1M followers on Facebook, published 9 news reports from ANI on its main website which originated primarily from EU Chronicle¹⁸⁷.

¹⁸³ Archive of the EU Chronicle article: <https://perma.cc/4WBL-BW2T>

¹⁸⁴ Archive of the ANI news report: <https://perma.cc/4CQ6-3GWK>

¹⁸⁵ Archive of the Google query showing that Query showing that 12 articles from ANI based on EU Chronicle content were reproduced on Yahoo News India (We verified manually all articles and one result was not relevant): <https://perma.cc/N5EA-RNCQ>

¹⁸⁶ Archive of the Google query showing that 8 articles from ANI based on EU Chronicle content were reproduced on businessworld.in (We verified manually all articles and two results were not relevant available here): <https://perma.cc/H3SA-N2N5>

¹⁸⁷ Archive of the Google query showing that 9 articles from ANI based on EU Chronicle content were reproduced on zee5.com: <https://perma.cc/U6G4-8MK3>

Slowly but surely, we also have started to see ANI versions of some of EU Chronicle's op-eds and articles being reproduced by major Indian media outlets.

On September 18th, Business Standard (2M followers on Twitter) published an ANI report titled "MEPs urge EU to take strong action on China for human rights violation"¹⁸⁸, which was mostly based on an EU Chronicle article¹⁸⁹.

On October 14th, the Times of India (13.2M followers on Twitter) shared the ANI version of MEP Fulvio Martusciello's EU Chronicle op-ed titled "Hold Pakistan accountable for the ongoing turmoil in Kashmir".



Screenshot: Times of India's article syndicating an ANI report, which is based on an op-ed of MEP Martusciello for EU Chronicle ¹⁹⁰.

The same op-ed from MEP Fulvio Martusciello, adapted by ANI from the original text published by EU Chronicle, was also spread by the Economic Times (3.7M followers on Twitter).

¹⁸⁸ Archive of the Business Standard's article available here: <https://perma.cc/8KHG-E7A6>

¹⁸⁹ Archive of the initial EU Chronicle's article: <https://perma.cc/WC9C-CFSU>

¹⁹⁰ Archive of the Times of India's article available here: <https://perma.cc/NP8A-YWVG> / Archive of the initial op-ed published on EU Chronicle: <https://perma.cc/F6XP-RSH6>

European Parliamentarian suggests international community to hold Pak responsible for Kashmir turmoil & its genesis

By Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, ET Bureau • Last Updated: Oct 16, 2020, 09:47 PM IST

Synopsis

In an opinion piece for EU-Chronicle on Wednesday, Martusciello called out Pakistan's attempt to distort history by observing October 26 as a "Black Day" to commemorate the war fought in Kashmir in 1947-48.



"The people of Jammu and Kashmir have been mired in campaigns of disinformation and deception by Pakistan for decades, and now the youth need to know the truth to be empowered to follow their own destinies."

New Delhi: A Member of **European Parliament (MEP)** **Fulvio Martusciello** has urged the international community to hold Pakistan accountable for the ongoing turmoil in the Kashmir valley and its genesis.

In an opinion piece for EU-Chronicle on Wednesday, Martusciello called out Pakistan's attempt to distort history by

observing October 26 as a "Black Day" to commemorate the war fought in

Screenshot: Economic Times' article syndicating an ANI report, which is based on an op-ed of MEP Martusciello for EU Chronicle ¹⁹¹.

On October 21st, DNA India (2.2M followers on Twitter) republished a report from ANI. This article is a modified version of an original article from EU Chronicle about a book published by the Council of Europe titled "A mission to inform: journalists at risk speak out". The change from the EU Chronicle article were made to attack Pakistan more directly.

DNA HOME IPL-2020 PHOTOS INDIA ENTERTAINMENT SPORTS WORLD BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY LIFESTYLE

TRENDING: Bihar election 2020 IPL 2020 US Election 2020 coronavirus Karnataka Budget

Home » World

Intolerance against media increased in Pakistan since Imran Khan became PM: Report

Journalists and the media are a priority target of Pakistan's military and inter-intelligence services to subjugate freedom of speech, EU Chronicle reported, adding that such actions of intolerance towards independent journalism has increased dramatically since July 2018 when Imran Khan became prime minister.

Imran Khan

Journalists and the media are a priority target of Pakistan's military and inter-intelligence services to subjugate freedom of speech, EU Chronicle reported, adding that such actions of intolerance towards independent journalism has increased dramatically since July 2018 when Imran Khan became prime minister.

In a report, EU Chronicle said the murder of a Pakistani journalist Sajid Hussain had all the hallmarks of a Pakistani extra-judicial killing. Sajid Hussain is just one example of the horrendous treatment of journalists inside and outside of Pakistan, it added.

Sajid (39), the editor-in-chief of the Balochistan Times was found dead in a

SHARE

SOURCE

ANI

Updated: Oct 21, 2020, 04:03 PM IST

Screenshot: DNA India article syndicating an ANI report, which is based on article from EU Chronicle ¹⁹².

¹⁹¹ Archive of the article available here: <https://perma.cc/K8JW-KEVB>

¹⁹² Archive of the DNA India's article available here: <https://perma.cc/3DX6-AQ8L/> Archive of the initial EU Chronicle article: <https://perma.cc/4WBL-BW2T>

As you can see, once rewritten by the ANI news agency, op-eds and articles from EU Chronicle gain legitimacy and start to be spread far more widely in India.

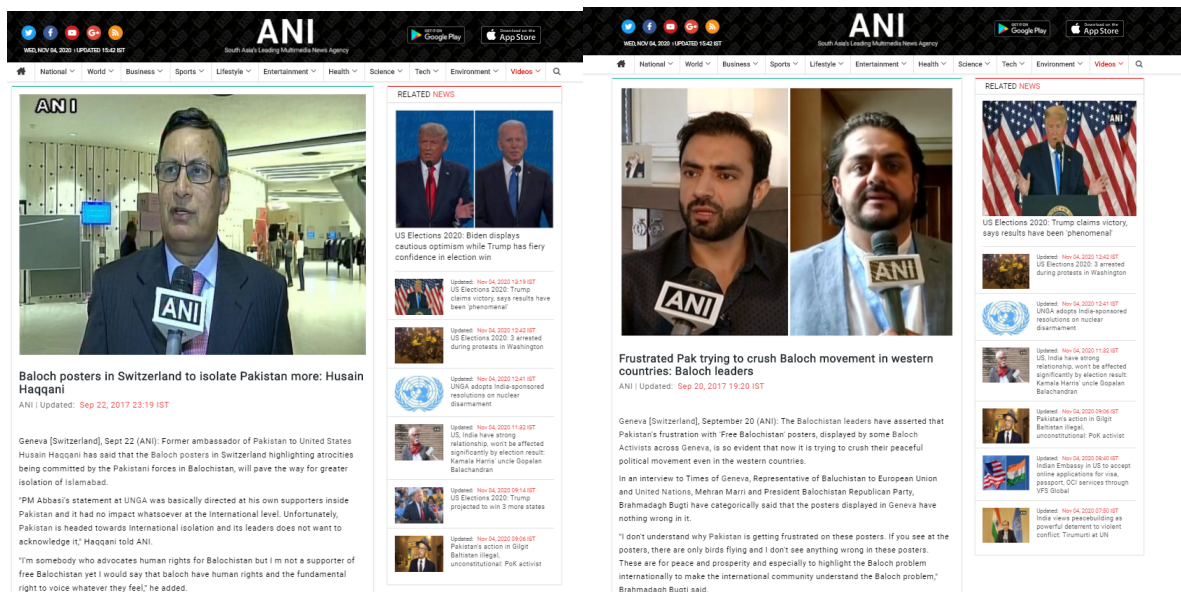
II- The role of ANI in the amplification of other content linked to this information operation

a- ANI was already amplifying content from fake media outlets linked to our previous investigation (EP Today, Times of Geneva)

Investigating further, we discovered that the ANI news agency also rewrote and recirculated some op-eds and articles from EP Today, the fake European Parliament magazine tied to the Srivastava group that we investigated at the end of 2019. The patterns around EP Today were similar to the amplification that we observed with EU Chronicle.

For example, EP Today's articles were mentioned at least 22 times in some of ANI's news reports¹⁹³. You could find two articles from ANI about the controversial visits of some MEPs to Maldives that quoted EP Today¹⁹⁴.

We also discovered that the ANI news agency amplified at least in two occasions interviews that they presented as made by the "Times of Geneva", another fake media outlet connected to the Srivastava group which had as its main purpose the amplification of demonstrations about Pakistani minorities in front of the UN in Geneva¹⁹⁵.



Screenshots: On the left, ANI's article about an interview of the former Pakistani Ambassador to the US Hussain Haqqani made by Times of Geneva¹⁹⁶. On the right, ANI's article about an interview of two Baloch leaders made by the Times of Geneva¹⁹⁷.

¹⁹³ Archive of the Google query available here: <https://perma.cc/DTG8-6X8M>

¹⁹⁴ Archives of the two ANI articles about the controversial visit of MEPs in Maldives which quoted EP Today: <https://perma.cc/9XMZ-5JUM> / <https://perma.cc/X4QS-PPM7>

¹⁹⁵ See EU DisinfoLab tweet here: <https://twitter.com/disinfoeu/status/1192381380631678976>

¹⁹⁶ Archive of the article here: <https://perma.cc/AL59-9AVK>

¹⁹⁷ Archive of the article here: <https://perma.cc/YDA4-LLJW>

We can see that for example, the report from ANI about the interview made by the fake media outlet “Times of Geneva” of the former Pakistani Ambassador to the US Hussain Haqqani was reproduced by some Indian mainstream media such as Business Standard or Outlook India.



Screenshots: On the left, the copy of the ANI news report in the Business Standard¹⁹⁸. On the right, the same article available in the magazine Outlook india¹⁹⁹.

b- ANI's controversial coverage of NGOs oral interventions at the UN

Disclaimer: Some NGOs mentioned in this section may have had or still have some legitimate activities. It is also possible that some of them have had their identities hijacked and not all of them have proven ties to the Srivastava Group²⁰⁰. Still, unwittingly or not, they all have been used at one point to push pro-Indian narratives.

During our investigation on the suspicious activities at the UN, we noticed something strange in how the ANI press agency covered oral interventions made by activists in front of the Economic and Social Council.

Whereas the individuals spoke on behalf of specific NGOs according to the UN Website, their titles were regularly different in the video reports about their oral interventions made by ANI news. Most of their speeches concerned Pakistan.

i- 19th Meeting, 42nd Regular Session of the Human Rights Council (September 2019)

During the 42nd regular session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva (September 2019), Ms Claire Denham was supposed to talk for the *International Association of Seed Crushers* and Mr Aurang Zeb Khan for the *International Association of Crafts and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises*²⁰¹.

¹⁹⁸ Archive of the Business Standard article available here: <https://perma.cc/EHN4-58F3>

¹⁹⁹ Archive of the article here: <https://perma.cc/J2P4-42J2>

²⁰⁰ For this specific question of ties between NGOs and the Srivastava Group, please have a look at the first part of this report.

²⁰¹ See the “Chapters” section on the right in this archive: <https://perma.cc/UZ3U-Y76R>

Item:4 General Debate (Cont'd) - 19th Meeting, 42nd Regular Session Human Rights Council
 18 Sep 2019 - CONTINUED - General debate Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention - 19th Plenary Meeting
 42nd Regular Session of the Human Rights Council.

Available languages: English

CHAPTERS RELATED VIDEOS

- 00:19:15
- 12. International Association of Crafts and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Mr. Aurang Zeb Khan 00:19:53
- 13. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Ms. Nada Awad 00:21:00
- 14. International Humanist and Ethical Union, Ms. Elizabeth O'Casey 00:23:19
- 15. Physicians for Human Rights, Ms. Mariam Al-Khawaja 00:25:04
- 16. Alliance Defending Freedom (Joint Statement), Mr. Giorgio Mazzoli 00:26:47
- 17. Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Ms. Claire Denman 00:28:38
- 18. International Federation for Human Rights Leagues, Ms. Sonia Tancic 00:30:07
- 19. Alsalam Foundation, Mr. Moosa Mohamed 00:31:41
- 20. International Association of Seed Crushers, Mr. Claire Denman 00:33:30
- 21. Iraqi Development Organization, Mr. Yusup Omran Omr Abdulla 00:35:04
- 22. Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, Mr. Tyler Fry 00:36:56
- 23. National Secular Society, Mr. Keith Wood

Item:4 General Debate (Cont'd) - 19th Meeting, 42nd Regular Session Human Rights Council
 18 Sep 2019 - CONTINUED - General debate Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention - 19th Plenary Meeting
 42nd Regular Session of the Human Rights Council.

Available languages: English

CHAPTERS RELATED VIDEOS

- 00:23:19
- 15. Physicians for Human Rights, Ms. Mariam Al-Khawaja 00:25:04
- 16. Alliance Defending Freedom (Joint Statement), Mr. Giorgio Mazzoli 00:26:47
- 17. Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Ms. Claire Denman 00:28:38
- 18. International Federation for Human Rights Leagues, Ms. Sonia Tancic 00:30:07
- 19. Alsalam Foundation, Mr. Moosa Mohamed 00:31:41
- 20. International Association of Seed Crushers, Ms. Claire Denman 00:33:30
- 21. Iraqi Development Organization, Mr. Yusup Omran Omr Abdulla 00:35:04
- 22. Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, Mr. Tyler Fry 00:36:56
- 23. National Secular Society, Mr. Keith Wood

HRC extranet (information on daily updates, draft documentation, copies of oral statements etc.)

ANI's video report²⁰² dubs Mr Aurang Zeb Khan as a "Pashtun Activist" and clarifies that this is in reality Nadeem Nusrat from Voice of Karachi who talked for the second NGO. No mention was made of the NGOs they were supposed to represent.

Activists slam Pakistan at UNHRC for spreading terrorism, committing human rights violations
 726 views · 18 Sept. 2019

Aurang Zeb Khan Zalmay
 Pashtun Activist

ANI News 797 k subscribers

Geneva (Switzerland), Sep 18 (ANI): Activists slammed Pakistan for gross human rights violation in country. Another activist Aurang Zeb Khan Zalmay said, "I would like to bring your attention to human rights abuses in Pakistan and the role of Pakistan in the region."

Activists slam Pakistan at UNHRC for spreading terrorism, committing human rights violations
 726 views · 18 Sept. 2019

Nadeem Nusrat
 Chairman, Voice of Karachi

ANI News 797 k subscribers

Geneva (Switzerland), Sep 18 (ANI): Activists slammed Pakistan for gross human rights violation in country. Another activist Aurang Zeb Khan Zalmay said, "I would like to bring your attention to human rights abuses in Pakistan and the role of Pakistan in the region."

ii- 26th Meeting, 37th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council (March 2018)

During the 37th regular session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva (March 2018), Mr Dusan Vejinovic was supposed to talk on behalf of the *United Schools International* according to the UN website²⁰³.

²⁰² Archive of ANI video's report available on Youtube: <https://perma.cc/6G8D-J677>

²⁰³ See the "Chapters" section on the right in this archive: <https://perma.cc/36SJ-97FD>

Item:3 General Debate - 26th Meeting, 37th Regular Session Human Rights Council

9 Mar 2018 - Report of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights, with the mandate of elaborating an international legally binding instrument A/HRC/37/67

- Presentation of the thematic reports of the Secretary-General and High Commissioner for Human Rights followed by general debate A/HRC/37/18, A/HRC/37/19, A/HRC/37/20, A/HRC/37/21, A/HRC/37/25, A/HRC/37/26, A/HRC/37/27, A/HRC/37/28, A/HRC/37/29, A/HRC/37/30, A/HRC/37/31, A/HRC/37/32, A/HRC/37/33, A/HRC/37/34, A/HRC/37/34/Add.1, A/HRC/37/35, A/HRC/37/36, A/HRC/37/44, A/HRC/37/33, A/HRC/37/63, A/HRC/37/81

Available languages: Original

CHAPTERS RELATED VIDEOS

- 73. African Regional Agricultural Credit Association, Mr. Aloks Cernovos 02:18:45
- 74. Center for Environmental and Management Studies, Ms. Anastasia Gelonybova 02:19:25
- 75. International Muslim Women's Union, Ms. Shamim Shawl 02:12:50
- 76. BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Mr. Lepo de Almeida De Sowa 02:12:55
- 77. International Association for Democracy in Africa, Mr. Andreiev Pivvel 02:15:46
- 78. United Schools International, Mr. Dusan Vejinovic 02:17:32
- 79. International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAAM), Mr. Mohamed Faouf 03:19:14
- 80. Association for Progressive Communications (APC), Ms. Deborah Brown 02:29:53

ANI's video report²⁰⁴ presents Mr Dusan Vejinovic as a "Senior Research Analyst for EFSAS" and the NGO he was supposed to represent that day is not mentioned.

Geneva (Switzerland)
Source: UNTV

Dusan Vejinovic
Senior Research Analyst, EFSAS

Watch: European think tank stams Pakistan at UN-HRC for violations in J&K

184 vues • 10 mars 2018

ANI News Official 234 k abonnés

PARTAGER ENREGISTRER

iii- 35th Meeting, 37th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council (March 2018)

During the 37th regular session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva (March 2018), Mr Muhammed Jawad was supposed to represent the "Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace"²⁰⁵.

Item:4 General Debate (Cont'd) - 35th Meeting, 37th Regular Session Human Rights Council

Available languages: English

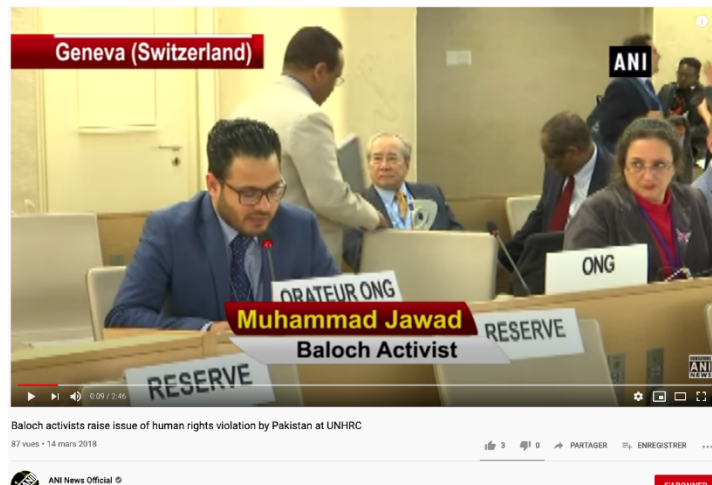
CHAPTERS RELATED VIDEOS

- 68. Conseil de jeunesse pluriculturelle (COJEP), Mr. Adel Megri 01:59:55
- 69. International Lawyers.org, Ms. Marjon Tytgat 01:52:36
- 70. Peace Brigades International Switzerland, Ms. Vu Kim-Wai 01:53:58
- 71. Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa, Mr. Garoma Wakessa 01:55:54
- 72. Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace, Mr. Muhammed Jawad 01:57:22
- 73. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Mr. Jeremie Smith 01:58:37
- 74. Fundacion Latinoamericana por los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social, Mr. David Ricardo Lopez Torres

²⁰⁴ Archive of ANI video's report available on Youtube: <https://perma.cc/Q8J3-8PFZ>

²⁰⁵ See the "Chapters" section on the right in this archive: <https://perma.cc/P6ZB-XBFA>

ANI's video report²⁰⁶ presents Mr Muhammad Jawad as a "Baloch activist" and the NGO he was supposed to represent that day is not mentioned.



iv- 31st Meeting, 40th Regular Session Human Rights Council (March 2019)


During the 40th regular session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva (March 2019), we identified three other activists speaking on behalf of NGOs²⁰⁷:

- Mr Junaid Qureshi on behalf of the *United Schools International*;
- Mr. Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri on behalf of the *Comité International pour le Respect et l'Application de la Charte Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples (CIRAC)*;
- Mr. Jamil Masood on behalf of the *Action internationale pour la paix et le développement dans la région des Grands Lacs*.



²⁰⁶ Archive of ANI video's report available on Youtube: <https://perma.cc/TB87-PYNR>


²⁰⁷ See the "Chapters" section on the right in this archive: <https://perma.cc/UKH2-K8WM>



Item:4 General Debate - 31st Meeting, 40th Regular Session Human Rights Council
 12 Mar 2019 - Presentation of report by the High Commissioner on the implementation of the recommendations made by the group of independent experts on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of ... [Show more >](#)

CHAPTERS RELATED VIDEOS

67. Human Rights Agency, Mr. Bahar Kimyongur	02:15:47
68. CIRAC, Mr. Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri	02:15:27
69. Association Duneryo, Mr. Abdelouahab Gain Brahim	02:17:19
70. Action internationale pour la paix et le développement dans la région des Grands Lacs, Mr. Jamil Masood	02:19:01
71. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Ms. Luslia Laglev	02:20:47
72. The Palestinian Return Centre Ltd, Mr. Ahmad Hosain	02:22:16
73. Physicians for Human Rights, Ms. Tamaryn Nelson	02:23:53
74. Family Health Association of Iran (Joint Statement), Mr. Peyman Radofi	02:25:20
75. Edmund Rice International Limited, Mr. Constantine d'Abreu	02:26:55



Item:4 General Debate - 31st Meeting, 40th Regular Session Human Rights Council
 12 Mar 2019 - Presentation of report by the High Commissioner on the implementation of the recommendations made by the group of independent experts on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of ... [Show more >](#)

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CHAPTERS RELATED VIDEOS

67. Human Rights Agency, Mr. Bahar Kimyongur	02:15:47
68. CIRAC, Mr. Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri	02:15:27
69. Association Duneryo, Mr. Abdelouahab Gain Brahim	02:17:19
70. Action internationale pour la paix et le développement dans la région des Grands Lacs, Mr. Jamil Masood	02:19:01
71. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Ms. Luslia Laglev	02:20:47
72. The Palestinian Return Centre Ltd, Mr. Ahmad Hosain	02:22:16
73. Physicians for Human Rights, Ms. Tamaryn Nelson	02:23:53
74. Family Health Association of Iran (Joint Statement), Mr. Peyman Radofi	02:25:20
75. Edmund Rice International Limited, Mr. Constantine d'Abreu	02:26:55

ANI's video report²⁰⁸ presents Mr Junaid Qureshi as "Director of EFSAS", Mr. Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri as "Chairman UKPNP" and Jamil Maqsood as "Political activist". No mention is made in the ANI video of the NGOs they were supposed to represent.

²⁰⁸ Archive of ANI video's report available on Youtube: <https://perma.cc/6G8D-J677>



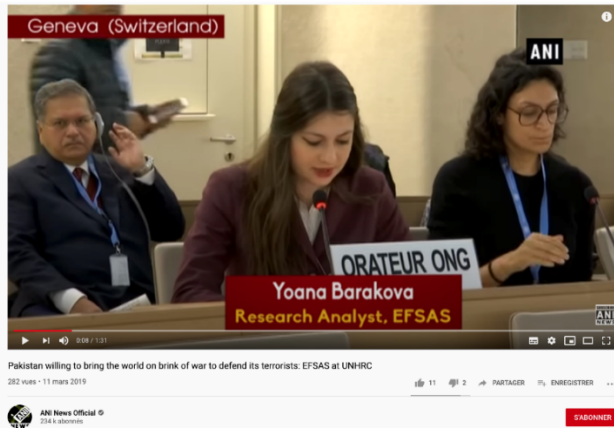
v- *26th Meeting, 40th Regular Session of Human Rights Council (March 2019)*
 During the 40th regular session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva (March 2019), Ms Yoana Barakova was supposed to represent the “United Schools International”²⁰⁹.



ANI's video report²¹⁰ presents Ms Yoana Barakova as a “Research Analyst for EFSAS” and the NGO she was supposed to represent that day is not mentioned.

²⁰⁹ See the “Chapters” section on the right in this archive: <https://perma.cc/T535-BFNQ>

²¹⁰ Archive of ANI video's report available on Youtube: <https://perma.cc/TB87-PYNR>

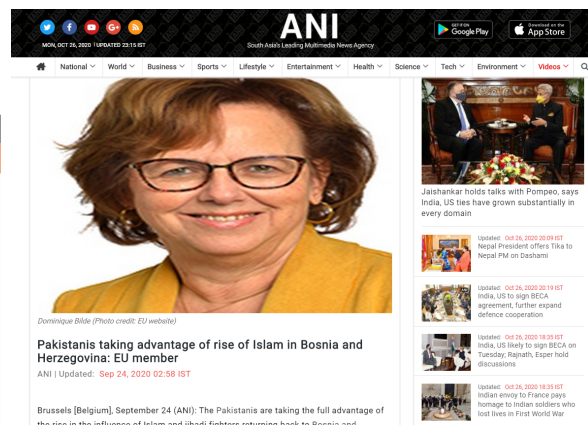


Please note that we have several other examples that we did not mention for the sake of clarity of this report. The major questions are: Why did ANI News Agency regularly change the titles of activists in its reports and who did inform the Indian news agency of the real title of all these people?

III- From EU Chronicle/ANI news agency's reports to obscure media outlets

a- The amplification of EU Chronicle/ANI articles on obscure media outlets

Going further in our analysis, we identified that after being modified by the ANI news agency, EU Chronicle's MEP op-eds and articles were not only reproduced on some occasions by Indian mainstream media but were also copied on a regular basis by some strange media outlets. We are going to illustrate these findings by taking the op-eds of two MEPs from EU Chronicle as an example.



Screenshot: On the left, the initial op-ed published by MEP Dominique Bilde on EU Chronicle website²¹¹. On the right, the article based on her op-ed made by the ANI press agency²¹².

As shown by these two screenshots, the op-ed from MEP Dominique Bilde was reproduced with some modifications by the ANI press agency. Then, the news report from ANI based on the EU Chronicle op-ed was recirculated by hundreds of websites²¹³.

²¹¹ <http://euchronicle.com/are-pakistani-migrants-using-bosnia-as-a-gateway-to-the-european-union/>, archive available here: <https://perma.cc/GP5U-32WC>

²¹² <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/europe/pakistanis-taking-advantage-of-rise-of-islam-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina-eu-member20200924025831/>, archive available here: <https://perma.cc/L4PT-CVKP>

²¹³ Archive of a Google query showing that the initial op-eds was reproduced on hundreds of websites available here: <https://perma.cc/2WTK-785>

Arizona Herald

Named after newspaper established in 1907

Tue, 27 Oct 2020

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VOLUME NO. 0205/16

Pakistanis taking advantage of rise of Islam

ANI
24 Sep 2020, 12:18 GMT+10

51 °F
Mostly Cloudy in Phoenix



Brussels (Belgium), September 24 (ANI): The Pakistanis are taking the full advantage of the rise in the influence of Islam and jihadi fighters returning back to Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country which is already facing political instability, the EU Chronicle quoted Dominique Bilde, Member of European Parliament (MEP), as saying.

Business

Stocks in Asia flat to lower, U.S. dollar steadies

SYDNEY, Australia, Oct 27 (Reuters) - Stocks in Asia were relatively quiet on Tuesday compared to the volatility and turbulence seen last week.

State of Victoria in Australia relaxes coronavirus restrictions

CANBERRA, Australia, Oct 27 (Reuters) - Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has welcomed the easing of strict coronavirus restrictions in Victoria.

U.S. stocks shatter as Covid-19 deaths in America top 225,000

NEW YORK, New York, Oct 26 (Reuters) - Wall Street's major averages closed sharply lower on Monday as...

Sierra Leone Times

First online news service in Sierra Leone

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VOLUME NO. 0205/16

Pakistanis taking advantage of rise of Islam

ANI
24 Sep 2020, 12:18 GMT+10

31 °C
Mostly Cloudy in Sealer



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Pakistanis taking advantage of rise of Islam

ANI
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Haze in Dhaka/Shahjalal Intl

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JRI expatriates shock over Bangla scold's murder

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Live COVID-19 updates: Iran reports 6,191 new infections

Bangladesh COVID-19 cases rise to 288,819, death toll reaches 3,033

Covid-19 labour: Demand to release inmates for passengers to ease

Sleepy Govt to free Bangladesh from child labour to achieve SDGs

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TAJIKISTAN News.Net

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TUE, 27 OCT 2020

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Pakistanis taking advantage of rise of Islam

ANI
24 Sep 2020, 12:18 GMT+10

22 °C
Fair in Dushanbe Intl

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Karabakh Army reports 35 more deaths

Who will Muslim Americans vote for in the US elections?

Taliban has not cut ties with Al-Qaeda Afghan Army Chief Zia

US calls death of al-Qaeda official a major setback for 'terror' group

US Official: Say Doud al-Qaeda leader not group's number 2

Karabakh troops down two Azerbaijan drones

Trump says Karabakh offensive is 'bold'

Karabakh shoots down one more

Lifestyle News

Herod issues warning on use of guard rifles

Screenshot: Some websites where the ANI's report based on MEP Dominique Bilde's op-ed in EU Chronicle was reproduced.²¹⁴

If this is normal to see news reports from an established press agency such as ANI being recirculated by some Indian media outlets, we also discovered that the rewritten EU Chronicle op-ed from MEPs Dominique Bilde was also republished on hundreds of strange media outlets all over the world, which have multiple similarities (design, content...).

EU CHRONICLE

News from the European Union

22 October - The Origin of Terror
Written questions - Systematic breaches and restrictions of human rights by the Islamic Republic of Iran - P. 04020/2020

Home / 2020 / October / Mourning its failures on Black Day



Mourning its failures on Black Day

Of Fabio Martusciello, Member of European Parliament

October 14, 2020

ANI

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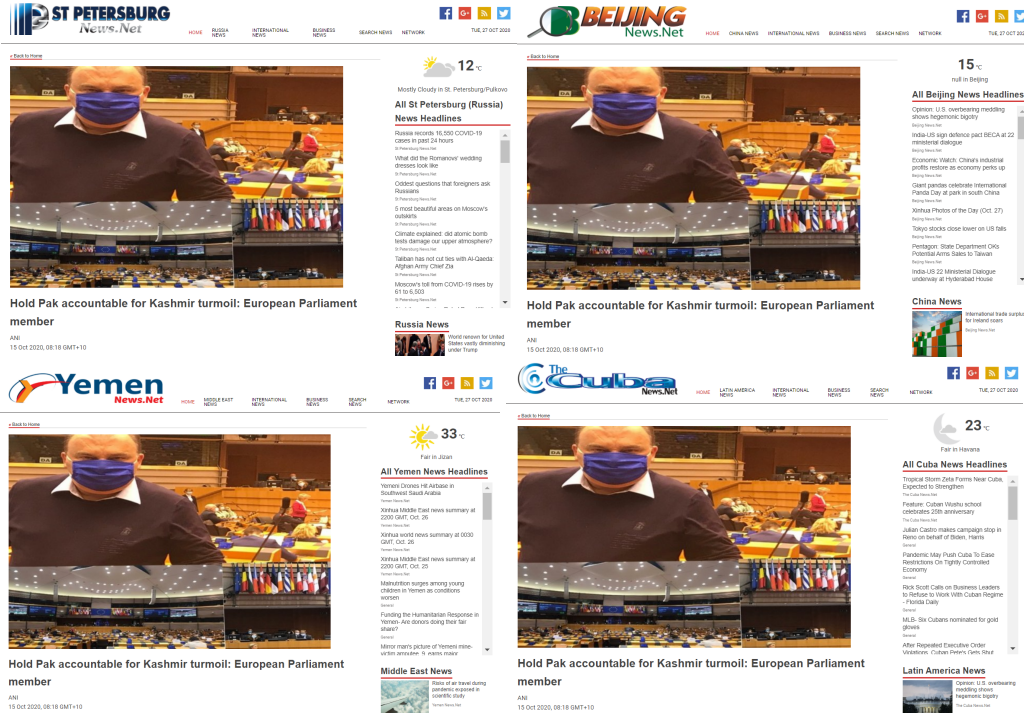
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Minor boat capsized, associated by

²¹⁴ Archive of the Sierra Leone Times article: <https://perma.cc/6FZW-BGTA/> Archive of the Arizona Herald article: <https://perma.cc/DD4E-TNUT/> Archive of the Bangladesh News article: <https://perma.cc/3FD8-6TK3/> Archive of the Tajikistan News article: <https://perma.cc/558V-BZ73/>

Screenshot: On the left, the initial op-ed published by MEP Fulvio Martusciello on EU Chronicle website²¹⁵. On the right, the article based on his op-ed made by the ANI press agency²¹⁶.

As shown by these screenshots, the op-ed from MEP Fulvio Martusciello was reproduced with some modifications by the ANI press agency. Then, the news report from ANI based on an EU Chronicle op-ed was recirculated by hundreds of websites²¹⁷.



Screenshot: Some websites where the ANI's report based on MEP Fulvio Martusciello's EU Chronicle op-ed was reproduced.²¹⁸

Similarly to what we observed for the op-ed of MEP Dominique Bilde, the ANI version of the op-ed from MEP Fulvio Martusciello was reproduced on hundreds of strange media outlets, having quite similar design and content.

As we will show in the next parts, these websites, which pose as media outlets often have similar design, are tied to at least one company ("Big News Network") and another unidentified actor ("World News Network"), which regularly syndicate content from the ANI press agency, including the rewritten op-eds and articles from EU Chronicle.

b-The Big News Network: the press agency which allows you to spread your content worldwide

i- General presentation of the Big News Network: 470 news websites

The Big News Network presents itself as a "news agency"²¹⁹. On its website, the Big News Network company states to be headquartered in Dubai (UAE) and to have administrative offices in Sydney (Australia). The Big

²¹⁵ Archive of the EU Chronicle op-ed: <https://perma.cc/PCD2-VPRW>

²¹⁶ Archive of the ANI article: <https://perma.cc/Z98G-3TF6>

²¹⁷ Archive of a Google query showing that the initial op-eds was reproduced on hundreds of websites available here: <https://perma.cc/SFG8-RX3A>

²¹⁸ Archive of the Saint Petersburg News article: <https://perma.cc/DUA5-HYNC/> Archive of the Beijing News article: <https://perma.cc/9KAK-Q7EA/> Archive of the Yemen News article: <https://perma.cc/R8TE-LSU3/> Archive of the Cuba News article: <https://perma.cc/CVE9-RNFS>

²¹⁹ Bignewsnetwork.net, see archive here: <https://perma.cc/DH5A-J3D8>

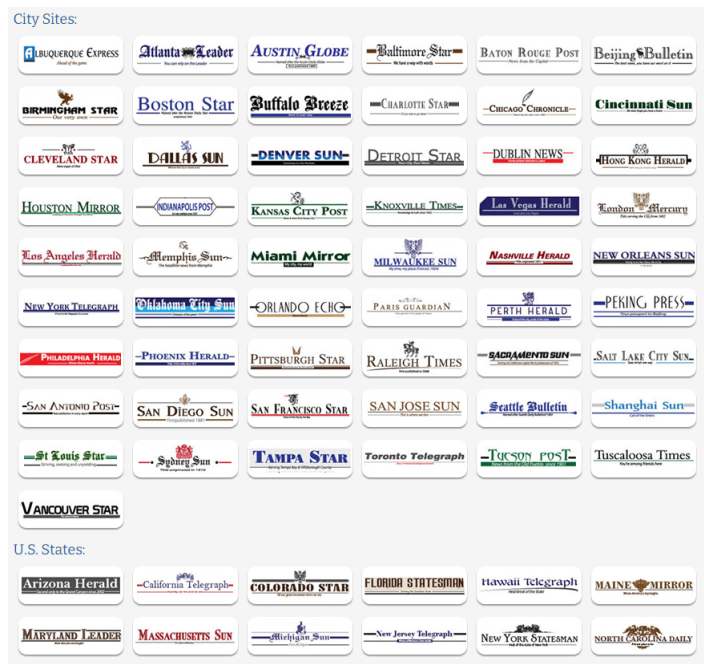
News Network is supposed to be composed of three main branches²²⁰: the Big News Network, the MidWest Radio Network and the Mainstream Media Limited²²¹.

On its corporate website, the Big News Network displays the names of more than 470 “media outlets” they claim to own, covering all the regions of the world. These websites are mainly named using the following pattern: names of a continent/country/region/city + terms that the general public associated to a media (times, herald, post, sun...).



²²⁰ bignewsnetwork.net/index.php?about, see archive here: <https://perma.cc/865M-MX5C>

²²¹ According to corporate registry available online, the “Mainstream Media Limited” was dissolved on February 25th 2020: <https://perma.cc/9GHN-E746?type=image>



Screenshot: Some “media outlets” managed by the Big News Network²²²

All these “media outlets” explicitly disclose their ties to the Big News Network in their “About Us” sections (e.g. [“About Us” on FijiNews.net](#), [“About Us” page on NorthKoreaTimes.com](#), [“About Us” page on VancouverStar.com](#), [“About us” on the PhoenixHerald.com](#)) but most of them do not seem to have any specific local staff.

ii- The use of zombies media outlets

Moreover, to create a fake legitimacy around some of its websites which pose as “local media outlets”²²³, the Big News Network did not hesitate to re-use the names of defunct local media, that we called “zombies” in our first Indian investigation.



Illinois Intelligencer

Title originated in 1818

Oakland Times

Original Oakland Times first published circa. 1868

Yorkshire Observer

Namesake of historic 1800s newspaper

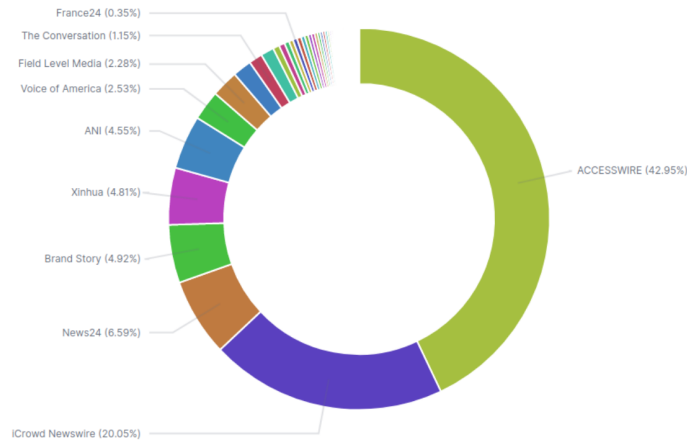
Most of these websites do not produce any original articles about the regions they are supposed to cover as you would expect from local media claiming to be the successor of former local media outlets.

iii- Content syndication

Overall, despite presenting itself as a “News agency” and owning more than 450 media outlets, the “Big News Network” seems to produce a very limited amount of original content. An analysis of the sources of more than 16k articles published on websites tied to the Big News Network shows that all these “media outlets” mostly syndicate content from newswire companies and some international media outlets.

²²² Archive available: <https://perma.cc/2WSM-6R83>

²²³ Archive of the Leeds Times: <https://perma.cc/EW62-AL2K> /Archive of the Illinois Intelligencer: <https://perma.cc/9PKW-SQSL/> Archive of the Oakland Times: <https://perma.cc/KW6W-VKC2/> Archive of the Yorkshire Observer: <https://perma.cc/ME92-9S4S>



iv- Opacity and freelance journalists

Moreover, the Big News Network press agency is very opaque and if it is possible to find some original articles being produced on their websites, this is still extremely challenging to identify the journalists the company might employed.

The main website “Bignewsnetwork.com” contains only one author page for an “editor-in-chief”²²⁴, who is supposed to have left the company in March 2019 and is now working for an American company according to her LinkedIn profile.

Furthermore, some of their regular contributors seem to use pseudonyms. For example, we were not able to find any mention of the name “Conor Trindle”, which is used by a person producing original articles about Ireland for the Big News Network²²⁵, outside of the websites linked to the Dubai-based company²²⁶.

Our main hypothesis is that most of the original content is written by freelance journalists who are using pseudonyms. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that we found several job offers for “freelance journalists” positions on some Indian job search websites.

Screenshots: Example of one job offer to work as freelance journalists for the Big News Network spread in India. More example are available in footnotes²²⁷

²²⁴ Archive of the query showing that there is only one author on the bignewsnetwork.com: <https://perma.cc/ULM6-2R65>

²²⁵ Archives of some articles written by “Conor Trindle” for websites connected to the Big News Network: <https://perma.cc/97HQ-C8K3/> <https://perma.cc/C5UZ-3JZ3/> <https://perma.cc/9S9X-8JJM/> <https://perma.cc/W68F-L6AE>

²²⁶ The only exception is the website muckrack.com which presents “Conor Trindle” as a journalist for the Big News Network.

²²⁷ Archive of the job offer displayed in the screenshots: <https://perma.cc/TA9Y-MRUH?type=image> / Archive of other job offers where the BNN is looking for freelance journalists based in India: <https://perma.cc/E5WZ-LD7A> / <https://perma.cc/RT4R-EWHL/>

As you can see, the Big News Network does not seem to have neither the size nor the resources that we would expect for an international press agency owning more than 450 media outlets. Most of the content on websites tied the Big News Network originate from other sources (content syndication) and the company seems to employ only a small amount of free-lance journalists. Despite the fact that the Big News Network likely does have some journalists, it is extremely difficult to consider most of the websites owned by the company as real media outlets:

- In most cases, these websites have no clear ties with the territories for which they are supposed to produce news coverage;
- Most of these "local media outlets" do not have any specific staff and their production of original news reports is often close to non-existence;
- Some websites use the name of defunct media outlets to acquire a false legitimacy.

What is the purpose of all these obscure media outlets?

c- The Big News Network: A network to distribute your content everywhere in the world.

i- *The "News release" business model*

Bignewsnetwork.com and all the websites affiliated to the company (eg. ["Submit a press release" page on cambodiantimes.com](#), ["Submit a press release" page on russiaherald.com](#)) offer the possibility to publish "News releases" on their websites.

News Releases

Submit A News Release:

Big News Network is a trusted source of news, and has been online since the late 1990s. We originate our own news, contract to wire services, and spider some thousands of other Web sites for supplementary articles.

We also accept news releases.

If you have upcoming news of an event or an occurrence that you believe would be of interest to Big News Network readers please submit it here. We accept submissions on special events, announcements of appointments, new product launches, openings of new businesses including franchises, fund-raising projects, and a host of other activities.

All news releases, including accompanying photos and links, submitted to us are reviewed by our editors. There is an administrative cost involved which is somewhat token but it does assist in meeting the costs of providing this service and ensures genuine releases only are submitted.

The cost of the editorial review is \$10.95. If you wish to feature a photo there is an additional cost of \$1.95. A link to your Web site or a page promoting the item that is the subject of your release will also incur a \$1.95 charge. You will be able to select a category for your news to appear from a wide range of categories covering most regions, countries and cities in the world, major technology, entertainment, health, sports, business, financial markets, Internet, media, religious, and industries. If you wish to select additional categories for your news release to appear there will be a nominal charge of \$3.90 for each category. To ensure your news release is approved be sure to select a category (or categories) that are relevant to your article.

Screenshot: Webpage from bignewsnetwork.com explaining to you the process to have your news release being published on their network²²⁸

Going further, we identified two Indian PR and Digital Marketing companies that sell the possibility to publish your content on the Big News Network's websites. One of these companies is Digital Punch, an Indian firm originating from Pune²²⁹. If you subscribe to one of its "news packages", you have the possibility to spread your press/news releases in hundreds of media (including the Big News Network but also mainstream Indian media such as ANI News, Forbes India or the Hindustan Times...).

²²⁸ Archive of this page here: <https://perma.cc/2FNU-KFS7>

²²⁹ Archive of Digital Punch corporate website: <https://perma.cc/BXC6-X5LP>

Digital Punch
Online Marketing Experts

Home About Services B2B/B2C Leads PR News Backlink Program Forbes Magazine News Contact Us

Our News Packages

Do-Follow News Package	International News Package	Startup News Package	Business News Package
200+ News Posting	300+ News Channels	100+ News Posting	300+ News Channels
₹ 16500	₹ 28500	₹ 110000	₹ 175000
Digpu News Google News Medium Scoop It Qoshe Founder India Fortune Week State of Affairs Scoop It India Press Release	British News Network Business Standard Big News Network Malaysia Sun Hawaii Telegraph New York Telegraph Thailand Tribunal In The Headline	Live Mint Forbes India Business Standard Digpu News ANI News Google News Daily Hunt Yahoo News Medium Scoop It	Hindustan Times Forbes India Business World Live Mint Digpu News ANI News Business Standard Desi Martini Yahoo News Google News
KNOW MORE	GET STARTED	KNOW MORE	KNOW MORE

Screenshot: Extract from the website DigitalPunch where the Indian Digital Marketing presents its "News Packages"²³⁰

As shown by one of their commercial documents²³¹, buying the "International News Package" consists for a big part in seeing your articles being reproduced on some websites from the "Big News Network".

Similarly, in a document communicated to one of their clients, the Indian PR company NewsVair²³² (also known under the name of its parent company Clickstream Media Pvt Ltd) mentioned three websites from the Big News Network in the list of websites where they will recirculate your press releases. (bignewsnetwork.com, indiasnews.net and zimbabwenews.net).

Outlook	Outlook India
Auto Tech Review	Auto Tech Review
THE WEEK	The Week
Devdiscourse	Devdiscourse
BIG NEWS NETWORK.com	Big News Network
newKerala.com	New Kerala.com
HTDS	HT Syndication
WebIndia123	WebIndia123
the covai post	The Covai Post
dailyhunt	Daily Hunt
India's News	India's News
Zimbabwe News.net	Zimbabwe News.net
News On Floor	News On Floor
Startup Success Stories	Startup Success Stories
International Brand Equity	International Brand Equity
Creative Bharat	Creative Bharat

ClickStream Media Pvt. Ltd., 76-D, First Floor, V-023, Udyog Vihar Phase 4 Gurgaon 122001, Haryana

NewsVair

Screenshot: Document communicated by NewsVair to one of their clients. In the list of the websites where the press release was published, you can find three Big News Network websites.²³³

²³⁰ Archive of this page here: <https://perma.cc/R289-M2RY>

²³¹ Archive of the commercial document available here: <https://perma.cc/NJN4-HBVD>

²³² Archive of newsvoir.com available here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201101043310/https://newsvoir.com/>

²³³ Archive of the document available here: <https://perma.cc/58ZR-YBNN>

In an article on his company website, the CEO of Digital Punch (known also as “DigPu”, a company which seems to have at least a commercial agreement with the Big News Network) explains how spreading content on multiple websites (including “media outlets”) using backlinks and content syndication can help to improve the reputation of one actor and the reach of their articles/press releases²³⁴.

The article says: “The traditional way of guest posting email outreach, searching for niche-specific online directories and social media & influencer marketing is very time-consuming and take years to earn backlinks. However, the unique Backlink program by Digpu News Network is more than enough, especially for new brands who want to earn the trust of potential customers online. In just a few days, the company boosts websites with guaranteed 270 do-follow backlinks, which will remain online forever. (...) What makes the off-site SEO services from Digpu more lucrative is the fact that not only the article will be distributed on 270 online news channels, but it would also be featured in Google News.”

Indirectly, this article highlights one of the probable reasons why the Big News Network maintains hundreds of “media outlets” which have an extremely limited audience. They are mainly there to improve indirectly the indexation of some content on search engines. The more a content is reproduced, the higher it will be on some results when you do a Google Search.

What is also interesting to note is that the advertising packages proposed by Digital Punch and NewsVoir also sell the possibility to have your press releases being reproduced on multiple Indian mainstream media outlets, including the ANI news press agency, Hindustan Times, Forbes India... This shows that these kinds of practices concern multiples actors. This also generates questions: What are the safeguards to be sure that these “content syndication” offers are not hijack by disinformation actors or entities which want to do some targeted information operations?

ii- The amplification of controversial content from ANI by the Big News Network

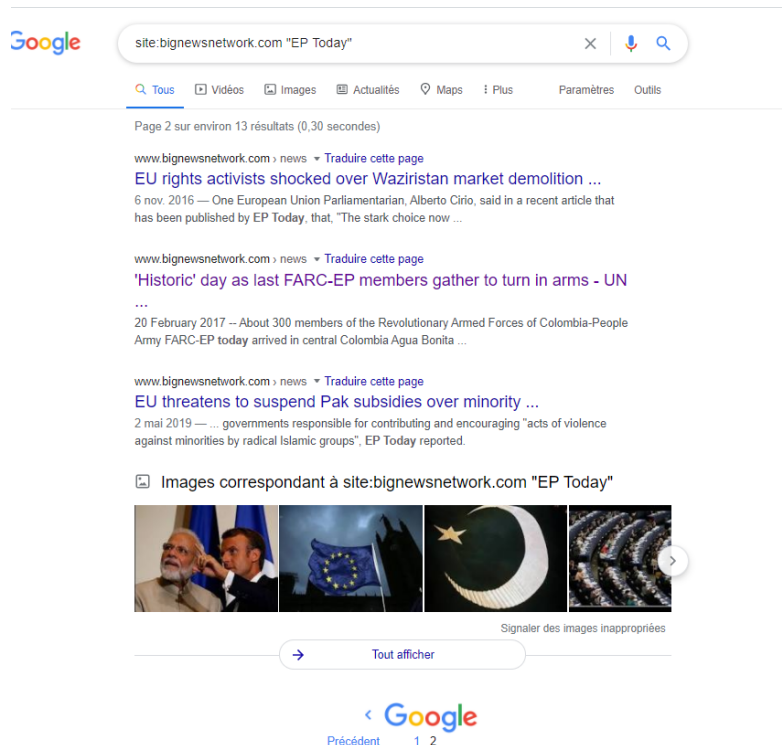
With our investigation, we were not able to determine the exact reason why the Big News Network amplifies quite regularly articles from the ANI press agency. Is there any contractual relationship between the Big News Network and the ANI press agency? Is the ANI press agency subcontracting the Big News Network to have its articles amplified worldwide? Or is the Big News Network simply using the Indian press agency as a newswire service to populate with news articles its websites? The answers to these questions remain unclear.

Still, it appears that the Big News Network also regularly recirculates articles and videos produced by the ANI press agency that contain content linked to activities from the Srivastava Group.

On twelve occasions, the Big News Network’s main websites recirculated press releases from the ANI news agency mentioning EP Today, the fake European Parliament magazine that we investigated last year²³⁵.

²³⁴ Archive of the article available here: <https://perma.cc/CMJ3-BBN7>

²³⁵ <https://www.disinfo.eu/publications/hiding-your-indian-interests-behind-american-and-russian-content>



Screenshot: Query showing that the Big News Network's main websites mentioned 13 times "EP Today". We verified manually all articles and in only one occasion, the mention EP Today didn't refer to the fake European Parliament magazine²³⁶

Similarly, the Big News Network reproduced eleven times some ANI's reports based on the fake European media outlet EU Chronicle's op-eds and articles²³⁷. As we have shown earlier in some previous part of this report, the UAE-based company spread all this content (especially op-eds from MEPs) in most of the "media outlets" which are part of its network (sierraleonetimes.com, northkoreatimes.com...).

A part of the value of the Big News Network's business model lies in content. The Big News Network's websites need to be constantly fed with content to pose as legitimate media. Some actors pay to see their content being amplified by the "news agency".

In terms of pure amplification, this doesn't make a difference if the Big News Network has simply contracted the ANI press agency as a wire service to feed its websites or with if, on the contrary, the ANI press agency has contracted the Big News Network to recirculate their content. At the end, the Big News Network business model, which relies a lot on content syndication and media outlets designed to serve as content repository for press releases, creates an ecosystem favorable to amplification of information operations or disinformation. Content circulates rapidly without enough verification to avoid the spread of disinformation or content linked to the information operation (e.g. EP Today/EU Chronicle articles) This illustrates how an actor, which poses as a "News Agency" but seems to act more as an opaque PR/Digital marketing firm, can end to spread content, unwittingly or wittingly, linked to an information operation.

²³⁶ Archive of the query is available here: <https://perma.cc/K9TA-DNHS>

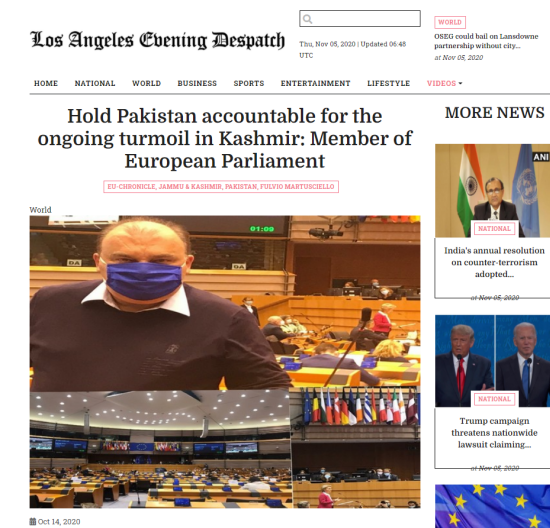
²³⁷ Archive of a Google query showing that the Big News Network's main websites mentioned 11 times "EU Chronicle": <https://perma.cc/4YBB-4UPP>

We would like to emphasize that these practices are not exclusive to the “Big News Network” but are part of a wide range of tools used by numerous actors online (Public relations companies...), that can be weaponized to support information operations and disinformation campaigns.

d- The World News Network: A competitor to the Big News Network

i- A network of fake media outlets

Looking at the amplification of ANI's articles based on EU Chronicle content, we found another network of shady “media outlets”, which is not connected to the Big News Network company.



Screenshots: Articles on multiple fake media outlets containing content which appeared first on EU Chronicle²³⁸

²³⁸ Archive of the article on the Los Angeles Evening Despatch: <https://perma.cc/28TV-HS7Q> / Archive of the article on the British News Network: <https://perma.cc/CK9B-FLFJ> / Archive of the article on the Washington DC Despatch: <https://perma.cc/TH8G-P6G3> / Archive of the article on the Wisconsin Journal: <https://perma.cc/B3EH-94WX>

ii- *Stealing the design of logos from real media outlets*

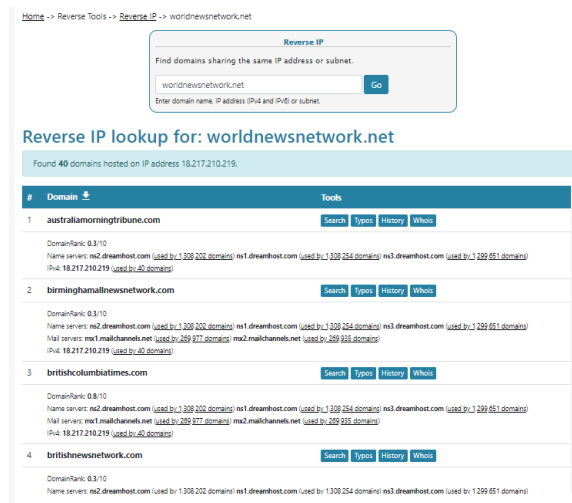
One of the first things that caught our attention with this network is the use of lookalike logos in some websites to make people believe they are currently reading some legitimate media outlets. This raises some important issues in terms of copyright.



Screenshots: On the left, logos of real media outlets. On the right, logos of their counterpart in the Word News Network.²³⁹

iii- *40 "medias outlets" connected to what appeared to be a non-existent US company*

Using DNSlytics, we were able to show that this smaller network is composed of 40 "media outlets" which share the same IP address and cover multiple countries. All these websites are linked to a main website called worldnewsnetwork.net.



Screenshot: According to DNSlytics, 39 fake media outlets share the same IP address as the World News Network

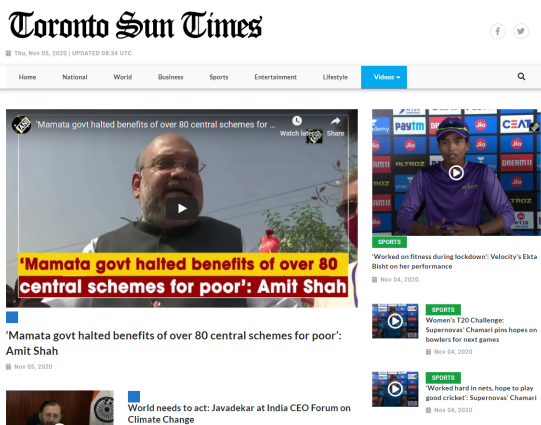
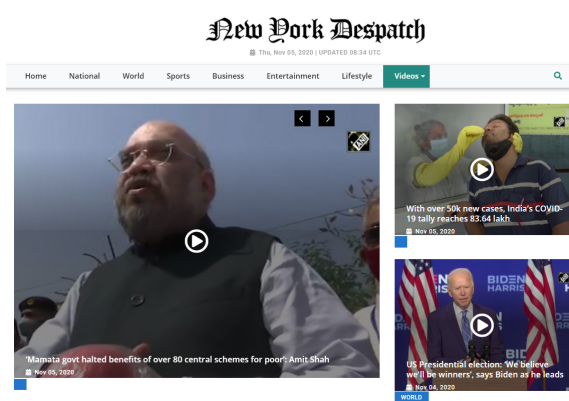
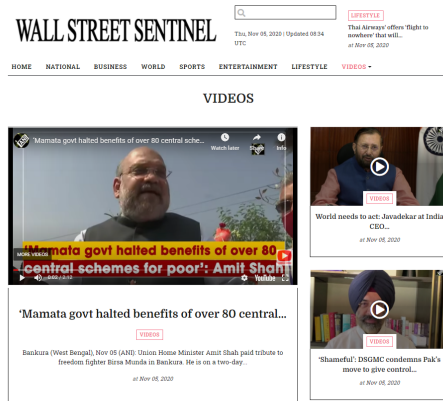
Contrarily to the Big News Network where we were able to connect all the media outlets to a real company which seems to employ at least some freelance journalists, we did not manage to link the "World News Network" to any real entity. Most of the "media outlets" tied to this network have an "about us" section mentioning an American company "Myriad communications" and an individual "Vincent Fox". Both don't seem to exist. (e.g. ["About us" section for the Los Angeles Evening Despatch](#) / ["About us" section for the World News Network](#) , ["About Us" section for the Sri Lanka Island News](#) / ["About us" section for the Westminster Times](#)).

²³⁹ Archive of the Japan Times Today: <https://perma.cc/RE98-ZMGC> /Archive of the South China Herald: <https://perma.cc/GK3H-WMZD> /Archive of the Wall Street Sentinel: <https://perma.cc/2W6B-NLGD>

iv- *Who is really behind the World News Network?*

We do not have any clear attribution about who is behind the "World News Network". Still, we found some clues suggesting a connection to India and the same ecosystem of Indian Digital Marketing companies.

First, all the video sections of the fake media outlets connected to the World News Network are almost exclusively populated by videos produced by the ANI news agency.



Screenshots: Videos sections on some websites connected to the World News Network, which contain mostly videos from the ANI News Agency ²⁴⁰


Moreover, you can find on websites of the World News Network press releases connected specifically to some Indian companies.

²⁴⁰ Archive of the Wall Street Sentinel videos section: <https://perma.cc/2M44-XV9C/> Archive of the New York Despatch video section: <https://perma.cc/K4WY-XJ36/> Archive of the Toronto Sun Times video section: <https://perma.cc/GEA2-LWWD/> Archive of the UAE Times videos section: <https://perma.cc/43XU-VLJZ/>

Washington DC Despatch
 Thu, Nov 05, 2020 | Updated 08:54 UTC

Home National World Sports Business Entertainment Lifestyle Videos

Business



**India's best innovation 'TRU HAIR',
The world's 1st Ayuurvedic hair oil
with heater**


at Nov 05, 2020

Hyderabad (Telangana) [India], November 5 (ANUPRNNewsWire): Ayuveda is a gift that keeps on giving. When done right, Ayuveda has helped people overcome various hair and skin problems. But what most people find difficult is that they don't feel equipped with the knowledge on what the right way to use Ayuveda is. But a Hyderabad based company is busy trying to bridge that gap.

Tru Hair - launched at the beginning of this year, is the world's first ayurvedic hair oil to come with a heater. Most people know how warm oil therapy can help, but what they lack is information on the right temperature. The small yet compact Tru Heater heats the oil around 65 degrees in about 4 minutes and thanks to the auto cut off technology, it is always heated to the right temperature.

New York Despatch
 Sun, Nov 08, 2020 | UPDATED 08:30 UTC


Home National World Sports Business Entertainment Lifestyle Videos



Sany India sets a new precedent in the industry


Nov 02, 2020
 Pune (Maharashtra) [India], November 2 (ANI/NewsVot): Sany India, a leading manufacturer of construction equipment and heavy machinery, have set a new example of leading from the front. The company has taken a slew of measures to help its partners sail through the pandemic with ease. Sany India helped all its 35 dealers steer through the challenging phase by implementing multiple initiatives to sustain and improve the cash flow for the dealer partners.

MORE NEWS




Constable killed in operation against terrorists in J&K's Machil sector
 Karama (Jammu and Kashmir) [India], November 8 (ANI): A constable, Sudip Sarkar, was killed during a joint operation by the security forces against terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Machil sector on Sunday, said Border Security Force (BSF).

Nov 08, 2020



Machil encounter: 3 terrorists killed, 3 security personnel lost their lives in J&K

Nov 08, 2020
















There has never been anything USA has tried and not been able to do: Biden after winning elections

Nov 08, 2020

Screenshots: Press releases of two India companies published in the Washington DC Despatch and the New York Despatch, two World News Network fake media outlets²⁴¹

Finally, the Indian Digital Marketing company Digital Punch not only offers you the possibility to spread press releases on the Big News Network's websites, but also on websites connected to the World News Network.

International News Package: Digital-Punch.pdf 6 / 23

68		Bombay news	https://www.bombaynews.net/	INDIA	General	English
69		Delhi news	https://www.delhinews.net/	INDIA	General	English
70		Chicago Chronicle	https://www.chicagochronicle.com/	USA	General	English
71		Mumbai news	https://www.mumbainews.net/	INDIA	General	English
72		Kolkata news	https://www.kolcatanews.net/	INDIA	General	English
73		New Delhi news	https://www.newdelhinews.net/	INDIA	General	English
74		Australiamorning tribune	https://www.australiamorningtribune.com/	AUSTRALIA	General	English
75		Southchina herald	https://www.southchinaherald.com/	CHINA	General	English
76		Sydney eveningpost	https://www.sydneyeveningpost.com/	AUSTRALIA	General	English
77		Japan times today	https://www.japantimestoday.com/	JAPAN	General	English
78		Usa report	https://www.usareport.com/	USA	General	English
79		Sanfrancisco star	https://www.sanfranciscostar.com/	USA	General	English
80		Wallstreet sentinel	https://www.wallstreet sentinel.com/	USA	General	English

Screenshots: Extract of a commercial document from Digital Punch, showing that with their international package, you can also see your press release being shared by some World News Network's websites²⁴²

As you can see, it is likely that the World News Network created "fake media outlets" for marketing and commercial purposes. Contrary to the Big News Network, the World News Network even hides the real identity of the organization behind the scheme. Still, we found again some ties to India. In both cases, these networks of media outlets have contributed to amplify content linked to an information operation.

Once again, this shows how PR and digital marketing's practices can contribute unwittingly or be weaponised to spread disinformation. This also blurs the line on attribution: Are these actors doing it only for financial gain or are they also wittingly spreading content with a more political dimension?

²⁴¹ Archive of the press release in the New York Despatch: <https://perma.cc/6TEQ-GUYJ/> Archive of the press release in the Washington Despatch: <https://perma.cc/R6XZ-R8X3>

²⁴² Archive of the commercial document of Digital Punch: <https://perma.cc/D285-RVYN>

Chapter 4: Mapping the information operation using its massive amount of registered domain names

Over 15 years, *Indian Chronicles* has bought more than 550 domain names for this operation, using multiple avatars, emails and proxies. These domain names have been acquired to host websites of all the bogus or shady organisations managed by Indian Chronicles.

In a nutshell, a domain name is a unique address where you can access a website by typing it in your Internet browser. In order to be found easily online, it is important for any actor to make sure he is occupying this space and acquired the domain name he wants to make sure nobody will take its spot. It is like making sure you book in advance the best place to see a movie or to go a concert.

For Indian Chronicle, the heavy focus on domain name has been used mostly as a cyber-squatting²⁴³ strategy and an online territory conquest game.

Indeed, regarding for example EP Today, we could find that the information operation has tried to secure multiple similar domain names with different extensions:

- eptoday.com;
- eptoday.eu;
- europeanparliamenttoday. Etc.

This is very likely to be a defensive move, designed to make sure no "adversarial" stakeholder will try to hijack the name by buying a similar domain. We saw the same techniques being used for other organizations linked to the network such as Baluchistanhouse or for Maldives affaires, (maldivescurrent, etc).

Interestingly, we found that this cyber occupation strategy seems to have also concerned the buyout of domain names making clear reference to Pakistan. This might have been done as a more offensive approach, as an attempt to hijack adversarial domain names in the information space. We can for instance mention Indian Chronicles' purchase of the domain name "FriendsOfPakistan.eu"²⁴⁴ referring to the European parliamentary group Friends of Pakistan²⁴⁵. Another example is the acquisition of the domain name "kashmircentre.eu", named after the infamous Kashmir Centre, which has been called out by Belgian authorities as a Pakistani intelligence service sock-puppet organisation operating in Brussels²⁴⁶.

I- Clusters of domain names

The operation has used more than 500 domain names and organisations over 15 years. Analysing more closely all the domain names, we were able to identify specific clusters and *modus operandi* reflecting the different assets used by Indian Chronicles.

²⁴³See the definition of cyber-squatting from Kaspersky: <https://encyclopedia.kaspersky.com/glossary/cyber-squatting/>

²⁴⁴ Bought by CSOPUS email address

²⁴⁵ This informal group has been chaired by MEP Sajjad Karim and advocated for instance for a « Marshall Plan » for Pakistan <https://www.politico.eu/article/time-to-plan-for-years-of-support/amp/>

²⁴⁶ See article about the Kashmir Centre EU and its possible role as a front organization from Pakistani intelligence: https://www.rtb.be/info/belgique/detail_le-kashmir-centre-de-bruxelles-se-replie-a-londres?id=8033170 (archive available here: <https://perma.cc/2SUT-W985>)

a- Dubious think tanks

In this category, we can classify domain names connected to think tanks created by the Srivastava group to push specific agendas towards international institutions such as the United Nations Human Rights Council or the European parliament ([iins.academy](#), [iins.org](#), [iins.uno](#), [iinsmail.com](#), [.net](#), [.org](#) for IINS - ICE-online.org and [ice.uno](#) for Indian Council of Education). Some of these think tanks such as the International Club for Peace Research ([icpr-eu.com](#)), or the previously defunct Commission for the Study for the Organization of Peace ([CSOPUS.com](#)), have been central in creating and maintaining a reputation smoke screen around the operation and ordering reports to specific individuals.

We could also find that other think tanks ([iffra.org](#) IFFRAS, [sadf.eu](#) South Asia Democratic Forum, [westt.eu](#) WESTT) have been established for instance with email addresses tied to some other of Srivastava Group's websites, or by individuals with links to the Indian lobbying company. These think tanks have provided regular partisan reports on Indian-related topics as well as organising and/or sponsoring controversial events or visits in India or to places where Indian-related topics were discussed such as the United Nations²⁴⁷.

b- Dubious NGOs

Indian Chronicles has set up bogus NGOs to organise demonstrations in Geneva, such as Pakistani Women ([pakistaniwomen.org](#)) or the European Organisation for Pakistan Minorities ([eopm.org](#) directly linked to the Srivastava network) or supported other organisations such as the Baluchistan House ([balochistanhouse.net](#), [.com](#), [.org](#), [balochistanhouse.eu](#), [com](#), [.org](#)) in paying lobbying campaigns against Pakistan on Geneva's public transport network²⁴⁸.

Eventually, we also identified a domain name linked to the mysterious NGO Coordinating committee for Human Rights ([ncchr.org](#)), which may have helped to coordinate the presence of other NGOs in Geneva. This specific asset is officially a spin-off of the IINS think tank²⁴⁹.

Around 2007 and 2011, Indian Chronicle created many websites and organisations linked to inter-religious cooperation topics (International Council for Inter-Religious Cooperation, or [ICIRC.org](#), established in Belgium as a non-for-profit). At the same time, we also notice the apparition of many organisations linked directly to Islam topics: [Globalmam](#), [Globalmam organization](#), [indialmam](#), [IndialmamOrganisation](#), [Pakistanmam](#), [InternationallmamOrganization](#).

c- Parliamentary groups in the European Parliament

Set up or chaired by MEPs involved in activities organized by Indian Chronicles, these informal parliamentary groups such as South Asia Peace Forum, Friends of Gilgit Baltistan, Friends of Balochistan, aimed to rally MEPs to Indian-related causes and focuses. However, some communication of these Parliamentary groups were for instance officially indicating Maria Rutowicz as a point of contact²⁵⁰, an *Indian Chronicles* avatar in Brussels²⁵¹. *Indian Chronicles* also bought domain names related to these themed parliamentary groups such as [southasiapeaceforum.com](#) or [fogb.eu](#)²⁵² but it remains unclear whether these domain names were ever

²⁴⁷ See our report on EP Today and the descriptions about SADF and WESTT at the beginning of this report.

²⁴⁸ See this campaign by the Balochistan House : <https://perma.cc/2NRW-TJEB>

²⁴⁹ NHCCR was registered at the same Swiss address that many other assets of Indian Chronicles

²⁵⁰ See archives of press releases here: <https://perma.cc/E4F3-99TN>, <https://perma.cc/4V3B-T69V>, <https://perma.cc/AZ5E-QFEY>

²⁵¹ See relevant section Actors in the ABC+D framework part.

²⁵² FOGB = Friends of Gilgit Baltistan

used. In what we suspect to be a “cybersquatting” move, Indian chronicle also bought in Brussels, domain names linked to some Pakistan influence group²⁵³.

d- Fake or dubious online media

- a. EU related online media such as [EPToday \(.com; .eu; .org](#) and their declination such as [europeanparliamenttoday.com](#)), [EUChronicle.com](#), [EUOutlook \(.com, .net, .org\)](#) [EUreports.com](#), [Europeinnews.com](#), [EUFreeNews.com](#). These domain names (not always used) have mainly served to pose as genuine media outlets from the European Union or as official European Parliament online media. They also served as repositories for MEP or thematic op-eds.
- b. Domain names linked to Indian geopolitical interests or territorial claims. This includes domain names referring to South Asian online media such as [SouthAsiaRevealed.com](#), [SouthAsiaDiary.com](#), [SANews.ca](#), [PerspectiveSouthAsia.com](#), [SouthAsianAffairs.ca](#). These websites focused mainly on South Asia News and especially on Indian related topics. They try to appear as authoritative content on what is happening inside the sub-continent.
We also found domain names related to other very important topics for India Chronicles, namely Gilgit Baltistan ([gilgitnews.net](#), [gilgitpost.net](#), [gilgittimes.com](#)) , Khalistan ([khalistan.eu](#), [khalistanfm.net](#), [radiokhalistan.net](#)), Balochistan ([balochnews.com](#), [balochistantoday.org](#) and [.net](#)) and Maldives ([maldivesaffairs.com](#), [maldivescurrent.com](#)).
- c. Fake press agencies or PR distribution such as [eunewsagency.com](#) (European union News Network), [PrNewsDistribution.com](#) and [FourNewsAgency.com](#)²⁵⁴.
- d. Online fake media posing as real local media, which refers mainly at the EP Today's worldwide network of fake media outlets that we exposed in 2019.

e - Other actors

In this category, we also found different stakeholders such as:

- consulting companies providing services in Brussels and Geneva for EU affairs ([ANConsults.com](#)²⁵⁵, [EuroConsultinc.com](#) or [DefConsult.com](#));
- publishing houses that played a role in amplifying some reports from specific affiliated think tanks such as IFFRAS ([ProLexpublishing.com](#), [NoidaPublishinghouse.com](#));
- Other professional websites such as UIW.net for United Indian Websites, which served as an email domain for many other organisations or [ITCMSCH.net](#) for the International Trading Corporation, a Srivastava-related Swiss company.

II- Why registering more than 600 domain names?

A significant part of the Indian Chronicle operation is based on creating a smoke screen of organisations, with often only an online presence, which can cross-reference each other. By regularly mentioning each other's without disclosing their links, these organisations try to gain legitimacy and to build an artificial ecosystem which is credible only if the network is big enough to justify its own existence.

²⁵³ See part on domain names.

²⁵⁴ See our first investigation for more details on Four News Agency

²⁵⁵ The domain is now owned by an American company.

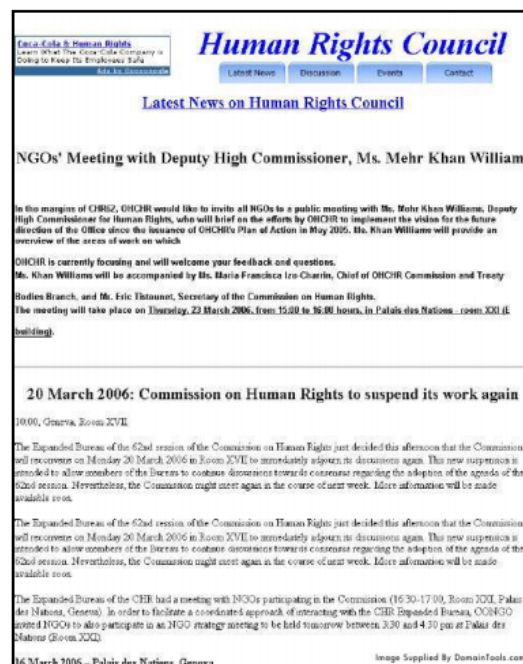
Investigating all these domain names is not an easy task. For instance, SADF.Eu (South Asia Democratic Forum) has been bought by csopus@yahoo.com. Through pivot research, we could find that this email address is linked to the domain name csopus.com. With more crosschecking, we also managed to clearly connect the csopus address email to other domain names such as iffras.com and eopm.org. Then, finally, through the investigation of these organisations' coordinated activities, we were able to definitely tie them to Indian Chronicles.

Until now, the tactic of using domain names as a smoke screen has been a successful method to hide the real ownership of these online spaces. One of the findings of this investigation is that behind this artificial ecosystem, same actors could repeatedly be tied to multiple domain names.

HumanRightsCouncil.net: an EPToday copycat for the United Nations?

The United Nations Human Rights Council was established in Geneva on 15 March 2006 to replace the former Council for Human Rights²⁵⁶.

On 17 March 2006, two days later, an email address linked to the International Trading Corporation²⁵⁷, bought the domain name HumanRightsCouncil.net.



Website Screenshot taken 06/26/2008

Screenshots available from that time shows that this website states clearly it was designed to provide "News from the Human Rights Council". At the beginning of Indian Chronicle, EP Today also claimed to bring "News from the European Union", whereas it served mainly as a lobbying tool.

Similarities between these two Indian Chronicle operations in Geneva (humanrightscouncil.net) and in Brussels (eptoday.com) are surely troubling. "Human Rights Council" was very likely at least bought to have an online impact at that time by occupying on the online space a similar name to the official international institution.

²⁵⁶ See resolution of the UN here: <https://perma.cc/2H8R-VL8W>

²⁵⁷ The International Trading Corporation is a Srivastava company, see here: <https://perma.cc/4NMM-S57V>

Chapter 5 – Overall overview of the information operation

I- The ABC+D Framework

Developed by Graphika's Chief of Innovation Camille Francois, the ABC framework²⁵⁸ seeks to “seeks to lay out three key vectors characteristic of viral deception” of online campaigns, which are broken down by:

- “A” for manipulative **Actors**, meaning the ones knowingly engaging in disinformation activities;
- “B” for deceptive **Behaviour**, describing the efforts to deliberately deceive or/and hide the source of information;
- “C” for harmful **Content**, for defining how the content is harmful for the population targeted.

In 2020, EU DisinfoLab proposed to add a “D” to this framework²⁵⁹ to encompass the **Distribution** model of the information operation. We are going to see whether, in this example, the “D” can highlight some of the tactics observed.

a- Actors

In this section, we will briefly describe a limited number of actors that have played a major role in the *Indian Chronicles* network. For three of them (Rahul Malhotra, Raul Mckenzie, Maria Rutowicz), we were not able to connect their names to real people, suggesting that some individuals tied to the network might have used “aliases”.

Ankit Srivastava: one of the leaders of the information operation?

Mr Ankit Srivastava is one of the central characters of the *Indian Chronicles* for his presence since the beginning the operation. He is the Vice-Chairman of the Srivastava Group²⁶⁰ and the editor in chief of the New Delhi Times, an Indian media claiming to be a reference in the Indian media landscape²⁶¹.

In total, we could find more than 400 domain names (not all related to Indian Chronicle) bought through Mr Srivastava private email address or through email addresses belonging to his companies/organisations. In parallel to his business profile (he serves as CEO of many organisations linked to the Srivastava group), he has also been very active in the international and diplomatic scene. For instance, Mr Srivastava's presence in Geneva dates back to 1999²⁶², where he attended United Nations meetings, officially representing Srivastava's think tanks such as the IINS and the Indian Council of Education. He is also the website owner of the organisations he represented in the United Nations.

Mr Ankit Srivastava also founded AN Consult, a consulting company, allegedly operating in Geneva and Brussels claiming experience in Public Affairs and “Special Operations”²⁶³.

He is a co-founder of the Council for Inter-Religious Cooperation (ICIRC), which has been mentioned in printed copies of EP Today as the address where one is able to send back their subscription form to the fake European

²⁵⁸ https://science.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Francois%20Addendum%20to%20Testimony%20-%20ABC_Framework_2019_Sept_2019.pdf

²⁵⁹ “Adding a ‘D’ to the ABC disinformation framework, Alexandre Alaphilippe, 27 April 2020, Brookings, <https://www.brookings.edu/techstream/adding-a-d-to-the-abc-disinformation-framework/>

²⁶⁰ See Srivastava Group's Leadership page: <https://perma.cc/6MC8-WXRH>

²⁶¹ In its coverage of our first investigation, The Times Of India described the New Delhi Times as an “obscure online media”: <https://perma.cc/5S7D-K2AJ>

²⁶² According to some documents archived on the digitallibrary.un.org

²⁶³ See archive of the website of the company here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20080222025211/http://www.anconsults.com/>

Parliament magazine²⁶⁴. The organisation also has multiple connections with other domains names connected to the Srivastava Group.

Eventually, by following the online fingerprints of Mr Srivastava, we find him connected to Raul McKenzie and Rahul Malhotra, three characters that used the same postal address in Geneva on different occasions. This address in Switzerland is the one used by Srivastava group.

Rahul Malhotra: A Director of Operations?

Rahul Malhotra is another enigmatic protagonist of the Indian chronicles.

According to the organization's website, Rahul Malhotra is the Director of Operations of the Indian Council of Education²⁶⁵. His personal email address is linked to an obscure website called Tehreek E Islam (tehreekeislam.net)²⁶⁶ which was registered using the Srivastava group postal address in New Delhi.

In a document linked to the Stratfor email leak, Rahul Malhotra indicates that the Geneva address of the Srivastava group as its billing address. He also makes direct references to different "csopus" email addresses and even refers to Raul McKenzie as being his "office person".

Raul McKenzie: the mysterious editor

Raul McKenzie has been described as the Editor-in-Chief of the now defunct EP Today. As an editor, he wrote pieces on Indian-related interests in the fake online media outlet. But we found McKenzie's fingerprints on other related assets. In Brussels, he is also linked to "South Asia" topics, being for instance the previous owner of the domain name SouthAsiaPeaceForum.com, a former MEP informal group chaired by then-MEP Paulo Casaca²⁶⁷. Raul McKenzie was also the owner of the South Asia Diary²⁶⁸, another online media outlet registered with an *Indian Chronicles* alias. In Brussels again, Raul McKenzie is also indicated as the owner of two consulting businesses websites, defconsult.com and euroconsultinc.com.

We also find fingerprints of Raul McKenzie in Geneva. As mentioned previously, in a document connected to the Stratfor email leak, Raul McKenzie is designated by Rahul Malhotra as his "office person"²⁶⁹ for the NGO coordinating committee for Human Rights. These NGO is directly linked to "Maria Rutowicz" (a colleague of him at EP Today) and shares the same address than other Indian Chronicle organisations in Geneva, according to the registration information of its website.

Eventually, Raul McKenzie is also the owner of ProLexPublishing domain name, a publishing house that seems to have edited only one book²⁷⁰ from Dr Massouda Jalal and Dr Mario Silva, Director of the Canadian think tank IFFRAS²⁷¹. Raul McKenzie is also the digital owner of domain names referring to radios in Canada, such as RadioKhalistan or KhalistanFM²⁷². According to the domain name information, these radios are supposed to

²⁶⁴ See page 9 of this printed version of EP Today: <https://www.yumpu.com/s/Xsce0oWmNwZQLJ4A> (archive available here: <https://perma.cc/GG8G-EM63>)

²⁶⁵ See the Indian Council of Education's contact us page here: <https://perma.cc/WY2J-977A>

²⁶⁶ Unclear if the domain was ever used.

²⁶⁷ After his mandate, Paulo Casaca founded the South Asia Democratic Forum, a think tank with ties to Indian Chronicle

²⁶⁸ See archive of this media outlet here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20070118003400/http://www.southasiadiary.com/>

²⁶⁹ In this leak, Raul McKenzie is said to use CSOPUS email addresses.

²⁷⁰ See archive here: <https://perma.cc/9TF9-CW8J>

²⁷¹ IFFRAS is a Canadian dubious think-tank directly linked to Indian Chronicle

²⁷² Khalistan independence and related conflicts around Sikhs communities in that region have been one of the major disputes feeding discord between India and Pakistan

be located at Bloor street (Toronto)²⁷³. This address was also used by "Riccardo Caprio"²⁷⁴ for the registration of other shady Canadian websites.

MARIA RUTOWICZ: a foot in the European Parliament?

We first encountered Maria Rutowicz as a key front name for EP Today (where she allegedly acted as a sub-editor²⁷⁵) at least between 2013 and 2019, simultaneously to Raul McKenzie.

We can find online traces from Maria Rutowicz (uncertain whether or not she really existed or if it is an avatar) from 24 March 2006. Back then, she signs as "Maria WPC" a press release about Balochistan on behalf of the World Peace Council with the European Parliament letterhead²⁷⁶. The phone number provided on this document is also used by other organisations owned by Srivastava Group. We also find traces of the World Peace Council in the registration data of southasiadiary.com²⁷⁷. The WPC defines itself as "an anti-imperialist, democratic, independent and non-aligned international movement of mass action". It was famous for being largely funded and controlled by the Soviet Union during the cold war. The nature of the relationship between the World Peace Council and the Srivastava group remains unclear.

Then, we also found Maria Rutowicz using the prwire.ep(at)gmail.com email address. The first occurrence we found of this email address was in a press release from the office of MEP Marek Aleksander Czarnecki, where the address was described as to be owned by the Polish MEP's assistant.²⁷⁸ In November 2009, Maria Rutowicz openly used this email address to sign a press release about the creation of the new group "Friends of Gilgit-Baltistan". In this press release, the address was presented as an official contact for the office of MEP Jurgen CREUTZMANN.²⁷⁹ On December 2009, she signed another press release on behalf of the South Asia Peace Forum for the one year of the Mumbai attack where she also used the same email address²⁸⁰.

This email address is also used in 2010 without mentioning Maria Rutowicz as an official contact for the office of MEP Ryszard Czarnecki, also Chairman of the "Baloch Forum in the European Parliament"²⁸¹, in a press release about the Baloch Day celebrations in the European Parliament²⁸².

She then covers the activities of the think-tank "International Club for Peace Research" with the same email address²⁸³. We also find traces of Maria Rutowicz signing press releases for globalimam.com, a website representing the "International Imam Organization"²⁸⁴. Eventually, in Geneva, her name appears on the information for the ncchr.org domain name registration (ncchr.org stands for "NGO Coordinating Committee on Human Rights"²⁸⁵).

²⁷³ Once again, this is unclear if the domain names were ever used and we suspect some cybersquatting.

²⁷⁴ Riccardo Caprio is the nickname that registered all fake media linked to the initial EP Today, see our previous investigation

²⁷⁵ See archive of the EP Today's Contact Page: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150509220814/http://eptoday.com:80/contact>

²⁷⁶ See page 142 of this document: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/13304396/balochistan-dossier1> (archive here: <https://perma.cc/X9RL-ZVT4>).

²⁷⁷ The address email used to register "South Asia Diary" is linked to EP Today but the physical address is connected to the WPC: <https://perma.cc/JY93-8R3W>

²⁷⁸ See archive of the press release here: <https://perma.cc/Y7SM-E349>

²⁷⁹ See archive of the press release here: <https://perma.cc/4V3B-T69V>

²⁸⁰ See archive of the press release here: <https://perma.cc/E4F3-99TN>

²⁸¹ We also find reference to another group called Friends of Balochistan, chaired by Mr Ryszard Czarnecki.

²⁸² See archive of the press release here: <https://perma.cc/HLD4-R3UY>

²⁸³ See archive of the press release here: <https://perma.cc/E26J-G8NL>

²⁸⁴ International Imam Organization (aka Global Imam) is another organization created by the Srivastava Group. This organization should not be confused with the "Global Imams Council" based in Iraq. See archive of one of its press release reproduced by the website "New Age Islam" here: <https://perma.cc/X5E4-KSCN>

²⁸⁵ The domain name information linked to ncchr.org also mentioned the Srivastava Group's address in Geneva

Madi Sharma: “business broker” and tour operator²⁸⁶

Madi Sharma's role in *Indian Chronicles* has already been extensively covered through our EP Today report. As a reminder, Ms Sharma has been instrumental in inviting MEPs and planning private visits depicted as official delegations, in India with a meeting with PM Narendra Modi (in partnership with IINS), or in Maldives²⁸⁷.

Ms Sharma was also a regular contributor to EP Today and the staff of her ONG WESTT also regularly wrote articles for the fake European Parliament media outlet. She was described in some articles as the EU correspondent for the New Delhi Times²⁸⁸, the obscure Indian magazine owned by the Srivastava Group.

Fake persona: Hiding traces with multiples names and email addresses

One main characteristic of this information operation is the use of multiple email addresses and names to register domain names and hide traces.

One name can be linked to multiple email addresses. For instance, we have seen that Raul McKenzie's name has been associated to many different emails and organisations over years.

In the meantime, some specific emails were also associated to multiple people. For instance, in domain name registrations, csopus@yahoo.com can be linked to the following names since 2015:

- Louis Shon
- Mario Silva
- Raul McKenzie
- Rahul Malhotra
- Martin Rutowicz
- Riyaz Malik
- Riyaz Khan
- Rahim Jaffer
- Ahmed Ilyasi
- Massouda Jalal

Another example is the name Maria Rutowicz (which could also be possibly Martin Rutowicz) that is associated with:

- Prwire.ep@gmail.com
- Ncchr.eu@gmail.com
- press@globalimam.org

This exemplifies well how names, email addresses and organisations were swapped by *Indian Chronicles* multiple times to confuse people. Following our investigations, for some of these characters such as Charles Forceps, Riccardo Caprio or Raul McKenzie, we could not find any evidence of their physical existence.

In the margin of our investigation, we also discovered another potential fake persona: the self-proclaimed UK based investigation journalist James Duglous Crickton. We were not able to find any traces of his existence

²⁸⁶ More about Madi Sharma on this article from the Telegraph India: <https://perma.cc/94T9-FUVZ>

²⁸⁷ She was also part of a trip of MEPs in Bangladesh organized by the South Asia Democratic Forum according to the draft programme of the trip available on the European Parliament: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/mepdat/attach/188622_d096beae-8543-403c-9a0c-d5eb8adaf274_1.pdf

²⁸⁸ Archive of an article wrote by Madi Sharma for the New Delhi Times: <https://perma.cc/UGQ2-RQGG>

online except for his op-eds covering South Asian issues. One of his claims on Pakistan have been covered by India and Pakistani media²⁸⁹, even if there is no strong evidence of this person existing, raising concerns of information manipulation. James Duglous Crickton also mistyped his own middle name online²⁹⁰ and seemed to have written one article for the fake media outlet EP Today²⁹¹, raising questions over the involvement of this avatar in Indian Chronicles.

One year later: what happened to the main actors of our EP Today investigation?

In October and December 2019, EU DisinfoLab published two investigations on the initial network linked to Indian Chronicle, exposing the roles of EP Today, multiple organizations (WESTT, EOPM, IFFRAS...) and 265 online fake medias that actively republished content in this hidden influence operation. These reports, extensively covered by international press (BBC²⁹², Politico²⁹³, etc.) have shed new light on the Indian-related influence on international institutions.

Following these revelations:

- First, in October, EP Today apologized for syndicating content from Russian Today but tried to argue it was a legitimate media and continued its activity.²⁹⁴
- Then, in December, subsequently to the EU DisinfoLab's revelations, EP Today and all the zombie fake media outlets exposed were shut down by Indian Chronicle. YouTube channels and videos extensively covering demonstrations in Geneva were also closed immediately²⁹⁵.
- Regarding the private visit organised by Indian Chronicle in Jammu and Kashmir, there has been no public investigation launched on this topic by European institutions.
- After these revelations, we also noticed that some MEPs involved in the EP Today scandal have announced they were manipulated by this operation and promised to be more careful in their activities. These MEPs are not present in India Chronicles.

However, certain characters, already active in EP Today, are active again, whether on its new avatar EU Chronicle or with other organisations connected to EU Chronicle. We could for instance see the following:

- Mr Malosse, former president of the European Economic and Social Committee who was involved in the EP Today network, has written three op-eds for EU Chronicle²⁹⁶. One of his op-ed in EU Chronicle was reproduced by the New Delhi Times.²⁹⁷
- The same with Mr Czarnecki, former VP of the European parliament, and Mr Fulvio Martusciello who wrote several op-eds for both EP Today²⁹⁸ and EU Chronicle²⁹⁹.

²⁸⁹ See an archive of an article from the Big News Network quoting a news report from ANI which mentioned James Duglous Crickton: <https://perma.cc/4ACP-GKHD>

²⁹⁰ See archived tweet here: <https://archive.is/SFwSF>

²⁹¹ See archive of this article allegedly written by James Duglous Crickton for EP Today: <https://perma.cc/8GDJ-5CBY>

²⁹² See article here: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-50749764>

²⁹³ See article here: <https://www.politico.eu/article/indian-interests-behind-site-targeting-european-parliament-with-rt-content/>

²⁹⁴ See archived EP Today's press release here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20191106103038/https://eptoday.com/press-statement-ep-today/>

²⁹⁵ A small EP Today's Youtube Channel is still up but was already inactive during our investigation.

²⁹⁶ See Chapter on EU Chronicle

²⁹⁷ Archive of Henri Malosse's EU Chronicle op-ed reproduced in the Srivastava-owned New Delhi Times newspaper: <https://perma.cc/7ABT-85G2>

²⁹⁸ Examples of two op-eds written respectively by MEP Martusciello and MEP Czarnecki in EP Today: <https://web.archive.org/web/20180521221701/http://eptoday.com/india-has-arrived-on-the-world-stage/> / <https://web.archive.org/web/20180512110055/http://eptoday.com/indias-war-on-terror>

²⁹⁹ See chapter on EU Chronicle

- In 2020, MEPs Czarnecki, Mariani and Martusciello have recorded videos for EU Chronicle wishing Happy Birthday to Mr Modi on the day of Indian independence.³⁰⁰
- In 2019, Dr Mario Silva, publicly stated that he did not have "any connection with any group or organization" mentioned in our investigation and that IFFRAS was inactive³⁰¹. However, we can see that since April 2020, IFFRAS has restarted its publishing activities, especially new books where Dr Mario Silva is still mentioned as Chairman of the think-tank³⁰². As a reminder, IFFRAS has officially been dissolved in 2014 by Mr Mario Silva³⁰³.

b- Behaviours

"Ceased to exist": resuscitating organisations to create a network of zombies

How to offer to your information operation some legitimacy?

Indian Chronicles have found its own way, which has been to resuscitate dead organisations and give them second lives, sometimes very far from their original ones. For instance, the Commission for the Study for the Organization of Peace, chaired by Louis B. Sohn, which ceased activity in the 1970s became Commission for the Study for the Organization of Peace, chaired by Louis B. Shon³⁰⁴.

We observed similar behaviour from Indian Chronicle, inside the United Nations Human Rights Council³⁰⁵, with organisations still active today and taking the floor to defend Indian-related interests:

- The International Permanent Committee on Canned Foods;
- the World Environment and Resources Council;
- The International Club for Peace Research;
- The Center for Environmental and Management Studies;

We also found other organisations that we couldn't link formally to *Indian Chronicles* but which have some similar behaviours such as the International Association of Seed Crushers (an NGO which ceased to exist in 2007 according to the Union of International Associations³⁰⁶).

The same *modus operandi* has been observed in our 2019 investigation where EP Today was created after the name of a "deceased" European Parliament Magazine, and most of the bogus online media around 4NewsAgency were reusing the names of former legit media outlets.

The point of this *Zombie modus operandi* is to benefit from status, reputation and names from inactive and sometimes out-of-business organisations. It allows the information operation to claim experience and a historical background that are crucial legitimacy drivers in terms of communication and outreach.

Locating your zombie NGOs in a virtual office: the use of Regus

Over the course of this investigation, we encountered many postal addresses used by different organisations. Most of these addresses were simply false, meaning they do not have any physical existence, such as Ferney

³⁰⁰ See chapter on EU Chronicle

³⁰¹ See answers of former MP Mario Silva to CBC in this article: <https://perma.cc/5YCY-PEJH>

³⁰² Archive of the "Books section" in IFFRAS website showing activities in 2020:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200715062120/https://iffras.org/category/books/>

³⁰³ See archive from the official business registries on the Canadian government website: <https://perma.cc/HM9H-F5GZ>

³⁰⁴ Only some letters were changed in the CSOP founder's name

³⁰⁵ See chapter on Indian Chronicles' activities at the UN.

³⁰⁶ See the profile of the International Association of Seed Crushers on the UIA website: <https://perma.cc/JJJ8-L99C>



Road in the United States, or were incomplete with no organisation connected to these places (38 forest hills, 37 road estate, for instance, with no mention of any city).

For the other part of the registered addresses, we observed that *Indian Chronicles* very often chose to publicly locate its activities in Regus offices. The company Regus³⁰⁷ provides, among other services, virtual offices where organisations can domiciliate their activities. This allows organisations to choose a cheaper way to maintain a presence in a city. Most of *Indian Chronicles* entities in Brussels were registered at 37 Square de Meeus, the location of a Regus office and the totality of fake media outlets from 4NewsAgency indicated Regus offices.

We could also find that some of the dubious organisations taking the floor in UNHCR were registered in Regus' offices. The International Association of Seed Crushers was resurrected in a Regus office in London, the International Permanent Committee on Canned Foods in Illinois, and the Center for Environmental and Management studies, in a Regus office in Canada.

International Association of Seed Crushers		Canners International Permanent Committee	
Profil Statut consultatif		Profil Statut consultatif	
Vue Générale			
Nom de l'organisation:	International Association of Seed Crushers	Nom de l'organisation:	Canners International Permanent Committee
Adresse du siège permanent		Adresse du siège permanent	
Adresse:	53-59 Chandos Pl London WC2N 4HS Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord	Adresse:	One Westbrook Corporate Center Suite 300 États-Unis d'Amérique
Email:	iasc.london@gmail.com	Email:	cip.committee@gmail.com
Type d'organisation:	Organisation non-gouvernementale	Type d'organisation:	Organisation non-gouvernementale
Langues:	• Anglais	Langues:	• Anglais



Center for Environmental and Management Studies	
Profil Statut consultatif	
Vue Générale	
Nom de l'organisation:	Center for Environmental and Management Studies
Adresse du siège permanent	
Adresse:	100 King Street West Toronto ON M5X 1C9 Canada
Téléphone:	+1 416 554 7252
Fax:	+1 416 554 7252
Email:	camsngc@gmail.com
Type d'organisation:	Organisation non-gouvernementale
Langues:	• Anglais

Regus - London, Covent Garden - Chandos Place

3,0 ★★★★★ 4 avis Google



Adresse : 53-59 Chandos Pl, Charing Cross, London WC2N 4HS, Royaume-Uni

Regus - Ontario, Hamilton - King Street

4,1 ★★★★★ 20 avis Google

Adresse : 21 King St W 5th Floor, Hamilton, ON L8P 4W7, Canada

Regus - Illinois, Westchester - Westbrook Corporate Center

3,4 ★★★★★ 20 avis Google

Adresse : 1 Westbrook Corporate Center Suite 300, Westchester, IL 60154, États-Unis

Active role in setting up a structure to lobby international institutions

In parallel to the network of zombie organisations, *Indian Chronicles* also set up or contributed to the creation of a list of organisations that could enter the traditional influence ecosystem of international institutions. These organisations such as think tanks (SADF, WESTT), NGOs (European organisations of Pakistan minorities, Pakistani Women) or informal groups of MEPs (South Asia Peace Forum, Friends of Gilgit Baltistan) were used to gain access to elected representative of the EU.

Through this access, Indian Chronicle was able to influence policy-makers to move towards positions more favourable to Indian interests.

³⁰⁷ See Regus's corporate website here: <https://www.regus.com/en-us>

Creating fake media outlets from scratch

One of the characteristics of Indian Chronicle is its propensity to create and maintain a high number of fake media outlets: EP Today, EU Chronicle, Times of Geneva, 4 News Agency.

To dissimulate their fakeness and appear as active, these websites hid behind a large amount of syndicated content. Their main objective is to produce original content about activities connected to Indian Chronicles.

This artificial media coverage has two purposes. First, it offers some fake legitimacy to Indian Chronicles' activities as they are covered by what is supposed to be "independent media". Then, these fake media outlets also amplify messages spread by the network.

Interns

The extensive use of interns to represent dubious organisations both in United Nations and in Brussels is another *modus operandi* that we have identified. For instance, we have observed that most interns employed by Indian Chronicles' organisations in Geneva were doing studies in universities based in Geneva. In Brussels, interns working for dubious organisations such as EP Today or WESTT had mostly the same cursus (Master in International Human Rights from Kent University).

While it is conventional for many organisations to recruit interns in Geneva and in Brussels, we found very few mentions of this experience in these people's resume. Moreover, after this experience, the majority of them seems to have not continued working in the human rights field.

Our hypothesis is that actors linked to EU Chronicles used interns to speak in the United Nations as a way to cover their tracks and make an attribution to India more difficult. These interns were manipulated to serve as one of the many public faces of this massive information operation.

Typos

One interesting aspect of this 15 year-long campaign is the regular typos observed when names of Indian Chronicle's organisations or their representatives are mentioned.

One of the central characters of this investigation is the avatar Maria Rutowicz in Brussels. She is very often quoted as a press contact for several dubious organisations in Brussels but also as a personal assistant to MEPs³⁰⁸. Surprisingly, we also found that *Indian Chronicles* used the name "Martin Rutowicz" to register some domain names.

In the United Nations, we also noticed an extensive use of middle names or double-barrelled surnames as what seems to be a way to hide the participation of the same person at different meetings. For instance, "Caitlina Victoria Bengtsson"³⁰⁹ became "Caitlin Victorie Deng Isson"³¹⁰.

As mentioned previously, an individual named "Stephen Ciccoli" spoke for the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace in the UNHRC in 2009. 11 years later, *Indian Chronicles* re-used his name, with a slight modification, to create the fake editor of the EuChronicle.com: "Stephan Ciccoli"³¹¹.

Typos can also concern the registration of domain names or email addresses. For instance, the European Union for Public Relations (EUPR), one of the dubious organisations which regularly represented Indian

³⁰⁸ See the previous part about Actors

³⁰⁹ See the "Chapters" section in this archive: <https://perma.cc/8D8M-EYSS>

³¹⁰ See the "Chapters" section in this archive: <https://perma.cc/78BZ-9277>

³¹¹ All evidences suggest that Indian Chronicles is now usurping the name of Stephen Ciccoli.

interests at the UNHRC³¹², used the email address eupri@litemsch.com as contact information in the UNHCR phonebook. We could not find any traces of any itemsch.com domain ever registered. However, "itemsch" is very close to the International Trading Corporation domain (itcmsch.com), a Srivastava owned company.

We do not think these regular "typos" are always a mistake. They can be used as a tactic to sow confusion and cover the tracks of the agent. This needs to be put in parallel with what we have shown at the beginning of this report with the infamous use of the name "Louis Shon" as a way to impersonate "Louis Sohn".

c- Content

In the course of this operation, we identified two main types of content, split across two geographical zones:

- In Brussels, content produced with and/or from MEPs. This content is made of parliamentary questions and articles - often drafted, but not always, by *Indian Chronicles* and endorsed by MEPs. This content is published by EU Chronicle/EP Today which we consider here as a content producer (acting as a lobbying organisation rather than a media). The content "produced" with MEPs also includes press conferences, events and false delegations involving MEPs.
The purpose of all this content is to showcase, amplify or distort support from MEPs - and more generally of the EU - to the positions or narratives of the Indian state, and to support the related advocacy in Brussels.
- In Geneva, content produced by NGOs at the UNHRC. This content is made of interventions of at UNHRC by resurrected or appropriated accredited NGOs, as well as in the side-event sponsored by these NGOs. This content also includes seminars, press conferences and demonstrations by NGOs/think-tanks either created and owned by *Indian Chronicles* or by NGOs/think-tanks that fit the narrative.
Here the aim is to show a general support from the civil society to pro-Indian narratives at the United Nations, and to support the related advocacy agendas at the UNHRC.

Put together, Indian Chronicle's content aims at demonstrating a global support for Indian narratives at civil society, political and even institutional level. It is used internally to project the image of a strong India on the international scene. Internationally, the content is used to advocate for pro-Indian interests, including, amongst others, anti-Pakistan resolutions and decisions.

In order to be efficient, this content needs to be distributed to key audiences.

d- Distribution

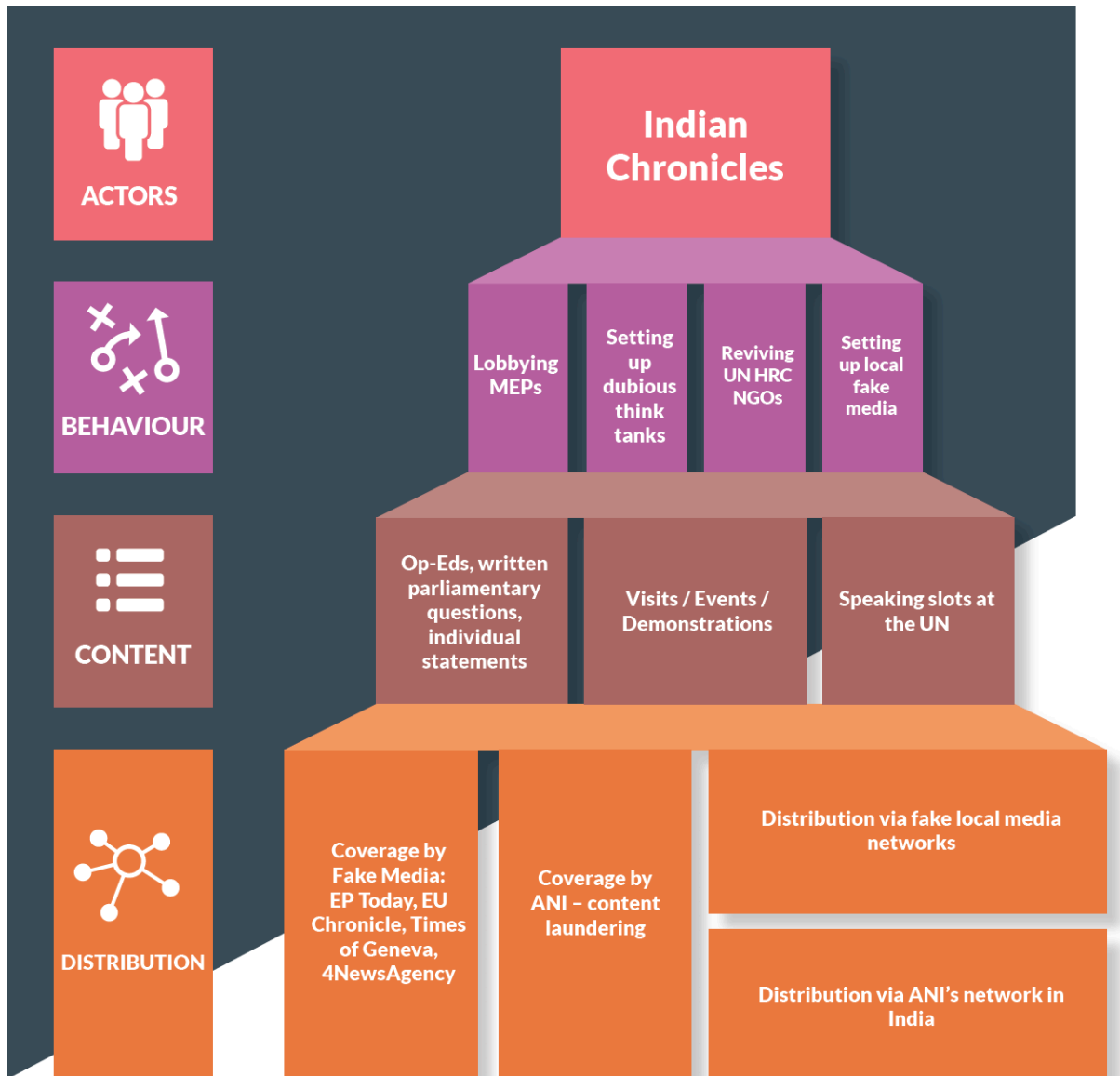
Indian Chronicles has been using two compatible distribution channels to disseminate the content it has produced:

- The first distribution channel relies on the content laundering realized by the ANI News agency. Once taken by ANI, the content linked to the information operation can be spread in Indian social media, in news aggregators such as Yahoo News but also by Indian media outlets which can quote *Indian Chronicles* content as coming from a legitimate source ("ANI").
- The second distribution network is composed of fake or dubious media outlets which contributes to the amplification of the content from Indian Chronicles. In our first investigation, we discovered in 2019 that one of these networks was directly managed by *Indian Chronicles* (4NewsAgency network – 265 fake media in 65 countries). In this second investigation, we highlighted how *Indian Chronicles*

³¹² EUPR has also represented other interests in UNHRC meetings

took advantage of some existing PR/Digital Marketing networks (Big News Network – 469 fake media in 94 countries, World News network – 40 fake medias in 12 countries) to see the content repackaged by ANI being spread further.

e- Summary



In this case, the need to describe distribution process of this information operation is crucial. It becomes possible to show both the direct and indirect efforts to spread this content towards the targeted groups of the campaign. In this specific case, the Distribution also goes further than its initial goal looking at digital distribution vectors (Advertisement, algorithmic amplification, algorithmic hijacking), to more “traditional” distribution vectors such as syndicated content and press agencies.

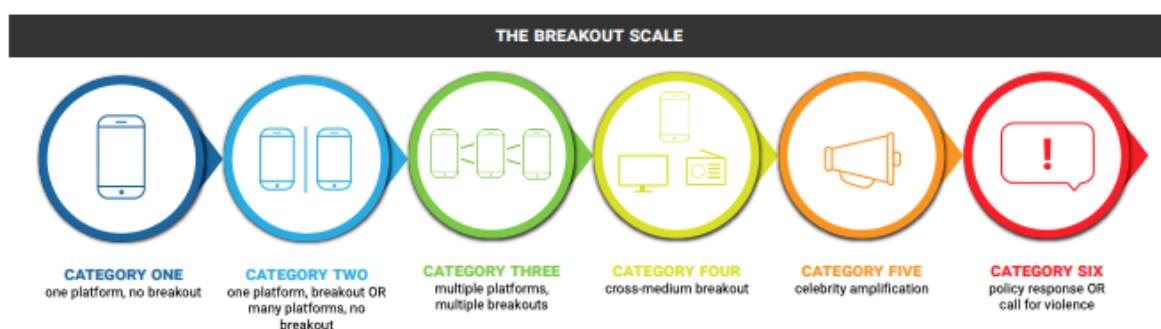
II- Impact

Many researchers have been trying to provide measurement tools to evaluate the impact of disinformation and information campaigns in the real world. These tools and frameworks are very often looking at the tactics of these campaigns as well as their amplification and distribution which is a complex task.

In this part, we are going to look at ways to quantify the characteristics and impact of the “Indian Chronicle” information operation.

a- The breakout scale

In order to measure and compare the potential impact of Information operations/Disinformation campaigns, British researcher Ben Nimmo recently proposed the use of a breakout scale in a paper for Brookings³¹³.



This scale is looking into the following criterions to assess impact:

- Number of online platforms targeted by the campaign;
- Presence of an online breakout;
- Cross-medium breakout (web, tv, radio, printed news);
- Celebrity amplification;
- Policy response or call for violence.

Criterion	Indian Chronicles
One or multiple platforms?	Multiple platforms targeted by the campaign over the year: websites, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube.
Breakout?	Cross-medium breakout: the content linked to the campaign is covered by Indian press agencies/media outlets, Indian TV and Indian social media platforms.
Celebrity amplification	Specific stories from <i>Indian Chronicles</i> have been shared by very influential public figures (politicians, researchers, journalists) with sometimes tens of thousands of followers on social media. By design, <i>Indian Chronicles</i> involve "celebrities" in the production of content. In their private capacity

³¹³ https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Nimmo_influence_operations_PDF.pdf

	(personal Twitter accounts, Facebook pages...), they become de facto one of the main amplifiers of the information operation ³¹⁴ .
Policy response or call for violence	<p>Campaign has succeeded to reach European Parliament agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written and oral questions were asked by MEPs on the specific points covered by the Information Operation; • Official reactions from institutions and governments to what was presented as "EU delegation" visits in India or in the Maldives. <p>Demonstrations have also taken place in Geneva and other cities and the Information Operation has created content that helped to fuel the hostility of the Indian population towards Pakistan and China.</p>

Therefore, following Ben Nimmo's breakout scale, we would qualify *Indian Chronicles* as a category 6 operation, the highest grade of this scale.

Even without formal attribution, the length, sophistication and the range of this information operation should call the attention of international institutions on the actors that have been able to design and maintain an operation with that scale.

III- Attribution

Attribution is a complex task. With regards to going beyond the ties of *Indian Chronicles* with the Srivastava Group, we could not come with enough evidence to do a formal attribution and we encourage everyone to refrain from attributing definitely *Indian Chronicles* to some specific actors (e.g. Indian intelligence services) without digging further.

However, during our investigation, we found several elements that suggest the possible involvement of other stakeholders:

- The obscure Srivastava-owned company Aglaya and its potential ties with Indian intelligence services;
- ANI's ambiguous relationship with the Indian State;
- The threats against a speaker at the UN by a member of the Srivastava group and the alleged interrogation of the supposed victim by Indian security services.

³¹⁴ See for example tweets of celebrities amplifying EU Chronicle or EP Today articles: <https://archive.is/IA7lv/> <https://archive.is/ucMS2/> <https://archive.is/8juak/> <https://archive.is/Oe9Gs> /<https://archive.is/Oe9Gs>

a- The obscure company "Aglaya"

In 2016, VICE revealed the existence of a brochure distributed by a small New Delhi-based company called Aglaya during the ISS World Conference³¹⁵ in 2014. According to this document, the Indian company offered hacking/spy tools but also information warfare services.

The Vice article indicated: "For eight to 12 weeks campaigns costing €2,500 per day, the company promised to "pollute" internet search results and social networks like Facebook and Twitter "to manipulate current events." For this service, which it labelled "Weaponized Information," Aglaya offered "infiltration," "ruse," and "sting" operations to "discredit a target" such as an "individual or company."³¹⁶ Aglaya's brochure also mentioned the ability to "hamper country level reputations".

WEAPONIZED INFORMATION

Ability to pollute internet search results and popular forums such as Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, etc to manipulate current events. This information attack is inserted into caches of all popular electronic services till it reaches a critical mass. Example of attack would be to pollute search results for keywords such as "Money laundry" and "John Smith" or "Cheat" and "Company Ltd".

Operations

- Infiltration Operation
- Ruse Operations
- Set Piece Operation
- False Flag Operation
- False Rescue Operation
- Disruption Operation
- Sting Operations

Example Targets

- Individual or Company Targets
- Ongoing Business or Internal Country level discussions or negotiations
- Hamper country level reputations
- Disrupt ongoing processes in third countries

Discredit a Target

- Setup Traps
- Change Photos on popular forums
- Write False Data on blogs
- Send False Information to contacts

Discredit a Company

- Leak confidential information or perpetrated information to Press and Bloggers worldwide
- Post negative information, reviews or officer related "bad" reviews
- Stop deals / ruin business relationships

Technical Points of dissemination

- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- Personal Touch points: SMS, Email, Phone Voice
- Internet Cache: Search Engines, Bloggers, RSS Feeds, Web Pages
- World Wide: Press, Financial Press, Micro Magazines and Newspapers

Aglaya is owned by Ankur Srivastava and is registered to the same address as the Srivastava Group in New Delhi³¹⁷. In another article, Vice also highlighted how Aglaya described some of its services as "Cyber Nukes"³¹⁸. If some of these claims are very likely exaggerated, leaked emails showed that Ankur Srivastava was in touch with the infamous Italian surveillance company "Hacking Team"³¹⁹. In another article by Forbes on government surveillance, reporter Thomas Brewster states that "Srivastava told me he only sold to Indian intelligence agencies"³²⁰.

³¹⁵ *The Intelligence Support Systems World Conference* gathers law enforcement, intelligence and homeland security analysts and companies offering cybersecurity and electronic surveillance tools.

³¹⁶ Article from Vice: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/d7ywx/leaked-catalog-weaponized-information-twitter-aglaya> (archive here: <https://perma.cc/ZSP6-Z6QZ>)

³¹⁷ See address here: <https://perma.cc/D3QY-GUYP>

³¹⁸ See article from Vice here: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/59weqb/a-spyware-company-audaciously-offers-cyber-nukes> (archive available here: <https://perma.cc/H4UQ-YU52>)

³¹⁹ See article from the Wired about the "Hacking Team": <https://www.wired.com/2015/07/hacking-team-breach-shows-global-spying-firm-run-amok/> (archive available here: <https://perma.cc/959L-BEKH>)

³²⁰ See article from Forbes here: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2017/02/16/government-iphone-android-spyware-is-the-same-as-seedy-spouseware/?sh=3a29e0d1455c> (archive available here: <https://perma.cc/98DU-2UYZ>)

b- ANI's ambiguous relationship with the India State

One of the central actors in our investigation is the ANI News agency, which is the main vector of amplification for the content produced by actors tied to the information operation. This raises multiple questions: Why is an international news agency re-using articles from obscure or fake media outlets (EP Today, EU Chronicle...), rewriting regularly content to support even more clearly some pro-Indian stances? Why is ANI regularly covering demonstrations organized by obscure NGOs in European cities? Are there ties between the Srivastava group and the ANI news agency?

For none of these questions, we will be able to give clear answers. Still, it seemed important for us to mention that the ANI News agency has had an ambiguous relationship with the Indian state for years. A long investigation³²¹ from the Indian magazine The Caravan shows how a wedding brought the founding family of ANI (Prakash family) extremely close to Inna Ramamohan Ra, the former Principal Information Officer for four Indian Prime Ministers. According to the Caravan's article, Rao had also spent four years with the Research and Analysis Wing ("R&AW- the main Indian external intelligence service"). This relationship has helped ANI to build for decades strong connections with the successive Indian governments.

According to an article from the online India media Ken³²², ANI has established a virtual monopoly over delivering news video feeds to TV channels in India and was contracted for example several years ago by the Indian government to "develop programming" for the DD Kashmir TV channel, which is described as a project launched to counter Pakistan propaganda in Kashmir³²³. In his piece, the journalist from The Caravan also mentions the regular coverage by an ANI team of small demonstrations for Pakistani minorities in European cities (Geneva, London...). These events are similar to the demonstrations organized by actors involved into the information operations uncovered by our investigation. The Indian media News Laundry also highlighted in an article how ANI inflated the CVs of Henri Malosse and Brian Toll, two individuals connected to organizations mentioned in our report, in interviews where they declared their support to India's decision to abrogate Article 370 in Kashmir³²⁴.

c- The threats against a speaker at the UN by a member of the Srivastava group and the alleged interrogation of the supposed victim by Indian security services

In 2009, Punjabi writer and paediatrician Dr Harshindar Kaur, who spoke at a side-event at the United Nations, claimed she had been threatened by a member of the Srivastava group. This member of the Srivastava group allegedly identified herself as a "very senior government official from India". She would have threatened Dr Kaur, claiming she had contacted high officials in India and Punjab, and that she could harm Dr Kaur once they would be back in India³²⁵.

According to a press release from an Indian NGO called Lawyers For Human Rights International, Dr Kaur "immediately made a complaint to the concerned quarters of the United Nations and exhibited her fears before

³²¹ See article from the Caravan here: <https://caravanmagazine.in/reportage/ani-reports-government-version-truth>

³²² See article from the Ken here: <https://the-ken.com/story/ani-video-news-monopoly/>

³²³ DD Kashir is owned by the Broadcasting Ministry of India

³²⁴ See article from NewsLaundry here: <https://www.newsLaundry.com/2019/09/18/ani-news-european-experts-kashmir> (archive available here: <https://perma.cc/38VU-C9C8>)

³²⁵ See archive of an ar news article about this incident:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20091128225225/http://www.punjabnewslines.com/content/view/17232/38/>

them, about her security after returning back to India. On her return to India, she was questioned by CBI and other intelligence agencies"³²⁶.

If true, this incident reinforces the questions around potential connection between the Srivastava Group and the Indian State.

IV- Summary of the influence operation

Overall, according to our open-source investigation, the information operation led by the Srivastava Group began in 2005 and is still ongoing.

The operation's mission is to discredit nations in conflict with India in Asia, in particular Pakistan but also to a lesser extent China. Its long-term objectives are:

- Internally, to reinforce pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan (and anti-Chinese) feelings in India.
- Internationally, to consolidate the power and improve the perception of India, to damage the reputation of other countries and ultimately benefit from more support from International Institutions such as the EU and the UN.

To do so, the information operation consists in:

- The support to minority and human rights NGOs e.g., Baloch rights associations
- The use of Members of the European Parliament to create a mirage of institutional support from the European Institutions to these minority groups, in favour of Indian interests and against Pakistan (and China)
- An active presence in Geneva and the United Nations' Human Rights Council by:
 - organising side-events and demonstrations in support of minority rights,
 - impersonating extinguished UN accredited NGOs or using the speaking slots of various inactive NGOs at the Council to give a voice to these minorities at the UN.
- The creation of fake media in Brussels, Geneva and across the world or the use of existing obscure media networks – present in at least in 95 countries - to multiply online negative iterations about countries in conflict with India, in particular Pakistan.

CONCLUSION: Recommendation to policy makers

We are alarmed to see the continuation of Indian Chronicles, which, despite our first report and wide press coverage, has pursued its 15-year long operation and even recently launched EU Chronicle, a fake EU outlet. This should serve as a call to action for decision-makers to put in place a relevant framework to sanction actors abusing international institutions. It is possible that the absence of messages from the institutions affected by *Indian Chronicles* provided the space and opportunity for the operation to reinvent itself and to continue doing "more of the same".

It is also our belief that the possibility for malicious actors to abuse search engines by reproducing the same content hundreds of times should also be challenged.

Our investigation relied heavily on the analysis of websites and domain names, rather than online platforms. Much of what we uncovered could be done thanks to website domain names registration history and because many websites of *Indian Chronicles* were created at a time when malicious actors were less concerned with

³²⁶ <http://lfhri.org/lfhri-condemns-pseudo-nationalist-attitude-of-civil-servant-of-india/> <https://perma.cc/63VV-JETU>

privacy. Nowadays, malicious actors register domain names and create websites anonymously, making detection more difficult. The regulatory discussion on data transparency from platforms now taking place should therefore be broadened to include greater scrutiny of domain names. Domain name information is critical for disinformation researchers; we therefore advocate for sufficient transparency for researchers investigating malicious domains. We also urge the domain name industry to seriously reflect on this kind of fraudulent, disinforming behaviour as technical abuse of the domain name system.