

A site covering German and international news that also publishes videos from a YouTube channel with the same name. The site has published numerous false claims, including about the COVID-19 virus.



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic journalistic standards.

Score: 20/100

Ownership and Financing

KenFM.de is owned by Kayvan Soufi Siavash, whose pen name is Ken Jebsen. Jebsen is a German activist and former TV and radio host who has worked for the popular German channels ZDF and ProSieben and for the Berlin-Brandenburg public broadcaster (RBB).

From 2001 to 2011, Jebsen hosted a weekly radio show called KenFM for Radio Fritz, part of RBB. In November 2011, Henryk Broder, who operates the website Achgut.com, published an email by Jebsen that Broder claimed contained anti-Semitic statements. According to the email published on Achgut.com, Jebsen wrote, “I know who invented the holocaust as PR. The nephew of Freud. [Edward Louis] Bernays. In his book about propaganda, [Bernays] explained how to carry out such campaigns. Goebbels read that and implemented it.”

RBB dismissed Jebsen that same month, stating that “many of his contributions did not meet the journalistic standards of the RBB.” Jebsen sued the broadcaster, claiming there were no grounds for his termination, according to a report by Tagesspiegel. Jebsen and RBB reached an out-of-court settlement in 2013, the terms of which were not disclosed.

KenFM.de solicits donations and states on its About page that it is “user-funded.” The site does not run advertising, but the associated App for KenFM carries ads.

- ✗ Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)
- ✗ Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
- ✗ Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
- ✗ Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
- ✗ Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
- ✓ Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
- Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
- ✓ Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
- ✗ The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

[More information.](#)

Content

The site’s About KenFM (Über KenFM) section states, “KenFM is a free press portal, a news platform that deliberately uses the internet as the only distribution medium and can thus be 'received' throughout the German-speaking world.” It also describes itself as a “media waste separator” that “offers its listeners, viewers and readers not only up-to-date interviews, its own political statements and the publication of contributions by numerous guest authors, but also elaborately produced special programmes.”

The site organizes its content into three main topics, Politics (Politik), Environment (Umwelt), and Social affairs (Soziales), as well as by media format. The site offers separate sections for articles and for its 27 channels, which include interviews, panels, and podcasts. The channels cover topics including politics, society, economics, finance, psychology, and science. Segments, regardless of the topic, often address what the site considers threats to Germany's sovereignty, while criticising Israel and its supporters, established media outlets, and various “elites.” Articles also often condemn the European Union and NATO.

One program, called “The power at eight” (“Die Macht um Acht”), focuses critically on Tagesschau, the main TV news show for the German public service broadcaster ARD (which airs daily at 8 PM.) Another show, titled “Me, Myself and “Media”, aims to “[expose] brazen propaganda, and political or journalistic contributions that originate from NATO networks or other lobbying organisations,” according to the site.

Many of the broadcasts are hosted by the site’s owner, Jebesen; the site’s Breaking News (Aktuell) section also often features videos of Jebesen. Interviews on the site have featured guests including Jürgen Elsässer, the publisher of the right-wing populist magazine Compact, as well as authors from the publishing company Kopp Verlag, which publishes right-wing and conspiracy-oriented books.

The site offers a selection of its articles in English, French, Russian, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Dutch.

Credibility

Videos and articles on Ken.FM.de often features interviews with people making false claims or espousing conspiracy theories, including German author Gerhard Wisnewski and former Tagesschau host Eva Herman as well as Ruediger Dahlke and Wolfgang Wodarg, medical professionals known for spreading falsehoods about the COVID-19 virus.

Articles on the site often include false or misleading claims. For example, a March 2020 article, titled “COVID 19 - A Trojan horse, a European 9/11?” (“COVID 19 – Ein trojanisches Pferd, ein europäisches 9/11?”) claimed that both the 2020 coronavirus outbreak and the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks are essentially

hoaxes. “COVID 19 is a Trojan horse and probably, no wonder, is all about global financial interests. It's like on 9/11/2001.... I didn't know at the time why it happened, but it was crystal clear to me that this was an inside job,” the article stated. “What we are all experiencing now is a European 9/11, a turning point in our remaining democratic society towards another state, another order.... The fact is that it is not about COVID 19, nor about protecting the population from a virus. This is a lie, as you can see for yourself by checking the sources below.”

There is no evidence that either the 9/11 terror attacks or the 2020 coronavirus pandemic are fabrications, or that the attack on the World Trade Center was an “inside job.” The 9/11 Commission and multiple other investigations concluded that the al-Qaida terror network and Osama bin Laden masterminded the 2001 terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

To back its claims, the site included links to the personal website of (or interviews with) German doctor Wolfgang Wodarg, which included claims that scientists sounding the alarm about COVID-19 are doing so for financial gain and that the virus is no worse than a flu. Both claims have been prominently debunked, including by the nonprofit investigative newsroom Correctiv and by the Austrian fact-checking nonprofit Mimikama.

The source list also included a YouTube video from the channel Eingeschenkt.tv, claiming that the COVID-19 pandemic is a “normal wave of influenza.” This claim has been refuted by the World Health Organization and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), among others. For example, the WHO reported that “fractions of severe and critical infection [are] higher than what is observed for influenza infection,” and also that the “mortality for COVID-19 appears higher than for influenza.” The ECDC states on its site that the COVID-19 virus “appears to be more transmissible than seasonal influenza,” and the Robert Koch Institute has explained that an infection can lead to “severe pneumonia resulting in lung failure and death.”

In March 2020, the site also published an opinion article by a former World Bank economist, Peter König, titled “China is facing the COVID 19 epidemic. Was it man-made?” (“China ist mit der COVID-19-Epidemie konfrontiert. War sie von Menschenhand gemacht?”).

The article stated, “What the Western media misses is the fact that there is a likelihood that the virus could have been manufactured by humans in one or more of the many US biological warfare laboratories.” It added: “The Western media is also silent about the fact that the virus appears to be highly infectious to ethnic Chinese, meaning that it specifically targets Chinese DNA... Will it eventually break through the ‘Chinese DNA borders’ and also infect other DNA types, i.e. Western ‘Caucasian’ people?”

There is no evidence that COVID-19 was engineered in a lab as part of a “biological war,” or to target Chinese people. In fact, people of multiple ethnicities have gotten infected with the virus. A March 2020 study published in the journal *Nature Medicine* concluded that the virus “is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus.” An earlier study, published in February 2020 in the journal *Nature*, found that the COVID-19 virus is “96% percent identical at the whole-genome level to a bat coronavirus.” In an April 2020 statement, the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) — a group of 17 U.S. intelligence services, including the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation — said that it “concurs with the wide scientific consensus that the COVID-19 virus was not manmade or genetically modified.”

A December 2019 article, titled “Fake climate rescue to save the elites” (“Fake Klimarettung zur Rettung der Eliten”), claimed that carbon dioxide released by humans does not cause global warming, and that “global elites” had constructed this narrative so that “the masses of the population [would] voluntarily renounce and joyfully give up part of their already greatly reduced purchasing power to the state... without riots in the streets.” According to the article “the adventurous theory that the man-made portion ... of the naturally existing trace element CO₂ in our air is supposed to cause global warming belongs rather to esotericism than to the realm of science.”

Multiple scientific studies and government agencies have concluded for years that the world’s temperatures are rising, attributing the increase to rising carbon dioxide levels that are caused at least in part by human activities. The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) states on its website: “The currently observed

climate change is largely caused by human” activity, which “inevitably releases carbon dioxide.” A 2014 report by a United Nations panel concluded that greenhouse gas emissions had gone up since the pre-industrial era, “driven largely by economic and population growth, and are now higher than ever.”

A December 2019 article, titled “Scandal around fake chemical weapons attacks in Syria” (“Skandal um Fake-Chemiewaffenangriffe in Syrien”), claimed that the Russia-backed Syrian government did not use chemical weapons against its own citizens in Douma in April 2018, and that the attacks had been staged by Western countries. “For attentive observers it is certainly no news that the fake chemical weapons operations against the population in Syrian villages were used by the West as war propaganda against the legitimate government in Syria,” the article stated. “The local henchmen of the West in these perfidious attacks under false flags were and are the ‘White Helmets’ masked as civilian helpers, closely associated with the local Islamist terrorist groups.”

Claims that the attacks were staged have been contradicted for years by first-person accounts, photographs, and videos documenting the atrocity, as well as reports from the United Nations, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and the French government. There is no evidence that the White Helmets, a Syrian volunteer rescue organization, are involved with terrorist groups.

Because KenFM.de has frequently published false and misleading information, NewsGuard has determined that the site repeatedly publishes false content and deceptive headlines, and that it does not gather and present information responsibly.

Although the site’s owner and editor, Ken Jebsen, has on occasion acknowledged prior factual errors in the course of his videos, the site does not appear to run corrections and does not include a corrections policy.

The site does not disclose an agenda, and it purports to distinguish news from opinion by labeling some articles as “A commentary by” (“Ein Kommentar von”) or “A standpoint from” (“Ein Standpunkt von”), followed by the name of the writer. However, articles not labeled as opinion also frequently include opinionated content.

For example, an April 2020 article, titled “Israeli soldiers steal and destroy Palestinian clinic against Covid-19” and published only in English stated, “In Palestine, the Zionist occupiers have always ignored the legally binding commitment because they can be sure that powerful Zionist friends in the US Congress and, to date, in virtually all US governments have blocked for at least half a century any initiative in the United Nations that would have forced Israel to change its criminal course. And in Germany – in politics, the media and in society – the anti-Semitism club threatens to suffocate any criticism of the racist apartheid policy of the self-declared Jewish state.”

A May 2020 article, titled “Campact pretends to be the government, while Antifa plays corona police” (“Campact macht auf Regierung – Antifa spielt sich als Corona-Polizei auf”), stated that “Those who call themselves antifascists use the violent methods of the Nazis against those who fight for the constitution with assemblies, demonstrations and written information. They like to attack women and elderly people. Because the mental dwarfs, when they are many, are real brave giants.”

A June 2020 article, titled “Constitutional protection: On the hunt for conspiracy theorists” (“Verfassungs-Schutz: Auf der Jagd nach Verschwörungstheoretikern”), stated, “The government is currently violating the constitution under the pretext of a diffuse illness, and anyone who wants to prevent it from doing so is 1. an agent of a foreign country and 2. destroying the free democratic basic order? How sick is that?”

Because KenFM.de regularly publishes unlabelled commentary in news articles, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

The site did not respond to two NewsGuard emails and a phone message inquiring about the articles cited above and the site’s editorial standards, including its handling of news and opinion and its approach to corrections.

Transparency

The Imprint page discloses the site’s ownership by Ken Jebesen and identifies him as editor-in-chief. The About KenFM (Über KenFM) page states that the site is “user-funded.”

Articles and videos are typically attributed to the site's writers. An Authors (Autoren) tab at the top of the homepage provides a list of the site's authors, as well as the articles written by each. The site does not provide authors' contact or biographical information — which does not meet NewsGuard's standard for providing information about content creators.

The site does not run advertisements.

The site did not respond to two NewsGuard emails and a phone message inquiring about its lack of content creator information.

History

Ken Jebsen launched a YouTube channel in January 2012, where he continued a version of his show, KenFM, that had been broadcast by RBB. The same month, Jebsen re-launched the site KenFM.de, which he had used since 2001 for his RBB radio show.

According to reports by Die Zeit, in 2014, Jebsen spoke at demonstrations called Vigils for Peace (Mahnwachen für den Frieden), which started as a show of support for Russia's annexation of Crimea and since 2015 have only taken place occasionally. The protests now are aimed at the global financial system, the Western media, and the military armament of Germany. Die Zeit also reported that in 2018, Jebsen traveled with politicians of the AfD and the left-wing party Die Linke to Russian-occupied Crimea, where he participated in an economic conference organized by the Russian government to attract Western investors, despite the EU sanctions against Russia at the time.

According to media reports, in 2020, Jebsen also spoke at non-registered demonstrations against the COVID-19 measures of the German government on multiple occasions, and used his YouTube channel and website to call on citizens to participate in these protests.

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: [Click Here](#)

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