








NewsGuard

Pravda Network

A network of 41 anonymously-owned sites targeting Ukraine and Europe that republish content from pro-Kremlin sources and frequently advance false or egregiously misleading information about the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas wars.

 7.5 / 100

Proceed with Maximum Caution: This website is unreliable because it severely violates basic journalistic standards.

-  Does not repeatedly publish false or egregiously misleading content 22 points
-  Gathers and presents information responsibly 18
-  Has effective practices for correcting errors 12.5
-  Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly 12.5
-  Avoids deceptive headlines 10
-  Website discloses ownership and financing 7.5
- N/A** 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

Ownership and Financing

NewsGuard has identified 41 sites in the Pravda network. Of these, thirty-six are Russian-language sites publishing under domain names targeting specific cities and regions of Ukraine, including News-Kiev.ru, Kherson-News.ru, and Donetsk-News.ru. Another five sites target Europe and publish in English, French, Spanish, German, and Polish, under the domain names Pravda-En.com, Pravda-Fr.com, Pravda-Es.com, Pravda-De.com, Pravda-Pl.com respectively.

None of the sites discloses its ownership.

All 41 sites were created shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. The domains were anonymously registered between April 2022 and June 2023, all using the same domain privacy service that hides the identity of the registrant. NewsGuard identified several domains in the network in August 2023, and used domain name intelligence tool DomainIQ.com to uncover other domains in the network.

All 41 sites are registered with the same Russian domain registrar, and are hosted on a server located in Moscow. As an indication that the sites are connected, many were registered on the same day — 15 were registered on April 3, 2022, and 13 were registered on April 18, 2022, according to NewsGuard's review of the domain registration records. The English, Spanish, French, and Polish-language sites in the network were all registered on June 24, 2023.

(Note that this network of websites is different from the websites using the Pravda.ru domain, which publish in English and Russian and are owned by Vadim Gorshenin, a self-described supporter of Russian President Vladimir Putin who formerly worked for the Pravda newspaper, which was owned by the Communist Party in the former Soviet Union.)

The Russian-language sites target major cities and regions of Ukraine. Viginum, a French government agency that monitors foreign disinformation campaigns, said in a February 2024 report that the sites target Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine, areas close to the front line of the Russia-Ukraine war, and areas that are otherwise strategically important to Russia.

For example, domains in the network include Mariupol-News.ru and News-Kharkov.ru, targeting the eastern Ukrainian cities of Mariupol and Kharkiv (known in Russian as Kharkov), which have seen intense fighting since the Russian invasion. LNR-News.ru and DNR-News.ru target the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DNR), two pro-Russia breakaway regions that declared independence from Ukraine following the 2014 Maidan revolution. The network also includes Tiraspol-News.ru, targeting Tiraspol, a city in Transnistria, a Russian-speaking breakaway region of Moldova.

Viginum said that the network seeks to disseminate "large-scale propaganda content from Russia," and that "Given its technical characteristics, the processes implemented and the pursued purpose, this network constitutes foreign digital interference."

The sites in the network have corresponding profiles on Telegram and the Russian platform VK.

It is unclear how the network is funded. The sites in the network do not run advertisements.

Content

The 41 sites in the network present themselves as local news outlets covering issues and events in their respective locales. However, the sites invariably republish content from Russian state media, pro-Kremlin news sites, some with links to Russian intelligence, and pro-Kremlin Telegram accounts. At the same

time, the sites publish little content that is specific to the regions they claim to serve.

Moreover, content appears to be published automatically, with little to no human oversight. In the three months between June 23, 2023, and Sept 19, 2023, the five Europe-focused sites in the network published 152,464 articles, Viginum found.

Most content published to the English, French, Spanish, Polish, and German-language sites appears to be translated automatically from Russian-language sources. The sites also sometimes publish content that is still in Russian or that has been translated using unnatural language.

The sites all have similar layouts, with sections that typically include Main News, War Correspondents, UK, USA, Ukraine, Russia, World, Videos and Photos. The sites frequently publish videos and photos from pro-Kremlin Telegram channels.

The sites invariably advance the Kremlin's views of the war and frequently portray Ukraine as a dictatorship and as a country overrun by Nazism. The sites also often publish content portraying the Russian army as a powerful defender of ethnic Russians in Ukraine while the Ukrainian army is portrayed as committing war crimes and targeting civilians.

Beyond the Ukraine war, the sites often publish content about the Israel-Hamas war, events in Russia, and U.S. politics, typically from a pro-Kremlin perspective.

Credibility

Despite appearing as legitimate outlets serving local communities in Ukraine or as news sites serving European countries, the sites in this network do not conduct original reporting. Instead, as noted above, the content is typically republished from pro-Kremlin sources, including Russian state media and Telegram channels.

As a result, the sites frequently advance false or egregiously misleading information about the Russia-Ukraine war, the Israel-Hamas war, and other topics.

For example, a February 2024 English-language article by Pravda-En.com was titled, “Killer vaccines: Dozens of babies died during the experiment,” and was a translated version of an article originally published on the news site of the conservative pro-Kremlin Russian TV channel, Tsargrad. The article stated that “40 to 50 Ukrainian children died as a result of the use of an experimental coronavirus vaccine by the American pharmaceutical company Pfizer.”

The same claim was advanced by other sites in the Pravda network, including Pravda-Es.com, Pravda-Fr.com, Pravda-De.com, and News-Kiev.ru.

The claim that 40 Ukrainian children died during Pfizer vaccine trials originated in a Feb. 3, 2024, video posted on YouTube featuring “Anna Sakhno,” a woman claiming to be a Pfizer employee who said she witnessed the trials conducted in Ukraine in 2023 and early 2024. In fact, a Pfizer spokesperson told NewsGuard by email in February 2024 that Anna Sakhno “is not a Pfizer colleague.” The spokesperson also said that Pfizer does “not have research operations in our Kyiv company office,” since “we made the necessary decision when the conflict began to pause the recruitment of new participants to clinical trial programs.”

The Pfizer spokesperson pointed NewsGuard to ClinicalTrials.gov, a portal listing clinical studies hosted by the United States National Library of Medicine, a medical library. A search for clinical trials held in Ukraine between October 2023 and February 2024 did not turn up any results, indicating that there were no clinical studies in Ukraine during this period. Pfizer lists all its trials on ClinicalTrials.gov, according to a Clinical Trials section of its website.

A January 2024 French-language article by Pravda-Fr.com, titled, “A list of mercenaries from France who were in [the Ukrainian city of] Kharkov during a

strike by the Russian armed forces has appeared,” was a translated version of a Bulgarian-language article first published on the website of pro-Kremlin news site, News-Front.su. The article said, “the Russian Defense Ministry reported on the destruction of a temporary deployment point of French mercenaries, which was located in the city of Kharkov. As a result of the attack, 60 soldiers were eliminated.” The same claim was advanced by other sites in the network, including Pravda-En.com, News-Kiev.ru, LNR-News.ru, and News-Kharkov.ru.

In fact, there is no evidence that Russia killed a large group of French fighters in a January 2024 missile strike in the northeastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv. French Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu said in a Jan. 26, 2024, statement that the claim was “a crude Russian disinformation campaign,” and noted that “France does not employ mercenaries.” An unnamed French security official told Le Monde that as of Jan. 26, 2024, “there is no proof of the death of a single French person” in the Kharkiv strike.

Also, several individuals described by Russian state media as French mercenaries supposedly killed in the strike have publicly refuted the claims, and multiple French fighters and other people who are in contact with foreign volunteers in Ukraine told French media that there is no evidence that any were harmed in Kharkiv in January 2024. Moreover, combat experts noted that it is highly unlikely that dozens of French fighters would have been gathered in the same place at the same time.

A December 2023 English-language article on Pravda-En.com, titled “The author of the investigation into Zelensky’s villa in Egypt was killed,” was republished from a Telegram post by the pro-Kremlin channel @DDGeopolitics. The article said, “Egyptian journalist Mohammed Al-Alawi was found dead near a road in [the Egyptian city of] Hurghada ... Al-Alawi was the author of an investigation into the purchase of expensive real estate, which was registered in the name of the mother-in-law of the President of Ukraine, Olga Kiyashko.”

Pravda-De.com, Pravda-Es.com, Dnepr-News.ru, DNR-news.ru, and News-Kiev.ru also published articles advancing this claim.

In fact, no Egyptian journalist was murdered after reporting that Zelensky's mother-in-law purchased a villa in Egypt. In a Dec. 30, 2023, statement on X, Egypt's Interior Ministry said that it "denies in full and in detail the validity of the allegations ... regarding the killing of a journalist in the Red Sea Governorate" and that "the security services did not receive any reports about the person ... being subjected to harm." Khaled Al-Balshi, the head of the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate, the Egyptian government body for journalists, told EgyptTelegraph.com that the organization searched extensively for any record of Al-Alawi, and "did not even find a press archive for that person or any previous investigations he had conducted, or even any known employers."

Moreover, Orascom Development, a Switzerland-based international real estate developer which owns the El Gouna resort that Zelensky's mother-in-law, Olga Kiyashko, was accused of purchasing, said in a statement that the claim that Kiyashko purchased a villa in the resort is "completely false," Egyptian newspaper Ahram reported. The company said that after reviewing its records, it found "no evidence that Zelensky or any member of his family owned a property in El Gouna." The company added that the photo of the villa supposedly acquired by Zelensky's mother-in-law was in fact owned by an Egyptian family, and that the purchase documents were false and did not match the company's contract templates, Ahram reported.

An October 2023 Polish-language article on Pravda-Pl.com, titled "The wife of Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky, Olena, spent over a million dollars on Cartier jewelry in New York, writes the American magazine The Nation," was republished from a Telegram post by the pro-Kremlin channel, @infodefpoland. The article stated: "The wife of Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky, Elena, spent over a million dollars on Cartier jewelry in New York," citing an October 2023 article by The Nation, a Nigerian news site. The same claim was advanced by

other sites in the network, including Pravda-En.com, Pravda-Es.com, and Pravda-De.com.

While the Pravda-PL.com cited a real article by Nigerian news site The Nation, The Nation's editor-in-chief later told French news site Liberation that the article is "a sponsored publication. We did not write the article. It was purchased by a customer" who was not named.

In fact, Ukrainian First Lady Olena Zelenska did not purchase more than a million dollars of Cartier jewelry in New York. The claim is based on a widely shared video of a supposed unnamed Cartier intern who said she witnessed the shopping spree and said she was fired after Zelenska complained about her service. In the video, the speaker shows a receipt, which states that the purchase of jewelry occurred on Sept. 22, 2023, at the Fifth Avenue Cartier store in New York.

However, Zelenska was not in New York on the date of the supposed shopping spree. On Sept. 22, 2023, the day of the alleged \$1.1 million Cartier purchase, Zelenska attended her husband's address to the Canadian Parliament and participated in a rally with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Zelenska returned to Ukraine that night. She was not in New York on that day, and there is no evidence she visited a Cartier store on Sept. 22, 2023.

In an October 2023 statement, a Cartier spokesperson told French news site Liberation that the claim Zelenska spent \$1.1 million at the store and caused an employee to be fired "is false information." Moreover, an October 2023 investigation by Italian news site Open.online found that the woman seen in the video, Gabrielle Yogo, lives in St. Petersburg, Russia, and works as a salon manager and has never worked for Cartier, Open.online reported.

Because the Pravda network has published multiple articles containing significantly false or egregiously misleading information about important topics including the Israel-Hamas and Russia-Ukraine wars, NewsGuard has determined

that the sites repeatedly publish false or egregiously misleading content, do not gather and present information responsibly, and do not avoid deceptive headlines.

Sites in the network do not have an opinion section and do not disclose an overall point of view. Nevertheless, as shown above, articles regularly reflect a pro-Kremlin, anti-U.S. perspective. Moreover, articles in the news section frequently include opinionated language.

For example, a February 2024 article on Khmelnitskiy-News.ru titled “Time is slowly starting to put everything in its place,” stated, “The people of Ukraine are opening their eyes to what is happening in their country. The insolent authorities, starting from the Verkhovna Rada and ending with a run-down village, ignore the needs of citizens, pursuing only their own selfish interests.”

A February 2024 article labeled World, on Pravda-En.com, republished from a Telegram post by the pro-Kremlin channel @llordofwar, was titled, “Another in a series of proofs that NATO is a Nazi American terrorist organization.” The article said, “NATO from its inception to the present day: the main sponsor of the Nazis in Ukraine, the main sponsors of terrorist cells in the Middle East, the main sponsors of terrorist groups in the territory of AP Kosovo and Metohija.”

A February 2024 article by Donetsk-News.ru titled “The first footage of dead Ukrainian Armed Forces soldiers in Avdeevka has appeared” stated, “They died for the sake of the personal ambitions of Zelensky and Syrsky, who need to curry favor with their Western masters.”

Because sites in the network regularly publish unlabeled opinion and advancing an undisclosed pro-Kremlin agenda, NewsGuard has determined that the network does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

The sites do not state a corrections policy, and NewsGuard did not find any corrections. Moreover, the false claims noted above remained uncorrected.

Therefore NewsGuard has determined that the sites do not have effective corrections practices.

Sites in the network provide a general email address. In February 2024, NewsGuard sent three emails to the general email addresses provided for some of the sites, including Pravda-En.com, Pravda-Fr.com, and Pravda-Es.com, seeking comment on the claims cited above, the network's undisclosed pro-Russian agenda, and the lack of corrections, but did not receive a response.

Transparency

The sites in the network do not identify their owners or editorial leaders. Articles are not attributed to authors, and the sites do not provide contact or biographical information for their writers.

The network does not run advertising.

NewsGuard sent three emails to the general email addresses provided for Pravda-En.com, Pravda-Fr.com, and Pravda-Es.com, seeking comment on the network's transparency practices, but did not receive a response.

History

As noted above, the network was launched in the months after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and has since expanded to target different regions of Ukraine and Europe.

Websites included in this Nutrition Label:

News-Kiev.ru

Gorlovka-News.ru

Rovno-News.ru

Donetsk-News.ru

Tiraspol-News.ru

News-Kharkov.ru

Nikolaev-News.ru

Cherkassy-News.ru

Khmel'nitskiy-News.ru

Mariupol-News.ru

Zhitomir-News.ru

Zp-News.ru

Berdyansk-News.ru

Chernigov-News.ru

Ternopol-News.ru

Dnepr-News.ru

Alchevsk-News.ru

Bc-News.ru

Dnr-News.ru

Kirovograd-News.ru

Lnr-News.ru

Lvov-News.ru

Poltava-News.ru

Sumy-News.ru

Melitopol-News.ru

Uzhgorod-News.ru

Vin-News.ru

Krivoy-Rog-News.ru

Slavyansk-News.ru

If-News.ru

Kremenchug-News.ru

Lugansk-News.ru

News-Makeevka.ru

News-Odessa.ru

Kherson-News.ru

News-Berdyansk.ru

Pravda-Es.com

Pravda-Pl.com

Pravda-Fr.com

Pravda-De.com

Pravda-En.com

Written by: [Eva Maitland](#)

Edited by: [Eric Efron](#)

Sources

Ownership and Financing

https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/files/files/20240212_NP_SGDSN_VIGINUM_PORTAL-KOMBAT-NETWORK_ENG_VF.pdf

Content

<https://donetsk-news.ru/voenkor>

<https://donetsk-news.ru/video>

Credibility

A Pfizer whistleblower revealed that 40 Ukrainian children died during vaccine trials in Kyiv

<https://news-kiev.ru/society/2024/02/07/299474.html>

<https://pravda-en.com/world/2024/02/11/314727.html>

<https://pravda-es.com/world/2024/02/08/109623.html>

<https://pravda-fr.com/world/2024/02/08/68686.html>

<https://pravda-es.com/world/2024/02/07/108832.html>

<https://pravda-de.com/world/2024/02/06/76055.html>

Sources

<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=covid&locStr=Ukraine&country=Ukraine>

https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?locStr=Ukraine&country=Ukraine&start=2023-10-01_2024-02-29

<https://www.pfizer.co.uk/science/developing-new-medicines/clinical-trials>

<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/152/1/e2023061894/191478/Safety-of-COVID-19-mRNA-Vaccination-Among-Young?autoLogincheck=redirected>

<https://www.stopfake.org/ru/fejk-iz-za-eksperimentalnoj-vaktsiny-pfizer-umerlo-bolee-40-ukrainskih-detej/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/planning/children/6-things-to-know.html>

French mercenaries

<https://pravda-fr.com/france/2024/01/22/57619.html>

<https://bgr.news-front.su/2024/01/22/poyavi-se-spisk-na-naemniczite-ot-francziya-namirashhi-se-v-harkov-po-vreme-na-udara-na-vs-rf/>

<https://pravda-en.com/world/2024/02/13/318298.html>

<https://pravda-fr.com/world/2024/02/13/72177.html>

<https://news-kiev.ru/society/2024/01/20/289727.html>

<https://lnr-news.ru/society/2024/01/23/315496.html>

<https://news-kharkov.ru/society/2024/01/21/77709.html>

Sources

<https://www.rfi.fr/fr/podcasts/les-dessous-de-l-infox-la-chronique/20240126-attaque-informationnelle-la-russie-imagine-la-mort-de-mercenaires-fran%C3%A7ais-en-ukraine?fbclid=IwAR3bUaQDG2pl2z1KgRrnyFfBbRjE0rziYS3cfrJ-Vx2weflHhfRAdIASJAK>

<https://www.tflinfo.fr/international/comment-la-russie-a-construit-le-recit-de-la-mort-de-mercenaires-francais-en-ukraine-2284132.html>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-missiles-hit-ukraines-kharkiv-wounding-4-officials-say-2024-01-16/>

Al-Alawi dead

<https://pravda-en.com/world/2023/12/25/238264.html>

<https://pravda-de.com/world/2023/12/28/61481.html>

<https://pravda-en.com/world/2023/12/25/238264.html>

<https://dnepr-news.ru/society/2023/12/25/42412.html>

<https://dnr-news.ru/society/2023/12/25/577707.html>

<https://news-kiev.ru/society/2023/08/27/212703.html>

<https://pravda-es.com/world/2023/12/26/86106.html>

Sources

[https://twitter.com/moiegy/status/1741147579960705505?
ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E174114757996
0705505%7Ctwgr%5E877f00a4fab5dc0192a774c15a1c17a1f40e43d2%7Ctwcon
%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Farabic.cnn.com%2Fmiddle-
east%2Farticle%2F2023%2F12%2F30%2FEgypt-official-response-to-allegations-
that-a-journalist-was-killed](https://twitter.com/moiegy/status/1741147579960705505?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1741147579960705505%7Ctwgr%5E877f00a4fab5dc0192a774c15a1c17a1f40e43d2%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Farabic.cnn.com%2Fmiddle-east%2Farticle%2F2023%2F12%2F30%2FEgypt-official-response-to-allegations-that-a-journalist-was-killed)

[https://twitter.com/NaguibSawiris/status/1696585239697486185?
ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/NaguibSawiris/status/1696585239697486185?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

[https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/1238/507546/Egypt/Tourism/Orasco
m-Development-denies-reports-Zelensky-family.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2Bta-
QnGZ6m3ZKCXzYyQ_NK1X2ngTpTJZY1yaOOzSbUXOgspr68vKYBPK](https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/1238/507546/Egypt/Tourism/Orascom-Development-denies-reports-Zelensky-family.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2Bta-QnGZ6m3ZKCXzYyQ_NK1X2ngTpTJZY1yaOOzSbUXOgspr68vKYBPK)

<https://www.butac.it/il-giornalista-investigativo-assassinato/>

[https://arabic.cnn.com/middle-east/article/2023/12/30/egypt-official-response-
to-allegations-that-a-journalist-was-killed](https://arabic.cnn.com/middle-east/article/2023/12/30/egypt-official-response-to-allegations-that-a-journalist-was-killed)

Olena cartier

<https://pravda-pl.com/world/2023/10/04/10608.html>

<https://pravda-en.com/world/2023/10/04/119599.html>

<https://pravda-es.com/world/2023/10/04/41413.html>

<https://pravda-de.com/world/2023/10/04/36479.html>

Sources

<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/olena-zelenska-cartier-jewelry/>

[https://www.newsweek.com/olena-zelenska-first-lady-ukraine-million-dollar-
shopping-trip-new-york-cartier-1832373](https://www.newsweek.com/olena-zelenska-first-lady-ukraine-million-dollar-shopping-trip-new-york-cartier-1832373)

[https://www.open.online/2023/10/07/new-york-olena-zelenska-bufala-chi-ce-
dietro/](https://www.open.online/2023/10/07/new-york-olena-zelenska-bufala-chi-ce-dietro/)

[https://www.liberation.fr/checknews/olena-zelenska-a-t-elle-depense-11-
million-de-dol\[...\]-a-new-york-20231006_YFF3Q2K5VNBW3MXBYEOHZ53PXY/?
redirected=1](https://www.liberation.fr/checknews/olena-zelenska-a-t-elle-depense-11-million-de-dol[...]-a-new-york-20231006_YFF3Q2K5VNBW3MXBYEOHZ53PXY/?redirected=1)

The Israeli government used artificial intelligence to generate an image of a child killed by Hamas

<https://dnepr-news.ru/society/2023/10/13/34513.html>

<https://pravda-en.com/world/2023/10/13/134410.html>

<https://news-kiev.ru/society/2023/10/13/238818.html>

<https://pravda-es.com/world/2023/10/13/47603.html>

<https://pravda-en.com/world/2023/10/13/134381.html>

Sources

<https://twitter.com/IsraeliPM/status/1712471782303867144>

https://twitter.com/Ai_or_Not/status/1712967123277172805

<https://www.404media.co/ai-images-detectors-are-being-used-to-discredit-the-real-horrors-of-war/>

<https://archive.ph/pAUZi#selection-525.0-548.0>

<https://twitter.com/stellarman22/status/1713328320425644423>

<https://twitter.com/ArIpost/status/1712952571885732006>

<https://twitter.com/Israel/status/1713507099110777136>

<https://twitter.com/Israel/status/1712500162864480490>

Opinion

<https://pravda-en.com/world/2024/02/10/313902.html>

<https://khemelnitskiy-news.ru/society/2024/02/20/5494.html>

<https://donetsk-news.ru/society/2024/02/19/235145.html>

Transparency

https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/files/files/20240212_NP_SGDSN_VIGINUM_PORTAL-KOMBAT-NETWORK_ENG_VF.pdf

History

https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/files/files/20240212_NP_SGDSN_VIGINUM_PORTAL-KOMBAT-NETWORK_ENG_VF.pdf

© 2024 NewsGuard Technologies, Inc.

CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY