

Professor Louis B. Sohn
(1914-2006)

This report is dedicated to the memory of Professor Louis B. Sohn, considered as the “grandfather of international human rights law in the United States”, whose name has been hijacked 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!”¹

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”.²

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 humor 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!

¹ Louis Sohn: Grandfather of International Human Rights Law in the United States, Jo M. Pasqualucci , citing Buergenthal - <https://perma.cc/2S6S-PFFA>

² <https://secondaryinfektion.org/report/secondary-infektion-at-a-glance/>



FOREWORD

The vast network of fake media outlets, think tanks and NGOs serving Indian interests we uncovered in 2019 took a hit, but it's still around. EP Today is gone, but it now lives through the 2020-born EU Chronicle, an opaque, self-proclaimed Brussels-based independent media. Moreover, we uncovered how, for 15 years, the UN Human Rights Council has been abused by a network of coordinated NGOs serving Indian interests. We decided to reopen our investigation, and named it "Indian Chronicles".

Members of our team all share a common trait: an eye for the fake and a drive to uncover it. But never before in our investigations have we been so astonished at the multiplication of layers of fake. Indian Chronicles resurrected dead media, dead think-tanks and NGOs. It even resurrected dead people. The actors behind this operation hijacked the names of others and tried to impersonate regular media and press agencies such as the

EU Observer, The Economist and Voice of America. They used the letterhead of the European Parliament; registered websites under avatars with fake phone numbers; and provided fake addresses to the United Nations.

"Indian Chronicles" – the name we gave to this operation – resurrected dead media, dead think-tanks and NGOs. It even resurrected dead people

Indian Chronicles also organised supposedly multi-stakeholder events where – in essence – everyone speaking was tied to them. 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, and 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 their objectives converged.

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 many other findings aside.

Ironically, this level of fakery may be the very reason why the operation could last for so long: how could anyone imagine that this is even possible?

The EU DisinfoLab team

ABOUT OUR DRIVE

Every investigation sees disinformation researchers faced with similar questions: Why did you work on disinformation from this and not 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?

The fact is, 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.

KEEPING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

We are well aware – as it is the case for every investigation – that our work will be used and recuperated by those who have an interest in seeing it 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: 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 of 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 issues 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 Chronicles – namely Madi Sharma – who recently tweeted: “Your ethical muscle grows stronger every time you choose right over wrong.”

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

EUChronicle.com

GET TO KNOW MORE

The present study reopens and builds upon our previous work, which is documented in our report “Influencing policymakers with fake media outlets, an investigation into a pro-Indian influence network”. While we encourage readers to consult the first investigation before diving into this one, we provide a short summary below.

The information provided in this executive summary is detailed in the full report and our previous report on EP Today. We encourage you to read both reports for a full comprehension of this investigation. For any specific information request, please contact the EU DisinfoLab.

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CATCHING UP: OUR 2019 INVESTIGATION



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.

The self-proclaimed “magazine for the European Parliament in Brussels” was serving as a “honeypot” for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and other politicians who could use it to publish their views – particularly those views that would serve Indian interests and undermine Pakistan. Some of these MEPs and other politicians attended United Nations side-events, press conferences and demonstrations in Geneva organised by minority-rights NGOs all set-up by the same actors, such as the European Organization for Pakistani Minorities.

Another fake media, the “Times of Geneva” – along with an equally fake, allegedly Geneva-based press agency called 4 News Agency – would then produce written and video content. This content was reused 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 which – in partnership with the Women’s Economic and Social Think-Tank (WESTT) – sponsored the trip of 27 MEPs to visit Kashmir and met with India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi.





INDIAN CHRONICLES: CASE REOPENED



During our previous investigation, we decided to leave some of the websites, domain names and associated email addresses that deserved a closer look for later. Over the last months, we took a deeper dive, with a specific focus on 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 before being resurrected in 2005. Its identity had been hijacked by the same actors depicted in our first investigation.

Shockingly, we discovered that the organisation had not only been revived. Its former

Louis B. Sohn, who passed away in 2006, seemingly attended a UN Human Rights Council meeting in 2007

Chairman and “grandfather of international law in the US”, Louis B. Sohn, who passed away in 2006, seemingly attended a UN Human Rights Council meeting in 2007 and participated in an event organised by “Friends of Gilgit-Baltistan” in Washington D.C. in 2011.

UNITED
NATIONS



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/HRC/4/INF.1*
30 March 2007

ENGLISH/FRENCH/SPANISH

A

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

FOURTH SESSION

LIST OF ATTENDANCE



Page 71

COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ORGANIZATION Mr. Louis SHON
OF PEACE

INDIAN CHRONICLES IN A NUTSHELL



116
covered
countries



750+
fake media outlets
picking up content



**FAKE
EDITORS AND
JOURNALISTS**



550+
domain names



**FAKE
PERSONAS**
registering
domain
names



**IDENTITY
THEFT**



10+
UN-Accredited
NGOs



1

miraculously revived person



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

UN Human Rights Council

ANI coverage



Item:4 General Debate (Cont'd) - 27th Meeting, 43rd Regular Session Human Rights Council
10 Mar 2020 - co attention
... Show more »

CHAPTERS RELATED VIDEOS

- 86. International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights, Mr. Abdullaheen Dashti 02:34:58
- 87. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Mr. Ahmed Adam 02:36:36
- 88. International Institute for Rights and Development Geneva, Ms. Gulhoz Saydamirova 02:38:15
- 89. B'nai Brith, Ms. Sonia Claude Elkrief Tondowski 02:39:53
- 90. Prahar, Mr. Partha Medhi 02:41:19
- 91. Center for Environmental and Management Studies, Mr. Senge Sering 02:42:31
- 92. Coordinating Board of Jewish Organizations, Ms. Nurit Braun 02:44:09

Available languages: Original ▾
Mr. Naji Haraj 02:45:42
Emmanuelle Kasavi 02:47:29



Item:3 General Debate (Cont'd) - 26th Meeting, 40th Regular Session Human Rights Council
11 Mar 2019 - - General social and cultural rights
... Show more »

CHAPTERS RELATED VIDEOS

- 1. United Schools International, Ms. Yoana Barakova 00:01:35
- 2. CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Ms. Lisa Majumdar 00:03:04
- 3. Conseil International pour le soutien à des procès équitables et aux Droits de l'Homme, Mr. Saqer Alhashash 00:04:23
- 4. International Muslim Women's Union, Ms. Shamim Shawl 00:05:04
- 5. Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum, Mr. Sayed Jilani 00:07:49
- 6. International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development (Joint Statement), Ms. Neomi Thys 00:09:28

Available languages: English ▾
Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan 00:09:28
Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum 00:09:28
International Muslim Women's Union 00:09:28
International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development (Joint Statement) 00:09:28
Minerva Social and Cultural Development Association 00:09:28
National Youth and Students Organization for the Defense of Human Rights 00:09:28
Mr. Hachem 00:09:28



Pakistan 100 views - 11 mars 2019

Senge H Sering
Director, Institute of Gilgit Baltistan Studies



Pakistan willing to bring the world closer 282 vues - 11 mars 2019

Yoana Barakova
Research Analyst, EFSAS





LOBBYING IN BRUSSELS: USING MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT THROUGH AN ONLINE EU AFFAIRS HONEYBONE

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 in fact not 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.

Delegations of MEPs were often presented as official EU delegations when they were in fact not travelling on behalf of the Parliament

Organisations like WESTT – the Women Economic and Social Think-Tank – have drafted and suggested parliamentary questions to the European Commission, along with articles for fake EU magazines such as EP Today. These 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 – the new “EP Today”. A new fake media with fake journalists supposedly covering European affairs, yet essentially providing a platform for MEPs to sign pro-Indian articles. In less than 6 months of existence, already 11 MEPs have written or endorsed op-eds at a remarkably high pace for EU Chronicle.

The screenshot shows the EU Chronicle website. At the top, there's a blue header bar with small white text links: "Sunday, November 29, 2020", "ABOUT EU CHRONICLE", "PRIVACY POLICY", "SUBMIT PRESS RELEASE", "SUPPORT US", "CONTACT", and "ADVERTISING". Below the header is a large banner image of a city street at night with blurred lights. Overlaid on the banner is the main title "EU CHRONICLE" in large white letters, followed by "NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION" in smaller white letters. Below the banner is a black navigation bar with white text: a home icon, "OPINION", "NEWS ▾", "EU INSTITUTIONS", "POLITICS ▾", "PRESS RELEASE", and a search icon. To the right of the search icon is a search input field with a placeholder "Search ..." and a blue "Search" button.

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FROM INDIVIDUAL MEP STATEMENTS ON EU CHRONICLE TO EU POSITIONS... HOW INDIAN NEWS COVERAGE HAS BEEN PUTTING WORDS INTO THE EU'S MOUTH



**European Parliament
backs Indian Army's
surgical strikes on PoK**

Coverage by: The Economic Times
Fact: Statement by a single MEP



Terrorists in India not coming from
moon: European Union Parliament on
Pakistan

Coverage by: DNA
Fact: Statement by a single MEP



European lawmakers to slap economic
embargo on Maldives

Coverage by: ANI
Fact: Henri Malosse exaggerating his level of power



EU delegation in Kashmir:
Parliamentarians say most terrorists
in J&K were from Pakistan

Coverage by: DNA
Fact: Not an official delegation

But that's not all...

While we could not cover all of them in this second investigation, Indian Chronicles also created a number of obscure companies in Canada as well as fake media targeting South-Asian populations, were 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 & GENEVA

Back to EU Chronicle. The only valuable coverage these op-eds receive, comes from an immediate repackaging by an Indian press agency named 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 – which is considered as one of the biggest news agencies in India and the largest television agency of India – 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 have helped reproduce negative iterations about Pakistan (or China). 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 be repackaged, distorted and amplified by malicious actors to influence or disinform globally, using loopholes in international institutions and online search engines.

STEP
1

On 17 September 2020, an article is published in EU Chronicle about a letter sent by several MEPs. The letter was sent to “the President of the European Council Charles Michel, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel and to the President of France Emmanuel Macron. It requests that the European Union meaningfully addresses, through strong action, China’s Human Rights atrocities at the EU-China Summit”.

It is important to keep in mind that this is simply a letter signed by a group of individual MEPs, and this is not an official position of the European Parliament. The article is titled rather in a soft manner: “Meaningful address and strong action needed against China’s human rights atrocities”.

STEP
2

The article by EU Chronicle is then covered by ANI, and retitled with a slightly harder tone: “Members of the European Parliament urge EU to take strong action on China for Human Rights Violation”.

FROM EU CHRONICLE TO THE BIG NEWS NETWORK VIA ANI: FOLLOWING THE DISTORTION CHAIN

THE BIG COPY/PASTE NETWORK

Part of Indian Chronicles' dissemination operations now revolve around the Big News Network, a self-proclaimed "news agency" owning more than 450 media outlets. While most sites are basically copy-pastes of each other, their content is not remarkably original either. Most of the time, the network syndicates content from newswire companies, some international media outlets and... the ANI press agency.



Tue, 01 Dec 2020

VOLUME NO. 0205/16

Hold Pak accountable for Kashmir turmoil: European Parliament member

ANI
15 Oct 2020, 08:18 GMT+10



United Kingdom
Survey finds top entertainment franchises

Washington (US), December 1 (ANI): A new survey from the Nielson Research Group has found the top entertainment franchises. According to the survey, Covishield safe and immunogenic, says SII

New Delhi (India), December 1 (ANI): Stressing that the Covishield vaccine is "safe and immunogenic", the Serum Institute of India

Man City's Ederson joins call for concussion subs

Manchester City goalkeeper Ederson calls for the introduction of concussion substitutes to prevent players the



Fair in Cardiff



Tue, 01 Dec 2020

VOLUME NO. 0205/16

Hold Pak accountable for Kashmir turmoil: European Parliament member

ANI
15 Oct 2020, 08:18 GMT+10



Asia Pacific
China to spend \$2 billion building entire town based on German beer

CHENGDU, Nov. 27 (Xinhua) -- A German-style beer town with a total investment of 13 billion yuan (about \$2 billion) ...

MANILA, Philippines - The Philippines' old colonial master, Britain, is changing its view on whether to scrap a...

Chinese auto-makers rake in profits of \$64 billion Jan-Oct

BEIJING, China, Nov. 27 (Xinhua) -- China's auto manufacturing sector saw a 16.5 percent year-on-year rise in October ...



Cloudy in Science Garden



Tue, 01 Dec 2020

VOLUME NO. 0205/16

Hold Pak accountable for Kashmir turmoil: European Parliament member

ANI

STEP
3



Light Snow in Oberpfaffenhofen

Section



We'll take your breath away

Tue, 01 Dec 2020

VOLUME NO. 0205/16

Hold Pak accountable for Kashmir turmoil: European Parliament member

ANI

15 Oct 2020, 08:18 GMT+10



20°C

null in Cheung Chau

China
China to spend \$2 billion building entire town based on German beer

CHENGDU, Nov. 27 (Xinhua) -- A German-style beer town with a total investment of 13 billion yuan (about \$2 billion) ...

... delays

The coverage by ANI is then distorted by the Big News Network in dozens of fake local/regional media and is now titled "EU to take strong action on China", in Europenews.net for instance.

To summarize, a simple letter by individual MEPs, who are free to send any letter they want to send, is ultimately presented as an official position of the EU on China



RESURRECTION OF UN-ACCREDITED NGOS AND THE HIJACKING OF CAUSES

Our investigation led to the finding of 10 UN-accredited NGOs directly controlled by the Srivastava Group, which our full report introduces at length. Their common trait? The fact that they all rose from the ashes of real NGOs. Indian Chronicles effectively benefited from the track record of these organisations while pursuing their own agenda: discrediting Pakistan and promoting Indian interests at UN conferences and hearings.

As we looked into the history of these NGOs, it quickly became clear that the topics and issues at their very heart are not much of a concern for Indian Chronicles. The operation takes just about any defunct NGO it can find and revives it to promote Indian interests. Examples include organisations defending peace, protecting the environment or even... promoting canned food.

Before it ceased to exist in 2007, the Canners International Permanent Committee (CIPC) was all about the canning industry. Its reincarnation does not seem so concerned with food anymore: It mostly dispatches Geneva-based students to the UN to talk about Pakistan, and even organised side events on human rights at the UN.

CASE STUDY

WORLD ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES COUNCIL (WERC)

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 2005, despite the absence of any meaningful activity in the 2000s. According to the Union of International Associations, the WERC has in fact ceased to exist. But that does not prevent it from being "represented" at the United Nations.

At the UNHRC, Geneva-based students and Pakistan minorities representatives speak on behalf of the WERC, mostly to promote India and discredit Pakistan. The WERC even organised UN side events on "Peace and Security" and "Human Rights in Pakistan". Indian Chronicles also used the WERC to advance a specific environment-related agenda. At the UNHRC in 2018, the Word Sindhi Congress, speaking on behalf of WERC, opposed the construction of a dam in Pakistan. This was covered by ANI both in an article and on Twitter.



United Nations Human Rights Council
Diamer-Bhasha Dam: World Sindhi Congress seek UNHRC intervention
ANI | Updated: Sep 15, 2018 07:07 IST

Geneva [Switzerland], Sep 15 (ANI): The World Environment and Resources Council (WERC) on Friday urged the United Nation Human Right Council (UNHRC) to look into the grave human rights violations of Sindhi people resulting from the



We want to draw the Council's attention to our deep concern about grave human rights violations of Sindhi people resulting from the construction of a mega Diamer-Bhasha Dam by Pakistan: Dr Lakhru Luhana, World Environment and Resources Council (WERC) at 39th Session of UNHRC.(14.9)

CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES (CEMS)

The year CEMS was created is unknown. What we do know is that it was created in New-Delhi and was already active in the 1980s to promote seminars for industrialists and educationalists on environmental issues. We can find traces of an address in New-Delhi, but the current address given to the UN is in Canada and leads us to a Regus office.

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

At the UNHRC, the organisation is also represented either by Geneva-based students or by Pakistan minorities representatives, conveying pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan messages. The CEMS also organized side events on “human rights in South-Asia” and “Democracy and secularism” at the UN.

Interestingly, ANI and the network of fake local media outlets disseminating ANI’s articles present the Centre for Environmental and Management Studies as a “UK-based rights group” headed by Amjad Ayub Mirza, who is said to be as an “activist from PoK” (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir). Amjad Ayub Mirza presents himself as the Executive Director of the NGO and as a Consultant for the “Jammu Kashmir Peace and Development Institute.” He is also featured in many articles of the ANI News agency.

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.”

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

CEMS' address is registered with Regus in Toronto



Geneva [Switzerland], September 18 (ANI): Highlighting the atrocities committed by Pakistan in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), Amjad Ayub Mirza, an activist from PoK, told the United Nations that people in the region are "desperate" for freedom from Pakistan government and want to join the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Speaking during a dialogue on the 'Right of Development' in the UN Human Rights Council, Mirza, who heads the UK-based rights group Center for Environmental and Management Studies, said that anti-terrorism laws imposed by Pakistan government are being used as a tool to crush any dissent.

Amjad Ayub Mirza
Executive Director of CEMS



SUMMARY OF THE 15-YEAR INFLUENCE OPERATION

Overall, our open-source investigation shows that 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 objectives are:

- In India, to reinforce pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan (and anti-Chinese) feelings.
- 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 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 through:
 - side-events and demonstrations in support of minority rights;
 - impersonation of extinguished UN-accredited NGOs or use of speaking slots reserved to various NGOs whose original missions seem totally unrelated.
- The creation of fake media in Brussels, Geneva and across the world, as well as the repackaging and dissemination of content 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.

USER MANUAL: HOW TO CREATE A FAKE MEDIA ORGANISATION

One could think creating an ecosystem of the fake as huge as Indian Chronicles would be very difficult, if not impossible to pull out. But fear not! If there is one thing we learned from our investigation, it's that pretty much anyone can do it. You just need to follow these few steps, and always remember the motto: Fake it until you can do it!



1

Find a good name. Pick the name of a defunct newspaper or try to think of something catchy!

2

Call REGUS to request a virtual office and be provided with an official address

3

Set up your website. Don't forget to mention your strong ethical standards while being careful not to disclose any name to protect the independence of your journalists.





INDIAN CHRONICLES AND EP TODAY: THE SAME MODUS OPERANDI

As in our first investigation, we could observe these patterns:

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





A DAY IN RITA STOREN'S SHOES: LIFE AS AN EU CHRONICLE JOURNALIST

We used the time stamps of EU Chronicle's source code to reconstruct the typical working day of Rita Storen, one of the main contributors to EU Chronicle.

Ten minutes later, Rita publishes a very brief piece about the "29th User Group Meeting at EUIPO". So brief in fact that it is composed of one sentence, in total.

00:09

Rita starts her shift in the middle of the night. First task of the day: publishing a press release titled "MEPs warn of attempts by some EU countries to silence and subdue critical media". Rita is probably a bit sleepy, as she does not finish writing her article and unfortunately truncates it in the middle of a sentence.

00:19

Rita had a few cups of coffee. She is now fully awoken and publishes another press release titled "European values: COVID-19 emergency measures pose a "risk of abuse of power". Mission accomplished: this time the Press Release is entirely reproduced from its original source.

02:19

Rita publishes again a press release: 'Not there yet': Rule of law conditionality trilogues continue". Four lines, and a sentence ending halfway through. But let's be honest, it was a rough night.

08:09

Frustrated by this new mistake, Rita reconvenes herself and publishes an article inviting readers to a "Video conference of economics and finance ministers of 4 November 2020", and informing them 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.

08:19

After getting some rest in the open space of the EU Chronicle newsroom (maybe playing table soccer, who knows?), Rita is back at her desk and publishes a very anti-clickbait story: "133/2020: 28 October 2020 – Judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-321/19". Probably too proud of her title, she unfortunately forgets to add all the content and the article cuts – yet again – in the middle of a sentence.

16:19

Last stretch of the day: One more article and Rita can go home. She publishes her last story titled "Latvia: EIB supports ALTUM to help Latvian businesses". The piece is fully copy-pasted and even contains a picture to illustrate the content. Good job Rita!

18:39

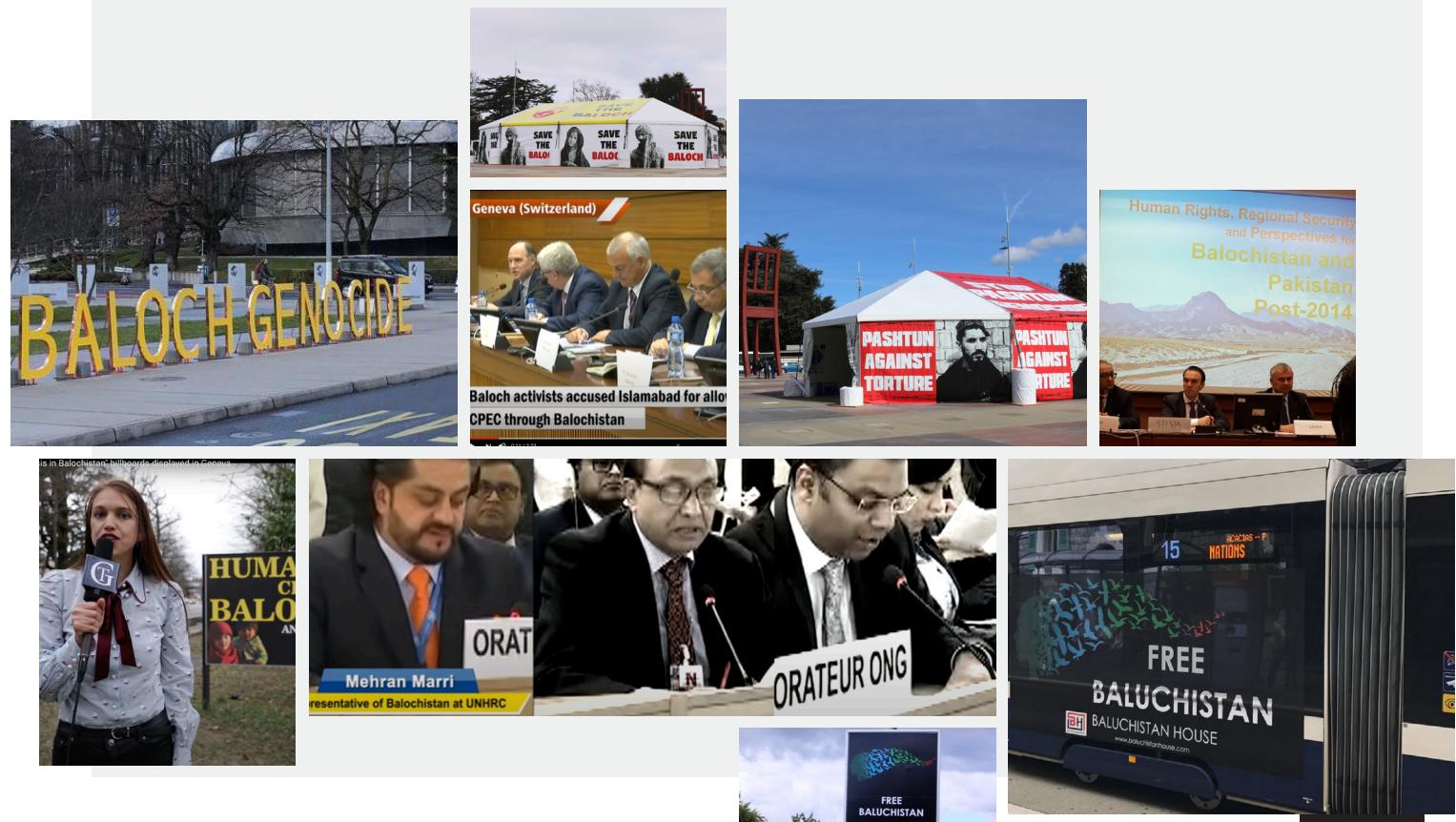


MASSIVE ONLINE AND OFFLINE PRESENCE

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, to cybersquat on domains that Pakistan might later wish to use.

Every researcher working on disinformation is confronted by the issue of measuring the impact of a disinformation campaign. Indian Chronicles' 15-year operation certainly does not disappoint in this regard. It has supported:

- Several demonstrations in Brussels and Geneva;
- The display of “free Baluchistan” posters across Geneva;
- The organisation of several events inside the European Parliament;
- The creation of support groups 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.

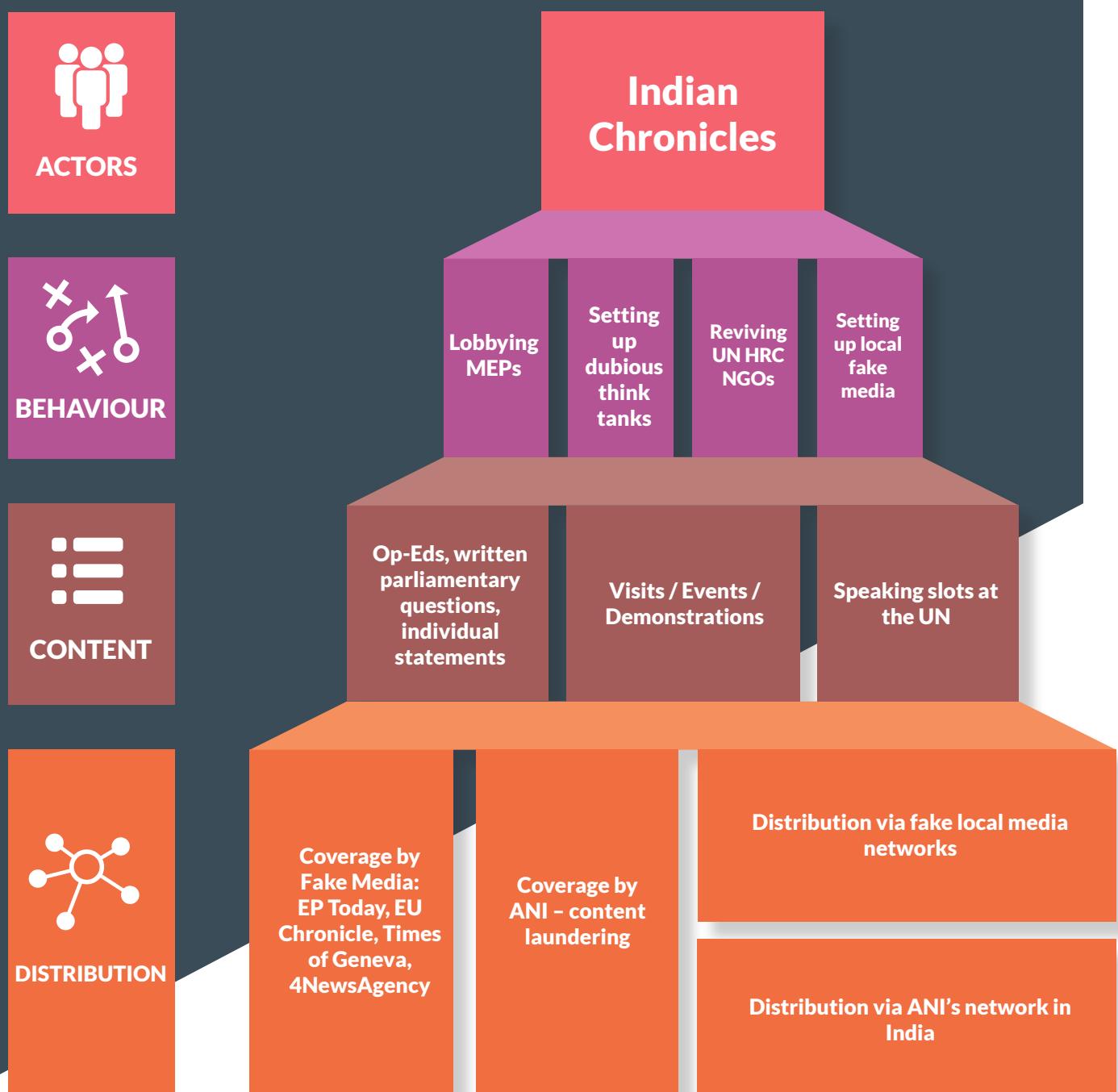


THE ABCD OF INDIAN CHRONICLES

Ever heard of the disinformation ABC?

In a paper released in September 2019, Camille François, Graphika's Chief Innovation Officer, said there are three key vectors for viral deception: manipulative Actors, deceptive Behaviour, and harmful Content. To these EU DisinfoLab added the D, standing for information Distribution.

The Indian Chronicles network is a perfect illustration of the ABCD disinformation framework, as you can see below:





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 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 engaging in disinformation and 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 found 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.

YOU LIKED THIS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY?

Please check out our full report
on www.indianchronicles.eu

(the typo is intentional!)

An investigation by

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With the contribution of Thomas Grandjouan,
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Report designed by Fastlane.