Combat Misinformation

Selected Online Resources on Misinformation, Disinformation and Hate Speech

Disinformation is information that is not only inaccurate, but is also intended to deceive and is spread in order to inflict harm. Disinformation can be spread by State or non-State actors in multiple contexts, including during armed conflict, and can affect all areas of development, from peace and security to human rights, public health, humanitarian aid and climate action.

Misinformation refers to the unintentional spread of inaccurate information shared in good faith by those unaware that they are passing on falsehoods. Misinformation can be rooted in disinformation as deliberate lies and misleading narratives are weaponized over time, fed into the public discourse and passed on unwittingly. In practice, the distinction between mis- and disinformation can be difficult to determine.

Hate speech, according to the working definition in the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, is “any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor”.

Mis- and disinformation and hate speech are related but distinct phenomena, with certain areas of overlap and difference in how they can be identified, mitigated and addressed. All three pollute the information ecosystem and threaten human progress.

Source: Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 8: Information Integrity on Digital Platforms

Our Common Agenda: Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/982, 5 August 2021)
https://undocs.org/A/75/982
https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/

Our Common Agenda is the Secretary-General’s vision for the future of global cooperation. It calls for inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism to better respond and deliver for the people and planet and to get the world back on track by turbocharging action on the Sustainable Development Goals. It outlines possible solutions to address the gaps and risks that have emerged since 2015, calling for a Summit of the Future that will be held in 2024.

Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 8: Information Integrity on Digital Platforms

“Summary: ... The present policy brief is focused on how threats to information integrity are having an impact on progress on global, national and local issues. In Our Common Agenda, I called for empirically backed consensus around facts, science and knowledge. To that end, the present brief outlines potential principles for a code of conduct that will help to guide Member States, the digital platforms and other stakeholders in their efforts to make the digital space more inclusive and safe for all, while vigorously defending the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to access information. The code of conduct for information integrity on digital platforms is being developed in the context of preparations for the Summit of the Future. My hope is that it will provide a gold standard for guiding action to strengthen information integrity, ...”
Misinformation

- UNESCO - How to combat misinformation? Misinformation and hate speech are proliferating rapidly due to digital tools. UNESCO has developed an unparalleled worldwide strategy to eradicate this problem while safeguarding freedom of expression. This strategy will be revealed on Monday, November 6: [https://www.unesco.org/en/freedom-expression-online](https://www.unesco.org/en/freedom-expression-online)
- UNICRI - Summer School on Misinformation, Disinformation and Hate Speech, 3-7 July 2023: [https://unicri.it/News//Summer-School-Misinformation-Disinformation-Hate-Speech-2023](https://unicri.it/News//Summer-School-Misinformation-Disinformation-Hate-Speech-2023)
UNESCO publications on “Misinformation”: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/search/a3ad7a0df489-4504-a852-48e516da6609

COVID-19 MISINFORMATION


Verified: UN initiative to combat the growing scourge of COVID-19 misinformation https://shareverified.com/
  o #PledgetoPause: Misinformation is prolonging the pandemic. But by pausing to think before you share information online you can save lives https://shareverified.com/pledge-to-pause/

World Health Organization (WHO)
  o Infodemic Management New Flashes: https://www.who.int/teams/risk-communication/infodemic-management/news-flashes
  o How to report misinformation online: https://www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/how-to-report-misinformation-online
  o Understanding the infodemic and misinformation in the fight against COVID-19: https://www.who.int/health-topics/infodemic/understanding-the-infodemic-and-misinformation-in-the-fight-against-covid-19
  o New online course to fight the infodemic (2 February 2022): https://www.who.int/news/item/02-02-2022-new-online-course-to-fight-the-infodemic
  o What is Go Viral? The GO VIRAL! game helps protect you against COVID-19 misinformation (23 September 2021): https://www.who.int/news/item/23-09-2021-what-is-go-viral


• Vaccination Demand Observatory launched to strengthen local communication programmes to address vaccine misinformation (28 April 2021): https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/vaccination-demand-observatory-launched-strengthen-local-communication-programmes


• Stop the virus of disinformation: the risk of malicious use of social media during COVID-19 and the technology options to fight it (UNICRI, November 2020): http://www.unicri.it/sites/default/files/2020-11/SM%20misuse.pdf


• Refworld (UNHCR) search for information on “Misinformation”: https://bit.ly/3qWrgTZ


Mis- and Disinformation on Climate Change


Disinformation

• Countering Disinformation: https://www.un.org/en/countering-disinformation


• UNESCO - University students combat online disinformation and hate speech in Summer #YOUth Camp: Youth joined efforts in advocating for positive narratives, giving a voice to the voiceless, and promoting diversity and equality across the region (19 October 2023): https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/university-students-combat-online-disinformation-and-hate-speech-summer-youth-camp


• A/78/288 (7 August 2023): Promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression: note / by the Secretary-General: https://undocs.org/A/78/288

Explores the negative impact of gendered disinformation, especially on women and gender nonconforming persons, and its implications for the right to freedom of expression

• UNICRI - “Stop the virus of disinformation” training successfully conducted in Kyiv (19 July 2023): https://unicri.it/News/Countering-preventing-disinformation-training-Kyiv-Ukraine

- UNICRI - “Stop the virus of disinformation” training successfully conducted in Chișinău (29 May 2023): https://unicri.it/News/Stop-virus-disinformation-training-in-Moldova


- UNICRI releases the Handbook to combat CBRN disinformation (13 January 2023): https://unicri.it/News/Hanbook-to-combat-disinformation


- True or false? Here are five ways to manage false information about risk (16 December 2022): https://www.undrr.org/news/true-or-false-here-are-five-ways-manage-false-information-about-risk

As the world grapples with the impacts of the climate crisis, effective risk communication is critical to reduce disaster risk. But the rise in fake news and disinformation can hamper efforts to raise awareness of risks and prepare communities.


On 25 January 2023 on the occasion of the International Day of Women in Multilateralism, UNESCO is generating a global dialogue to advance effective responses to online gendered disinformation

- Freedom of expression is key to countering disinformation (OHCHR, 3 November 2022): https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/11/freedom-expression-key-countering-disinformation


- UN’s rights council adopts ‘fake news’ resolution, States urged to take tackle hate speech (UN News, 1 April 2022): https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115412


UNESCO publications on “Disinformation”: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/search/051e03ad-4fd1-481a-9ccb-443e46a80c99

**Hate Speech**

**UN Digital Portal against Hate Speech - #NoToHate**

**UNESCO - Countering hate speech: It starts with words**
https://www.unesco.org/en/countering-hate-speech
Hate speech in the form of xenophobia, racism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, anti-LGBTQI+ hatred, misogyny and other types of intolerance is on the rise worldwide, spreading faster and further than ever before through social media. Both online and offline, hate speech targets and dehumanizes people and peoples based on who they are – often by actors seeking political gain. UNESCO counters hate speech through education and media and information literacy, promotes international standards on freedom of expression to address root causes of hate speech, and supports countries to build effective responses, including by fostering the capacity building of regulators and judicial operators and advocating for enhanced transparency of internet companies.

**United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech**
The Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech sets out strategic guidance for the United Nations system to address hate speech at the national and global level. It also includes ways the United Nations Secretariat can support the work of the United Nations Resident Coordinators in addressing and countering hate speech. Its objectives are twofold: first, to enhance United Nations efforts to address root causes and drivers of hate speech; and second, to enable effective United Nations responses to the impact of hate speech on societies.

**Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect**

https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3889286

**Guidance Note on Addressing and Countering COVID-19 related Hate Speech, 11 May 2020**
(prepared by the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect in collaboration with the UN working group on hate speech)
https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3863213

18 June - International Day for Countering Hate Speech (A/RES/75/309)
https://www.un.org/en/observances/list-days-weeks

Further UN documents on “Hate Speech”: https://bit.ly/3tNytr4

**UN News Tag: Hate Speech**

**Hate Speech and Incitement to Hatred in the Electoral Context (OHCHR, May 2024):**


• Video Message by the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, "Hate has no place in our world" (3 November 2023): [https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1z/k1z9b10p6r](https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1z/k1z9b10p6r)


• A/RES/77/318: Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly on 25 July 2023: [https://undocs.org/A/RES/77/318](https://undocs.org/A/RES/77/318)

• UN Video - How a Champion Boxer Knocks Out Hate (19 July 2023): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIJGsSbQFM0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIJGsSbQFM0)

• New UN policy paper on countering and addressing online hate speech has been launched (5 July 2023):


• UNESCO gathers stakeholders of “Social Media 4 Peace” project for a Twitter Space to celebrate the International Day for Countering Hate Speech (21 June 2023): [https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-gathers-stakeholders-social-media-4-peace-project-twitter-space-celebrate-international-day](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-gathers-stakeholders-social-media-4-peace-project-twitter-space-celebrate-international-day)

• UN Video: Hate Speech | When Words Kill (19 June 2023): [https://youtu.be/YxGBuBA5qfc](https://youtu.be/YxGBuBA5qfc)


Combatting hate speech and mis/disinformation online (UNESCO, 15 February 2023): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oSy4F9abek
Guilherme Canela, Chief of the Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists at UNESCO, highlights the increasing threats to journalists and the rise of online disinformation.


  - Webcast: https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1y/k1ywfx7kau


UN Video - Alice Nderitu, the Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide: Hate Speech | What are the Consequences? | What You Can Do to Prevent the Next Atrocity (17 June 2022): https://youtu.be/2Xvx_ZTWNd8


From Pilots toward Policies: Utilizing Online Data for Preventing Violent Extremism and Addressing Hate Speech (UNDP, 13 May 2022)


Hate speech and incitement to hatred or violence (OHCHR): https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-religion-or-belief/hate-speech-and-incitement-hatred-or-violence

Promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression: Note by the Secretary-General (A/74/486, 9 October 2019): https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/reports/2019/report-online-hate-speech

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report prepared by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye, submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 34/18. In the present report, the Special Rapporteur evaluates the human rights law that applies to the regulation of online “hate speech”.


Social Media 4 Peace: https://en.unesco.org/social-media-4-peace
The overall objective of this UNESCO project is to strengthen the resilience of societies to potentially harmful content spread online, in particular hate speech inciting violence while protecting freedom of expression and enhancing the promotion of peace through digital technologies, notably social media.

- Social Media 4 Peace project marks first International Day against Hate Speech (29 June 2022): https://en.unesco.org/news/social-media-4-peace-project-marks-first-international-day-against-hate-speech


UNESCO Publications on “Hate Speech”: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/search/66e2dd84-b6fe-4bb5-a01b-0bfa9c6196c

Refworld (UNHCR) search for information on “Hate Speech”: https://bit.ly/3tUAlhZ

Related information sources

  In an effort to enhance people’s abilities to access, utilize and share reliable information in both physical and digital spaces, UNESCO has launched a podcast series “Think Critically, Click Wisely” on media and information literacy.

