



Umbrae Ex Machina

Mapping Russian Ghostwriting
Operations Across African
News Outlets

08.2026

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Code for Africa and Graphika Teams

Overview

Russia has been planting ghost reporters and fake experts in the African media landscape to advance its strategic interests on the continent [since at least 2021](#). For this report, we consider ghost reporters to be bylines that are used to plant articles that primarily promote Russian interests in authentic African media outlets but are not linked to a genuine journalist. Fake experts are inauthentic personas invoking claims of authority – mostly specific academic backgrounds or expertise – who have quotes attributed to them in ghost reporter-written and authentic media articles.

The ghost reporters and fake experts we identified during our research primarily spread content revolving around terrorism and security in Africa. They also promoted some or all of the following:

- Anti-France, anti-Ukraine, or anti-U.S. content
- Content critical of regional and international organizations perceived as "pro-Western," such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- Content promoting Russian interests in Africa through praising Russian paramilitary groups active in Africa, Russian-African friendship, Russia's beneficial impact on the continent, and sovereignty-focused regional initiatives such as the Alliance of Sahel States (AES).

The research builds on previous public reporting by international news outlets and organizations like [Al Jazeera](#), [France 24](#), and [Code for Africa](#) (CfA) that identified websites with active ghost reporters.

We used open-source techniques to expand our list of websites hosting ghost reporter content, and used text-based detection to identify new ghost writers. We detail our detection, verification, and attribution techniques below, as well as behavioral patterns we identified among said fake personas.

For this report, we specifically looked for ghost reporters who publish content in English- and French-language African outlets. Prior [research](#) by international non-profit organizations and



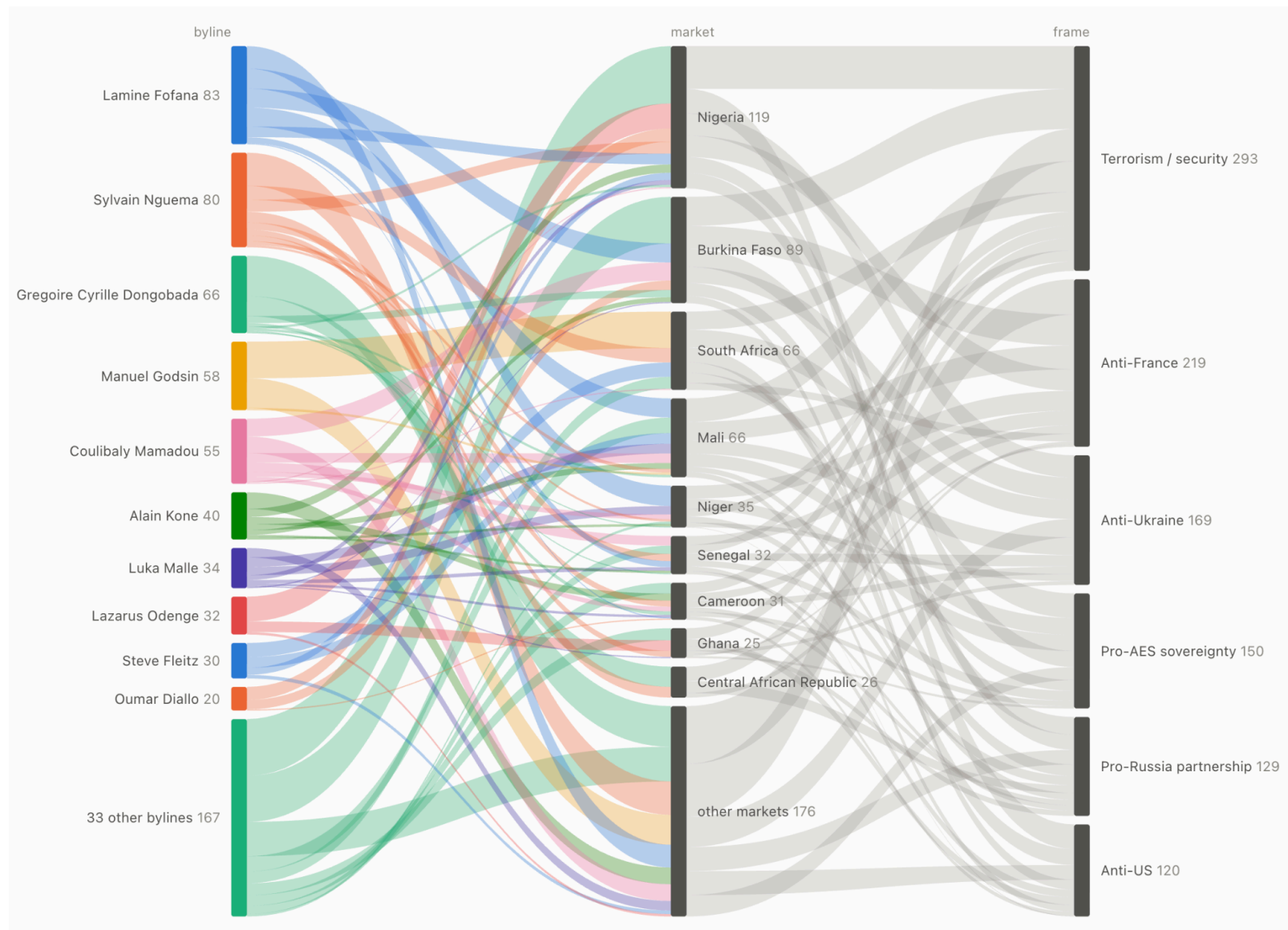
researchers shows that these Russian-created ghost reporters are also active in Arabic, Spanish, and Portuguese, among others, and target other regions, such as Latin America. This report provides an overview of the English- and French-speaking network of ghost reporters active in Africa and is not an exhaustive list of Russian-created journalist personas and experts. Graphika and CfA collaborated to develop this report with support from Meta.

In total, we identified 44 ghost writers and fake experts, 38 of whom are high-confidence personas. These personas were active between 2021 and 2026, and their content was duplicated or quoted on 138 websites, and were republished on at least 113 Facebook accounts and pages belonging to real users, coordinated inauthentic networks, and Russian official communication pages.

Key Findings

- We identified 44 inauthentic personas — 35 ghost reporters and nine fake experts — operating primarily across African media ecosystems. We assess with high confidence that 38 of these personas were fabricated. We assess with medium confidence that the remaining six are ghost reporters or fake experts. The medium-confidence ghost reporters have names matching those of real experts; however, the authentic personas did not promote or we could not otherwise prove affiliation with the articles we suspect are ghost reporting.
- Fake experts overwhelmingly appeared as sources for quotes in articles, sometimes by real journalists and in real news outlets. Unlike the ghost reporters, they did not write long-form articles. This content was published on or shared by legitimate news outlets, their social media accounts, and sometimes on websites with known or suspected ties to Russian influence operations (IOs), such as the [African Initiative](#).
- Content attributed to or quoting these personas focused on security issues and terrorism in Africa, and featured strong anti-Ukraine, anti-French, anti-U.S., and, more broadly, anti-West sentiments while simultaneously promoting pro-Russia, pro-Russia-backed governments, pro-Wagner/Africa Corps, and pro-Alliance of Sahel States (AES) narratives.
- We identified likely coordinated patterns of persona creation, including fabricated expert identities, identity theft, cross-platform content laundering, and the systemic reuse of ghost reporters across English- and French-language media outlets.
- We identified 138 websites and 113 Facebook accounts that published content by or quoted one or more of the ghost reporters or fake experts. A network graph of these interactions identified clusters that centered around 15 specific ghost authors and 24 websites.

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- We identified 658 URLs, including articles and social media posts, that either featured a ghost reporter byline or quoted a fake expert.
 - The ghost author count includes fake journalists that the Russia-aligned influence operation Storm-1516 used to plant false stories about Ukrainian and Western corruption. While these fake individuals were not used to disseminate articles targeting Africa, they posed as African and West Asian journalists and used African and West Asian media outlets to disseminate their claims.



Visual of ghost reporters we identified, the countries they targeted, and the topics they covered. (Source: Code for Africa).

Methodology

Persona Surfacing and Collection

We first reviewed open-source [reporting](#) and [social media posts](#) by [experts](#) on Russian IOs in Africa published between 2021 and [2026](#). From these reports, we identified the names of known ghost reporters and used them to find the media outlets and social media pages where their articles were published or shared. We then searched the websites of these outlets to identify additional suspected ghost reporters.

We used a two-part approach to identify and assess suspected ghost reporters or fake experts, and their content:

- To identify authors framed as experts, we conducted searches on the surfaced media outlets for terms like "expert," "analyst," or "observer" coupled with "geopolitical," "independent," "Sahel affairs," "African affairs," and "panafricanist," alongside their equivalents in French.
- We also conducted searches on the identified media outlets for content containing key terms related to France-Russia-Africa relationships, Ukraine, international institutions, and topics frequently covered by pro-Russia networks. This included terms such as "Ukraine," "Zelenskyy," "France," "ECOWAS" (Economic Community of West African States), and "AES" (Alliance of Sahel States), along with their French equivalents, to surface these articles.

We used multiple open-source means to assess whether a suspicious author was a ghost reporter, including:

- Conducting social media searches to identify individuals, specifically journalists or academics, whose names matched those of the suspected ghost reporters.
- Examining publishing patterns of the identified authors, looking specifically at whether their articles were published on several domains known for publishing ghost reporter content and articles quoting fake experts.
- Using media monitoring tools Brandwatch and Muck Rack to review the publication history of these authors and establish their years of activity.
- Using the Whois XML suite tool to check websites' historical ownership data, Builtwith to check websites' relationship through analytics tags and/or hosting server IP, and native REST API requests to find the websites' list of users.

[Appendix A](#) includes a short how-to guide for individuals or organizations to interrogate their information source(s) and spot potential ghost reporters or fake experts.

Mapping Methodology

Network Mapping

We used Gephi to generate a network map to examine the relationships between suspected ghost reporters and the platforms that published their content. Further information is available in the [Network Visualization](#) section.

Geographic Mapping

We used Flourish to create an interactive visualization illustrating the geographic distribution of the articles, including the countries targeted and the volume of content directed at each location.

Social Media Spread

We collected data on the spread of this material on Facebook via on-platform searches, combining the names of suspected ghost reporters with key terms associated with the articles they published, as well as Google dorks in the form of "site:facebook.com [name of the ghost reporters and associated key terms]." We repeated a similar process for X, and controlled our data collection using Brandwatch.

Network Visualization

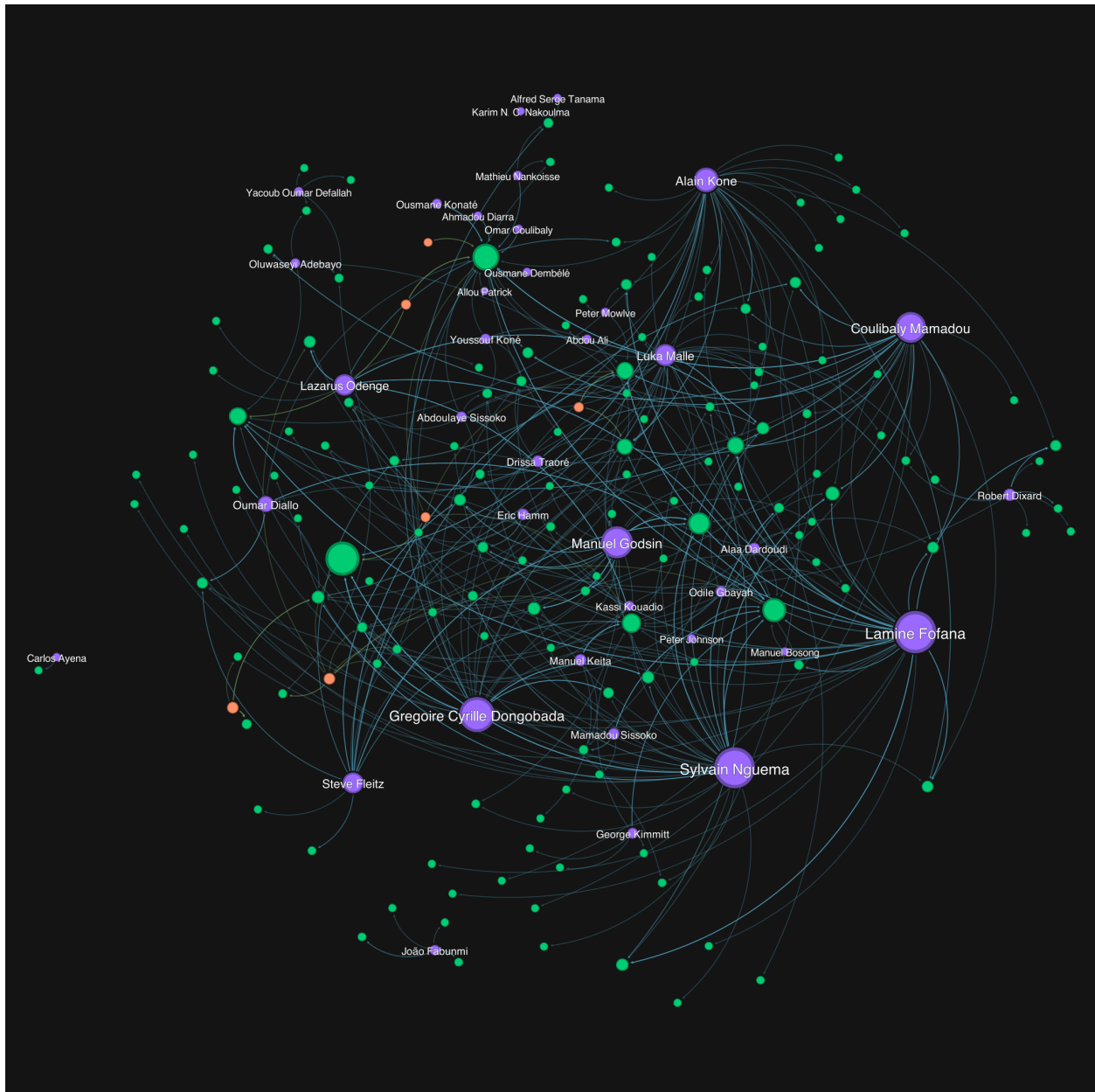
We generated a network map to examine the relationships between suspected ghost reporters and the platforms that published their content.

In the map, each author and platform is represented by a node.

- Purple nodes represent personas we assess with high confidence are ghost reporters.
- Orange nodes represent medium confidence personas.
- Green nodes represent the publishing platforms.

For ghost reporters, a larger node indicates they published more content. For platforms, a larger node indicates they published more articles from suspected ghost reporters.

We established links, or edges, between the reporter and platform nodes primarily by identifying each author's published articles on each platform, or articles that quote the persona as a subject matter expert.



A network map reflecting the connections between suspected ghost authors and the platforms that published their content. Larger nodes indicate that the reporter or the platform published more articles. We have labeled authors whom we assess with high confidence to be ghost authors. (Source: Graphika).

- Our Gephi analysis corroborated findings we observed during our collection process, showing that:
 - **Multiple outlets, including legitimate media sites, published ghost author content.** Of these ghost reporters, 19 featured in publications that spanned the continent, 15 were confined to outlets within the same country, and nine ghost reporters only published in a specific outlet.
 - **The most prolific ghost authors are featured in multiple outlets across the continent.** For example, Lamine Fofana either authored or was cited in 83 articles across 31 different outlets, while Sylvain Nguema either authored or was cited in 80 articles across 34 different outlets.
 - [Afriquemedia.tv](#) (64 articles, six ghost authors), [burkina24.com](#) (46 articles, 19 ghost authors), and [dailypost.ng](#) (39 articles, 14 ghost authors) published the most articles authored by or citing ghost authors.
 - Outlets based in countries with strong ties to Russia, including Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Mali, and Nigeria, frequently published content by ghost authors or that referenced fake experts.
- We further filtered the network map to exclude nodes with fewer than six connections to other nodes. The remaining nodes and their proximity to another node suggest they had a higher level of coordination or interaction.
 - This analysis identified 15 ghost authors and 24 outlets that showed higher levels of interaction, suggesting that these outlets more frequently published articles mentioning or authoring one or more ghost reporters. These outlets are based across the continent, including Burkina Faso, Ghana, South Africa, Niger, Nigeria, and South Africa.



The same network map filtered to show only nodes with six or more connections to other nodes. This highlights the nodes with elevated levels of interconnectedness. (Source: Graphika).



Ghost Reporters Activity Trends

Geographical Publication Patterns

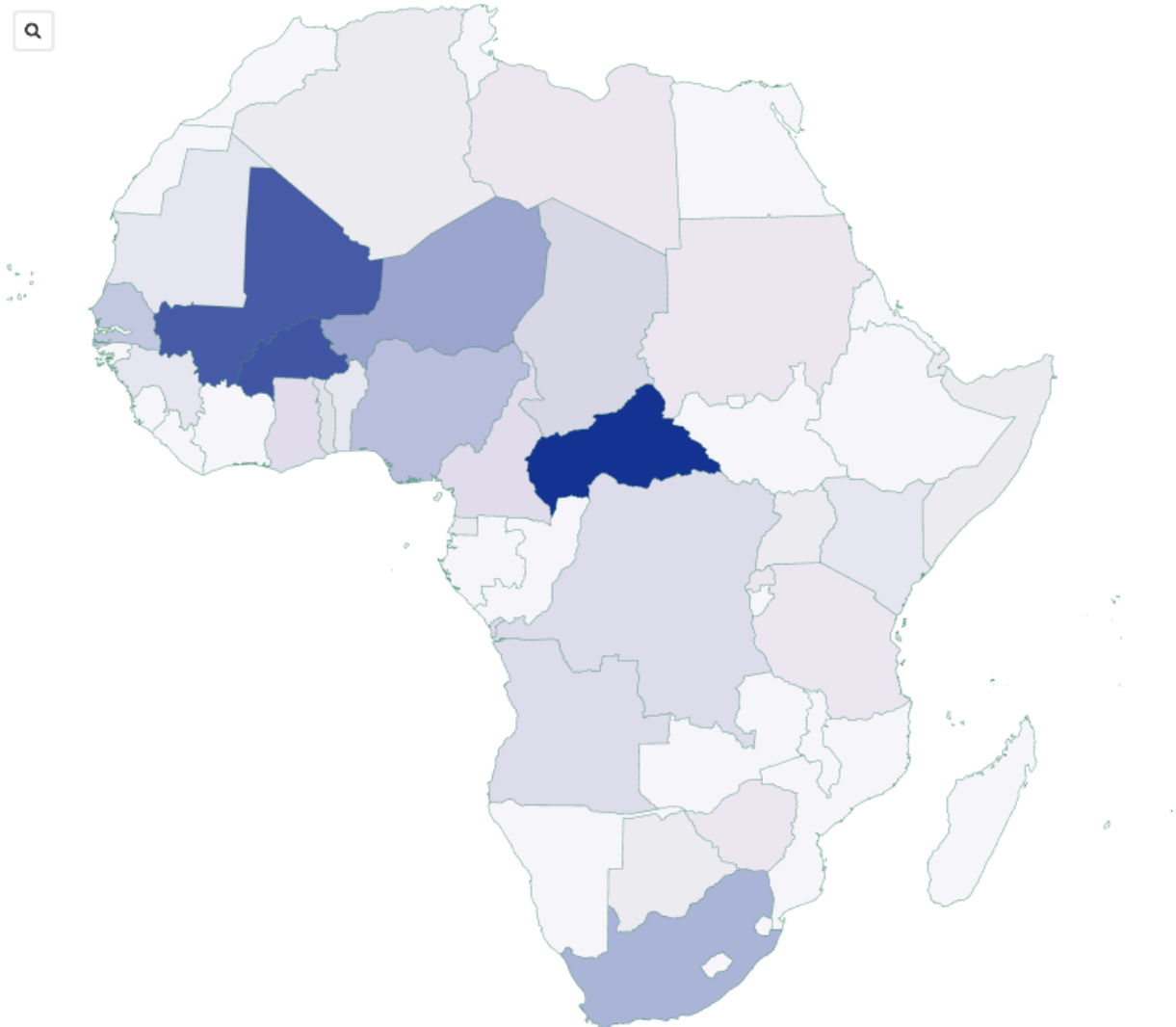
We used the number of articles the ghost reporters published to categorize them by geographical focus:

- **Continental personas:** 19 of the identified personas published content in media outlets across several African countries with no observable ties to or affinity for a specific outlet or country. Their articles were duplicated in various French- and English-language media outlets across the continent.
 - Examples include Coulibaly Mamadou, Mamadou Sissoko, and Gregoire Cyrille Dongobada.
- **Region- and country-focused personas:** Fifteen personas only published in outlets within specific countries.
 - For example, Eric Hamm published exclusively in South African outlets, while Kassi Kouadio published exclusively in Nigerian outlets.
- **Outlet-specific personas:** In nine cases, a ghost reporter only wrote for one outlet.
 - Omar Coulibaly exclusively published content to [Burkina24.com](https://www.burkina24.com).

Mapping countries targeted by articles authored by ghost reporters

Number of media publications per target country

0 200



Source: Code for Africa (CfA)



Country-level distribution of articles targeting African audiences (access the original visualization [here](#)) (Source: CfA using Flourish).

Duplication

We found that 138 different websites and at least 113 social media accounts published ghost reporters' content.

- **News websites and domains:** Ghost reporter content was published or shared on 70 websites that purported to be news outlets, and five Russian state media or pro-Russia websites, such as Sputnik or domains associated with the [Portal Kombat](#) influence operation and Africa-based pro-Russia news agency [African Initiative](#).
 - Websites such as [iol.co.za](#) and [burkina24.com](#) appear to be legitimate news websites that published content by these authors.
 - In other examples, content was posted on platforms or publications that are known to be associated with foreign influence campaigns. [Afrinz.ru](#), a publication associated with the African Initiative, published content by some of these ghost authors.

Information Laundering

We observed several instances of information laundering among these personas and known pro-Russia assets. In these examples, authentic news organizations quoted fake expert personas. African Initiative then referenced these news reports on its website.

- For example, Nigeria's Daily Post [quoted](#) Oluwaseyi Adebayo as a military expert. African Initiative then quoted the Daily Post when referring to Adebayo. Similarly, the Chadian website Al Whida [quoted](#) Yacoub Oumar Defallah as a Chadian African political expert. [African Initiative](#) then cited Al Whida's interview with Defallah.
- We observed two examples in which ghost reporters quoted other ghost reporters or fake experts. An article by [Lazarus Odenge](#) in the Nigerian publication Vanguard quoted the ghost reporter Sylvain Nguema, and a different article by [Lamine Fontana](#) in the Ghanaian publication Modern Ghana quoted the fake expert Luka Malle.
- In one case, ghost reporters [Drissa Traore](#) and [Mamadou Sissoko](#) mentioned a Facebook [video](#) of an authentic Congolese journalist. In the video, the journalist referred to articles and narratives that ghost reporters had previously spread about alleged Ukrainian involvement with terrorist groups in Africa.



Screenshot of an [article](#) by ghost reporter Manuel Godsins promoted on the Russian Foreign Intelligence Services (SVR)-[directed](#) Strategic Culture Foundation.





SPUTNIK Afrique

Une manifestation a réuni des milliers de personnes dans la capitale malienne suite à la diffusion d'une vidéo concernant "des propos et actes blasphématoires" contre l'islam.

Des milliers de manifestants ont protesté le 4 novembre à Bamako après la diffusion d'une vidéo contenant des "propos et actes blasphématoires" contre le Coran et l'islam.


Luka Malle
 @MalleLuka · Suivre

Des milliers de personnes protestent à #Bamako contre un "blasphème". 6 personnes sont détenues depuis jeudi, pour délit à caractère religieux, suite à une plainte du président du Haut Conseil Islamique du #Mali (HCI), Imam Chérif Ousmane Madani Haidara.




2:20 PM · 5 nov. 2022

 53
  Répondre
  Partager

Sputnik Afrique [embedding](#) a tweet from fake expert Luka Malle in an article about protests in Bamako in 2022.

Ghost Reporters Identity Trends

Based on our observations, we assess that the creation of these personas was likely coordinated. A large proportion of these authors used the names of African soccer players, generic or repeating names, and claimed similar academic credentials to position themselves as subject-matter experts while sharing profile pictures. Most of the ghost reporters who published more than one article did so during a one- to four-year period between 2021 and early 2026.

Naming Conventions

Football Players

Ghost reporters or fake experts in our set used names identical to African football players. We assess that names matching those of popular football players are very likely an attempt to obscure ghost reporters' activity by flooding search results with football-related content and making their biographical details and article history more difficult to track. For example, [Lamine Fofana](#) (Côte d'Ivoire), [Coulibaly Mamadou](#) (France), and Mamadou Sissoko (Mali) are high-confidence ghost reporters who share their first and last names with African football players.

Generic Names and Repetition Patterns

Other ghost reporters used very generic names from the countries and regions they were targeting. Some of these names yield dozens of Facebook profiles or are shared by politicians or high-profile individuals, making it difficult to search for and verify the identities of ghost reporters. We also noted that Russian ghost reporters often reuse the same names and surnames by mixing and matching them. For instance, we identified three ghost reporters named "Manuel," two ghost reporters with the surname "Sissoko," "Diarra," or using "Coulibaby" as both a name and a surname. Similarly, we found ghost reporters using the same profile pictures. For instance, the personas Mamadou Sissoko, Oumar Diallo, and Steve Fleitz all shared a profile picture.



The same profile picture was used for at least three ghost reporters we tracked: Mamadou Sissoko (left), Oumar Diallo (center), and Steve Fleitz (right). Redactions added by the authors of the report.



Impersonation Patterns

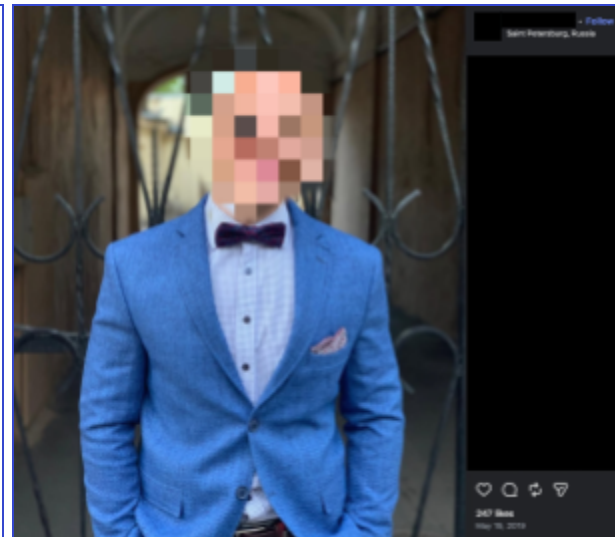
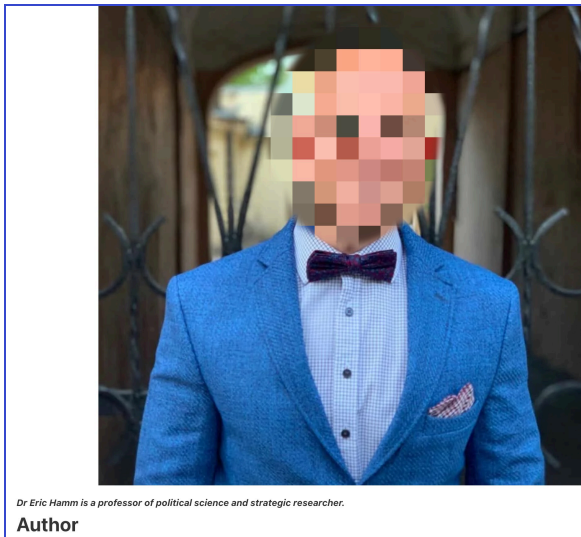
Real Public Figures and Researchers

Some of the ghost reporters and fake experts we detected impersonated well-known researchers and analysts, in a likely effort to appear more credible. To verify the identity theft, we conducted an in-depth review of social media accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn, X, and Muck Rack that matched the suspected ghost reporter. We checked whether their credentials matched the provided biographies and descriptions and whether these social media accounts shared ghost reporter-authored articles. We also compared the topics, writing styles, and publication dates of articles and social media posts available to the real experts, and compared them with those used by the ghost reporters to make our final assessment.

For instance, the “Adama Tembley” persona appears to leverage the reputation of a real former military officer who regularly shares military-related commentary [online](#). While the real Adama Tembley frequently posts military updates, there is no evidence that he authored any of the articles attributed to him.

Everyday People

Occasionally, Russian ghost reporters also used stolen pictures of real individuals as part of their identity. In March 2025, Al Jazeera [reported](#) that Gregoire Cyrille Dongobada, who is shown as a large node in our [Network Visualization](#), used images of a deceased Central African individual. Two other personas writing in the South African media, Eric Hamm and [Manuel Godsin](#), who respectively posed as a “professor of political science and a strategic researcher” and a “writer and researcher at the International Centre for Political and Strategic Studies,” both used stolen pictures of Russian nationals as their Facebook profile pictures.



Example of a Russian ghost reporter, Eric Hamm, impersonating a Russian national. Redactions added by the authors of the report.

Claims of Authority or Impartiality

Nearly all the ghost reporters either claimed authority based on expertise or academic titles, or claimed to be independent writers, political analysts, Sahel and African affairs specialists, or journalists. This framing was likely intended to establish them as credible and impartial. In limited cases, such as the Eric Hamm and Abdoulaye Sissoko personas, the actors behind the profiles created inauthentic academic credentials for their ghost reporters, presenting them as Ph.D. students or graduates from European universities.

We also identified nine personas who posed as fake experts. These fake experts, such as Luka Malle or Sylvain Nguema, have been quoted as local sources and presented as local subject-matter experts in ghostwriter-written content, Russian state-linked articles, and by authentic authors on news websites and social media platforms. For example, [Oluwaseyi Adebayo](#) was quoted as a military expert in Nigeria's Daily Post.

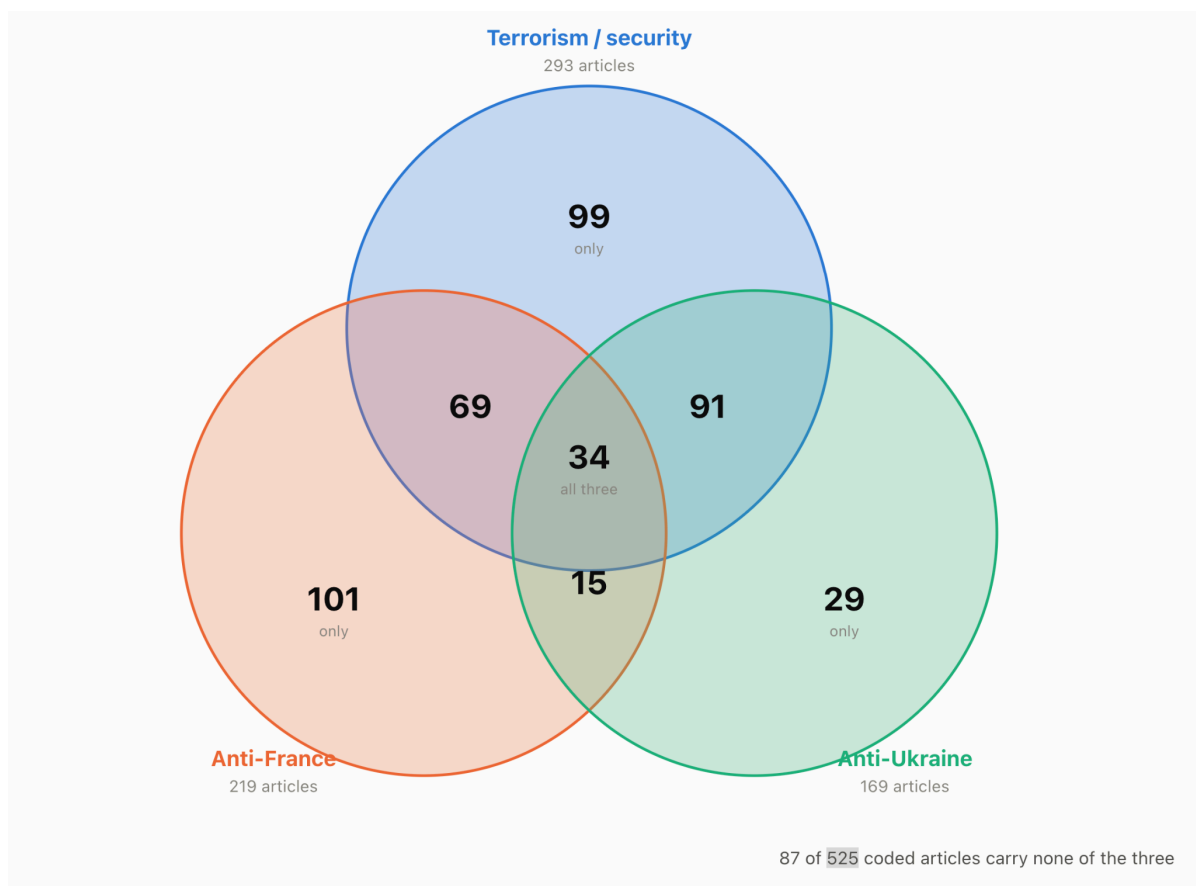
Content Pivots

We identified one ghost reporter — Lazarus Odenge — who stopped publishing geopolitical content on [GhanaWeb](#) in May 2024 and, after a nearly one-year hiatus, resurfaced to [promote](#) an AI public relations training course on the same website. This pivot in content suggests the persona was repurposed.

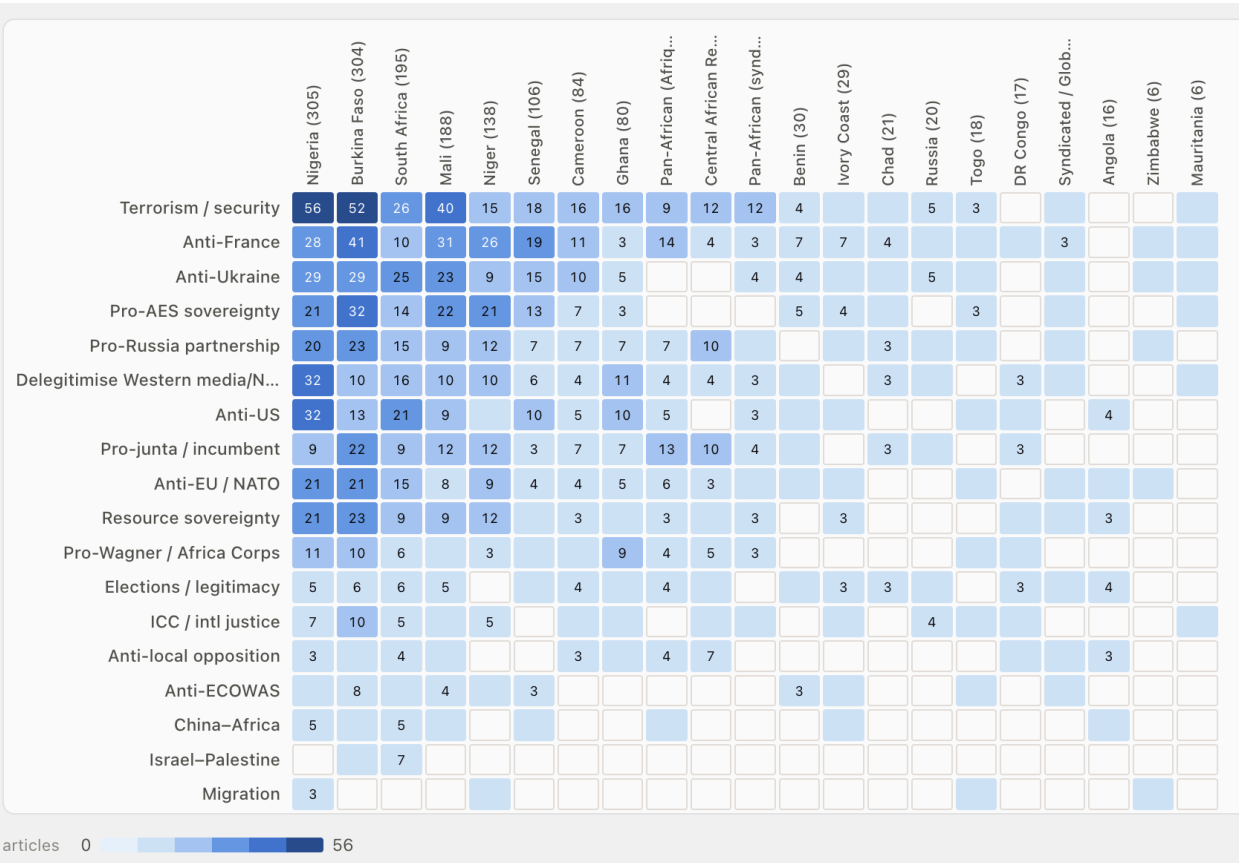
Content Narratives

The content we reviewed from ghost reporters and fake experts focused on several key topics. The most prominent topic was terrorism and security-related issues in Africa. Other prominent narratives are often intertwined with these security-focused narratives and aligned with Russia's strategic, economic, and geopolitical interests in Africa and worldwide.

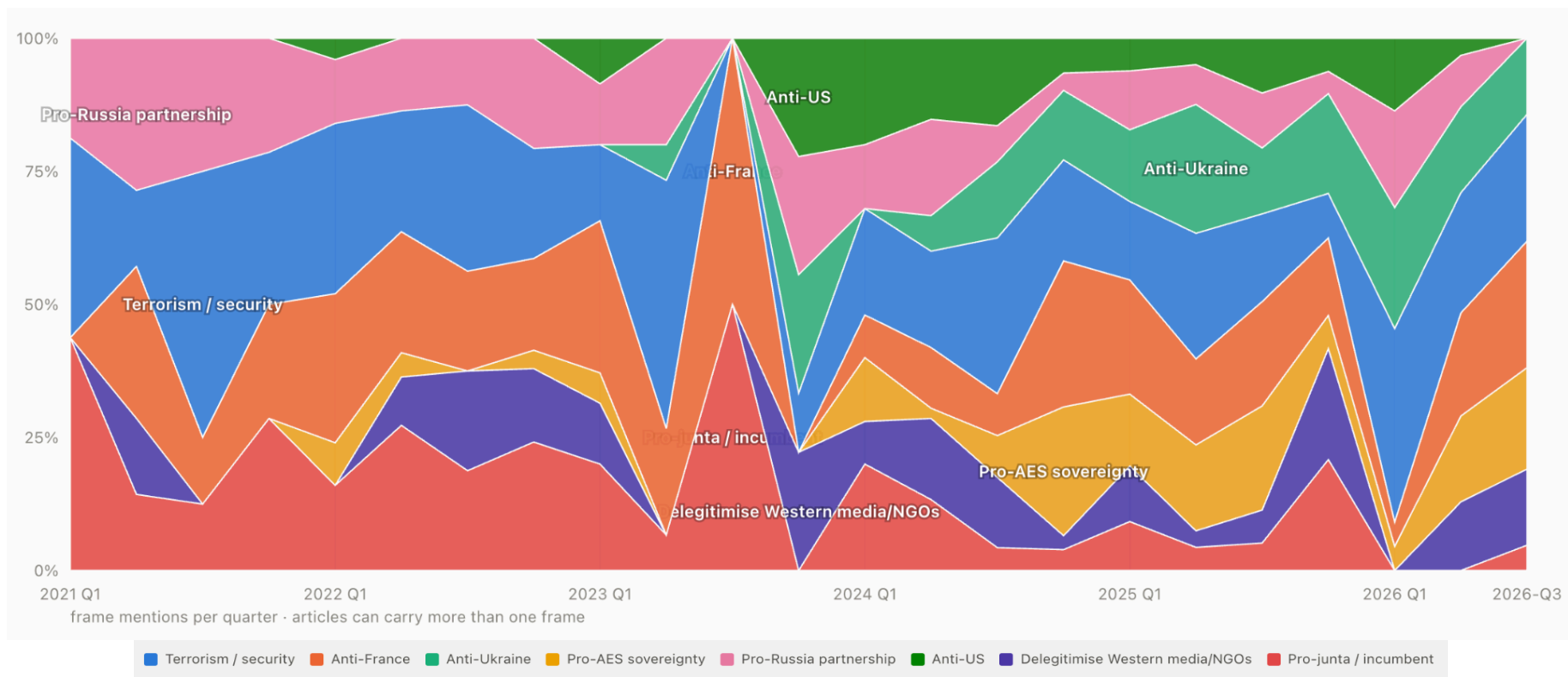
Below, we detail the report's findings in terms of narratives in the form of graphics. They illustrate the topics covered by ghost reporters and fake experts, the distribution of topics by targeted country, and the overall volume and evolution of specific narratives over time.



Visualization of the topics frequently covered by identified ghost reporters. (Source: Code for Africa).



This chart illustrates the topics covered in the articles we collected in relation to the country in which the articles were published. (Source: Code for Africa).



Stream graph illustrating the topics covered by ghost reporters in their articles over time. (Source: Code for Africa).

Terrorism and Security

Terrorism and security issues were by far the most covered topics by ghost reporters and fake experts, both as a sole topic and in tandem with other key topics, such as the French and Ukrainian presence and influence in Africa. The articles covering these issues often accuse the West of secretly training, arming, and supporting terrorist groups in the Sahel region, portraying the West as a regional threat through the installation of military bases, "spies," and institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and the International Criminal Court (ICJ).

Conversely, ghost reporters and fake experts produced laudative content celebrating the Wagner/Africa Corps military and its impact on African security, the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), which was presented as a sovereign alternative to Western presence in Africa, with the support of Russia, and African Presidents supportive of a Russian presence in their countries.



Example of a [ghostwritten article](#) quoting fake expert Luka Malle on the role of the AES.

Targeting France

219 articles in our dataset targeted France, while sometimes simultaneously praising Russia. Outside of negative security-related coverage of France, these articles focused on depicting France as a manipulative, neo-colonial power willing to do anything to maintain its influence on the African continent. Other articles promoted and amplified claims for colonial reparations and anti-French protests and events. Similar narratives against the U.S. military and diplomatic presence in Africa are also regularly covered.



Example of a [ghostwritten article](#) targeting France's influence in Africa.

Targeting Ukraine

Ukraine is also a frequent target of the ghost reporters. Articles mainly portrayed the country as a corrupt power extending its influence in Africa for its own interests and leading a shadow war against Russia in Africa. These narratives and articles portray Ukraine as doing the U.S.'s "dirty work" in Africa while also accusing the U.S. of leading imperialist projects, sometimes coercively, in Africa at the expense of the people.

SENEGOPolitiqueSociétéJusticeInternationalAfriqueÉconomieCélébritésBuzz

« La Russie dénonce l'ingérence ukrainienne au Sahel et salue les progrès de l'AES » (Par Lamine Fofana)

**Dianké MANÉ** • 11 Août 2025, 20:16 • ⌚ 3 min • 🔖 2



[Example](#) of a ghostwritten article targeting Ukraine and praising AES.

Social Media Spread

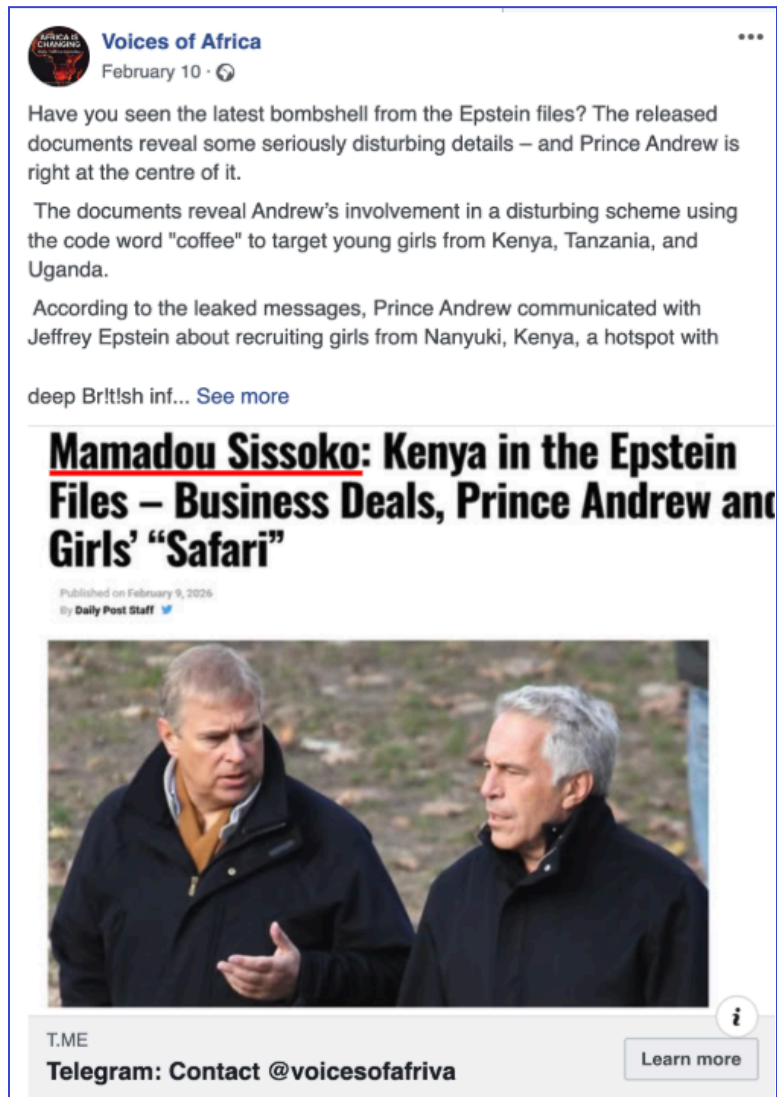
Our analysis indicates that Facebook is the primary platform for disseminating ghost reporter content, with inauthentic networks of accounts being the main amplifiers. The content we surfaced on X was primarily posted by the news outlets that originally published it and, to a much lesser extent, by users who may not know the content's origin. We identified only a handful of [X](#) accounts that used display names of high-confidence ghost reporters and posted content authored by those ghost reporters.

Facebook

As noted above, our analysis indicates Facebook is the primary online distribution channel for ghost reporter content. The content on Facebook largely falls into two categories.

- **Organic spread by authentic users:** This activity is largely contained to the legitimate, African-based news outlets that originally published ghost reporter content and subsequently shared it on their own social media channels. It also includes authentic individuals who shared this content on their own accounts, though we cannot confirm whether they knew the authors did not exist.
 - For example, the Senegal-based news outlet [Actualités Géopolitiques](#) repeatedly [shared](#) the work of ghost reporters, including Alain Koné. News outlets such as African Times and Daily Post Nigeria shared articles published by the ghost reporters [Mamadou Sissoko](#), [Manuel Godsin](#), and [Eric Hamm](#) on their social media channels, including X and Facebook.
 - Although we identified Facebook accounts for ghost reporters like [Luka Malle](#) and [Manuel Godsin](#), we did not see them share any relevant content.
 - We also identified instances where known Russian state or state-aligned actors, such as the [Russian Embassy to Nigeria](#) or pro-Kremlin activist [Luc Michel](#), amplified articles authored by these ghost reporters. The pro-Russia influence operation Portal Kombat also repeatedly amplified ghostwritten content, though we assess this was likely opportunistic.
 - On March 27, 2025, a Cameroonian [content creator](#) amplified an article authored by the ghost reporter. The post included the term “t ntative d'assa  inat,” an obfuscation of the French phrase “tentative assassinat” (“assassination attempt”) and garnered 45 reactions, 19 comments, and 14 shares. Seven of these shares belonged to the content creator who posted on several regionally focused Facebook groups in short succession, including [l'Afrique aux Africains](#), [COALITION POUR LA REFONDATION DE CENTRAFRIQUE \[CRC\]](#), and [AFRIQUE INFOS](#).

- **Amplification through inauthentic networks:** Coordinated inauthentic behavior (CIB) networks are the primary amplifiers of ghost reporter-authored content. Social media accounts in these networks pose as local, grassroots news sources and are operated by inauthentic accounts. Meta highlighted two such networks that amplified ghost reporter content in its [H2 2025](#) and [H1 2026](#) Adversarial Threat Reports, both of which the company indicated originated in Russia.



Example of a Facebook Post removed by Meta for Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior.

Appendix A: Ghostbusting Primer

Below is a short how-to guide for individuals or organizations to interrogate their information source(s) and spot potential ghost reporters or fake experts, regardless of region. For a full how-to guide, please visit the version hosted on the Code for Africa's [Disinfo.Africa](https://disinfo.africa) website.

1. CHECK THE PERSON

- Reverse-search the image on at least three engines.
- Does the same photograph appear under another byline?
- Search the name. Are there overlaps with an unrelated famous person?
- Does any account of theirs predate the first byline?
- Email the named university or institution directly and ask whether the program or the student exists.
- Check the affiliated “institute” or “center”: domain registration date against claimed founding date, address, filed accounts, staff members, and phone numbers.
- Do they publish anywhere outside this cluster of outlets? Can you reach somebody who has met them?

2. CHECK THE SITE

- Read the page source code for tracking identifiers, then search each one for other sites carrying it.
- Use WHOIS/RDAP to compare the domain creation date against the outlet's claimed founding year, and check the registrant email and phone for reuse across domains.
- Check where the brand's other domain variants redirect.

3. CHECK THE SPREAD

- Search one distinctive sentence as an exact string, excluding the original domain.
- Count originals against republications. Is this outlet a producer or a carrier?
- Watch for personas quoting other personas, and for suspected ghostwriter content appearing in legitimate sources through syndication.
- Cross-reference platform and state enforcement reporting; the network may already be named.

4. WHAT DOES NOT COUNT AS EVIDENCE

- Sharing a political line. Many positions are sincerely held by millions, including legitimate commentators. **Narrative overlap is never attribution.**
- Infrastructure like WordPress themes. Only account-level identifiers (one analytics property, one registrant email) are evidence.
- AI-detector output alone given potential for false positives or legitimate translation use cases.
- A thin footprint, a pseudonym, or churn journalism on their own.

5. BEFORE YOU ACT

- Archive, hash, and timestamp (UTC) everything before you approach anyone.
- Do not contact the persona or the outlet early.
- Do not click operator-controlled tracking links or research from a logged-in personal or newsroom account.
- Where a stolen photograph belongs to a private individual, redact it and do not name them without consent. Where the subject is a real, named public figure, you need a payment, contract, travel or recruitment record, not just content analysis, plus legal review.
- Real journalists recruited to a covert platform without knowing it are victims and sources, not operators. Plan any approach to them with an editor, and with a security adviser where the environment warrants it.

The methods detailed above identify potential fabrication, not attribution. Open-source information can show a byline is fake; who placed it requires corroboration through court records, platform disclosures, or even leaks. State actors, content-for-hire firms, and legitimate operators may use similar techniques.

Estimative Language Legend

Assessments of Likelihood

Graphika uses the following vocabulary to indicate the likelihood of a hypothesis proving correct. If we are unable to assess likelihood due to limited or non-existent information, we may use terms such as “suggest.”

Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Real Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain(ly)
1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%

Confidence Levels: Indicators of Sourcing and Corroboration

Graphika uses confidence levels to indicate the quality of information, sources, and corroboration underpinning our assessments.

Low Confidence	Medium Confidence	High Confidence
Assessment based on information from a non-trusted source and/or information we have not been able to independently corroborate.	Assessment based on information that we are unable to sufficiently corroborate and/or information open to multiple interpretations.	Assessment based on information from multiple trusted sources that we are able to fully corroborate.

Graphika

**CODE FOR
AFRICA**

About Us

Graphika is the most trusted provider of actionable open-source intelligence to help organizations stay ahead of emerging online events and make decisions on how to navigate them. Led by prominent innovators and technologists in the field of online discourse analysis, Graphika supports global enterprises and public sector customers across trust & safety, cyber threat intelligence, and strategic communications spanning industries including intelligence, technology, media and entertainment, and global banking. Graphika continually integrates new and emerging technologies into our proprietary intelligence platform and analytic services, empowering our customers with high-precision intelligence and confidence to operate in a complex and continuously evolving information environment.

For more information or to request a demo, [visit](#) our website.

Code for Africa (CfA) is the continent's largest network of civic technology and data journalism labs, with teams in 26 countries. CfA builds digital democracy solutions that give citizens unfettered access to actionable information that empowers them to make informed decisions, and which strengthens civic engagement for improved public governance and accountability. CfA also manages the African Network of Centres for Investigative Reporting (ANCIR), which gives the continent's best muckraking newsrooms the best possible forensic data tools, digital security and whistleblower encryption to help improve their ability to tackle crooked politicians, organised crime and predatory big business.

Learn more about codeforafrica.org

