Countering Misinformation & Disinformation

Train-the-trainer Toolkit

2023/2024

government communications
Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NDP 2030

STAY SAFE
VACCINATE TO SAVE SOUTH AFRICA
TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT CORONAVIRUS

TOOLKIT OBJECTIVES

Structured Training Approach:

Provides a structured and comprehensive training approach for instructors to effectively convey the *RESIST framework's components.*

Recognise, **E**arly warning, **S**ituational insight, **I**mpact analysis, **I**mpact analysis, and **T**racking effectiveness.

This ensures that trainers can present the information in a coherent and organised manner.

Resource for Instruction:

Serves as a valuable resource for trainers and trainees by offering instructional materials, guidelines, and resources to facilitate the training sessions.

It aids in delivering consistent and high-quality content, ensuring that trainers are well-equipped to impart the necessary knowledge and skills related to countering misinformation and disinformation.

Consistent Implementation:

Ensures consistency in the implementation of the RESIST framework across various training sessions.

Trainers can adhere to a standardized set of materials, methodologies, and best practices, promoting uniformity in the way the framework is taught.

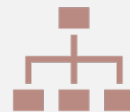This consistency is essential for effective learning outcomes.

TRAINING OUTCOMES

Identify a range of different types of misinformation, dis- information and **Malinformation** consistently and effectively

Prevent, contain, and tackle the spread of mis- and disinformation

Develop a response when mis- and disinformation affects the organisation's/departments' ability to do its job or its reputation, or represents a threat to the general public

Aid to build **audience resilience** to the threat of mis- and disinformation

Section A

This session will focus on:

The differences between **mis**-, **dis**- **and malinformation**

The **messages** that are spread and whether they are false, misleading or manipulated

Who is spreading the messages and narratives

Some common examples & narratives

SA Digital and Media Landscape 2023/2024

Manipulated, false and misleading information can:

Why is disinformation harmful?

- Threaten **public safety**

- Fracture **community cohesion**

- Reduce **trust in institutions and the media**

- Undermine public acceptance of **informing policy development and implementation**

- Damage our **economic prosperity and our global influence**

- Undermine the **integrity of government, the constitution and our democratic processes**

Government Communications (GCIS)

Does fake news spread faster than real news?

YES!!

"The Spread of True and False News Online" (March 2018)

Three MIT scholars analysed a set of rumors on Twitter from 2006 to 2017. False news reached more people than the truth:

- *False news stories are ==**70 percent** more likely to be retweeted than true stories are==*

- *It also takes true stories about **six times as long** to reach 1,500 people as it does for false stories to reach the same number of people.*

"Fake news, disinformation and misinformation in social media: a review (Aïmeur, E., Amri, S. and Brassard, G., 2023)"

*…"it has been widely ==**proven that people are often motivated to support and accept information that goes with their preexisting viewpoints**== and beliefs and reject information that does not fit in…";*

"…that humans are more likely to believe information that confirms their existing views and ideological beliefs."

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9910783/

https://news.mit.edu/2018/study-twitter-false-news-travels-faster-true-stories-0308

Government Communications (GCIS)

Does fake news spread faster than real news?

Forwarded

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) R700 Grant Application Form 2023 is Out. The online registration exercise which is the quickest to apply for is now out for all bonafide citizens only who needs helping hands in their various activities.
All South Africans under the age 18-45 years can apply
Over 55,000 citizens received R350 fund grant in 2021 due to covid.
In 2023 Over 675,000 citizens will receive R700 payment.
The Payments have just began for all applicants,Register To be Part of the Beneficiaries.
Check Eligibility and Apply here

://tynlink.com/Apply4SASSAOnline

FAKE

KINDLY SUBMIT DIRECTLY TO THE DEPARTMENT

the dpsa
Department:
Public Service and Administration
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DPSA CIRCULAR VACANCIES

LOCATION: NATION WIDE

REQUIREMENTS: GRADE 10 OR EQUIVALENT

STIPEND: R4,600 - R8,600 P/M
CLOSING DATE: 03 December 2023
TARGET GROUP: 18 - 45 YEARS

- General Workers X250 (R6,800 pm)
- Clerks X50 posts (12,070 pm)
- Priso... 172 ...sts (8,500 pm)
- Librar... ...ce x96 posts (R8,672 pm)
- Cleaner... (6,500 pm)
- Code 10/14 Drivers X50 posts (R15,000 pm)
- Secretary X15 posts (R10,000 pm)

HOW TO APPLY?
Visit: jobsonlin.co.za for reference & Application Details.
Also Whatsapp: 0711405922 for Assistance.

KINDLY SUBMIT DIRECTLY TO THE DEPARTMENT

🚨 FAKE 🚨

SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT 10GB FREE...
Government is providing 10GB...
bit.ly

SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT 10GB FREE DATA

Government is providing 10GB of free data to every South African similar to the allocati... municipal wate... servic...
...eedy ...d be given to e... ...te whether they are rich or poor, will be given access to 10GB per month

AVAILABLE NETWORKS:
Cell C, Vodacom, MTN, Telkom, Rain and Liquid

Use Link Below to Get Yours
https://bit.ly/Gov-10gb-Free-Data-...ard-SA

4:50 PM

FAKE

Government Communications (GCIS)

THE ONLINE LANDSCAPE

40 million messages

150,000 posts

5000 hours of content

350,000 tweets

Facebook Fake accounts removed from 2017 – 2020

(Courtesy of Statista.com_)

5,800,000,000 fake Facebook accounts removed in 2022?
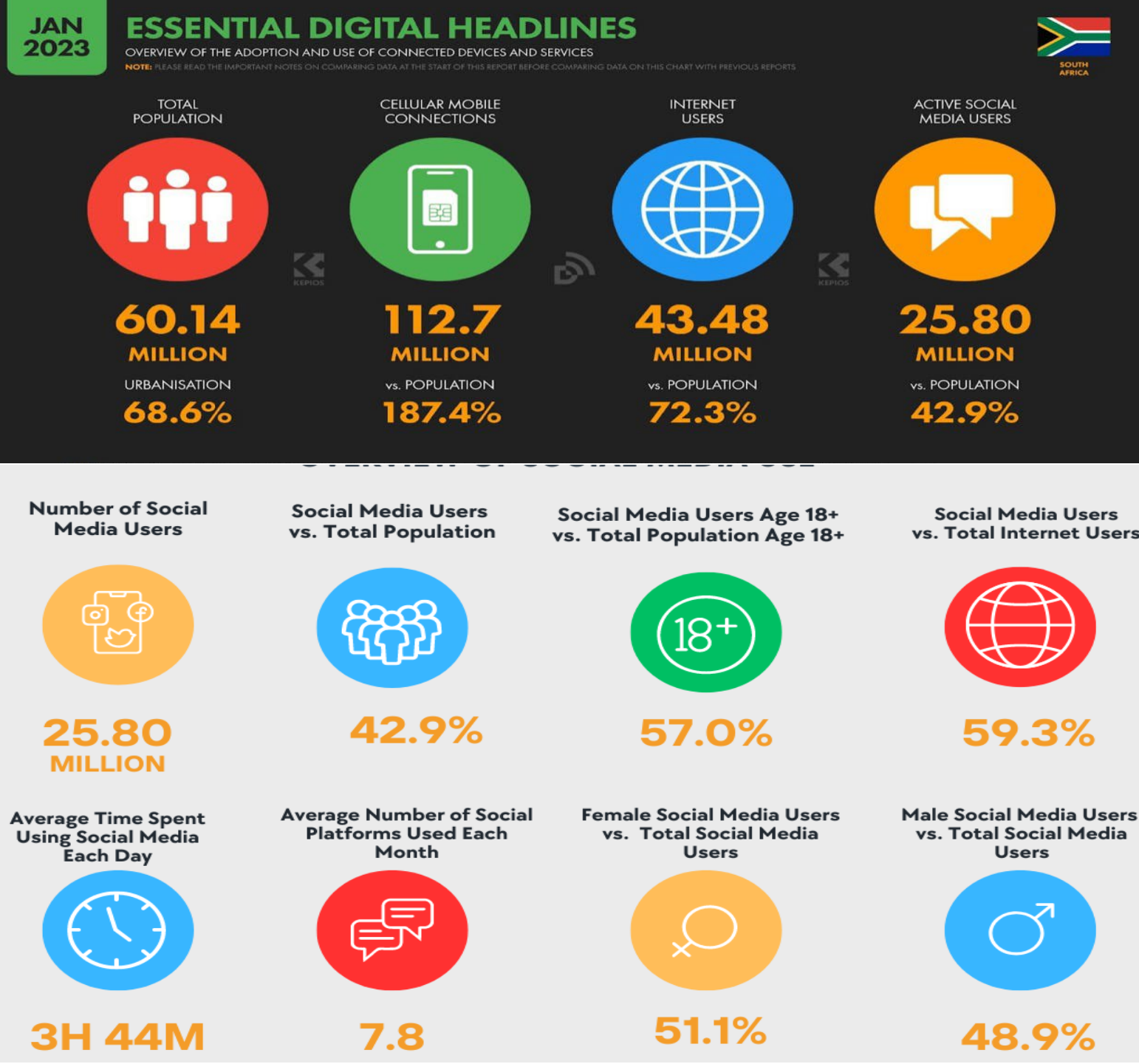

SABC Example – Courtesy of YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aE1RYWbNOU

Government Communications (GCIS)

SA's DIGITAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE 2023

Courtesy of:
- *Meltwater*
- *Semantic Scholar*
- *CSA Sha-Izwe*

JAN 2023

ESSENTIAL DIGITAL HEADLINES
OVERVIEW OF THE ADOPTION AND USE OF CONNECTED DEVICES AND SERVICES
NOTE: PLEASE READ THE IMPORTANT NOTES ON COMPARING DATA AT THE START OF THIS REPORT BEFORE COMPARING DATA ON THIS CHART WITH PREVIOUS REPORTS.

SOUTH AFRICA

TOTAL POPULATION	CELLULAR MOBILE CONNECTIONS	INTERNET USERS	ACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA USERS
60.14 MILLION	**112.7 MILLION**	**43.48 MILLION**	**25.80 MILLION**
URBANISATION **68.6%**	vs. POPULATION **187.4%**	vs. POPULATION **72.3%**	vs. POPULATION **42.9%**

OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Number of Social Media Users	Social Media Users vs. Total Population	Social Media Users Age 18+ vs. Total Population Age 18+	Social Media Users vs. Total Internet Users
25.80 MILLION	**42.9%**	**57.0%**	**59.3%**

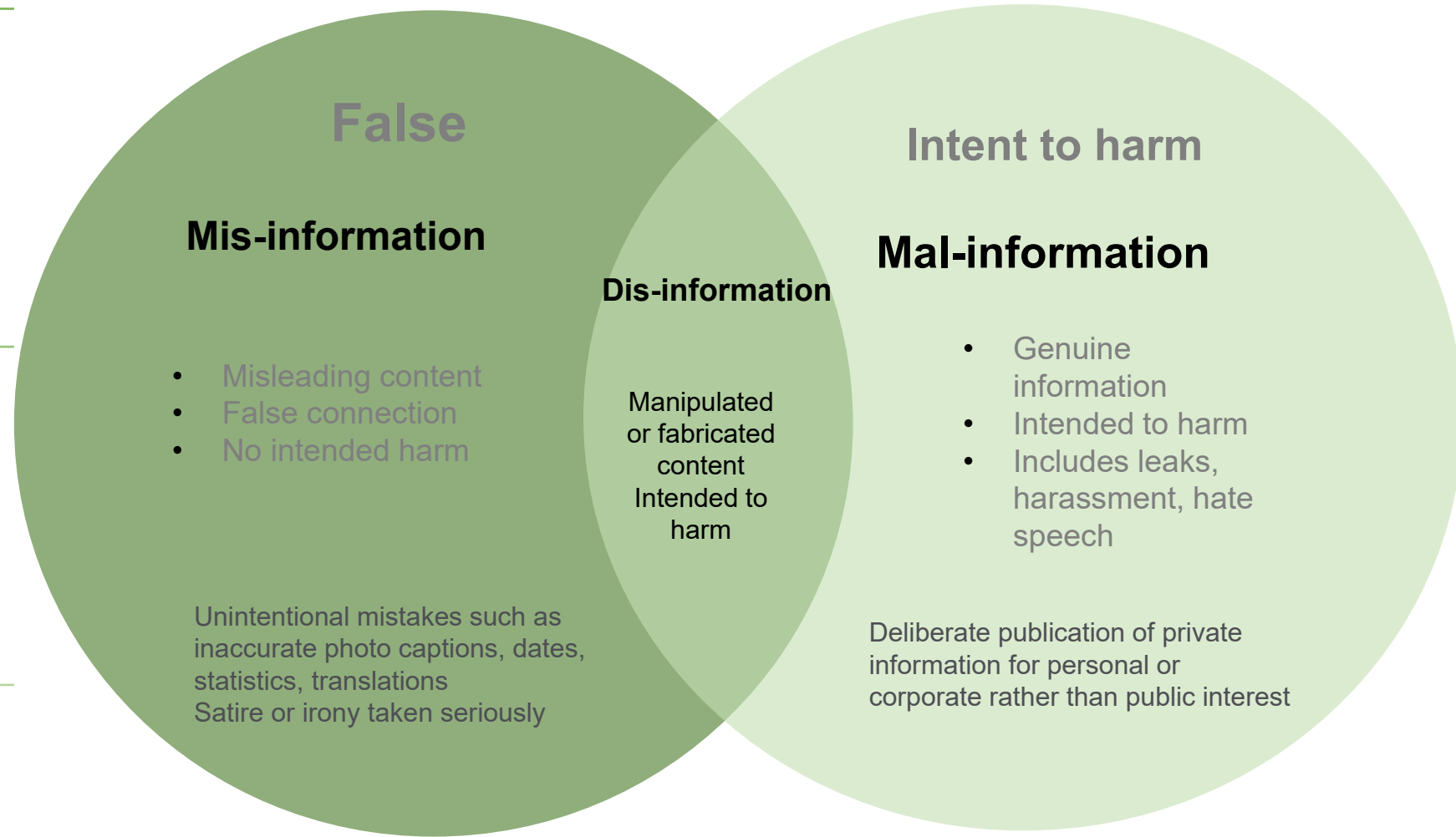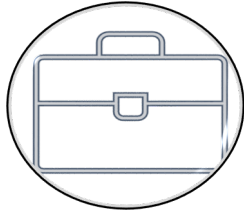| Average Time Spent Using Social Media Each Day	Average Number of Social Platforms Used Each Month	Female Social Media Users vs. Total Social Media Users	Male Social Media Users vs. Total Social Media Users
3H 44M	**7.8**	**51.1%**	**48.9%**

KEY DEFINITIONS

1. Disinformation: refers to verifiably false information that is shared with an intent to deceive and mislead.

2. Misinformation: refers to verifiably false information that is shared without an intent to mislead

3. Malinformation: deliberately misleads by twisting the meaning of truthful information

False

Intent to harm

Mis-information

- Misleading content
- False connection
- No intended harm

Unintentional mistakes such as inaccurate photo captions, dates, statistics, translations
Satire or irony taken seriously

Dis-information

Manipulated or fabricated content
Intended to harm

Mal-information

- Genuine information
- Intended to harm
- Includes leaks, harassment, hate speech

Deliberate publication of private information for personal or corporate rather than public interest

Hostile state actors: - Governments, organisations, state-sponsored individuals

Ideological actors: lone actor, motivated by ideology or politics

Commercial actors Economically motivated (non-political)
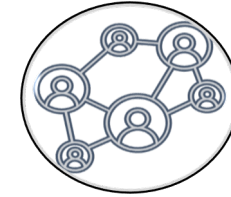
Trolls Deliberate commenting on internet forums to provoke or engage others in argument

Mal/Dis/Misinformation is performed by multiple actors

Contextualising the difference between Mis/Dis/Malinformation

Video Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vg3s6mQq3C0

Government Communications (GCIS)

DISCUSSION

What personal or experience do you have with disinformation, misinformation, or malinformation?

1. Have you ever experienced the effects of malformation, was there inaccurate or incomplete information that led to confusion or misinterpretation?

2. How did you navigate through the situation, and what strategies did you employ to ensure clarity and accuracy moving forward?

3. Could you share a personal anecdote about a time when you unintentionally spread misinformation?

How did you realize your mistake, and what measures did you take to rectify it and prevent similar occurrences in the future?

Section B

What will this session cover?

- ○ The R.E.S.I.S.T FRAMEWORK

- ○ The steps to identify Misinformation and Disinformation

- ○ Relate to real-world mis/disinformation events

R.E.S.I.S.T Framework

Recognise

Situational insight

Strategic communications

R-E-S-I-S-T

Early warning

Impact analysis

Tracking effectiveness
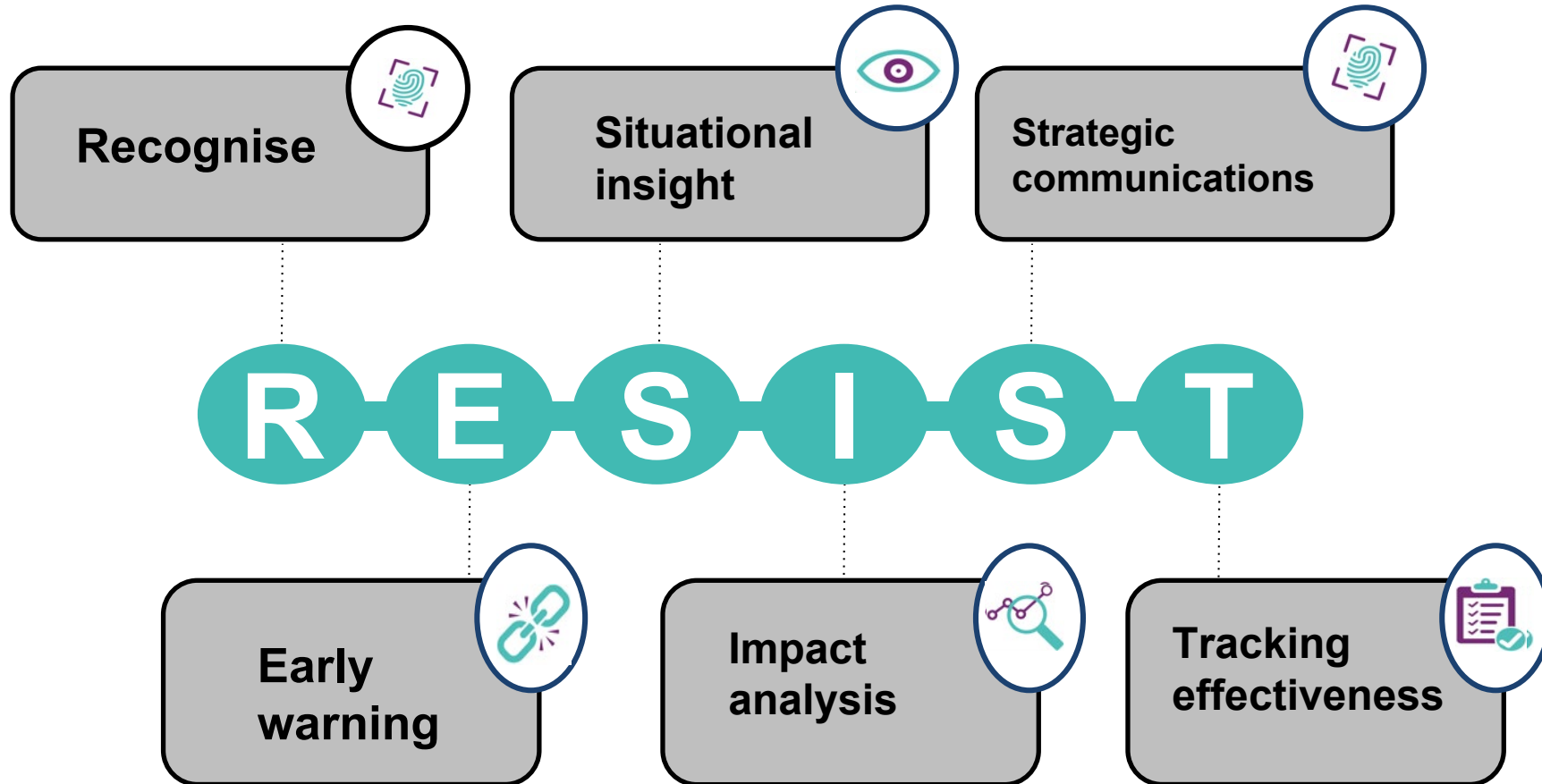
Consists of:

- Media Monitoring & Management
- Content & Insights Analysis
- Communication Strategising
- Media & Stakeholder Engagement
- Crisis Communication
- Rapid response
- Campaign Management
- Evaluation and reporting

The Purpose Of RESIST

The RESIST framework allows communicators/communications practitioners to:

Monitor the information environment(s)

Identify mis-, dis- and malinformation

Choose appropriate response(s)

Early Warning

Situational Insight

Impact Analysis

Strategic Communications

Tracking Effectiveness

Recognise?

"Recognise" provides an insightful overview of today's information landscape, emphasizing the abundance of online information and the ensuing communication challenges.
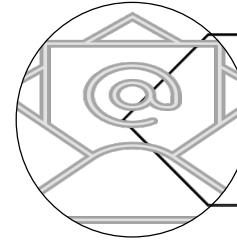
It delineates between misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, elucidating their impact on audiences.

By categorizing these forms of false information, it facilitates understanding of their potential threats to public safety and community trust in institutions and media.
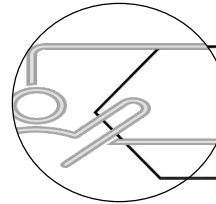
Furthermore, it furnishes communicators with a practical checklist to assess information accuracy.
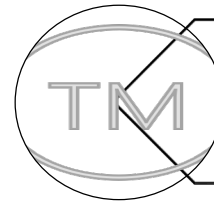
Consider these….

1. MESSAGE

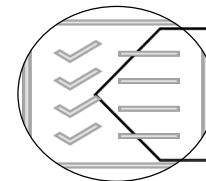## 2. NARRATIVE

3. BRAND
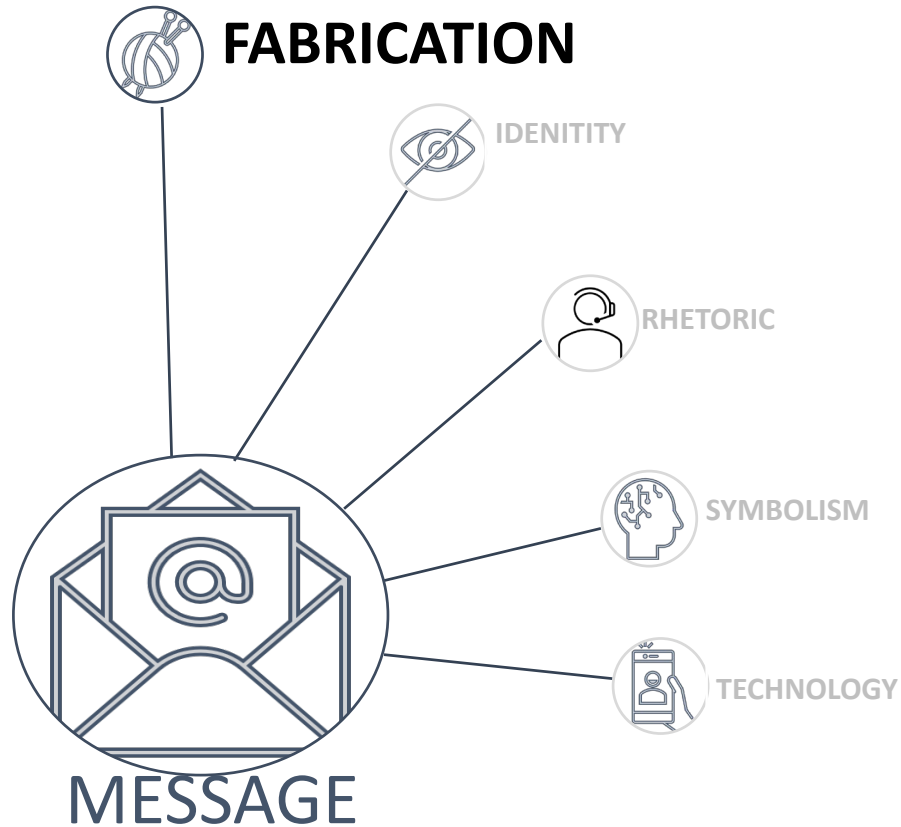
4. INTENT

FABRICATION

IDENITITY

RHETORIC

SYMBOLISM

TECHNOLOGY

MESSAGE

FABRICATION?

Is the content fabricated/ manipulated content?

e.g.: forged documents, manipulated images, or deliberately

Case Study Example

Elon Musk Investment Project Hoax

13:37 CAT

SABC

EVERYONE WHO INVESTS R4700 CAN EARN R300,000 PER MONTH

@SABCNews

SABCNEWS.COM

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aE1RYWbNOU

Government Communications (GCIS

IDENTITY?

FABRICATION

IDENITITY

RHETORIC

SYMBOLISM

TECHNOLOGY

MESSAGE

Does anything point to a disguised or misleading source, or false claims about someone else's identity?

- E.g.: a fake social media account, claiming that a person or organisation is something they are not, or behaviour that doesn't match the way the account presents itself.
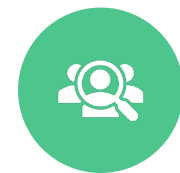
TEDROS SAYS HE ISNT VACCINTED

MISSING CONTEXT

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

TEDROS SAYS HE ISNT VACCINTED

MISSING CONTEXT

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

A video circulating on X (formerly Twitter) claims to show the head of the World Health Organization, *Tedros Ghebreyesus, saying he has not been vaccinated against the coronavirus.*

○ The video was initially popular on social media in August 2022. *The same claim was debunked by fact-checking organisations, FullFact and AP news in 2022*, and again by Health Feedback in July 2023.

○ Despite this, **the video has resurfaced in September 2023**, like in this post where it has been **viewed over 400,000 times in just a few days.** The video is captioned: *"The Guy Incharge Of Telling Everyone Else To Get Boosters Now, Doesn't Even Have The First Shot."*

Case study example

The post also received attention in South Africa from Beverley Schäfer, deputy speaker of the Western Cape's provincial parliament. She reposted it, saying Tedros was trying "to spin a story about Africa as to why he didn't take the [vaccine]".
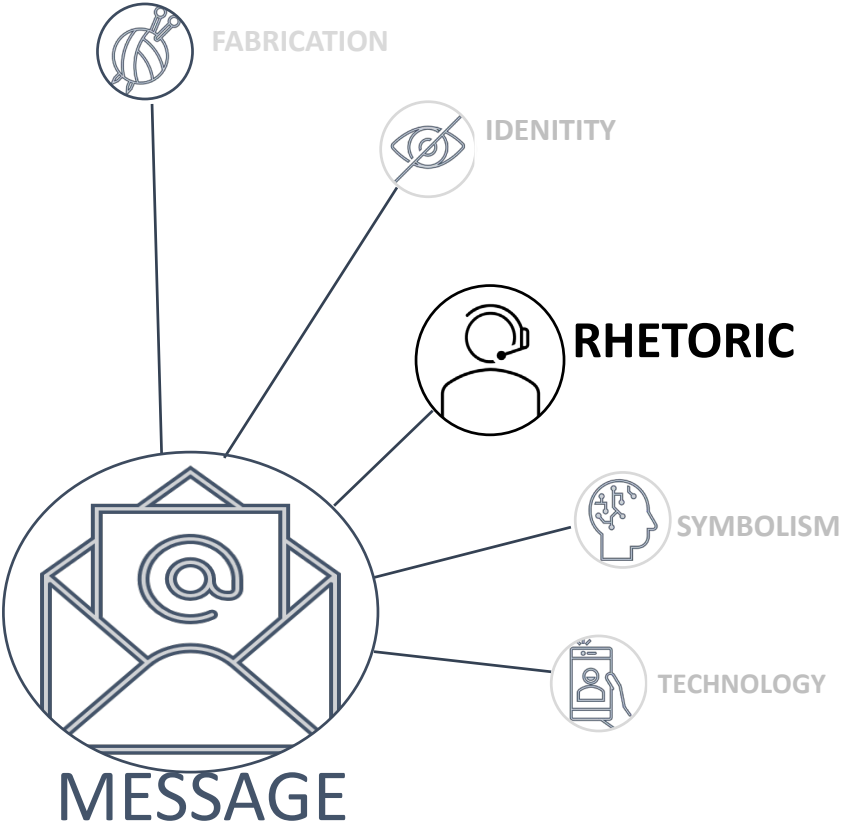
The video was taken out of context and deliberately missed vital information on why the WHO leader didn't take the vaccine. The clip was part of a documentary called 'How to Survive a Pandemic,' in it the interviewer asks Ghebreyesus when he was vaccinated and he responds: "Still I feel like I know where I belong: in a poor country called Ethiopia, in a poor continent called Africa, and [I] wanted to wait until Africa and other countries in other regions, low-income countries, start vaccination. So I was protesting, in other words, because we're failing."

Resource Source: https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/meta-programme-fact-checks/whos-tedros-ghebreyesus-did-get-vaccinated-against-covid-19

RHETORIC?

FABRICATION

IDENITY

RHETORIC

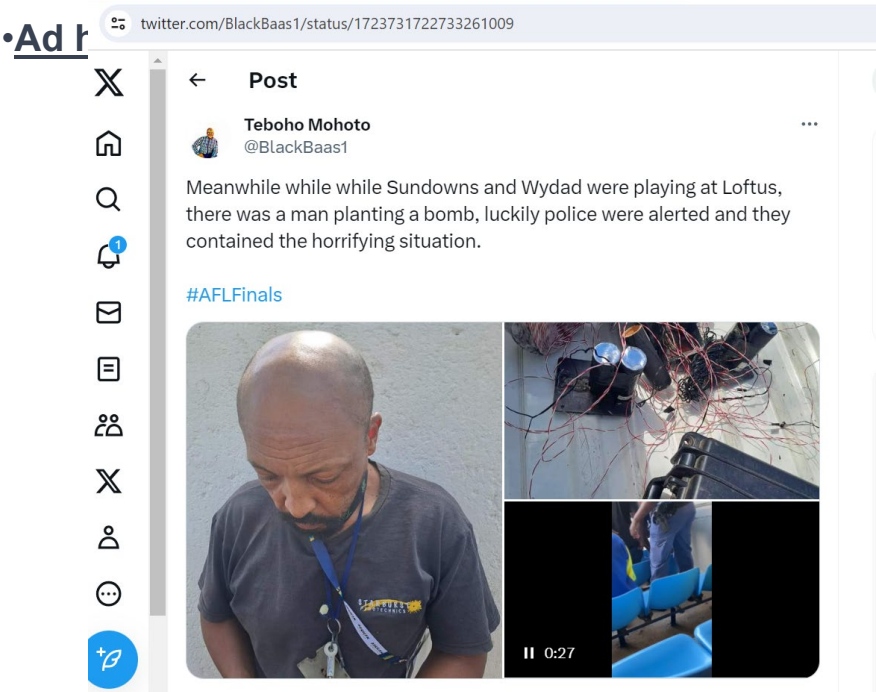SYMBOLISM

TECHNOLOGY

MESSAGE

• **Trolling:** Provocative online behavior aimed at inciting reactions.

• **Whataboutism:** Shifting focus by deflecting criticism towards others.

• **Strawman:** Misrepresenting an argument to make it easier to attack.
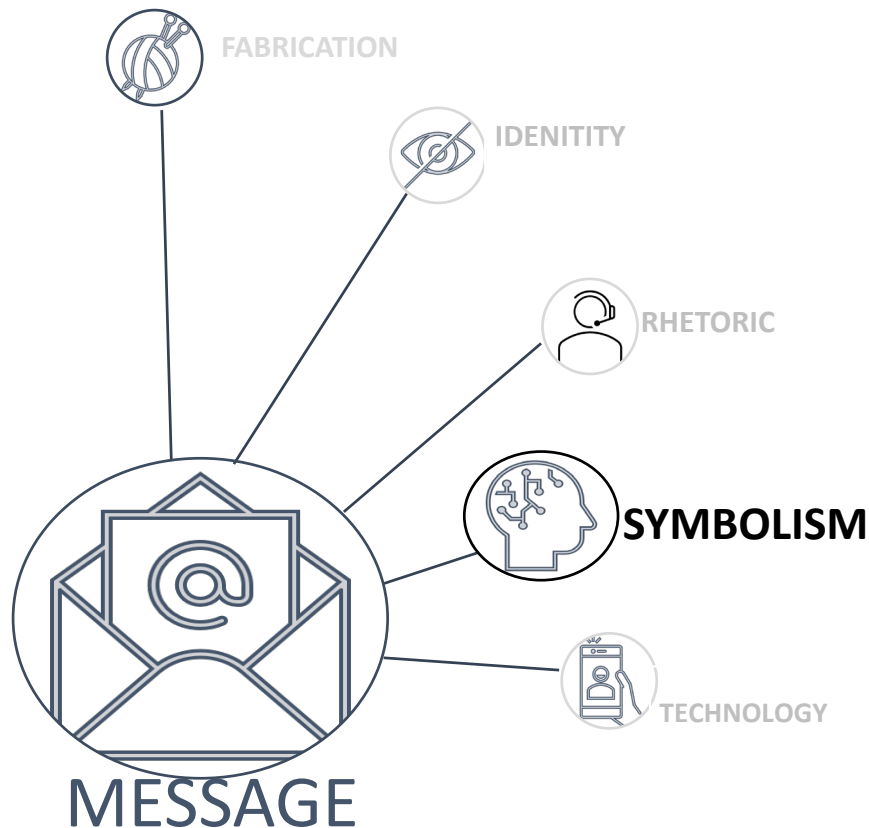
• **Social proof:** Conforming to the actions or beliefs of others.

• **Ad h**   gument.

twitter.com/BlackBaas1/status/1723731722733261009

Post

Teboho Mohoto
@BlackBaas1

Meanwhile while while Sundowns and Wydad were playing at Loftus, there was a man planting a bomb, luckily police were alerted and they contained the horrifying situation.

#AFLFinals

SYMBOLISM

FABRICATION

IDENITITY

RHETORIC

SYMBOLISM

TECHNOLOGY

MESSAGE

Exploitation of data, issues, or events for unrelated communicative goals:

- Historical examples taken out of context

- Unconnected facts used to justify conspiracy theories

- Misuse of statistics

Conclusions that are far removed from what data reasonably supports
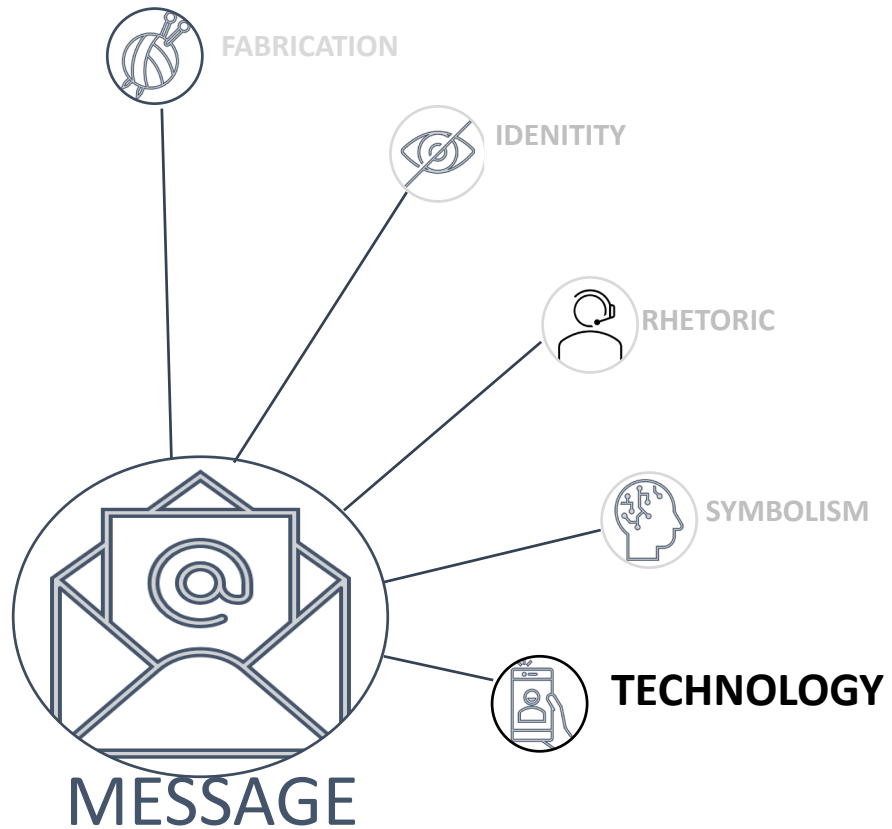

CASE STUDY

JOHANNESBURG MASHALLTOWN FIRE (Sept 2023)

Following the Marshalltown fire in September 2023, which claimed the lives of 77 people and left more than 50 injured, Johannesburg officials seemed to suggest that the catastrophe could have been averted had it not been for civil society organisations that often drag the City to court over "illegal evictions".

Sources: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-08-31-city-of-johannesburg-points-finger-at-ngos-and-foreign-nationals-after-deadly-fire/ https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-09-29-under-fire-civil-society-unites-for-joburg-solidarity-picket/

FABRICATION

IDENITITY

RHETORIC

SYMBOLISM

TECHNOLOGY

MESSAGE

Do communicative techniques exploit technology in order to trick or mislead?

E.g. off-platform coordination, bots amplifying messages, or machine-generated text, audio and visual content.

Case Study Example !!!

In November 2023, a series of deepfake videos edited to look like TV news segments began circulating on social media.

The videos announce Elon Musk's supposed "new secret investment" project using the likeness of TV news anchors.

Source: https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/meta-programme-fact-checks/beware-another-elon-musk-investment-scam-using-deepfake

1. MESSAGE

2. NARRATIVE

3. BRAND

4. INTENT

STEP 2: Investigate The Narratives

Messages are the building blocks of narratives.

They are stories that are designed to influence a target audience

These stories are then more relatable to a broader audience, and can unify groups with different beliefs and interests

Narratives are simple stories that give shortcuts to understanding complex issues.

Are the messages that are spread false, misleading or manipulated?

Who is spreading the messages and narratives?

REFER BACK TO SLIDE 19

1. MESSAGE

2. NARRATIVE

TM

3. BRAND

4. INTENT

STEP 3: Consider the Brand

What people think and feel about somebody or something.

The characteristics and qualities that distinguish something from everything else.

The persona that the account attempts to project to resonate with certain target audiences.

It may not be possible for you to accurately attribute a social media account or set of posts to its owner

Rather than the person behind the account, it is more important to focus on the persona that the account attempts to project to resonate with certain target audiences

1. MESSAGE

2. NARRATIVE

TM 3. BRAND

4. INTENT

STEP 4: Weigh up the intent

Intent is notoriously difficult to determine.

If the account sharing misleading content is willing to discuss, delete or correct false statements, for example, it is a strong indicator
that there is no intent to mislead.

If the account is deliberately
spreading false content, trolling, or attacking individuals and organisations, the risk is higher.

Intent may vary quite widely, for e.g.:

- Belief
- Fueled by grievances,
- To polarise/fueling the fire,
- To intentionally discredit,
- Make money/ capitalize,
- To influence

Government Communications (GCIS)

Article Overview:

The government and agricultural industry are addressing claims circulating in the media regarding potential export bans on white-owned farms in South Africa to the UK and Europe.

These claims, reported by City Press and Rapport, suggest that new regulations may target farms labeled as "too white," potentially affecting their ability to export products under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU and UK.

Both the government and industry stakeholders are responding to these claims to clarify the situation and provide accurate information to the public.

The article IMPACT:

- The entities responding to the alleged regulations might see impacts on their credibility.

- Media outlets involved in disseminating false information could face trust issues.

- Additionally, strained diplomatic relations could affect the international context of trade and cooperation.

- It's crucial to note that the described scenario is based on disinformation, and there is no credible evidence supporting these claims.

- Verification from reliable sources is essential to understand the real impact on these sectors.
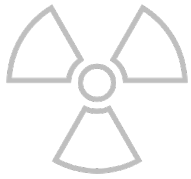
The article IMPACT:

- Impact sectors, i.e., agriculture, trade, and the economy in South Africa.

- Farming operations engaged in exports

- Impact on relations between the UK and Europe.

Therefore, this could disrupt the broader agricultural sector and the trade and export industry, leading to economic uncertainties and potential financial losses.

In dis- and malinformation, there is an **intent to harm.**

Misinformation is shared without an intent to mislead

When investigating messages and whether they are false, misleading or manipulated.

Remember the **FIRST indicators: Fabrication, Identity, Rhetoric, Symbolism and Technology**

More important than the individuals spreading the messages and narratives is **their brand**:

Who they claim to be, what they represent and who they attempt to resonate with.

The most common motivations of individuals and organisations to spread false, misleading or manipulated information include **belief, grievances, opportunity, desire to discredit, to polarise, financial benefits or belonging to an Influence Operation**

Q & A

What will this session cover?

Early Warning

- Early warnings?

- Monitoring **risks**?

- Protecting priority issues?

WHAT IS EARLY WARNING?

Early warning is simply using tools to monitor the media environment and information space.

It focuses on the **monitoring of key risks** by mapping out:

o An organisation's objectives, audiences, values and narratives

o Determining the extent to which they are vulnerable to mis- and disinformation.

Early Warning

Monitoring risk?

Monitoring can be used to understand…

- Debates in relation to your organisation

- The main attitude held by key influencers and audiences

- How influencers engage with your organisation

- Changes in trends over time

Government Segmentation Model

S1	ROOTED REALISTS	
S2	CITY SEEKERS	
S3	SAFELY SUBURBAN	
S4	METRO MOBILES	
S5	COSMOPOLITAN CAPITAL	

Monitoring risk?

Monitoring can be used to understand…

- Stakeholders Perceptions/Views

- Key Primary Stakeholder/public group

  and the Secondary stakeholder Group

Monitoring risk

TweetDeck
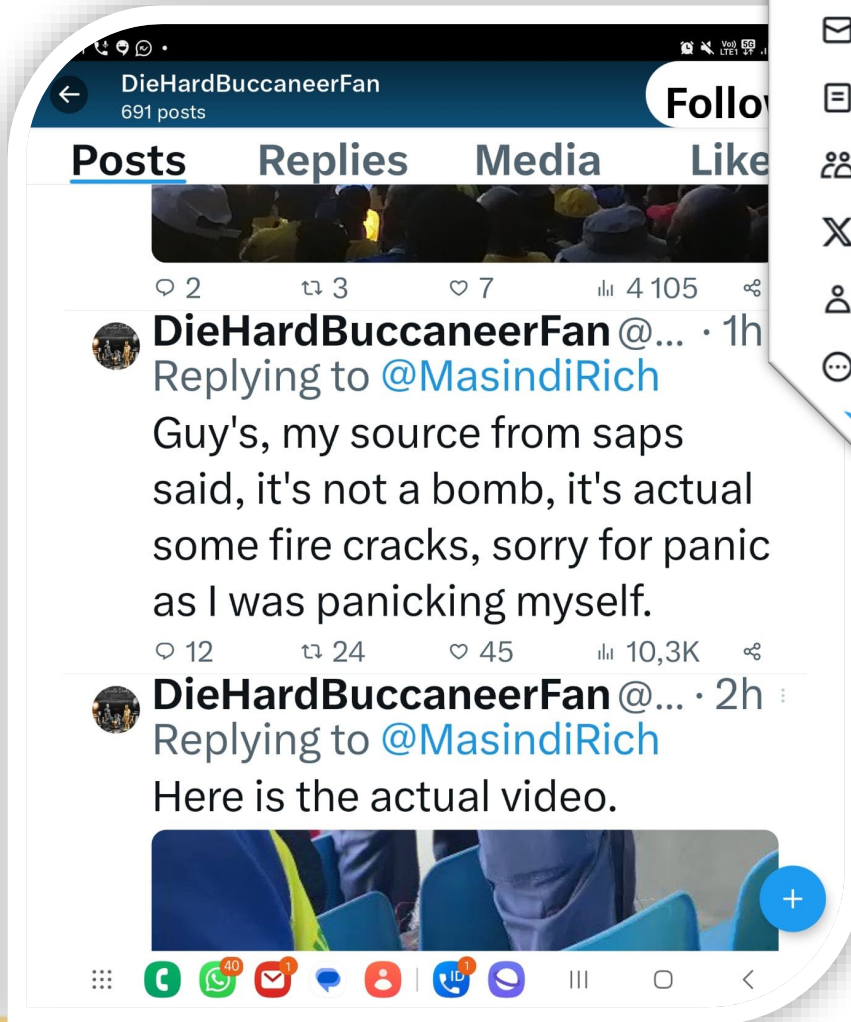
Talkwalker

Trendrr

hootsuite

Google Trends

ZOHO
ZOHO SOCIAL

sproutsocial

Brandwatch

buzzlogic

Google Chrome Extensions

Direct Debunking

OR

Exposing The Falseness

Courtesy of X

twitter.com/athlendam/status/1723794687520084211?s=48

Post

Athlenda Mathe
@AthlendaM

[MAKING HOAX BOMB THREATS IS A CRIME]The person in this video and picture is a service provider who was contracted to supply& display pryotechnics (fireworks) displays at the end of the game. In this video,he is accompanied by SAPS officers as he is busy setting these devices up.

@MasindiRich

This guy was taken from where i am seated at the stadium, He was planting a bomb. We alerted cops in time, loftus it's not safe.

2:17 pm · 12 Nov 23 · 18,4K Views

10:07 PM · Nov 12, 2023 · 194.5K Views

DieHardBuccaneerFan
691 posts

Follow

Posts | **Replies** | **Media** | **Like**

♡ 2   ⟲ 3   ♡ 7   ᷅ 4 105   ⬀

DieHardBuccaneerFan @... · 1h
Replying to @MasindiRich
Guy's, my source from saps said, it's not a bomb, it's actual some fire cracks, sorry for panic as I was panicking myself.

♡ 12   ⟲ 24   ♡ 45   ᷅ 10,3K   ⬀

DieHardBuccaneerFan @... · 2h
Replying to @MasindiRich
Here is the actual video.

Government Communications (GCIS)

Early Warning Priorities

PROTECT THE ORGANISATION'S PRIORITIES FROM DISINFORMATION

Understand what you want to monitor and focus on the key risks:

a) Understand what people think about your priorities and the narratives that exist around them

b) Find relevant disinformation

c) Respond appropriately to disinformation

Early Warning Summary

- Monitoring should focus on your **key policy objectives, narratives, values** and **audiences.**

- This will help you to **reduce vulnerabilities, plan for risk, and protect your priorities.**

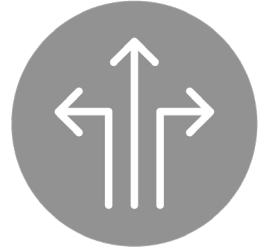- The knowledge that you develop in these steps will be vital in the **creation of insight.**

	Priorities	Attitudes
Policy objectives		
Key messages/ narratives		
Core values		
Audiences/ stakeholders		

Q & A Session

Situational Insight

What this session will cover

- **What is Situational Insight** in the context of mis- and disinformation?

- How should it be used to support a timely response

- How to develop an **insight report**

What is situational insight?

Role of insight

Monitoring becomes valuable when it is turned into **insight**.

Insight is a form of analysis that turns **interesting data** into **actionable data**.

It answers the question, 'so what?'

At its core, insight is about understanding audiences to support communication planning.

- Formulate a Baseline or benchmark to show change over time

- Identify emerging trends for early warning

- Understand distribution of mis- and disinformation

- Generate recommendations

- Develop messages and campaigns to counter

Developing Situational Insight reports

A good insight report should have...

- Topline summary - with recommendations

- Relevant outputs

- Examples

- Key Interactions

- Trends

- Recommendations

PRINT HEADLINES

Rapid Response Related media coverage:

Area of concern	Responsible Department	Feedback
Ramaphosa 'proud' of SA legal team as country argues case at ICJ • ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa has spoken of his pride at watching the South African delegation presenting their case against Israel at the International Court of Justice. "We were taught by Nelson Mandela that our freedom will never be complete until the freedom of Palestinians is also attained, we felt duty bound to launch the court case." **(Jacaranda FM), Timeslive**	The Presidency/ Justice/ Dirco	
'Nothing will stop this suffering, except an order from this court' - SA at ICJ (EWN), ENCA, SABC News, Newzroom Afrika Top SA legal team argues genocidal intent by Israel showing how life is being squeezed from Gaza (Daily Maverick) SA team presents case on Gaza genocide (Business Day) SA hailed for taking up the cudgels for Palestinians (Sowetan), The Star, The Mercury, Cape Times US insists SA's genocide case against Israel is 'unfounded' (News24) Zionist Federation opposes South Africa's case against Israel (SABC News) SA cites urgency in shielding Gazans from Israel: 'genocide is never the answer' (EWN) Israel can't claim its attacks on Gaza in self-defence, SA tells ICJ (EWN) Netanyahu slams South Africa, says Israel fighting Hamas 'genocide' (Jacaranda FM) Israel labels South Africa 'legal arm' of Hamas (Jacaranda FM)		
FOR NOTING: Ramaphosa vows 'heightened accountability' amid Nsfas graft claims (Jacaranda FM), Newzroom Afrika **Godongwana keeps eye on Transnet's cash** • Finance minister Enoch Godongwana says he can't yet give a yes or no answer to the question of whether the government will give Transnet an equity injection, over and above the guarantee it provided in December. But he is watching Transnet's cash flow closely and "trying to understand the nature of the problem". He was speaking at a media briefing ahead of the annual World Economic Forum meeting in Davos. **(Business Day)** • **Despite challenges, Godongwana optimistic of getting investment for SA at WEF (EWN)** • **Team SA aims to attract foreign investors at WEF to plough more cash into nation's electricity transmission network (Business Report)**	The Presidency Finance	
Gordhan's summary explains SA's new SOC • Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan has published an explanatory summary for the National State Enterprises Bill that will create a mega stateowned holding company that will own and manage about 13 of South Africa's state-owned companies. Gordhan will introduce the Bill in the National Assembly soon. **(The Citizen)**	Public Enterprises	
Sassa clarifies millions paid to dead beneficiaries • The office of social development minister Lindiwe Zulu yesterday clarified comments she made in parliament relating to the wrongful payment of R140m in grants to dead beneficiaries. Spokesperson Paseka Letsatsi said Sassa was working with home affairs to ensure the systems stay connected and a "fraud-prevention strategy, aligned to the national anti-corruption strategy, has been implemented by Sassa ... to increase awareness". **(Sowetan), SABC News**	Social Development/ SASSA	

Developing Situational Insight reports

Key Considerations

o Consider **risks** and **Context**

o Consider **channels/Mediums**

o Consider **Audience**

o Know what is **typical**

o Don't **exaggerate**

o Don't fixate on **response**

Summary

- Share early warning signals with those that need them, for example policy colleagues or ministers

- Consider sharing insight as part of long-term planning or for topical issues

- Insight reports should be short, clear and to the point

Q & A

Government Communications (GCIS)

Impact Analysis

What is Impact Analysis?

- Impact Analysis is a technique communicators can use to predict the likely impact of a piece of mis- or disinformation.

- Highlights/ idenitifies the effects of mis- or disinformation on areas of responsibility, or ability to achieve organisational objectives?

- Highlights the affects on the brand or organisation's reputation?

- Provides guidance on 'How to prioritise?'

Considerations:

Where disinformation can have an impact, and what we

need to protect:

- Areas of responsibility or policies

- Communications with the public

- Brand

- Audiences

https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/www.gcis.gov.za/files/docs/resourcecentre/guidelines/handbook/Completel_doc.pdf

"Disinformation is targeting a specific community that we work with. Vulnerable members of that community are particularly susceptible to the narratives."

"Accounts are spreading false information that encourages individuals not to use this potentially life-saving service. There is some evidence of moderate impact among users of the service's Facebook page."

"A small group of users are spreading forged material that potentially undermines trust in our department. The forgeries are low-quality and make unrealistic claims."

Analysis 3: Which group that depends upon your services does it impact?

a. a vulnerable audience

b. key stakeholders

c. niche audiences

Analysis 1: What risk does it pose?

a. national security

b. public safety

c. public health

Analysis 2: What risk does it pose?

a. ability to deliver services
b. policy areas
c. reputation

Impact Analysis
Considerations:

How does the mis- or disinformation affect your

communication with the public?

What techniques are being used?

What content is being spread?

What are the main untrue or misleading messages?

How does the mis or disinformation affect your brand?

- **Does it affect your brand?**

- What values and interests do actors wish to project?

- Which target groups do they wish to reach?

Impact Analysis
Considerations:

Prioritise responses to mis and disinformation?

What is the likely reach of the mis or disinformation?

- You can't respond to everything

- Neither should you - it is not your role

- You may need to develop your own criteria

- **Little interest**

  Very limited circulation and engagement

- **Filter bubble**

  Some engagement within niche audiences

- **Trending**

  Some discussion online, may include open debate and rebuttals

- **Minor story**

  Some reporting on mainstream media

- **Headline story**

  Affecting day-to-day operations

How to prioritise responding to mis and disinformation?

LOW RISK: Does not require a response

Description: Potential to affect the climate of debate

Actions: Share insight; investigate and prepare lines

Internal audiences: Comms officers, monitoring and analysis team

Tools: Insight reports, press lines etc. Prioritise medium- and long-term communications.

MEDIUM RISK: Requires a response

Description: Negative effect on policy area

Actions: Make senior colleagues aware; share insight; investigate and share lines

Internal audiences: Senior staff; policy advisors, monitoring team

Tools: Insight reports, briefings, press lines etc. Prioritise short and medium term communications.

Q & A Session

Summary of Impact Analysis

- Mis/Disinformation needs to be tackled in a coherent and consistent way across government

This section suggested

- approaches that can standardise the assessment of risk and impact, and

- help you prioritise your response to mis- or disinformation

Strategic Communications

What are my **options** when responding to disinformation?

- Traditional vs digital
- Proactive communication
- Reactive communication

How should I weigh up **approaches**? Do I even **need to respond**?

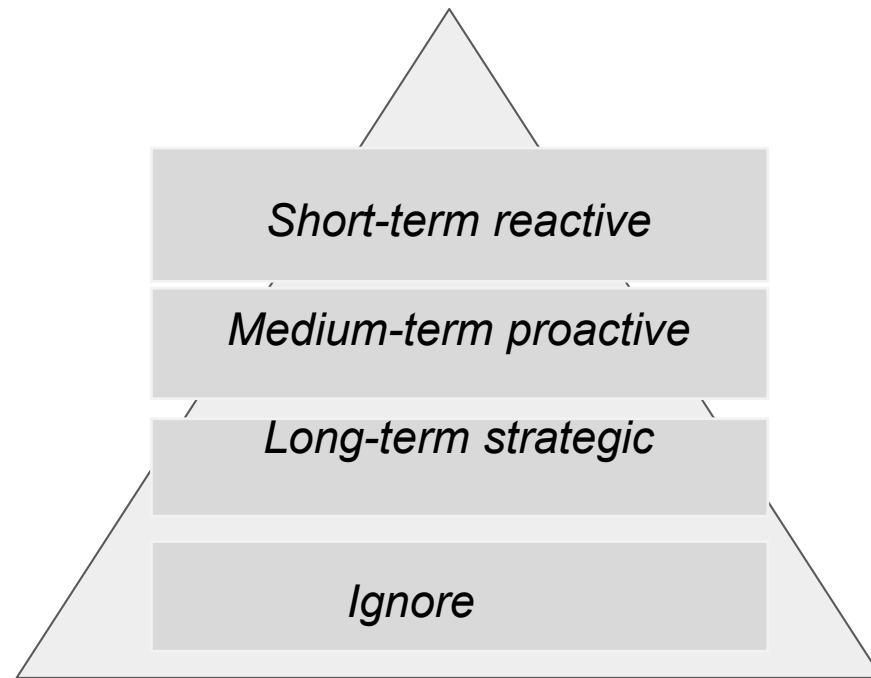https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/guidelines/handbook/Chapter3%28P14-26%29.pdf

Government Communications (GCIS)

An Overview of communications options?

Strategic Communications

Communication Channels

- **Informing and engaging with the public**

Short-term reactive

Medium-term proactive

Long-term strategic

Ignore

Government Communications (GCIS)

What are my communications options?

Communication channels

Media Relations

- Press release
- Statement
- Paid/Earned media coverage
- Background briefing
- Capitalising on Influencers

Social Media Engagement

Find

Assess

Create

Track

Proactive Communication

Inoculation

Campaigns/Awareness raising

Network building

Counter-brand

Resilience building

Inoculation

When?
To proactively counteract false messaging before it becomes widely spread

Example?
Organising a briefing for journalists before an announcement.

Campaigns/ Awareness raising

When?
To proactively shape public debate about issues likely to be subjected to mis- and disinformation.

Example?
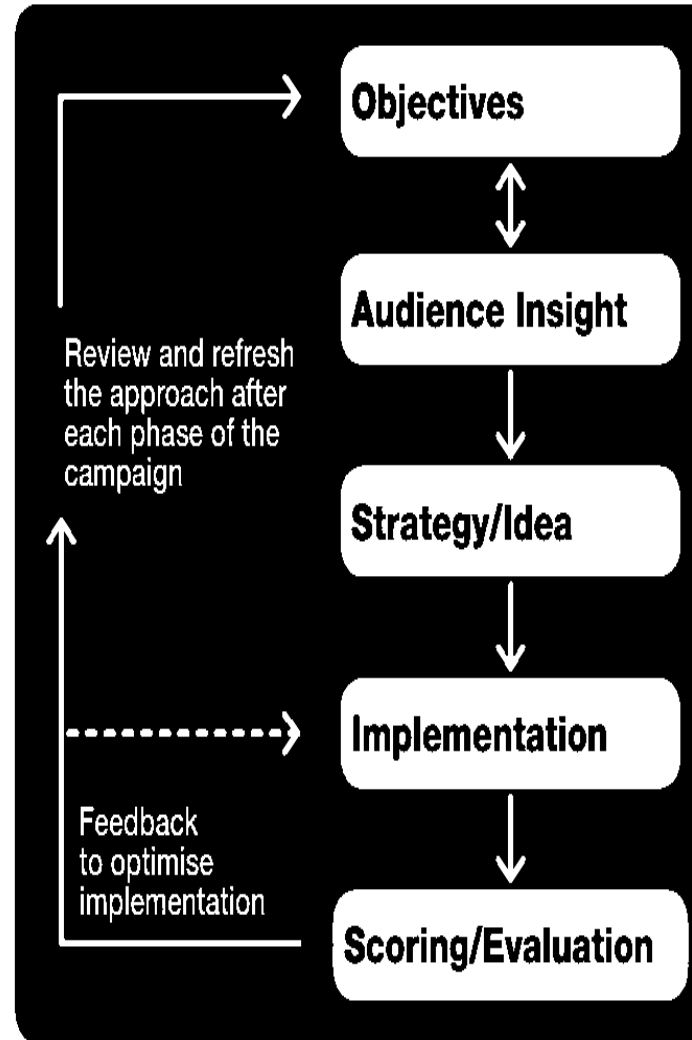Building awareness of best practice in response to Covid.

When?

All communications should be viewed in the context of a wider campaign - a planned sequence of events with a clear start and end, as well as a set of key objectives and audiences.

Example?

The OASIS (Objective, Audience, Strategy, Implementation, Scoring) framework is the foundation for all campaign activity across the UK Government.

Review and refresh the approach after each phase of the campaign

Objectives

Audience Insight

Strategy/Idea

Implementation

Feedback to optimise implementation

Scoring/Evaluation

NETWORK BUILDING

When? When an issue is likely to persist, it is important to develop networks capable of shaping an effective response over time.

COUNTER-BRAND

When? If you want to expose the behaviour of a persistently hostile actor who spreads false or misleading claims

Resilience building

When? For long term efforts aimed at increasing the ability of target audiences to critically-engage with false or manipulated information

NETWORK BUILDING

When? When an issue is likely to persist, it is important to develop networks capable of shaping an effective response over time.

COUNTER-BRAND

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Resilience building

When? For long term efforts aimed at increasing the ability of target audiences to critically-engage with false or manipulated information

Strategic Communications

Reactive communication options

Reactive Communications:

- Rebuttal

- Counter-narrative

- Crisis Communication

- Policy response

Rebuttal

When?

If false or manipulated information is circulating and you wish to counteract the impact of the false information by asserting the truth

COUNTER-NARRATIVE

When?

If false or misleading narratives, stories, conspiracies, or myths develop into shorthand, or a delivery mechanism, for mis- and disinformation content

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

When?

If false or manipulated information is circulating and you wish to counteract the impact of the false information by asserting the truth

POLICY RESPONSE

When?

When you need additional policy options to counteract the strategic intent of a persistently hostile actor

Strategic Communications

Summary

- There are a variety of communications options available to you in response to mis- and disinformation.

- These include several proactive and reactive options, all of which are executed through three categories of communication channels (face-to-face, traditional media, social media)

Questions to reflect on

What communications techniques have you used recently? Why did you use them?

Did you use them in conjunction with other communications techniques?

What about a time recently when you didn't respond to mis- or disinformation? Why did you make this choice?

Do you consider whether a piece of mis- or disinformation is a high or low priority before you choose your response?

Q & A Session

R.E.S.I.S.T

TRACKING EFFECTIVENESS

- **Tracking the impact** of your strategic communications is important

- Understanding the difference between **output and outcome measures**

- Identifying **examples of metrics** that can be used to track impact

- Improving future performance

- Demonstrating value and impact

- Measuring against a baseline

Government Communications (GCIS)

R.E.S.I.S.T

TRACKING EFFECTIVENESS

Tracking Effectiveness: Setting Objectives

- **Baseline**: A **prediction** of what will be observed if there was no communications intervention

- **Change:** A <u>forecast</u> of the difference the campaign activity will make

- **Explanation:** Use an **evidence base as a justification** for the level of change you are aiming to achieve

Tracking Effectiveness: Outputs and outcomes

- **Outputs** are the pieces of information that you create and disseminate

- **Outcomes** are the impact that your strategic communication has in the real world

R.E.S.I.S.T

TRACKING EFFECTIVENESS

Tracking Effectiveness: Counter-disinformation objective

Reach the audience vulnerable to a specific piece of mis- or disinformation (output)

Present your information in a way which engages the audience and captures their attention (output)

Direct the audience to an alternative source of information that is legitimate and credible (output)

Increase the proportion of reporting or online activity that references your communications or information (output)

Build audience resilience while enhancing their ability to think critically about the information they encounter (outcome)

Change audience attitudes, perceptions and behaviours towards a particular issue or topic (outcome)

R.E.S.I.S.T

TRACKING EFFECTIVENESS

Metric to measure effectiveness of outputs and outcomes

Outputs

Demographic information on types of people engaging with content

Number of people who go on to **click on a link** to a more detailed source of legitimate and credible information

The amount of time people spend viewing your content (**'dwell time'**)

Outputs

- **Survey and polling data** on the views and attitudes of your target audience

- Statistics on the numbers of people **undertaking desired actions**

R.E.S.I.S.T

TRACKING EFFECTIVENESS

- Plan from the start for a constant process

- Focus on outcomes

- Be proportionate and use good practice

- Use a full range of data sources

- Avoid fueling the fire/issue

Summary

After this final section, you now have a sense of:

- Why tracking the impact of your strategic communications is important

- The difference between output and outcome measure

- Examples of metrics that can be used to track your impact

Tracking effectiveness brings us full circle to better understand how we can constantly improve our strategic communications in response to disinformation.

Q & A Session

Reflections and actions

o Reflections on what we have learnt during this training

o Consideration of how we can apply these learnings to our work

o Identification of any challenges or barriers we might encounter doing this

Discussion Point 2

o *Based on what you have learned what actions could you implement in your work right now or in the immediate future?*

o *What barriers might prevent you from implementing these changes?*

Discussion Point 3

o *Based on what you have learned what actions could you implement in your work longer term?*

o *What barriers might prevent you from implementing these changes?*

Resources and References:

- https://www.whois.com/whois/

- https://www.real411.org/

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The Marshalltown fire in September 2023, which claimed the lives of 77 people and left more than 50 injured

Source: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-08-31-city-of-johannesburg-points-finger-at-ngos-and-foreign-nationals-after-deadly-fire/

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Source: https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/meta-programme-fact-checks/whos-tedros-ghebreyesus-did-get-vaccinated-against-covid-19

No, white farmers don't need black ownership to export'
Source: https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/fact-check-no-white-farmers-dont-need-black-ownership-to-export-20231113

Sassa delays: Government can't rule out that another Postbank glitch won't happen

Source: https://www.news24.com/news24/politics/government/sassa-delays-government-cant-rule-out-that-another-postbank-glitch-wont-happen-20230914

Source: https://www.cyber.gc.ca/en/guidance/how-identify-misinformation-disinformation-and-malinformation-itsap00300

Thank You

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