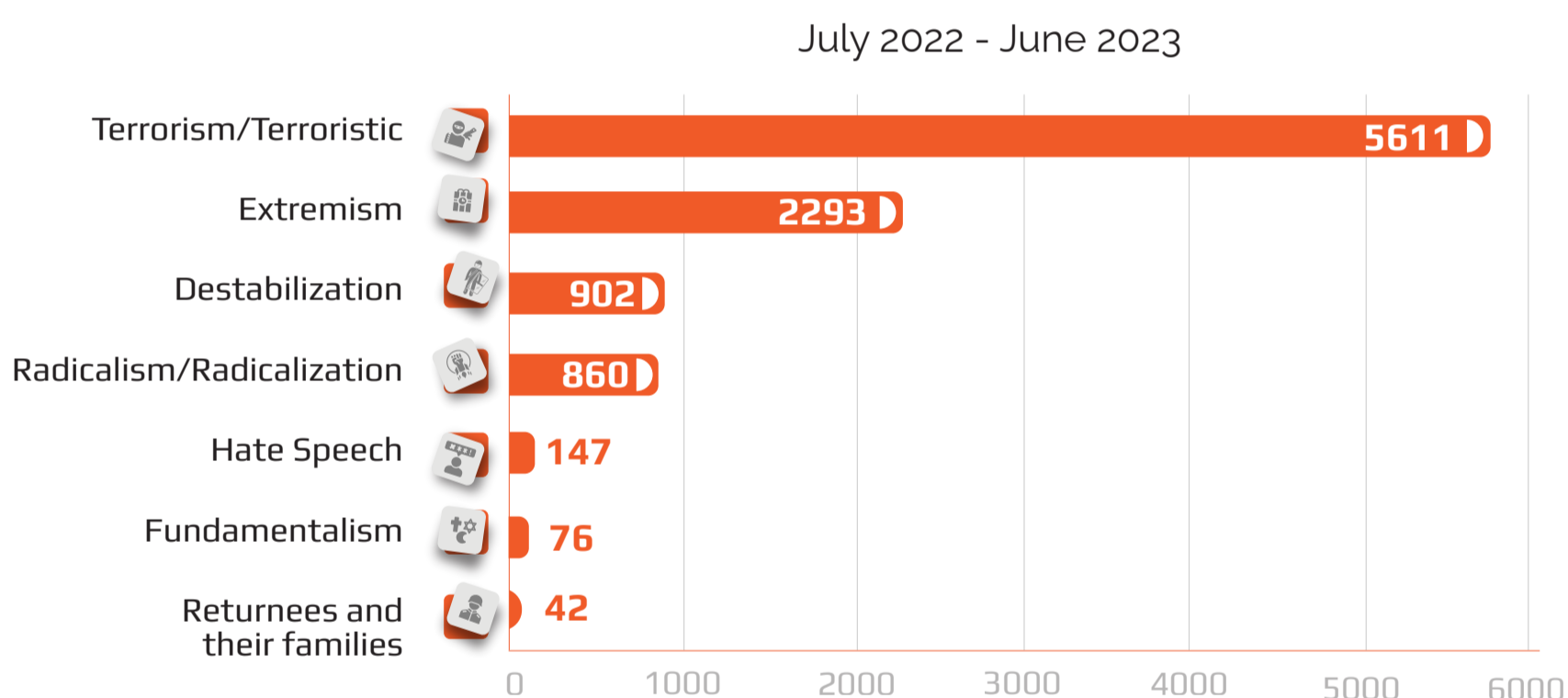


MONITORING OF THE MEDIA CONTENT ON RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN NORTH MACEDONIA



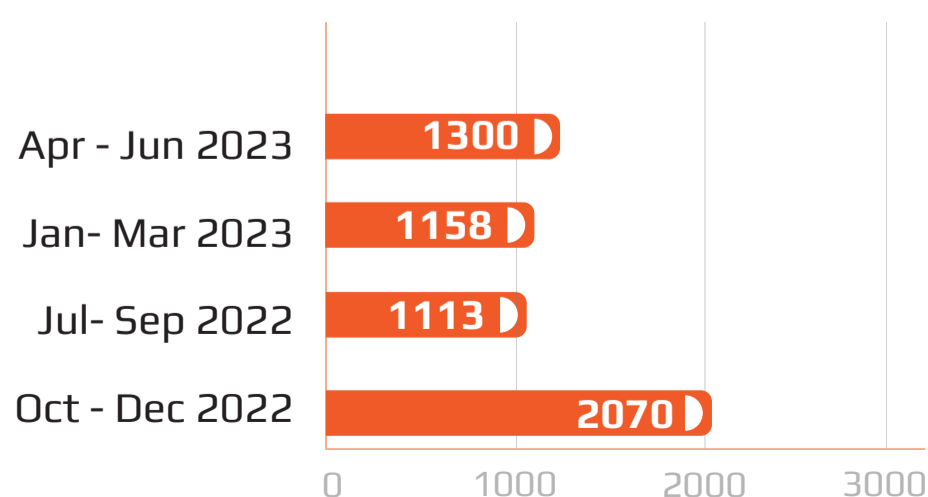
From July 1, 2022 until June 30, 2023 a total of 9.981 (in average 832 articles per month) news articles related to terrorism, extremism (including violent and right-wing), destabilization, radicalism (including Islamic radicalism), fundamentalism and hate-speech were registered.

News Articles on the News Agregator Time.mk
(by keywords)

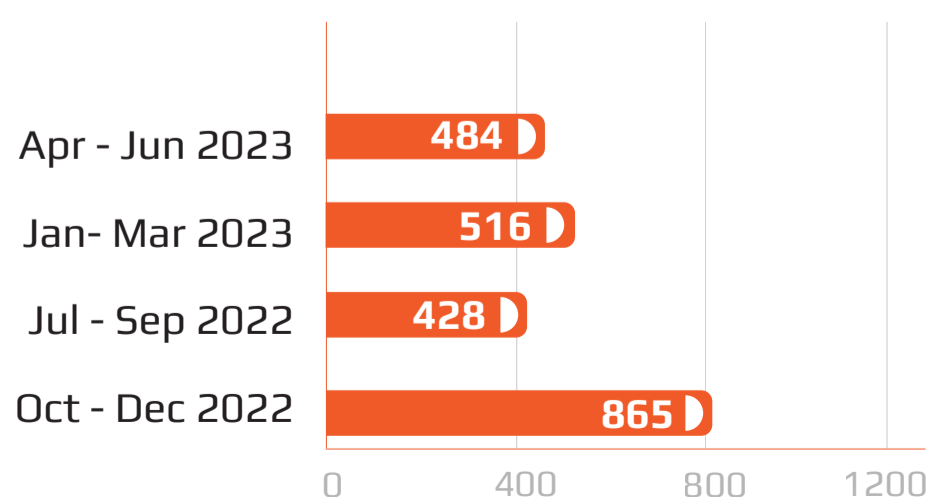


The majority of the journalistic stories, 56.7% (5.661) were in regard to terrorism, followed by 23% (2.293) on extremism, 9% (902) on radicalism, 8.6% (860) on destabilization, 1.5% (147) on hate speech, 0.8% (76) on fundamentalism and 0.4% (42) on war/conflict returnees.

Terrorism / Terroristic



Extremism



Conclusions:



The number of almost 10,000 media articles covered by this monitoring unequivocally shows that terrorism and violent extremism, everywhere in the world, represent a serious threat to peace, stability, democracy, and human rights. This number also indicates the great media interest for the events and processes related to terrorism, extremism and radicalisation.



The media continuously report on events and processes related to terrorism and violent extremism. The way the media report is mostly superficial and is characterized by a simple transmission of agencies' news and articles from other media (mostly foreign). As a result, lots of articles in different media outlets were published with identical content including headlines.



This type of information is most prevalent when it comes to events and processes in the world, Europe and the region. There are almost no media products/stories with authentic journalistic engagement on terrorism, extremism and radicalisation that are taking place abroad.



The majority of the media articles covered (or were initiated by) "pseudo-events" (press-conferences, press releases, statements, sessions of different bodies, etc.). The analytical and investigative articles that resulted from independent investigations of journalists are almost non-existent.



The vast majority of the media articles have no author and contain only official representatives' statements, press releases, political parties and other institutions' reactions, reports, etc.



There is almost a complete lack of analytical and investigative approach. The numerous topics, information, data, reports and expert analyses were not used by journalists to dig deeper into issues and processes. Only few media products had analytical approach and included experts' views.



The analysis of the quality of journalistic products shows that journalists either have no knowledge or have only basic knowledge about terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization. It is also evident that the vast majority of the media do not have journalists who are specialized in research and analyses of topics related to terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization.

Recommendations:



1

In-depth Investigations and Analysis

Media should go beyond surface-level reporting and should invest in an in-depth investigations and analyses that shed light on various aspects of terrorism and extremism. Editors need to stimulate and encourage journalists to continuously tackle and investigate these topics.

Government Policies and Programs

Journalists should investigate and assess government policies and programs related to counterterrorism and countering violent extremism. Media should keep the public informed about ongoing events/processes related to extremist activities, investigations, legal measures, policies, etc.

3

Diverse Expert Opinions

Journalists should more often use expert diverse opinions and views in their stories, as well as to expand the list of experts ensuring gender equality. There are significant number of experts in the country that should be on journalists' lists of experts on topics related to terrorism and violent extremism. Journalists should also avoid (at any cost) presentation of extremist views and standing points.

4

CSO Information Sharing

Civic organizations (CSOs) are relevant and quality source of information, expertise, analysis and research for journalists/media. The media and civil society organizations that work on topics related to the prevention and countering violent extremism should expand and sustain their mutual two-way communication and cooperation.

The CSOs should regularly share information they gather to the journalists, in an open format, and to provide support to journalists that are investigating and reporting including training to journalists and other media workers on extremism phenomenon.

Engagement with Local Communities and Leaders

In order to gain profound and relevant insights and perspectives on the local context, existing problems and potential solutions, journalists should also establish communication and collaboration with local communities and religious leaders.

6

Enhancing Knowledge and Understanding

Editors, journalists and media workers in general should improve their knowledge and understanding of the terminology, phenomena and processes related to terrorism and violent extremism. Adequate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and processes, as well as, the accurate contextualisation (understanding of the historical, cultural, and political dimensions) empowers the quality and credibility of the information, researches and analysis. It simply enhances the relevance of the media content and contributes to raising public awareness.

7 Training and Resources

Media/newsrooms need to adopt good practices for training and enhancement of journalists' knowledge and skills for reporting, investigating and analysing terrorism and violent extremism. Media should also dedicate more resources (people, equipment, time, etc.) to their journalistic products.

8 Fact-Checking as Priority

Fact-checking is extremely important for professional and ethical journalism, because it prevents spreading disinformation. Disinformation generates misunderstanding, confusion, fear. Therefore, in each newsroom there should be at least one person who will work on fact checking. This is still a challenge for most of the media in the country, but it is even more an imperative.

9 Promoting Media Literacy

Beside reporting media should create an educational content that will enhance audience's media literacy and critical thinking and will enable the public to recognize and resist extremist's narratives and messages.

10 Tolerance, Inclusiveness, and Sensitivity

Journalist should promote (multi-ethnic, multi-religious) tolerance, inclusiveness, cooperation, unity and should avoid any ethnic or religious generalizations. While reporting on victims of extremism or terrorism, journalists should be trauma sensitive and should highlight and amplify the experiences, voices and messages coming from survivors and their families.

11 Responsible Reporting Practices

Media should avoid sensationalism, both in the content and in the illustrations. Journalists should maintain their objective and balanced stance and should respect professional and ethical standards in their reporting. Professional and ethical standards are the backbone of credible, impartial and socially responsible journalism.