



Community  
of Democracies

# Russia's Worldwide Information Manipulations on Telegram and X

A Pilot Study

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Disclaimer**

The opinions expressed in this research report do not necessarily reflect those of the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies, the Community of Democracies' Governing Council Member States, or donor.

# Introduction

Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) has emerged as one of the most severe global risks as “the disruptive capabilities of manipulated information are rapidly accelerating,”<sup>1</sup> and are used “as a broader strategy to malignly interfere in and destabilise the democratic systems across the world.”<sup>2</sup> In 2023, in its first report on FIMI Threats, EEAS argued that:

There is no longer any distance between the Kremlin’s diplomatic and FIMI arms. In further attempts to sow discord, official social media accounts of Russia’s diplomatic representations have been acting as a coordinated amplification network for disinformation narratives, and are now fully integrated into the wider FIMI ecosystem.<sup>3</sup>

While this qualitative assessment by EEAS is supported by existing research that focuses on separate cases, analysing activities of Russia’s diplomatic representations in different countries,<sup>4</sup> there is currently no systematic data-driven analysis of Russian information manipulations on social media platforms as a global campaign.

Such a systematic analysis is important for two main reasons. First, it would provide data-driven evidence of the Kremlin’s campaign and its strategy. Secondly, it will assist in addressing these FIMI threats by increasing the situational awareness of the diplomats and representatives of like-minded democracies deployed in the countries targeted by the Kremlin. These diplomats, face a very particular type of FIMI threats during their overseas deployments, especially outside of like-minded democracies, and their tools, capabilities and mandates to address these threats are limited.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, the purpose of this pilot study is to offer a preliminary indication into the global FIMI threats faced by diplomats, by investigating Russia’s official communications on Telegram and X conducted by its diplomatic representations worldwide. This preliminary global picture will be supplemented by a more detailed analysis of Russia’s official communications in three different countries: the UK, Japan and Argentina. Comprehensive situational awareness is a key prerequisite for any policies to address the Kremlin’s FIMI activities,<sup>6</sup> and this research will showcase the first step towards how this awareness can be achieved.

# Methodology

This report examines Russian official communications to provide Western diplomats with a better situational awareness. Thus, we have collected Russian diplomatic representations' activities on Telegram worldwide and X/Twitter for the chosen three case studies. Telegram is an encrypted platform that facilitates one-on-one and group communications, where users exchange messages ranging from brief notes to lengthy discussions. We selected Telegram due to its similarities with other social media networks such as Twitter/X, Facebook, and Reddit, particularly in the type and length of content shared—short messages, links, images, and videos. Telegram's unique advantage lies in the channel's proprietor's ability to curate and control the channel's content. Overall, Russia's embassies and diplomatic representatives maintain approximately 130 active channels worldwide.

We scraped the Telegram API to gather all messages posted by the embassies of the Russian Federation worldwide from December 2021 to January 2024. This timeframe is especially significant, as many channels were either newly established or became noticeably more active following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The surge in activity offers valuable insights into the Kremlin's evolving strategic messaging and narratives in the post-invasion context. Indeed, a critical challenge in studying Russian communications lies in accounting for the adaptive nature of Russian officials, who continually refine their information operations in response to mounting resistance from Western nations. Understanding this evolution is essential to accurately assessing the effectiveness and sophistication of their efforts. In total, more than 190,000 comments were collected on Telegram.

Figure 1 below illustrates the activity of the embassies of the Russian Federation on Telegram worldwide, with the intensity of red shading indicating the volume of comments and darker shades representing higher activity levels. The map reveals a stark disparity in engagement, ranging from over 10,000 comments in Kazakhstan over three years to just three in Djibouti. This uneven activity underscores the strategic nature of Russia's official campaign on Telegram and provides insight into how the Kremlin perceives the world and prioritises its interests. Regions with high levels of engagement likely represent areas of strategic importance for Russia, driven by geopolitical, economic, or cultural factors. Conversely, minimal engagement in other regions suggests a lower prioritisation of resources or interests. This global pattern reflects a deliberate allocation of resources, emphasising that Russia's approach is far from random. Contrary to arguments by some Western experts over the last decade that President Putin and Russia lack a coherent strategy—particularly in their (dis-)information campaigns,<sup>7</sup> often described as a “throw-the-spaghetti-at-the-wall-to-see-what-sticks”<sup>8</sup> approach—a closer

examination suggests otherwise.<sup>9</sup> Russia's so-called 'Information War' appears to follow a clear and globally tailored strategy by "weaponizing information in different ways around the world."<sup>10</sup>

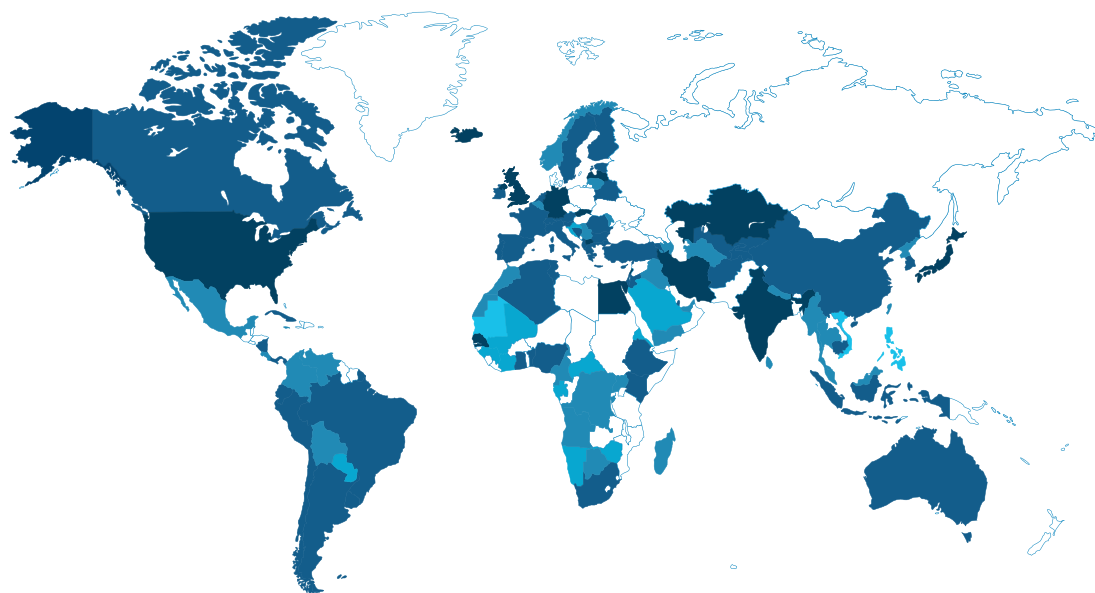


Figure 1: Russian Official Diplomatic Campaign on Telegram – Global Picture

Building on the global patterns identified in Figure 1, the activity of the embassies of the Russian Federation on Telegram reflects distinct objectives, strategically tailored to different regions and priorities. First, Russia demonstrates a strong focus on maintaining influence within what it considers as its traditional sphere of influence, as seen in the high engagement levels in Kazakhstan. This reflects the Kremlin's intent to assert dominance and preserve its role as a regional power in the post-Soviet space. Second, Russia's significant activity in BRICS countries – Brazil, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Iran and Ethiopia – highlights its status-seeking ambitions. By engaging with these nations, Russia aims to bolster ties within this emerging bloc, project itself as a key player in reshaping global power dynamics and challenge the dominance of Western-led institutions. This engagement aligns with Moscow's broader ambition of reshaping the world order.<sup>11</sup>

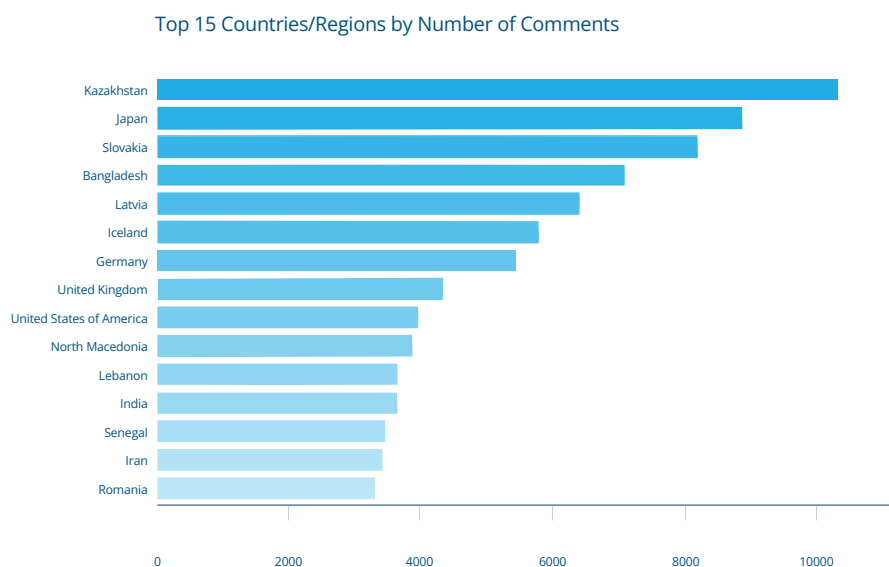
Third, Russia prioritises gaining influence and undermining Western dominance in strategically important regions. On the African continent, for example, its activity is mainly concentrated in Senegal and Algeria in Francophone Africa, South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya in Anglophone Africa, and Egypt in the Arab world. These countries represent key entry points for Russia to assert its presence, expand its geopolitical influence, and counter Western partnerships.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Russia's engagement in like-minded nations such as Venezuela, Cuba, and Cambodia illustrate its commitment to maintaining close ties with ideological allies that share its opposition to Western hegemony. Finally, Russia is also highly active in adversarial nations such as Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, reflecting the Kremlin's

perception of these countries as key rivals. By targeting these nations, Russia seeks to challenge Western narratives, deepen internal divisions, and position itself as a counterweight to their global influence.

These distinct objectives reveal a clear and deliberate strategy, showcasing Russia's use of information diplomacy to enhance its global positioning and advance its interests across diverse geopolitical arenas.

Maintaining a strong presence of the embassies of the Russian Federation on social media requires a coordinated plan, likely approved by the Kremlin or at least Russia's MFA. Figure 2 below highlights the top 15 most active Telegram accounts of the embassies of the Russian Federation. These accounts post between 10 and 25 comments daily—an extraordinary accomplishment for any diplomatic communication agency. This level of activity underscores Russia's significant resources and effort, demonstrating the Kremlin's prioritisation of social media as a key tool for advancing its strategic narratives and influence campaigns.

Figure 2: Most active Telegram accounts of the embassies of the Russian Federation



This data further reinforces the analysis presented in Figure 1, offering additional insight into Russia's strategic objectives, as these top 15 targeted countries can be easily divided into several groups. The first group comprises Russia's friends/partners/allies: Kazakhstan, India, South Ossetia (Georgian territory occupied by Russia), and Iran. The second includes Russia's adversaries (NATO members): Slovakia, Latvia, Iceland, Germany, North Macedonia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. While other NATO members have been targeted by Russian embassies as well (see annex 1), understanding the reason behind the particular emphasis on these 7 members requires deeper content analysis that is beyond the scope of this report.

The third group comprises countries of interest for Russian foreign policy: Bangladesh, Senegal and Lebanon. In the context of the war in Ukraine, Bangladesh is a good example of how Russia has reinvented “neglected relationships and woo developing countries for their support.”<sup>13</sup> For the same reason, Senegal “has become Russia’s largest trading partner in Sub-Saharan Africa, second only to South Africa.”<sup>14</sup> Lebanon, however, is a different case, as it is a part of Russia’s more extensive interests in the Middle East and the Kremlin’s cooperation with the now deposed Syrian government and Hezbollah.<sup>15</sup>

Japan, for its part, has several possible explanations for the increased Kremlin activity in the country. On the one hand, since Japan introduced “a sanctions regime that differs little from those of the EU, the United States, and Canada,”<sup>16</sup> it might well be that the Kremlin puts Japan in the group of adversaries, together with NATO members. On the other hand, this increased activity might be explained by the Russia-China “alliance for disinformation,”<sup>17</sup> where Russia supports the Chinese information campaign against Japan.<sup>18</sup> While the following examination of Japanese case will offer more information on this case, a deeper content analysis is required to fully assess the level of Russia’s efforts in Japan.

## Case Study – Online Activity of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan

As discussed earlier, Russian activity in Japan offers a compelling case study. The Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan ranks as the second most active Russian embassy worldwide on Telegram. To enhance our analysis, we collected all comments posted by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan between December 2021 and January 2024. Figure 3 below illustrates the evolution of the embassy’s activity on Telegram and X (formerly Twitter) during this period. Over three years, the embassy posted 8,894 comments on Telegram, averaging 12 daily comments. On X, its activity was even higher, with over 22,000 tweets in the same period, equating to an average of 29 tweets per day. The account frequently retweeted content from the main account of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (@MFA\_russia) and shared statements by prominent figures in the Russian government, including President Vladimir Putin, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, MFA spokesperson Maria Zakharova, and Russian ambassadors to Japan, Mikhail Galuzin (until November 2022, when Russia recalled its ambassador to protest against Japan’s sanctions on Moscow over its war with Ukraine).

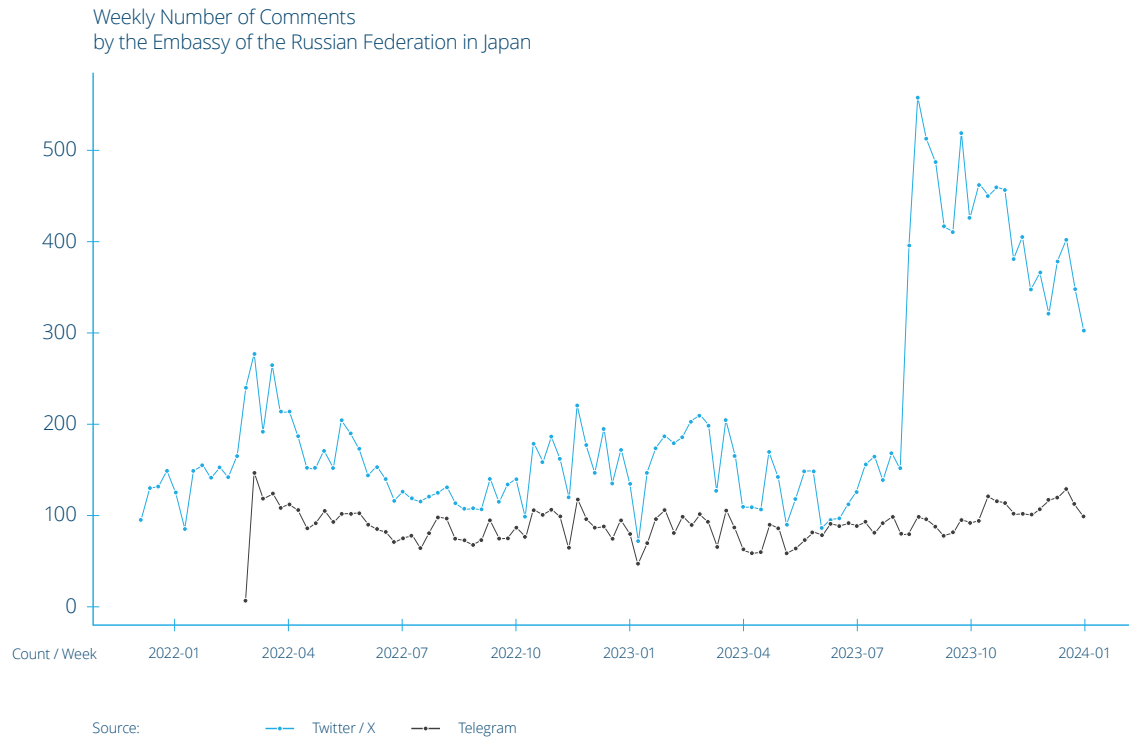


Figure 3: Activity of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan on Telegram and X/Twitter (Dec 2021 to January 2024)

First, as shown in Figure 3, the Telegram channel became active in February 2022, shortly after the invasion of Ukraine. This reflects how the Russian MFA and its diplomatic missions developed communication strategies to align with and support the Russian invasion in Ukraine. Since then, the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan has maintained consistent activity, posting approximately 100 comments per week. Second, on X (formerly Twitter), the channel was highly active before the invasion of Ukraine, posting up to 150 tweets per week. After the invasion, the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan significantly increased its activity, highlighting the central role of communication on social media platforms by Russian embassies – both globally and in Japan – in supporting Russia’s military campaigns and enhancing its global standing. Of note is the dramatic surge in activity on X/Twitter after the summer of 2023, with the embassy’s activity sometimes exceeding 500 weekly tweets. This increase coincided with Elon Musk’s takeover of X and eliminating the platform’s monitoring team, creating an environment with fewer restrictions and less oversight, which may have facilitated this intensified activity. This spike underscores the evolving importance of X/Twitter in Russia’s digital communication strategy.

Effective communication requires tailoring messages to specific groups, and the language choices of Russian operators serve as a key indicator of their intended target audiences. To this effect, Figure 4 illustrates the languages used by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan, highlighting the three primary languages—Russian, English, and Japanese—on Telegram and X (formerly Twitter).



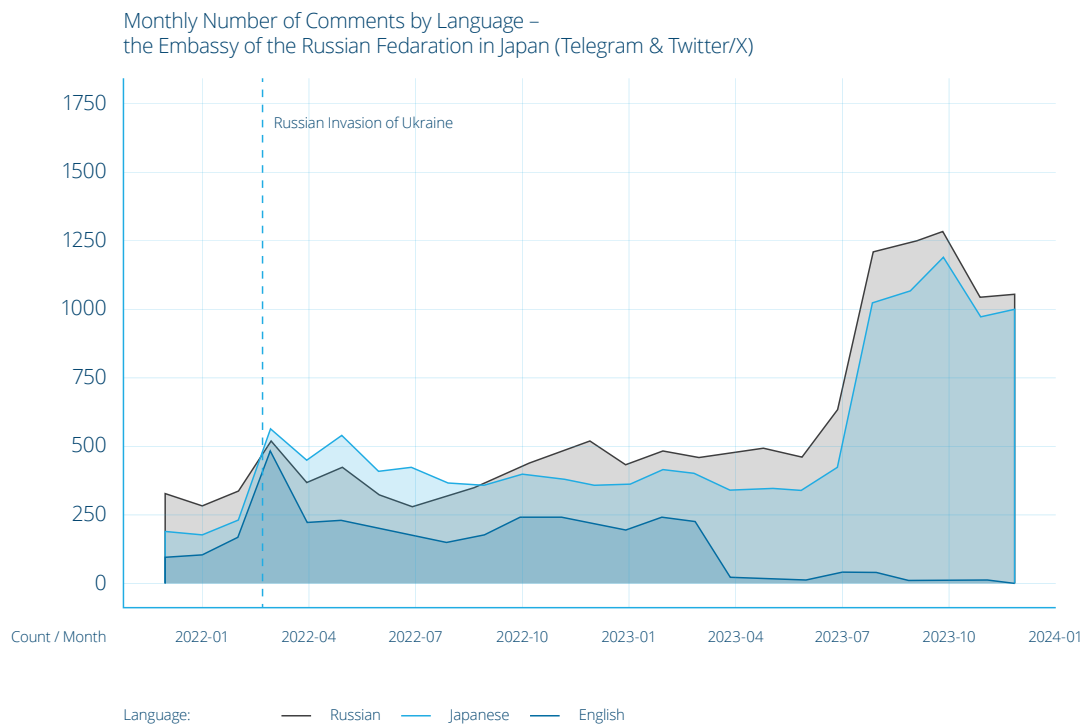


Figure 4: Language used by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan on Telegram and X/Twitter

The data reveal a shift in the groups targeted by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan from 2021 to 2024. Notably, before 2023, a significant portion (approximately 20%) of communication, particularly around the time of the invasion of Ukraine, was conducted in English. However, after February 2023, all communication on Telegram and X from the embassy shifted exclusively to Russian and Japanese. Moreover, the use of Japanese increased steadily over time, rising from approximately 30% of content in 2021–2022 to almost 50% by the end of 2023. This shift reflects an apparent effort to engage more directly with Japanese audiences and the adaptive nature of Russian information operations, which adjusts linguistic strategies to maximise resonance with target audiences.

The collected data reflects a wide range of online communication from the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan. This includes celebrating Russian achievements in arts, culture, and sports—traditionally associated with public diplomacy—providing consular information for Russian nationals in Japan and advancing different narratives to promote Russian interests abroad. However, to better understand how diplomatic missions specifically support Moscow’s strategic objectives, we narrowed our analysis to two key topics: Ukraine and NATO. These themes reveal how the Kremlin tailors its narratives to align with its strategic goals. The NATO narrative reflects the Kremlin’s broader objective of redefining global power dynamics and restoring Russia’s influence to its Soviet-era prominence. By amplifying its own greatness and legitimacy while discrediting Western alliances, particularly NATO, Russia seeks to weaken cohesion among its geopolitical rivals.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, the Ukraine narrative supports a more immediate strategic priority: justifying Russia’s invasion and eroding Western

resolve to support Ukraine's sovereignty. Together, these narratives demonstrate Russia's calculated use of its diplomatic missions to pursue long-term global ambitions and immediate operational goals simultaneously.

Figure 5 provides insight into how these narratives are communicated, illustrating the weekly mentions of Ukraine and NATO by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan on Telegram. Mentions of Ukraine dominate, comprising over 60% of online content during the winter of 2022 and consistently accounting for 40–50% of comments throughout the analysed period. This focus highlights the prioritisation of justifying the Ukraine war within the embassy's communication strategy, leveraging Telegram to amplify narratives supporting Russia's actions. In contrast, NATO mentions are less frequent, averaging less than 15%. This likely reflects the limited direct relevance of NATO to Japan, as the country is not a NATO member. Instead, the embassy's content emphasises themes tailored to the Indo-Pacific region, aligning with the Kremlin's broader geopolitical strategy of countering Western influence globally. This adaptive approach underscores the flexibility of Russian information operations, which skilfully adjust narratives to fit local contexts while serving overarching strategic goals.

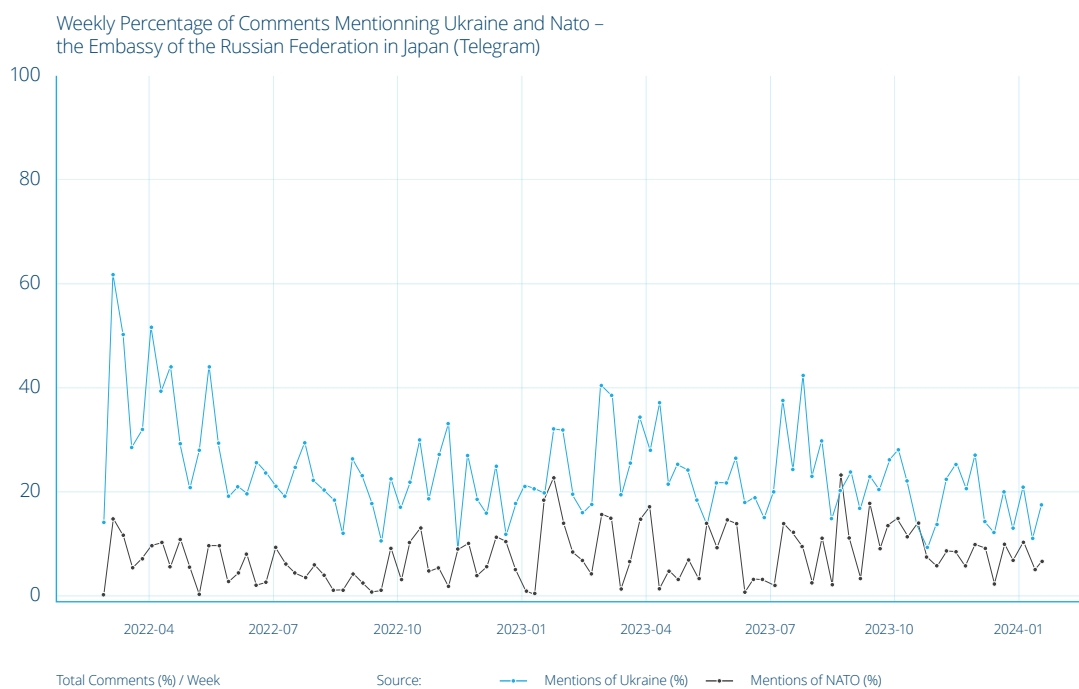


Figure 5: Weekly mention of Ukraine and NATO by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan on Telegram

The word cloud in Figure 6 highlights the most frequently used terms in Telegram comments mentioning Ukraine published by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan. It provides an illustrative view of how language is strategically deployed to shape distinct narratives around the ongoing conflict. These narratives can be grouped into two key themes: (1) blaming





Finally, the inclusion of “Nuclear” in the word cloud reflects the Kremlin’s deliberate use of nuclear threats to heighten perceived risks and bolster its narratives about NATO and Western aggression. This aligns with Russia’s broader strategy of using nuclear brinkmanship as both a deterrent and a propaganda tool. By linking “Nuclear” to NATO, Russia positions itself as a victim of Western provocation, framing its actions as necessary to protect against existential threats.

This word cloud provides insight into how NATO is framed in Russian diplomatic communication as both an adversarial force and a justification for Russian military actions. The dual focus on blaming NATO and leveraging nuclear rhetoric highlights the Kremlin’s ability to blend fear-based messaging with strategic narratives. The embassy’s integration of Japan into these discussions underscores Russia’s adaptability in tailoring global narratives to local contexts. By linking NATO to Japan and the Indo-Pacific, Russia amplifies its messaging for regional audiences while pursuing broader geopolitical goals.

## Case Study – Online Activity of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the United Kingdom

This part examines the activity of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the UK on Telegram and X/Twitter between December 2021 and January 2024. The embassy’s X/Twitter account was significantly more active throughout this period, frequently producing original content and amplifying comments from other Russian government accounts, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its diplomatic corps. In total, we collected 7,378 comments, averaging 67 comments per week. On Telegram, we collected 2,049 comments, with a weekly average of 18. Figure 8 shows that the Embassy’s Telegram activity was relatively low between December 2021 and August 2022, with only one or two daily comments. However, from August 2022 onwards, the embassy substantially increased its use of Telegram, fully integrating the platform into its communication and public diplomacy efforts in the UK. This increase in activity across both platforms reflects a deliberate effort by the embassy to expand its reach and amplify Kremlin narratives. Notably, this heightened effort to leverage diplomatic channels for communications on social media platforms must be considered within the broader context of significant measures by Western allies, particularly the UK, to combat Russian disinformation. Following the invasion of Ukraine, Western governments took steps to curtail Russia’s access to traditional information channels, including the suspension of RT and Sputnik in many regions. In this environment, the embassy’s online activity represents

an adaptive response, as it seeks to maintain influence and continue disseminating its narratives despite these restrictions.

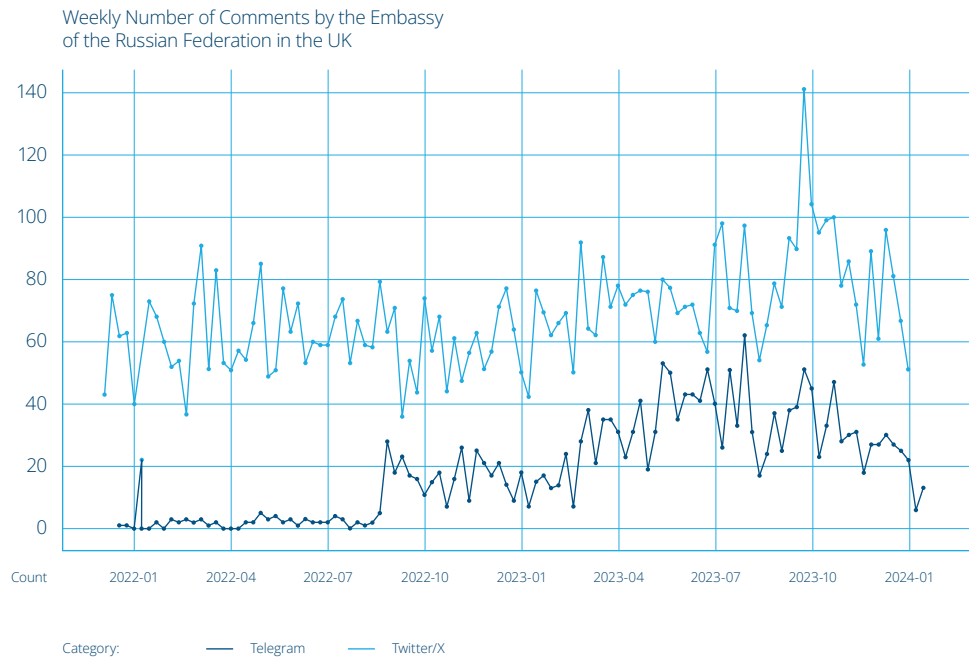


Figure 8: Activity of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the UK on Telegram and X/Twitter (Dec 2021 to January 2024)

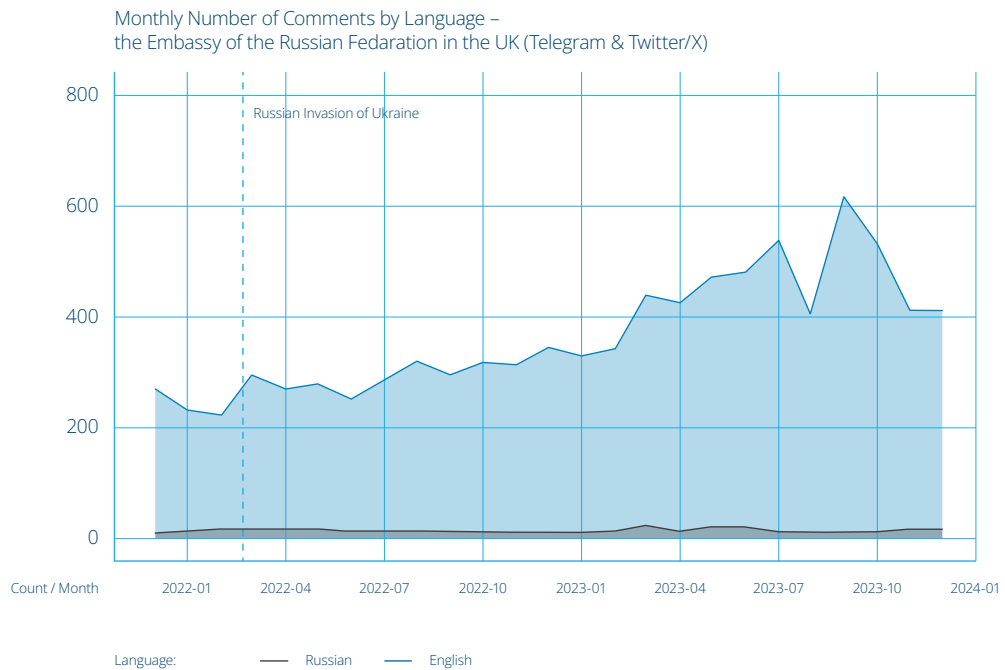


Figure 9: Language used by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the UK on Telegram and X/Twitter

Figure 9 illustrates the language distribution in the online communication of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the UK. The embassy's almost exclusive usage of English in its communications suggests a deliberate strategy to engage directly with its target audience: UK citizens. By prioritising English, the embassy aims to increase the resonance of its messaging, making it more accessible and persuasive to local audiences. This aligns with Russia's broader approach to public diplomacy, which seeks to influence public opinion abroad by tailoring content to its target regions' cultural and linguistic context. The strategic focus on English further highlights the embassy's role in amplifying Kremlin narratives within the UK, mainly through platforms like X/Twitter and Telegram.

Figure 10 estimates the proportion of comments mentioning 'Ukraine' and 'NATO' by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the UK on Telegram between December 2021 and January 2024. First, in early 2022, a significant proportion of Telegram comments focused on Ukraine, coinciding with Russia's invasion. In this respect, the Russian MFA played an integral role in the war effort, aligning its communication strategies to support and justify the invasion. This underscores how information operations are a key component of Russia's approach to warfare, closely integrated with military actions and serving broader tactical objectives. However, after February 2023, one year into the war, mentions of Ukraine decreased significantly, with only 20% of the embassy's Telegram comments referencing the topic. Secondly, while NATO was a notable focus in early 2022, mentions quickly declined, often accounting for less than 10% of overall comments. This shift reflects the evolution of Russian communication strategies, likely adapting to changing objectives and priorities as the conflict progressed.

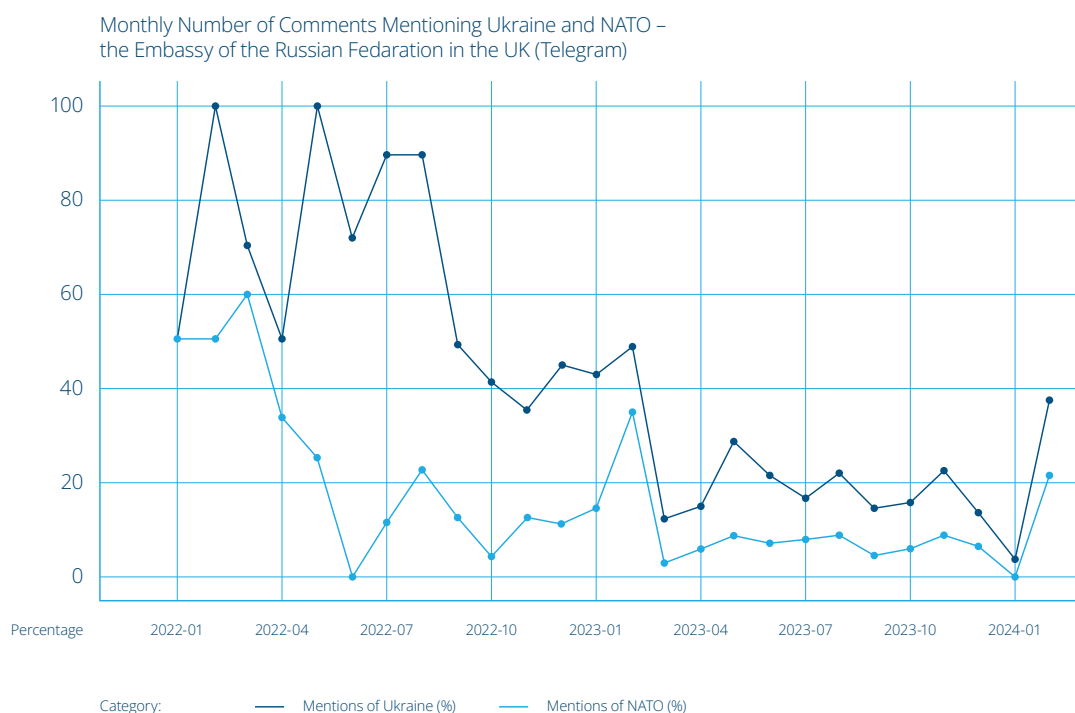


Figure 10: Weekly mention of Ukraine and NATO by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the UK on Telegram

Figure 11 highlights the dominant terms used in comments mentioning Ukraine by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the UK, revealing key narratives and strategic messaging. Prominent terms such as “Western,” “United States,” “West,” “British,” and “London” underscore a recurring anti-Western theme in the Kremlin’s communication. The emphasis on “British” reflects a deliberate effort to target the United Kingdom, portraying it as a key antagonist in the conflict. This aligns with broader Russian communication strategies that frame Western nations, particularly the UK, as instigators of the war in Ukraine. By shifting blame onto external actors, Russia seeks to delegitimise Western support for Ukraine while diverting attention from its own aggression. Additionally, the word cloud illustrates how these themes are woven into broader geopolitical messaging. Terms such as “Policy” and “International” suggest an effort to position the war in Ukraine within the context of global power dynamics, aligning with Russia’s strategic objectives. Moreover, the term “Nazi” suggest an attempt to target British audiences with the narrative that “Russian soldiers in Ukraine are fighting Nazism like their ancestors” – one of the major narratives created by the Kremlin to justify the invasion of Ukraine to the Russian domestic audiences.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 11: Word cloud associated with comments containing “Ukraine” on Telegram from the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the UK

Another significant theme is the Kremlin’s framing of Ukraine’s leadership. Terms such as “Kiev” and “Kiev Regime” are frequently used to undermine the legitimacy of Ukraine’s government. Referring to the government as a ‘regime’ is a deliberate rhetorical strategy aimed at portraying it as corrupt, authoritarian, or illegitimate. Combined with terms like “Conflict” and “Crisis,” this language seeks to obscure Russia’s role as the aggressor by presenting the situation as



a broader geopolitical struggle rather than a unilateral invasion. Finally, similarly to the data from the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan, a related narrative focuses on justifying Russia's actions in Ukraine. Terms such as “People,” “Territory,” “Donbas,” and “Armed Forces” emphasise protective and defensive themes, portraying Russia's involvement as a necessary intervention to safeguard vulnerable populations or disputed territories. This aligns with Kremlin narratives framing the invasion as a humanitarian effort rather than an act of aggression.

Figure 12, for its part, presents the emphasis by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the UK on anti-Western narratives in its communication about NATO. Indeed, prominent terms such as “Western,” “West,” “United States,” “Washington,” “Europe,” and “European” reveal a consistent framing of NATO and its member states as adversaries. The frequent mention of “United States” and “Washington” underscores Russia's portrayal of NATO as a tool of American imperialism, positioning the U.S. as the primary driver of NATO's actions. Meanwhile, references to “Europe” and “European” highlight an effort to present NATO as a unified Western bloc working in concert against Russian interests. Specific mentions of “London” and “British” highlight tailored messaging for UK audiences, framing the United Kingdom as a key NATO member and close ally of the United States. By emphasising Britain's role in NATO's agenda, the embassy portrays the UK as complicit in perpetuating Western hostility toward Russia.



Figure 12: Word cloud associated with comments containing “NATO” on Telegram from the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the UK

Moreover, the embassy's messaging frequently frames NATO as a destabilising and militaristic force. Terms such as “Military,” “Policy,” “Crisis,” and “Conflict” emphasise NATO's perceived role

as a provocateur, particularly in Eastern Europe. By framing NATO’s activities as escalatory, the Kremlin positions its own actions as necessary defensive measures. The term “Meeting” likely refers to NATO summits or decisions, which Russia often portrays as evidence of Western efforts to undermine Russian sovereignty and destabilise the region. The embassy thus links NATO directly to the conflict in Ukraine, using terms like “Kiev,” “Regime,” “People,” “Territory,” and “Armed Forces.” These messages frequently portray NATO as a direct supporter of the “Kiev regime,” a term designed to delegitimise Ukraine’s government. By associating NATO with terms like “People” and “Territory,” the Embassy aligns its communication with the Kremlin’s narrative of protecting Russian-speaking populations from NATO-backed aggression. This framing justifies Russia’s military actions as necessary interventions against external threats, aligning with the Kremlin’s broader geopolitical strategy of delegitimising Western alliances and positioning Russia’s actions as defensive and necessary.

## Case Study – Online Activity of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Argentina

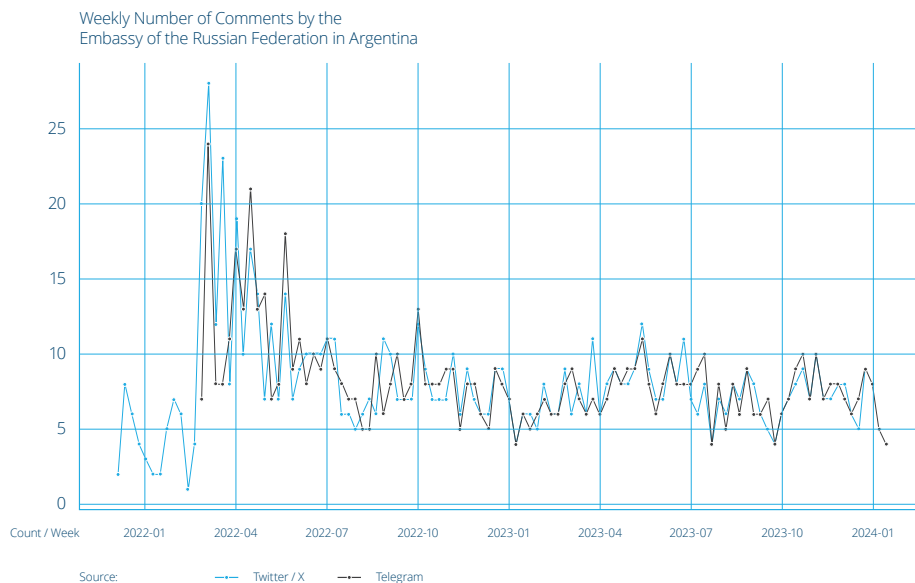


Figure 13: Activity of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Argentina on Telegram and X/Twitter (Dec 2021 to January 2024)

The final case study examines the online activity of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Argentina, providing insights into Moscow's strategic communication in the Global South. Figure 13 below illustrates the embassy's activity on Telegram and X/Twitter between December 2021 and January 2024. This relatively modest activity starkly contrasts with the embassies in Japan and the UK, suggesting a lower prioritisation of Argentina in Russia's communications strategy. First, the Telegram channel was activated on February 26, 2022, just two days after Russia invaded Ukraine, likely to support Russia's war effort and serve as a vector for strategic messaging in Argentina. However, the channel's activity has remained modest, with only 820 comments posted between December 2021 and January 2024, averaging 8.28 weekly comments. Secondly, the embassy's X/Twitter account, active before the invasion, posted 881 times, including original content and shares from other official Russian accounts, with an average of 8.08 weekly comments. As we can see, there has been a sharp increase in activity on both platforms since February 2022. This rise suggests intensified communication efforts linked to Russia's strategic messaging during the invasion.

Comparing activities across both platforms reveals a near parity in activity levels, underscoring a formulaic approach to social media management in Argentina. This is in contrast to the embassies in Japan and the UK, which adopted more dynamic and intensive strategies, reflecting their higher strategic importance to Moscow. These comparisons highlight the variation in Russia's digital diplomatic efforts, shaped by the target region's significance and its alignment with broader geopolitical objectives.

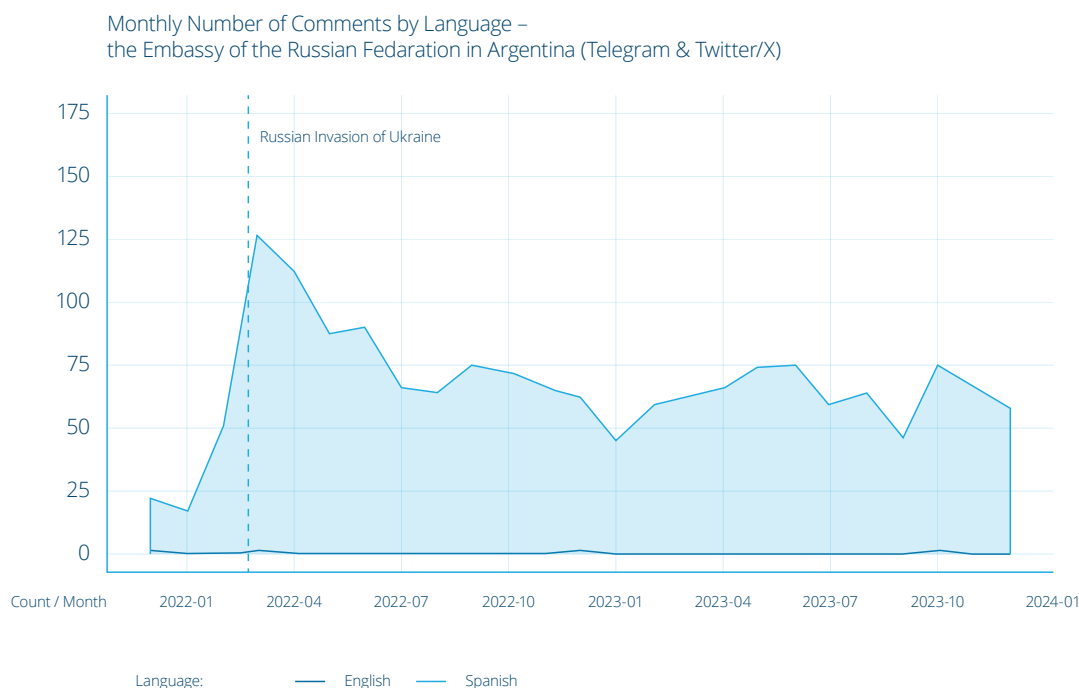


Figure 14: Language used by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Argentina on Telegram and X/Twitter

Figure 14 examines the targeted audience of online communication by the Russian embassy in Argentina. It highlights the dominance of Spanish language in the embassy's messaging

efforts in Argentina from December 2021 to January 2024, with consistently higher activity levels compared to English and no communications in Russian. This reflects a clear focus on engaging the local audience, as Spanish is the primary language in Argentina. English-language communication remains minimal throughout the period, with a nearly flat trendline, indicating it was not prioritised, due to its limited relevance for the target audience. Despite some fluctuations, Spanish-language messaging stabilises after an initial spike in February 2022, reflecting a sustained but moderate long-term strategy to engage and influence the Argentine audience.

Figure 15 illustrates the share of comments referencing ‘Ukraine’ and ‘NATO’ in the Telegram communications of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Argentina from December 2021 to January 2024, shedding light on Moscow’s strategic narratives. Mentions of Ukraine consistently dominate throughout the period, frequently accounting for more than 60% of the embassy’s comments. This underscores the centrality of the war in Ukraine to Russia’s diplomatic messaging, even in the Global South countries, which a geographically and politically distant from the war in Ukraine. The frequency of Ukraine mentions fluctuates over time, likely tied to key developments in the conflict or other significant geopolitical events. These patterns highlight the embassy’s focus on framing the war as a priority in its strategic narratives.

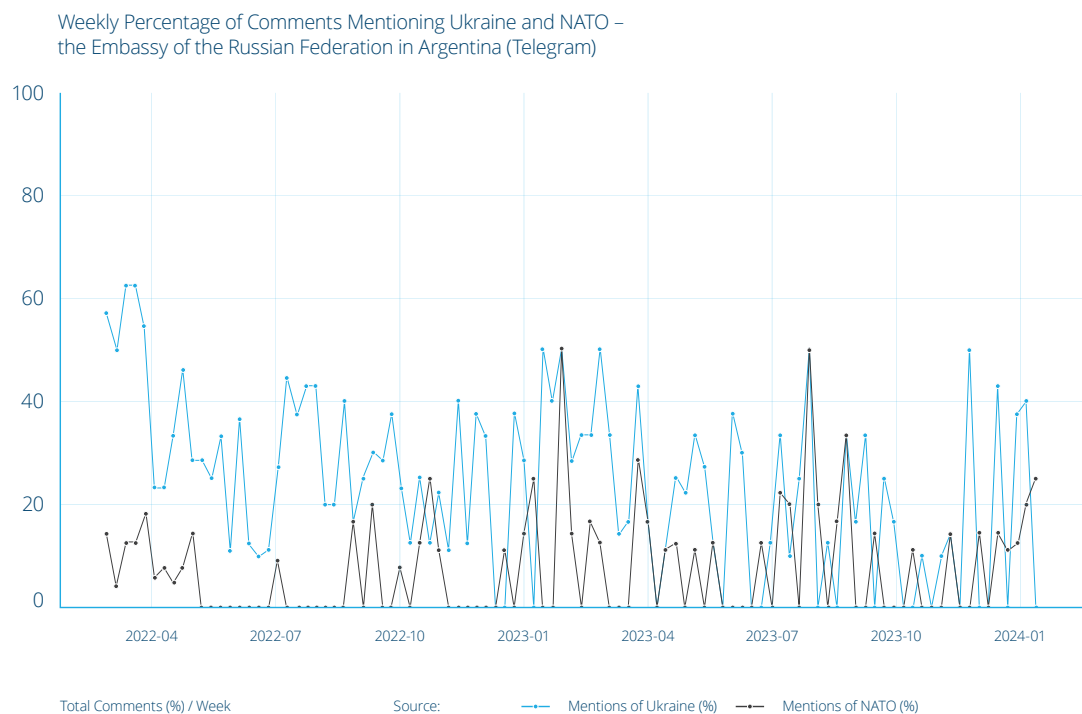


Figure 15: Weekly mention of Ukraine and NATO by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Argentina on Telegram



Moreover, terms like “military,” “operation,” and “defence” underscore the embassy’s portrayal of the war as a controlled and necessary action. The use of “special military operation” mirrors Russia’s official terminology, deliberately minimising the scale and severity of the invasion. References to “defence” further position Russia’s actions as reactive, framing the conflict as a justified response to perceived threats from Ukraine and its Western allies. This rhetorical strategy aims to downplay Russia’s role as an aggressor while reinforcing its narrative of protecting sovereignty and security.

Finally, broader themes emerge with terms such as “people,” “world,” “international,” and “new,” which reveal efforts to contextualise the conflict within a global framework. By emphasising universal concepts, the embassy seeks to present its actions as part of a broader fight for a new world order, appealing particularly to audiences in the Global South. This framing bridges localised narratives with Russia’s overarching geopolitical strategy, portraying the conflict as both a regional issue and part of a global struggle against Western domination.

The word cloud in Figure 17 reveals a distinct focus on framing the Ukraine conflict as a geopolitical struggle against the West, with terms such as “Western,” “West,” and “state” dominating the discourse. As noted in Figure 15, the embassy makes limited references to “NATO,” reflecting a strategic adaptation to the local context where anti-NATO rhetoric may resonate less strongly than generalised critiques of the West. Instead, terms like “Washington” and “American” are prominently featured, underscoring a direct critique of U.S. influence and aligning with historical doubts about American intervention in Latin America. This messaging highlights Russia’s efforts to foster anti-Western sentiment by addressing regional dynamics, portraying the conflict as a global struggle against Western hegemony rather than a narrowly defined confrontation with NATO.



Figure 17: Word cloud associated with comments containing “NATO” on Telegram from the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Argentina

The prominence of terms such as “state,” “world,” and “people” reflects an effort to universalise the Ukraine conflict, framing it as a struggle with global implications rather than a localised issue. By focusing on these themes, the embassy positions Russia as addressing broader human concerns in an attempt to resonate with international audiences. Additionally, the inclusion of regionally specific terms such as “Latin American,” “Argentina,” and “cooperation” demonstrates an effort to localise the narrative, connecting broader geopolitical framing with regional concerns about Western influence. This approach underscores a tailored messaging strategy designed to maximise relevance and impact within the Latin American context.

# Conclusion

During the last decade, EU Institutions, member states, and other democracies have devoted considerable efforts to enhancing situational awareness of FIMI activities carried out by Russia within their own borders. Some research was done to analyse Russian FIMI activities in other regions, though not continuously and systematically. Even fewer resources have been allocated to systematically monitoring, identifying, and analysing information manipulation and interference globally. While there has been an acknowledgment that “Russia has gone all out in using its diplomatic network to push its disinformation narratives across different social media platforms,” the common understanding of the Kremlin’s strategy is still that it is “throwing mud at everyone and hoping some of it sticks.”<sup>21</sup>

This pilot study challenged this assumption by offering a preliminary systematic, data-driven investigation of Russia’s official communications on Telegram and X conducted by its diplomatic representations worldwide. Moreover, this preliminary global picture was supplemented by an in-depth analysis of Russia’s official communications in the UK, Japan, and Argentina to provide more nuanced insights.

Despite its narrow scope and limited focus, this research’s findings do not look like ‘wall with thrown mud at it.’ Instead, they resemble a carefully crafted collage—a result of assembling different forms, textures, and materials to create a new whole—when each part results from deliberate resource allocation to achieve overarching strategic goals within local geopolitical and economic contexts.

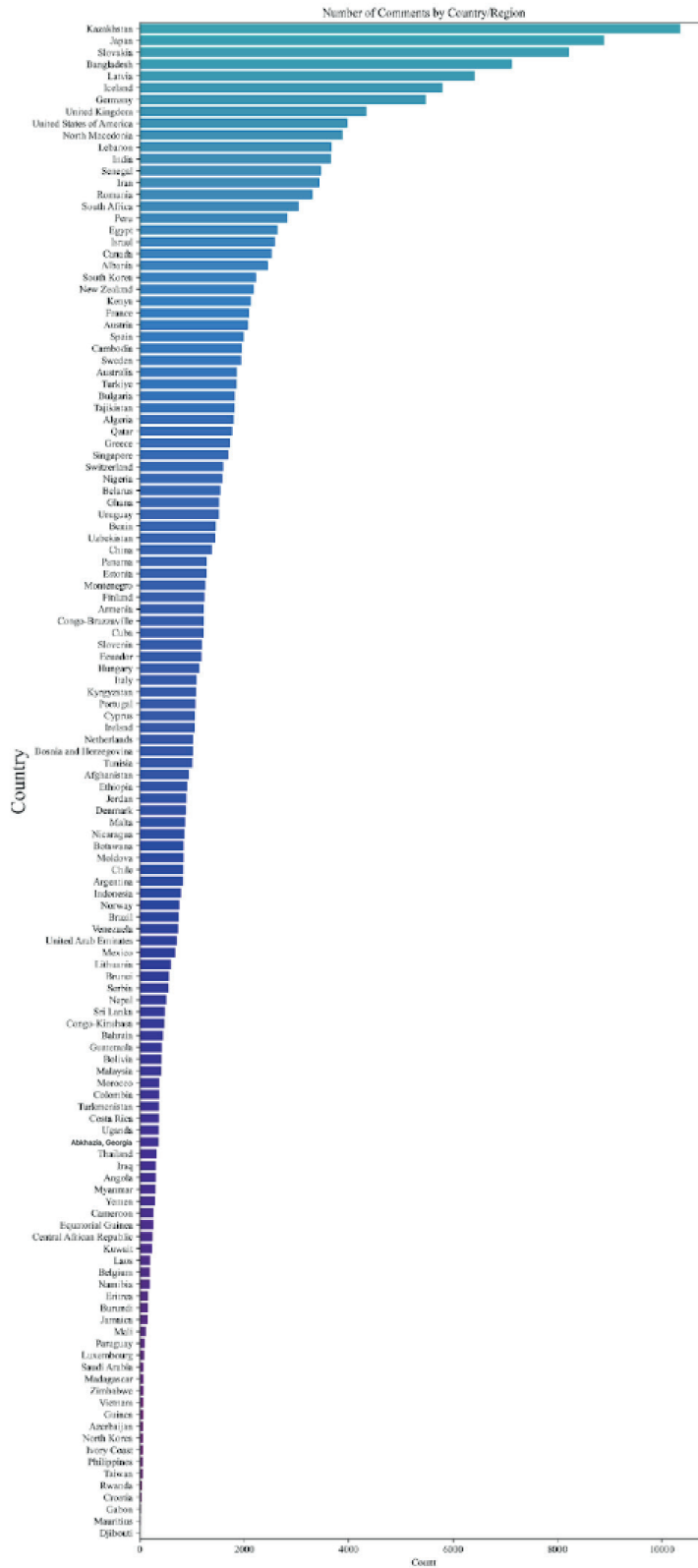
As demonstrated by three case studies, FIMI activities conducted by Russia worldwide are highly adaptable in tailoring global narratives to local contexts. Addressing these threats requires a clear strategy with clearly defined objectives based on the situational awareness of the shape, scale and form of these FIMI activities in the local context. In other words, as suggested by the counter-FIMI toolbox for diplomats, in their efforts to counter FIMI in the countries of their deployment, the diplomats of like-minded democracies must have a clear understanding of the Russian narratives disseminated in these countries, the local audiences receptive to these narratives, and how these FIMI activities fit into the global Kremlin’s campaign.<sup>22</sup>

Being a pilot study, this research offered a glimpse into what this clear understanding might be. However, more work must be done to offer such an understanding. In addition to Telegram and X/Twitter, Russia’s embassies operate on multiple platforms, such as Facebook and YouTube. As Russian embassies tailor their activities to the characteristics of different



platforms (different types of content, different audiences, etc.), only a combined analysis of all communications would offer the full scale of conducted FIMI activities. Moreover, additional analysis tools – such as topic clustering, networks sentiment analyses, etc. – shall be used to offer diplomats a whole picture of FIMI activities in the countries of their deployment. Such a comprehensive analysis would not only provide data-driven evidence of the Kremlin's global strategy and its adaptations to local contexts, but it would also serve as a basis for successfully addressing FIMI threats faced by the diplomats and representatives of like-minded democracies deployed in the countries targeted by the Kremlin.

# Annex 1



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