



Baltic Engagement
Centre for Combating
Information Disorders

HOT REPORT

KREMLIN-BACKED “HUMAN RIGHTS” CAMPAIGN TARGETS VIA THE UN

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THIS REPORT IS BASED ON AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED
EESTI EKSPRESS (DELFI MEEDIA) **“KREMLIN SECRET
OP USES ‘HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS’ TO UNDERMINE
ESTONIAN CHANCELLOR OF JUSTICE AND TARNISH
ESTONIA’S GLOBAL REPUTATION”.**

WHAT’S HOT?

A Kremlin-funded smear campaign is using so-called “human rights” organisations to pressure the UN into downgrading Estonia’s Chancellor of Justice and portray Estonia as a rights-violating state. While these organisations pose as civil society watchdogs, they coordinate closely with Russian influence agents and disseminate narratives that align with Kremlin propaganda.

What Do We See?

- **False complaints at the UN:** A Swiss-based NGO, Justice pour Tous Internationale (JPTi), submitted multiple formal complaints against Estonia, including to the UN Accreditation Committee and the UN Human Rights Council.
- **Pro-Kremlin media amplification:** A Kremlin-funded outlet, Tribuna, published interviews with JPTi leaders to legitimise the campaign, further amplified by Russian propaganda channels and agents.
- **Funding ties to Russian intelligence:** Leaked documents show that Russian influence agent Oleg Ivanov requested and received Kremlin funding to finance JPTi’s anti-Estonian activities.
- **Narrative alignment with Russian state messaging:** Accusations such as “discrimination against Russians”, “political persecution”, and “glorification of Nazism” mirror Russia’s long-used disinformation tropes.
- **Western lobbying façade:** The campaign is presented by individuals with professional CVs, such as Sharof Azizov, who has worked with UN and OSCE institutions, but whose affiliations and actions indicate alignment with Kremlin interests.

Why Does It Work?

- **Legitimacy of the UN stage:** The UN provides a global platform with guaranteed right to be heard, which Russia exploits to launder propaganda under the guise of human rights advocacy.
- **Credibility through false proxies:** Organisations like JPTi mimic genuine civil society work, using formal procedures and legal language to lend legitimacy to false accusations.
- **Amplification via aligned actors:** Kremlin-funded media, influence agents like Ivanov, and proxy “experts” coordinate to create the illusion of independent, global concern.
- **Procedural overload:** UN bodies must respond to formal submissions, forcing Estonia to expend resources rebutting false claims.

RISK ASSESSMENT: HIGH

- Reputational harm at the global level: Estonia’s credibility in international institutions is being systematically attacked.
- Exploitation of democratic systems: The UN’s openness is manipulated to platform malign narratives.
- Transnational coordination: This is not an isolated incident but part of a broader Kremlin influence campaign targeting democratic countries.
- High resource cost for Estonia: Responding to these attacks consumes time, money, and diplomatic capital.

How to Respond?

For the general public:

- Be aware that not all organisations claiming to represent human rights are independent or legitimate. Scrutinise claims made by obscure actors, especially when echoed in Russian-language or fringe media.

For (media literacy) educators:

- Use this case to illustrate how authoritarian regimes weaponise democratic institutions and exploit media and legal mechanisms. Highlight how visual and procedural mimicry (NGO names, UN procedures, academic CVs) can be tools of manipulation.

For policymakers and officials:

- Advocate for reform within international institutions to prevent abuse of procedural rights by hostile actors. Support stronger due diligence on NGO funding and affiliations. Increase transparency and coordination among EU democracies to expose and counteract influence operations masked as civil society advocacy.

FURTHER READING

- [Atlantic Council: Putin is weaponizing corruption to weaken Europe from within](#)
- [EU Disinfo Lab: Disinformation Landscape in Estonia](#)
- [EU Disinfo Lab: Disinformation Landscape in Latvia](#)
- [EU Disinfo Lab: Disinformation Landscape in Lithuania](#)

What is BECID?

BECID – the Baltic Engagement Centre for Combating Information Disorders – brings together expertise in fact-checking, media literacy, and journalism across the Baltics. We conduct fact-checks in collaboration with Delfi/Delfi Meedia, monitor disinformation narratives and campaigns under the leadership of investigative journalism organisation Re:Baltica, and promote media literacy through the Baltic Centre for Media Literacy (BCME). We also develop methodologies to effectively counter disinformation. Learn more: becid.ut.ee