



Advanced Course on Verification and new narratives on fact checking for Namibian journalists

Windhoek, Namibia
7-9 June 2022

#PeriodismoÁfrica

Organized by Casa Africa and
Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation



Media partners



#PeriodismoAfrica

The year of the pandemic was a time of postponements, uncertainty and trials for all, but it was also a year of opportunities.

Casa África finds it is absolutely necessary and urgent to help improve the communication on the African continent, a region that the Western media tends to ignore and which, in terms of our country's interest, is increasingly important. The fight against stereotypes in the narratives about Africa has been a constant for the institution, with initiatives as such as the publication *Si hablas de nosotros* ("If you talk about us") or the creation of the Saliou Traoré Prize for journalism in Spanish on Africa.

Other successful examples are the Africa-Spain Journalists' Meetings, that have brought together a large number of Spanish journalists specializing in Africa and African journalists. However, the pandemic forced us to resituate ourselves, to abandon meetings of this type momentarily and to direct budget and efforts towards other formulas that continued to serve these purposes. Now, one of our new focus areas is training aimed to combat a plague of our times: disinformation.

These reasons have led to the creation of a specialized training course for African journalists in verifying and combating hoaxes, which began last year in Nairobi and now reaches its second edition in Windhoek. Representatives of renowned media such as Newtral and Maldita.es are taking part in this course, as well as an African journalist with experience in the fact checking sector, thanks to a fluid and fruitful collaboration with Africa Check, a leading initiative in this field. Spain is one of the countries in the world where the media have stood out the most for fact checking and the advance in innovative data verification techniques. Media such as Newtral or Maldita.es have received international recognition and have joined the International Fact Checking Network (IFCN). Africa Check is a reference in this work of verification and the fight against hoaxes, especially focused on the African media landscape and which has contributed decisively to combating propaganda, hate speech and, above all, disinformation in such sensitive times as the elections.

In Namibia, we repeat the formula of a two-day intensive course and a third day in which Spanish journalists travelling to the country will have the opportunity to visit the main Namibian media to exchange impressions with their directors and top managers. The journalists who follow this training will also receive our manual, created with the contributions of the Nairobi course, and a certificate. The idea is to keep in touch, helping to improve, each one from their own territory and their own media, but forming part of a transnational network, the quality of the information that reaches our public opinion.

This course is an initiative of Casa África's Media Department, which would be impossible to carry out without the decisive collaboration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation and, especially, of the Spanish embassies on African soil. The proactive and constant support of José del Palacio Tamarit and Beatha Tangi Ntinda, from the Spanish embassy in Namibia, has been essential in landing this project in Windhoek and turning it into a tangible reality. Casa África's gratitude to both of them and to Alejandra Rubio del Barrio cannot be expressed in these few lines. Thanks to them and other officials and collaborators, we hope to see and experience many other editions of this course and to continue working so that Africa and Spain are much more connected, much closer.

Joan Tusell

Head of the Department of Media relations, Casa África

Casa África and Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation organize an ***Advanced course on verification and new narratives in fact-checking journalism*** for Namibian journalists.

Casa Africa, headquartered in the Canary Islands, is a public diplomacy institution that works to bring Africa and Spain closer. Its mission is to foster mutual understanding and strengthen relations with African countries. To do this, Casa Africa organizes more than 200 economic, social, cultural, institutional and political activities each year.

For more than 12 years, Casa África has worked to strengthen the relations between Spanish and African journalists, in order to favor a balanced and non-stereotyped vision of the African continent in Spain and also to serve as a bridge among Spanish and African journalists.

During the last decade fact-checking journalism has emerged due to the enormous proliferation and effects of disinformation and fake news at a global scale. To contribute to tackle this new challenge, we want to provide to Namibian journalists the experience and know-how of specialized media in Spain and Africa that have been worldwide recognized for their innovation and impact of their fact-checking journalism.

A mutual learning experience that will also allow Spanish journalists to understand the specificity of African disinformation and see how Namibian journalists and media deal with them daily, how to they fact-check and the tools they use for it.

June 7th and 8th, 2022, are the dates chosen. Two Spanish fact-checking journalists and an African fact-checker from Africa Check will be part of this Advanced course on verification and new narratives on fact checking journalism. Around 40 Namibian journalists will be invited to this two-day course, that will combine theory and practice in order to provide a wide vision on the new trends that fact-checkers are developing, with a practical approach on debunking fake news and how to combat misinformation.

This event is organized by Casa Africa as a part of his #PeriodismoAfrica program, and is made possible thanks to the support of Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Spanish Embassy in Namibia and our media partners Maldita.es, Newtral and Africa Check.

COURSE CONTENT

FACT CHECKING AS A CITIZEN SERVICE

by Tomás Rudich, Newtral

Why is fact checking so important today? We will address the origin of the current phenomenon of disinformation and how it affects the daily lives of people around the world. We will look at how the fact-checking organizations work, their standards of independence, the methodologies and sources they use, their challenges and how they collaborate globally.

FAKE NEWS: HOW DO THE BAD GUYS WORK? MOTIVATIONS AND TECHNIQUES

by Andrés Jiménez, Maldita.es

A practical class designed to put us on the other side, to understand who and for what reasons disinform, to learn how to deconstruct examples of disinformation and understand how they become really effective. The course will analyze how disinformation exploits lack of context and/or wrong context as disinformation, show the tools used by 'the bad guys' to exercise this disinformation and work with participants on practical examples.

VERIFICATION TOOLS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET SEARCH ENGINES

by Andrés Jiménez, Maldita.es

In this session we will learn how to make the most of Google's advanced search, which is essential for journalistic work and fact-checking. With a narrowed search we can go from finding millions of results to a few dozen, making it easier and quicker to get to the information we need. We will also see how to track and find content on social networks such as Twitter, Facebook and Telegram, which is not always easy but necessary to disprove misinformation. Have you ever read an article that later disappeared? We will learn how to archive and locate information published on the web.

STRATEGIES FOR ACT CHECKING WHEN INFORMATION IS HARD TO FIND

by Keegan Leech, Africa Check

Fact-checkers and journalists rely on credible information and expert sources to set the record straight and keep public debate accurate. So what do you do when facts are scarce and experts are unwilling to speak publicly? It's a question that Africa Check is asked often, as some African fact-checkers find that statistics on the continent are not well-collected or trustworthy. This training session shares advice for effective fact-checking when accurate information is hard to come by.

POLITICAL VERIFICATION, FACT-CHECKING IN ELECTIONS AND NEW NARRATIVES

by Tomás Rudich, Newtral

A review of the political verification process, including the detection of elements or data susceptible to be verified, which sources should be used and the use of tools for verification of political discourse. For example, we will talk about ClaimHunter, a tool developed by the Newtral team to monitor possible disinformation in social networks through an algorithm. In addition, we will review some examples of good verification practices in the electoral context. Regarding social media dissemination and new narratives, we will address the use of audio, illustrations and videos to disprove hoaxes on Twitter, Instagram and TikTok, as well as different WhatsApp verification projects.

PHOTO AND VIDEO VERIFICATION TO AVOID DISINFORMATION

by Andrés Jiménez, Maldita.es and Tomás Rudich, Newtral

It is very easy to misinform with videos and photos: manipulating, decontextualising or cutting them out, among others. But there are also simple and free tools that any citizen can use and that every journalist should know to verify audiovisual content, especially in times of crisis such as catastrophes, conflicts, attacks or last hours. We will also address the challenge posed by deepfakes and the projects that are underway to address them.

DISINFORMATION IN WARTIME: THE CASE OF UKRAINE

by Tomás Rudich, Newtral, and Andrés Jiménez, Maldita.es

In crisis and conflict situations, disinformation multiplies and needs to be tackled as soon as possible. The war in Ukraine has posed a huge challenge for fact-checkers around the world and has made the use of OSINT sources more necessary than ever. In this session we will look at what types of fake news have proliferated and how they have been spread. We will also look at how to establish collaborative networks in times of crisis, such as #UkraineFacts promoted by Maldita.es.

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT INFODEMIC

by Keegan Leech, Africa Check

The Covid-19 pandemic brought with it an "infodemic", an overwhelming flood of information, much of it unreliable. As Africa becomes more connected, it also becomes more difficult to fact-check such a volume of information in times of crisis. This training session discusses how to prepare for and combat future waves of misinformation using examples of African fact-checking during the pandemic and techniques from Africa Check, the continent's leading fact-checking provider.

JOURNALIST PROFILES



TOMÁS RUDICH is the Debunking Editor at Newtral.es, a Spanish organization member of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) since 2018. He has previously worked as an editor at the DPA news agency for eight years. He has also collaborated in media such as Clarín (Argentina) or El Confidencial (Spain). He has a degree in Communication Sciences from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA).



ANDRÉS JIMÉNEZ MACKELLAR is the Debunking Editor at Maldita.es, a Spanish fact-checking organization, where he has also been a reporter since 2018. Prior to that, he founded a fact-checking project called Facterbot and worked as an editor at the Spanish news agency Agencia EFE. Andrés has offered many media literacy workshops and participated in international counter disinformation seminars.



KEEGAN LEECH is a researcher at Africa Check, the continent's first independent non-profit fact-checking organisation. He holds a bachelor of sciences in English literature, applied mathematics, and physics and electronics. His work as a fact-checker has covered topics such as health misinformation, migration, and misleading statistics. And he's run many training sessions sharing Africa Check's methods with students, journalists, and other fact-checkers.

PROGRAM

TUESDAY, JUNE 7TH, 2022

- 9.00 h **Welcome, accreditation and opening remarks.**
Casa Africa, Spanish Embassy in Namibia, Africa Check
- 9.15 h **FACT-CHECKING AS A CITIZEN SERVICE**, by Tomás Rudich, Newtral.
- 10.15 h **DISINFORMATION: HOW DO THE BAD GUYS WORK? MOTIVATIONS AND TECHNIQUES**, by Andrés Jiménez, Maldita.es
- 11.15 h **Coffee break**
- 11.45 h **STRATEGIES FOR FACT-CHECKING WHEN INFORMATION IS HARD TO FIND**, by Keegan Leech, Africa Check
- 13.00 h **Lunch Break**
- 14.30 h **VERIFICATION TOOLS: ADVANCED SEARCHES ON TWITTER, GOOGLE AND FACEBOOK. HOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TELEGRAM, METADATA AND DIGITAL ARCHIVES**, Andrés Jiménez, Maldita.es
- 15.45 h **Break**
- 16.00 h **PREPARING FOR THE NEXT INFODEMIC**, by Keegan Leech, Africa Check
HOW FACT-CHECKERS IN SPAIN TACKLED COVID-19 DISINFORMATION, by Tomás Rudich, Newtral and Andrés Jiménez, Maldita.es

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8TH, 2022

- 9.00 h **POLITICAL VERIFICATION, FACT-CHECKING IN ELECTIONS AND NEW NARRATIVES**, by Tomás Rudich, Newtral
- 10.15 h **Coffee Break**
- 10.30 h **PHOTO AND VIDEO VERIFICATION TO AVOID DISINFORMATION**, by Andrés Jiménez, Maldita.es and Tomás Rudich, Newtral
- 11.45 h **DISINFORMATION DURING WARTIME: THE CASE OF UKRAINE**, by Tomás Rudich, Newtral and Andrés Jiménez, Maldita.es
- 13.00 h **Lunch Break**
- 14.30 h **PRACTICAL VERIFICATION CASES FROM NAMIBIA AND BEYOND**, by Tomás Rudich, Newtral, Andrés Jiménez, Maldita.es and Keegan Leech, Africa Check
- 16.30 h **FINAL PRACTICE PRESENTATIONS**
- 17.30 h **Closure and certificate of assistance**



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