

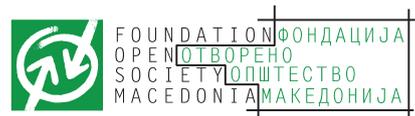
ANNUAL REPORT ON MONITORING

LOCAL HATE SPEECH

IN THE CITIES OF TETOVO,
BITOLA AND SHTIP IN 2021



SKOPJE,
DECEMBER 2021



Наслов на оригиналот:

Годишен извештај за состојбата со говорот на омраза на локално ниво во градовите: Тетово, Битола и Штип за 2021 година

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CONTENTS

Preface	1
About the Report	2
FIRST PART	
Hate speech situation in 2021 in the cities of Tetovo, Bitola, and Shtip	3
Noted hate speech cases in Tetovo	4
Noted hate speech cases in Bitola	8
Noted hate speech cases in Shtip	12
Conclusions	16
Recommendations	17
SECOND PART	
Cyberbullying	18
Research findings	19
Conclusions	27
Recommendations	28
THIRD PART	
Hate speech between fan groups	29
Findings from the conducted focus group	30
Conclusions	33
Recommendations	34

PREFACE

The annual report on the hate speech situation at the local level in the cities of Tetovo, Bitola, and Shtip in 2021 is a final analysis of the hate speech situation prepared within the project "Joint Action against Hate Speech".¹ The project refers to the monitoring of hate speech in three local communities in Macedonia: Tetovo, Bitola, and Shtip. This report is based on an eight-month monitoring of hate speech on social networks, monitoring and analysis of sports fan groups activities, youth movements and associations, public events in the municipalities, graffiti writing, cultural events, and so on. The report gives a special focus on cyberbullying through a presentation of findings that detect the situation at the local level for this phenomenon in the three cities. Conclusions are analysed and recommendations are given for systematic recognition, identification, and solution of problems that cause violence, intolerance, impatience. The report also highlights a separate section that examines hate speech between fan groups at a local level in the three cities and presents findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

As part of the project activities, the project team in cooperation with the local youth cores, located public areas with hate speech graffiti and removed them by writing messages of love, tolerance, and understanding.

Within the Project, a mini online campaign was prepared and implemented to increase the awareness and sensitization of the public on the problem of hate speech and prejudice where the youngsters are in the main focus.

¹ The project is supported and funded by the "Open Society Macedonia" Foundation within the concept of "Partnerships in Communities for the Promotion of Local Democracy".

ABOUT THE REPORT

For the second year in a row, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights conducts the monitoring of hate speech in the cities of Bitola, Shtip, and Tetovo. The annual report on the hate speech condition at the local level in the cities of Bitola, Shtip, and Tetovo in 2021 is the second such report in a row,² and in a continuum of two years comparatively gives the situation with hate speech in the three local communities. The report aims to objectively present and document cases of hate speech identified and observed by local observers.³

The report is structured in three main thematic units. In the first part, the report contains a description of hate speech cases in the three identified local communities. The observed and documented cases of hate speech for each city are further analysed separately and the data from the previous year are analysed comparatively. The conclusions are analysed, and observations are given.

The second part of the Report deals with the topic of Internet harassment among young high school students in the three cities and this is analysed for the first time in Macedonia. Cyberbullying is basically a form of bullying and intimidation using electronic means or online harassment. Cyberbullying is becoming more common among teens as the availability of digital tools and technology advances.⁴ As part of the project activities, a survey was conducted in the three cities through an anonymous online questionnaire answered by at least 100 high school students from each city. This part of the Report analyses the frequency of cyberbullying, the forms of intimidation, the consequences for the psycho-physical health, etc. In addition to the conclusions of this research, the report provides recommendations to reach a situation that will not cause such aggression on social networks.

The third part of the Report is dedicated to the detected situations with hate speech among the members of the sports fan groups in the three cities. Within the project activities, three focus groups with fan groups from Bitola, Shtip, and Tetovo⁵ were planned to be conducted. With the previously prepared methodological framework for conducting the focus groups, information was obtained from the members of the sports fan groups. As in the previous two parts of the Report, in this part the conclusions are analysed, and recommendations are given.

² <https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/godishen-izveshta%D1%98-za-monitoring-na-govor-na-omraza-na-lokalno-nivo-2020.pdf>

³ One local observer was hired in each city.

⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyberbullying>

⁵ Focus groups with the fan groups from Bitola and Shtip were not held due to the refusal of the fan groups to any kind of cooperation and communication with the project team.

FIRST PART

Hate speech situation in 2021 in the cities of Tetovo, Bitola, and Shtip

This part of the report is dedicated to the situation with hate speech at the local level. All documented cases of hate speech in the cities of Tetovo, Bitola, and Shtip in 2021, in the period from January to August 2021 were analysed in this report. The presence of hate speech in these three local environments continues to undermine the sense of security; hence, the need to find an effective approach to tackling hate speech both locally and nationally is always present. During the documentation and analysis of all reported cases of hate speech in the three cities, the right and importance of freedom of expression, tolerance, and respect for equality and dignity were carefully analysed, in order to identify all real cases of hate speech in public discourse – be that cases of hate speech registered online or at public events, sporting events or hate speech expressed in the form of graffiti and drawings.

The dominant types of hate speech in these three cities remain the same – hate speech based on ethnicity, hate speech based on political affiliation, and hate speech against members of the LGBTI + community. The "Pride Parade" held in Skopje in June, although not directly related to these three cities, caused hate speech based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Public areas continue to be painted with graffiti and drawings with offensive content that cause intolerance, disrespect, and hatred.

The project team, in accordance with the previously established methodology, monitored and reported local events, public spaces, the online space, announcements from local portals and televisions, etc., local profiles from social media⁶ and groups that publish content related to the local context.

The report on the situation with hate speech at the local level in the cities of Tetovo, Shtip, and Bitola, in addition to providing statistics on the observed cases of hate speech for 2021, provides a summary of the overall public discourse related to economic, social, and political developments in that negative context through the prism of hatred that exists among the citizens.

⁶ Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.

REGISTERED CASES OF HATE SPEECH IN THE CITY OF TETOVO

In Tetovo, in the period from January 2021 to August 2021, a total of 52 cases of hate speech were registered and documented, compared to 40 cases of hate speech registered in 2020 for the same period. 30 out of a total of 52 cases are hate speech cases based on ethnicity, of which as many as 25 cases are hate speech directed at Macedonians, and the remaining 5 hate speech cases are directed at Albanians. In 2021, there was a total of 13 hate speech cases based on religious grounds, targeting exclusively non-Muslims. Religious intolerance and hatred of everything non-Muslim is indicative. In all these cases of hate speech based on religion/affiliation, Christians and other non-Muslims are belittled and insulted, calling them derogatory and insulting words. Based on sexual orientation and gender identity, a total of 9 cases were detected and registered; these cases were noticed during the "Pride Parade" in June in Skopje. These cases of hate speech directed directly at members of the LGBTI + community are the third most common in the public discourse in Tetovo. In 2021, there were significantly fewer public drawings in the form of graffiti or offensive messages containing hate speech. Namely, in contrast to the 7 registered cases of hate speech in 2020 through drawings and graffiti on buildings and public areas in the city area, in 2021 only one graffiti was registered. The only graffiti observed contained hate speech based on ethnicity. Almost all cases of hate speech have been reported on social media – a total of 51 cases. They are posts or comments from a local context, while only one public case has been reported in the form of graffiti.

Compared to 2020, in 2021 in Tetovo the hate speech based on ethnic/national affiliation remains dominant, with significantly higher frequency of hate speech against Macedonians. Intolerance, rejection, and hatred based on religious affiliation with non-Muslims is worrying. All 13 cases reported on the Internet were related to hate speech against Christians or other non-Muslim religious groups. Facebook and Twitter are the most common social networks where hate speech is spread.

All cases of hate speech against members of the LGBTI + community in Tetovo were registered in June during the second "Pride Parade" in Skopje. This type of hate speech in Tetovo is present regardless of the ethnic context. In 2021, not a single case of hate speech based on political affiliation was registered, compared to 2020 in which 3 cases were registered in Tetovo.

Several figures are given as examples of the most common forms of hate speech in the city of Tetovo.

Figure 1

On 10 June 2021, a news story related to the fire that took place in Jerusalem was published on the Facebook profile of the Internet portal "Tetova News". The comments of this news item contain hate speech based on religious affiliation, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism.

The image shows a Facebook post from 'Tetova News' dated 7h ago. The post title is 'Zjarr i madh në Jerusalem - 9 qershor 2021' (Wild fires force evacuations in Jerusalem June 9, 2021). The main image shows a fire with orange flames and dark smoke. Below the post are several comments, each starting with a '😡' emoji. Blue callout boxes with white text point to specific comments:

- Comment 1: "pse juve ju vjen gjunah se gjithmon folshi kunder muslimanve tash car teme do citni" (Why are you sorry when there was always talk against Muslims, now what kind of topic will you publish so we can read).
- Comment 2: "Poe poe ishalla dixhet kret ene tshkojm nshpaj se ndrashe sen shkojm haa" (Let God burn them all so we can peacefully go home. Otherwise, we can't have).
- Comment 3: "Inshallah zoti igjekt krejt" (With God's help, let them burn).
- Comment 4: "Denimi i Allahut eshte i rand qa te ja bajsh dikujna Allahu ta kethen Allahu vonon por nuk haron Elhamdulillah" (The punishment from Allah is severe. If it gets you, Allah returns it to you, Allah may be late, but does not forget. Amen Lord).

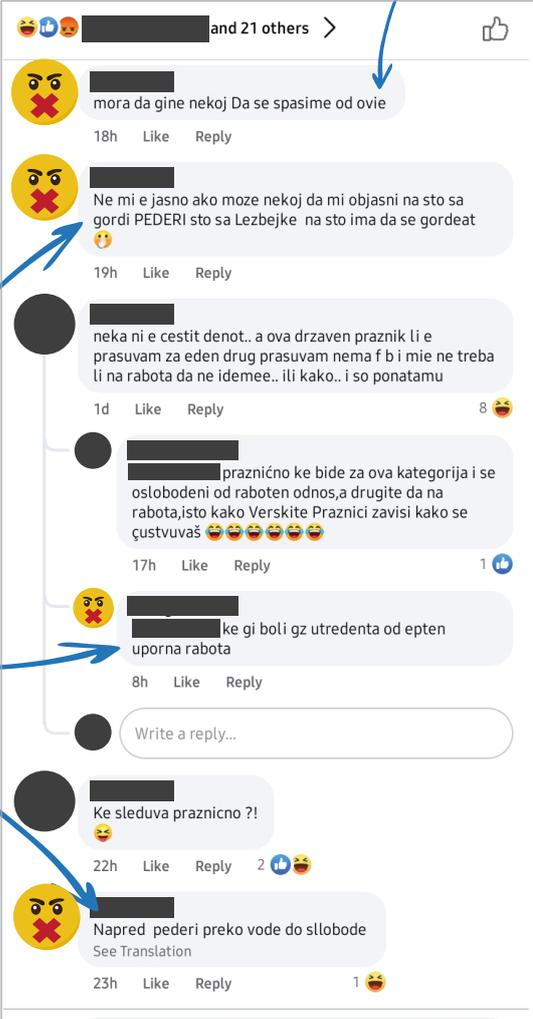
LOCAL HATE SPEECH

Figure 2

On 24 June 2021, a news story related to the "Pride Parade" was published on the Facebook profile of the Internet portal "Tetova News". This post caused a storm of negative comments and hate speech based on sexual orientation.



SOMEONE HAS TO DIE TO BE SAVED FROM THESE PEOPLE



CAN SOMEONE EXPLAIN WHY ARE THE GAY PEOPLE PROUD, AND WHAT DO LESPINANS HAVE TO BE PROUD OF

THE NEXT DAY YOUR BOTTOM WILL HURT AFTER HARD WORK

FORWARD FAGOTS THROUGH WATER TO FREEDOM



Figure 3

During the month of May, at the entrance to the city of Tetovo, on the main traffic point on one of the concrete walls, an inscription was noticed with the content: "Death to Giaours". This post is an explicit hate speech based on ethnic, national, and religious grounds.



REGISTERED HATE SPEECH CASES IN THE CITY OF BITOLA

In the period from January 2021 to August 2021, there were 46 cases of hate speech registered in Bitola, compared to 55 cases of hate speech registered for the same monitoring period in 2020.⁷ All cases of hate speech have been registered on the social networks Facebook, Twitter, and Tick-tock, while there are no cases of graffiti and drawings on public areas in the city. Most of the reported cases of hate speech are aimed at the LGBTI + community, a total of 25 cases (compared to 8 cases from the previous 2020), which is more than half of the total number of cases of hate speech in 2021 or 54%. Bitola "abounds" with various cases of hate speech. There was one case of hate speech based on social origin, one case of sexism, two cases of xenophobia, 7 cases of hate speech based on political affiliation expressed through hatred of political dissidents, and one case of hate speech based on a health condition associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, 4 cases of hate speech based on ethnicity were registered in Bitola, compared to 36 cases registered in the previous 2020.

The statement from the previous 2020⁸ that the Roma from Bitola are the most marginalized community and that they suffer the most intense hate speech⁹ in the daily communication on social networks is confirmed in this report, where out of a total of 4 registered cases of hate speech based on ethnicity, 3 are hate speech that are directly and explicitly addressed to the Roma.

The behaviour of the public in Bitola regarding the issue of protection of the rights of Roma living in the city is indicative. Besides the attempt the case of the beaten Roma¹⁰ in 2020 to be hidden and the fact that the Roma were condemned as harmful to society, the number of citizens protesting against the conviction of the police officer who beat the Roma last September 2020¹¹ is astonishing.

The LGBTI + community throughout the year, and especially during the "Pride Parade" at the local level in Bitola, faced daily attacks and humiliation, expressing intense hate speech on the public Internet space. The comments on the social media Facebook and Twitter almost always call for physical violence, humiliation, degradation of the human dignity of these people, pointing to a complete exclusion and non-acceptance.

Several figures are given as example of the most common forms of hate speech in Bitola.

⁷ <https://mhc.org.mk/reports/godishen-izveshta%d1%98-od-monitoring-na-govor-na-omraza-na-lokalno-nivo-vo-gradovite-tetovo-bitola-i-shtip-2020/>

⁸ idem

⁹ Source: the website www.govornaomraza.mk

¹⁰ [tps://www.slobodenpecat.mk/pretepanite-romi-od-bitolskata-policzija-svedochea-vo-zhivo-ne-maltretiraa-kako-stoka-ne-tepaa-i-drzhea-vo-stanicza-do-5-sabajle-video/](https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/pretepanite-romi-od-bitolskata-policzija-svedochea-vo-zhivo-ne-maltretiraa-kako-stoka-ne-tepaa-i-drzhea-vo-stanicza-do-5-sabajle-video/)

¹¹ https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=320522839520086

Figure 1

On 9 August 2021, photos from the village of Dihovo were shared on the Facebook group "Bitolski Problemi" (Problems in Bitola), which show spilled garbage and waste. The comments regarding this post accuse the Roma and the Roma population, making them guilty of this problem, presenting them as harmful to society, and thus spreading hate speech.

The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook post and its comments. The post is from the group "Bitolski Problemi" and is dated 9 August 2021. The post text reads: "Eve so se desava kaj bazeno vo Dihovo. Nikoj i nisto ne pezemva!" (Even so, it happens at the pool in Dihovo. No one has ever cleaned it!). The post includes three photos showing a large area of spilled garbage and waste. The post has 32 comments and 94 likes. The comments are as follows:

- Comment 1: "Mentalitet nikakov. Dzabe e se.. Kontejneri da postavite ke gi iskrshat. Od nas narod NE BIVAAA" (3w Like Reply 7 likes)
- Comment 2: "Одат во природа, демек сакаат природа ??? Не ги разбирам... овие ко дома слуги да им чистат, па не знаат. Еднаш господ со вода не исчисти, сега оган нека не изгори. Зошто сме. Уништувачи 😞" (3w Like Reply 2 likes)
- Comment 3: "Во Европа одиме, вака ни на сон нема да не примат 😞" (3w Like Reply 2 likes)
- Comment 4: "Rekov so decata. le odam dihi vo na kapenci ama ko se kaciv. ko vidlc befaj rekov. doma ke se ladime" (3w Like Reply)
- Comment 5: "Nekni imash nekolku familii od bairo" (3w Like Reply)
- Comment 6: "Ova e virus a ne covido cao prijatno." (3w Like Reply 3 likes)
- Comment 7: "Клајте му ги чакмакот и ќе се исчисти." (3w Like Reply)

Below the post, there are three blue callout boxes with English text:

- Box 1: "IF THEY ARE FORBIDDEN AN ENTRANCE SOMEWHERE, THEY CALL THE MEDIA, THE ROMA ORGANIZATIONS AND SO ON. THEY'VE BEEN THROWING GARBAGE WHEREVER THEY WANT FOR 10 YEARS, AND THEY HAVEN'T BEEN PUNISHED... AND THEN THEY ARE OFFENDED WHEN SOMEONE CALL THEM GYPSIES..."
- Box 2: "THERE WERE A FEW FAMILIES FROM BAIRO THE OTHER DAY THERE"
- Box 3: "THIS IS A VIRUS, NOT COVID-19 BYE"
- Box 4: "ONE LIGHTER AND EVERYTHING WILL BE CLEANED."

Figure 2

On 28 June 2021, due to the "Pride Parade" in Skopje, a counter-parade of the real "Pride Parade" was held in Bitola. This news was published on the Facebook page of the internet portal "Tocka". The comments of this post contain homophobic and transphobic speech, as well as advocacy of fascist ideas.

Tocka
3 d · 🌐

Вчера вечер во Битола се одржа „Вистинска парада на гордоста“, на која учесниците самоиницијативно се организирале преку социјал... See more

TOCKA.COM.MK
Контра парада во Битола под името „Вистинска парада на гордоста“: „Да се зачув...

and 1.3k others 92 comments · 24 shares

🙄 Vistinski grad-vistinska parada pederski grad-pederska parada 🤔🤔🤔
3 d Like Reply 23 🙄

● БРАВО, ТОА СЕ ВИСТИНСКИТЕ ВРЕДНОСТИ ЗА ГОРДОСТ-ФАМИЛИЈА, ДЕЦА, ЛЪУБОВ
3 d Like Reply 3 🙄

🙄 оваа е fazisoidam. ovie ne gi priznavale sklonostite na одредени gragani koi neli gospod takvi gi daril, isto kako sto hitler ne gi racunase za luge na evreite ili deka se lige odvtorai treta kategorija za slovenskite narodi, romite ... priznavanjeto na vrodניתe sklonosti na одредени gragani ne e politika tuku civilizaciska vrednost... moe mislenje
3 d Like Reply 6 🙄

● View 1 more reply...

● Вистинскиот народ ја промовира вистинската парада на Гордоста 🙄🙄

THE REAL PEOPLE PROMOTE THE REAL PRIDE PARADE. AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNTRY WAVES THE RAINBOW FLAG... WHAT A DISGRACE... WHO KNOWS, MAYBE HE PREPARES HIS CHILDREN TO BE PROUD, MAYBE HE WANTS HIS SON TO BRING HIM A SON-IN-LAW AT HOME.

and 1.3k others >

View 1 more reply...

🙄 Вистинскиот народ ја промовира вистинската парада на Гордоста 🙄🙄. А претседателот на државата вее знамето на виножитото.... која беда... а кој знае мош па и децата си ги спрема да му бидат горди мош сака син му, да му донесе дома ЗЕТ
2 d Like Reply 3 🙄

● ajttt mos uba

View 2 more replies...

● Respekt za bitolčani 🙄

2 d Like Reply 1 🙄

● Bravo Bitolcani 🙄

REAL CITY-REAL PARADE, FAGGOTY CITY-FAGGOTY PARADE

THIS IS FASCISM. THEY HAVEN'T ACCEPTED THE WAY GOD CREATED SOME PEOPLE, SUCH AS HITLER WHO DIDN'T CONSIDER JEWS TO BE PEOPLE OR THAT THEY WERE PEOPLE FROM THE SECOND OR THIRD CLASS FOR THE SLAVIC, THE ROMA... THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE INNATE TENDENCIES IS NOT POLITICS BUT CIVILIZATION VALUE... MY OPINION

Figure 3

On the day of the "Pride Parade" in Skopje on 26 June 2021, due to the increased visibility of the LGBTI community, a message with a disturbing content and inciting discrimination was posted on the social network Instagram by a private user from Bitola.



LOCAL HATE SPEECH

REGISTERED HATE SPEECH CASES IN THE CITY OF SHTIP

In 2021 in Shtip were noticed twice as many cases of hate speech, a total of 88 cases, compared to 36 cases registered in 2020. All cases of hate speech are reported on social networks and are mainly posts or comments on events related to the local or national context of events. No graffiti was noticed. During the monitoring period from January to August 2021, no graffiti or drawings were noticed on public areas that convey a message of hate speech. Of all the reported cases of hate speech, the most common are hate speech directed at the LGBTI + community and hate speech based on ethnicity, directed at Albanians, Roma, and Vlachs. The third place, in terms of representation, is reserved for hate speech based on political affiliation.

A total of 67 cases of hate speech based on sexual orientation and gender identity were registered in Shtip. Hate speech directed at the LGBTI + community is most present in Shtip with as much as 76% of the total number of cases. In the previous 2020, only 6 cases of hate speech based on sexual orientation and gender identity were registered. It can be safely concluded that the "Pride Parade" in June is the reason for the increased number of hate speech cases. There were 13 cases of hate speech against the LGBTI + community in May, 37 cases in June, and 15 cases in August.

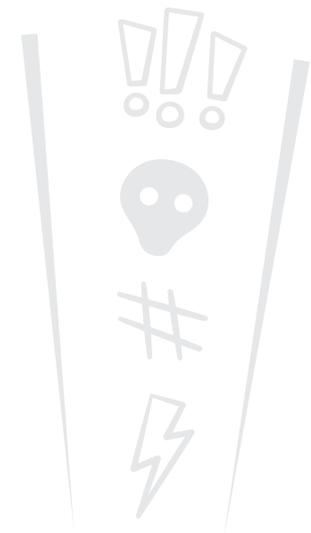
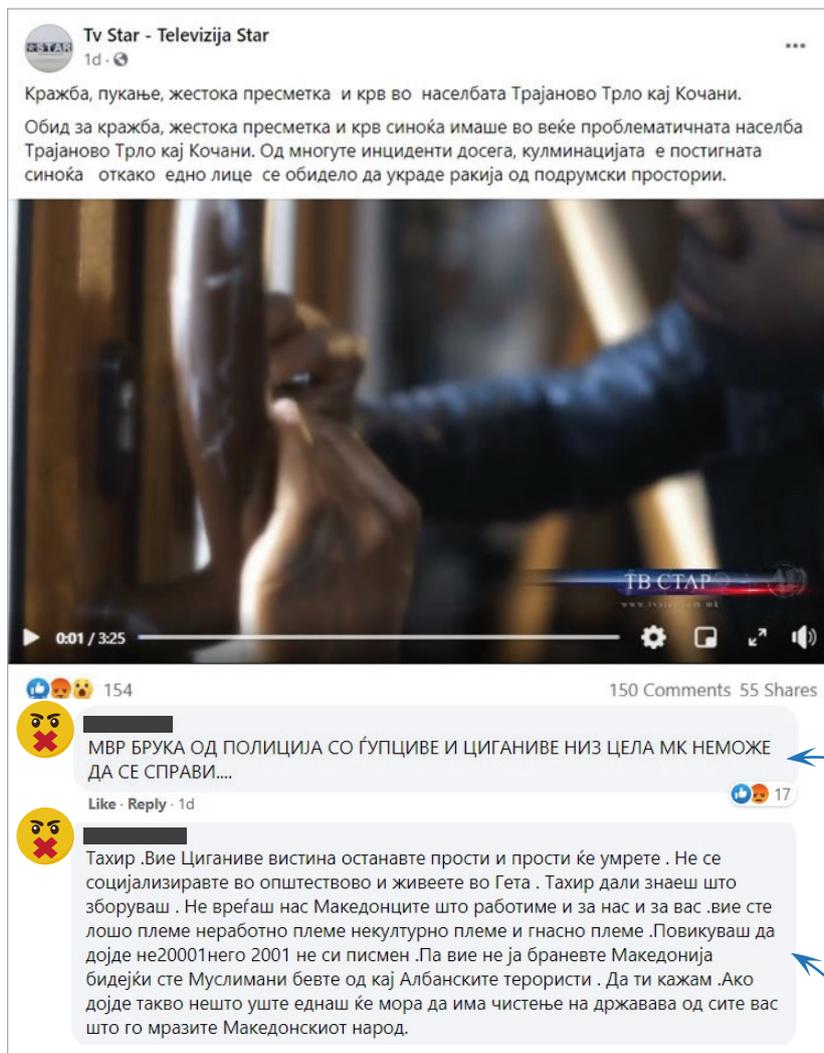
The intolerance and rejection of differences based on sexual orientation and gender identity have intensified both discriminatory and hate speech against the LGBTI + community that culminated on social media. There were a lot of threats, calls for deprivation of life, demoralization, comments of the vilest kind and form with extremely disturbing content.

Hate speech based on ethnicity is significantly present with a total of 15 documented cases for 2021 compared to 23 from the previous year. There were 6 hate speech cases based on political affiliation for 2021, identically to the previous 2020.

Several figures are given as example of the most common cases of hate speech in Shtip.

Figure 1

On 12 April 2022, on the Facebook profile of the Shtip television "TV-Star - Televizija Star", a news article was published on a committed crime in a neighbourhood in the city of Kochani. This news is followed by comments with negative rhetoric towards the Roma. They contain direct hate speech and call for violence against the Roma.



THE POLICE ARE SHAME; THEY CANNOT DEAL WITH THE GYPSIES AROUND MACEDONIA.

TAHIR, YOU GYPSIES REMAINED UNEDUCATED AND UNEDUCATED YOU WILL DIE. YOU HAVEN'T SOCIALIZED IN THE SOCIETY, AND YOU LIVE IN GHETTOS. TAHIR, ARE YOU HEARING YOURSELF? YOU ARE INSULTING US MACEDONIANS WHO WORK FOR US AND FOR YOU. YOU ARE A BAD TRIBE, UNEMPLOYED TRIBE, IMPOLITE, AND FILTHY TRIBE. YOU WANT THE YEAR OF 20001 TO COME BACK, NOT 2001, WHICH MEANS YOU ARE ILLITERATE. IT WASN'T ALL OF YOU WHO DEFENDED MACEDONIA BECAUSE YOU ARE MUSLIMS, AND YOU WERE SIDING WITH THE ALBANIAN TERRORISTS. LET ME TELL YOU, IF SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENS AGAIN, WE WILL HAVE TO CLEANSE THE COUNTRY FROM ALL OF YOU WHO HATE THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE.



Figure 2

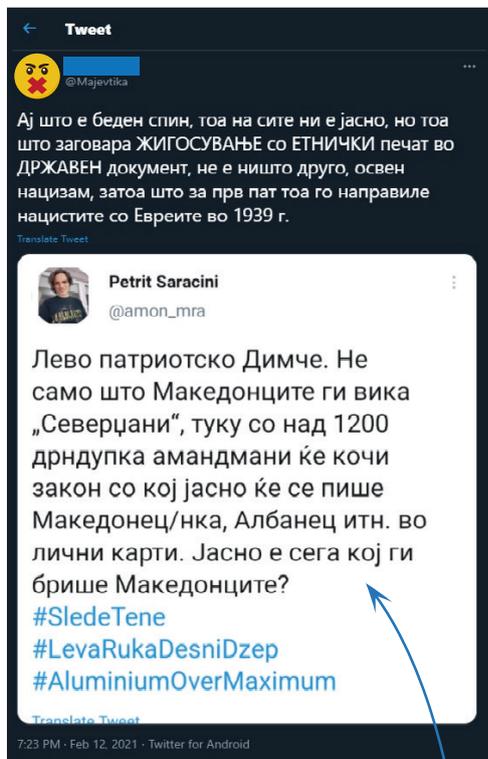
On 5 May 2021, on the Facebook profile of "Дневна доза вести и македонски хумор" (Daily dose of news and Macedonian humour), a news article was published on the decision made in Croatia that allows same-sex partners to be able to adopt children. The article continues with a commentary which is hate speech directed at members of the LGBTI community, calling for violence.



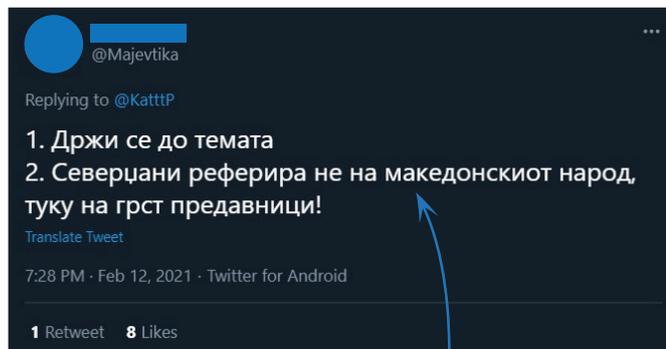
LOCAL HATE SPEECH

Figure 3

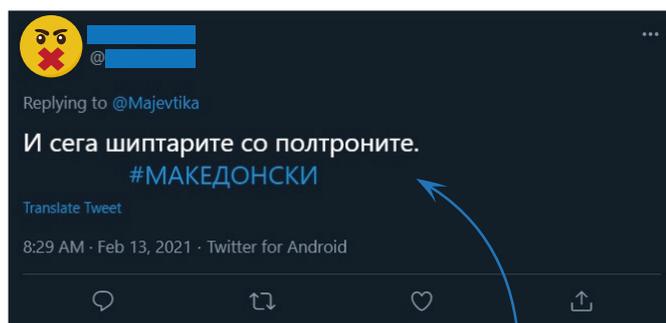
On 12 February 2021, the Twitter profile "@Majevtika" shared a photo containing a tweet by the journalist Petrit Saracini, with a condemned text regarding the actions of the MP from "Levica", Dimitar Apasiev. This piece of news encouraged, and initiated hate speech based on political and ethnic affiliation.



LEFT PATRIOTIC DIMCHE. NOT ONLY HE CALLS MACEDONIANS "SEVERDZANS", BUT HE IS STOPPING A LAW WITH MORE THAN 1200 DULL AMENDMENTS, WHICH WILL CLEARLY STATE IN THE IDS WHO IS MACEDONIAN, ALBANIAN, ETC. IS IT CLEAR NOW WHO ERASES THE MACEDONIANS?



*1. STICK TO THE TOPIC.
2. SEVERDZANS DOES NOT MEAN MACEDONIANS, BUT A HANDFUL OF TRAITORS!*



AND NOW THE SHQIPTARS WITH THE POLTROONS.



CONCLUSIONS

1. The most common hate speech at the local level in the cities of Tetovo, Bitola, and Shtip is hate speech based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
2. The division of the society on ethnic grounds is reflected at the local level; hence, in the cities of Tetovo, Bitola, and Shtip is registered hate speech based on ethnicity.
3. Prejudices and stereotypes towards members of the LGBTI community are evident in all three cities. The "Pride Parade" on 26 June in Skopje under the slogan "Outside the Walls" further provoked intensified hate speech against the LGBTI + community.
4. The use of social media and the Internet are a major space for exchange of information, but they also provide tremendous freedom of expression. In the absence of precise regulations, this digital space is in fact the main place where hate speech spreads.
5. Lack of a comprehensive national/local mechanism for monitoring hate speech in the digital space.
6. Lack of a comprehensive and clear legal framework by institutions regarding the monitoring, registration, and reporting of hate speech in public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with the findings and conclusions arising from the Report, and in order to detect and prevent the increased intensity of hate speech and to promote the principle of tolerance and non-discrimination, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Establishment of a comprehensive educational and preventive mechanism in primary and secondary schools, included in the framework of civic education, in order to early accept the differences and overcome prejudices.
2. Raising awareness regarding the dangerous consequences of hate speech via conducting public campaigns by competent institutions and bodies, as well as encouraging public figures to react quickly against hate speech.
3. Promoting the use of self-regulatory mechanisms by public and private bodies.
4. Improving digital and media literacy at the level of the general public, in order to critically read and transmit information in the direction of ethical and safe communication.
5. Amending the Criminal Code and adding sexual orientation and gender identity as one of the grounds for prosecuting perpetrators who spread hate speech through a computer system and cause discord and intolerance.
6. Establish a comprehensive and clear legal framework to effectively and efficiently sanction hate speech and hate crimes.

SECOND PART

Cyberbullying

In the framework of the project "Joint Action against Hate Speech at the Local Level", research on "Internet harassment" was conducted as a special activity. The research was conducted in the period from 20 May 2021 to 10 June 2021 in the high schools "Slavcho Stojmenski" in Shtip, "Sedmi mart" in Tetovo, and "Josip Broz – Tito" in Bitola. A total of 317 respondents aged 15-18 were included, with the prior consent of the Ministry of Education and Science and the principals of the said secondary schools. The research was conducted by the agency "Segments research", Skopje through an anonymous online questionnaire. The online questionnaire was structured in such a way as to show certain demographic data of the respondents, data related to their social status and position, sexual orientation and gender identity, exposure and frequency of cyberbullying, the most common forms of cyberbullying, and the health consequences of students.

Definition of cyberbullying

There is no single definition of cyberbullying at international and European levels, but international organizations and European institutions try to define this phenomenon. Since 2009, the UN has emphasized the importance of tackling cyberhate, which also included cyberbullying. In 2009, in the Recommendations for the promotion of the Internet and online media services appropriate for minors, cyberbullying was defined as a continuation of traditional bullying in the cyberspace.¹²

The Republic of North Macedonia lacks a definition of cyberbullying, as well as visible efforts by the state to identify, prevent, stop, and protect against this phenomenon.

¹² PACE - Recommendation 1882 (2009) - The promotion of Internet and online media services appropriate for minors (coe.int)

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Demographic analysis and number of respondents

The research on the prevalence of cyberbullying among high school students in the cities of Shtip, Tetovo, and Bitola was conducted on a representative sample of 317 respondents – 196 female and 121 male respondents, from all four years. 85 of the surveyed students were in their first year of studying, 101 students in their second, 87 students in their third, 44 students in their fourth year. Out of a total of 317 respondents, 196 were Macedonians, 100 Albanians, and 21 were members of other communities living in the RNM. Out of the total number of respondents, 191 declared themselves as Orthodox Christians, 102 respondents declared themselves as Muslims, 13 respondents declared themselves as atheists, and 5 respondents did not answer this question.

Sexual orientation and gender identity

Regarding the question of sexual orientation, 245 people declared themselves as heterosexual, 4 as homosexual, 9 as bisexual, 3 as asexual, and 56 people refused to answer this question. When it comes to the gender identity, 256 persons declared themselves as cis, 2 persons as transgenders, 5 persons declared themselves as non-binary, while 34 respondents refused to answer the question. Out of the 34 people who refused to answer this question, 76% or 26 people live in Tetovo and by religion are Muslims – a taboo topic.¹³

Persons with disabilities

Out of the total of 317 respondents, 23 respondents declared themselves as persons with disabilities.

Using social networks

Out of the total of 317 respondents, 310 use social media, while 7 respondents do not use social media.¹⁴ This data is relevant in terms of reliability and importance of the data obtained from the respondents because the research itself refers to cyberbullying and justifies the relevance of the obtained data.

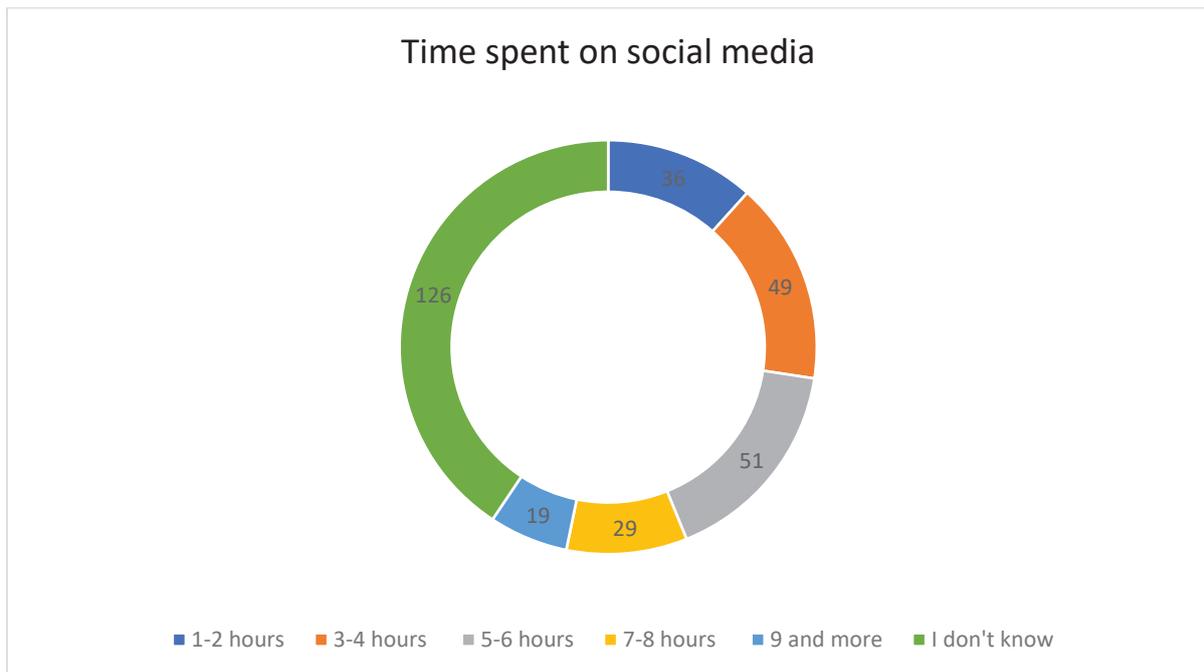
Time spent using social media

Regarding the time spent on social networks, 310 respondents stated the following:

¹³ Taboo topic – <http://drmj.eu/show/%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B1%D1%83/%D1%81%D1%80>

¹⁴ They all come from a large family, which has only one employed member in the family, they are Albanians from Tetovo, and they are Muslim by religion.

(Photo 1)



According to the survey data, all respondents spend an average of about **311.6 minutes on social media or more than five hours a day.**

For comparison, in 2021 on a global level, 55% of the world's population uses social media. The average person spends an average of 2 hours and 32 minutes on social media. Teenagers spend an average of 3 hours and 1 minute, and some teens spend up to 9 hours on social media.¹⁵

Globally, there is an increasing trend of time spent on social media by the average person. Namely, in 2012 the average time spent on social media was 90 minutes or an hour and a half; in 2016 the average time was 128 minutes per day, i.e., 2 hours and 8 minutes; and in 2019 the time spent on social media increased to 145 minutes per day, i.e., 2 hours and 25 minutes.¹⁶

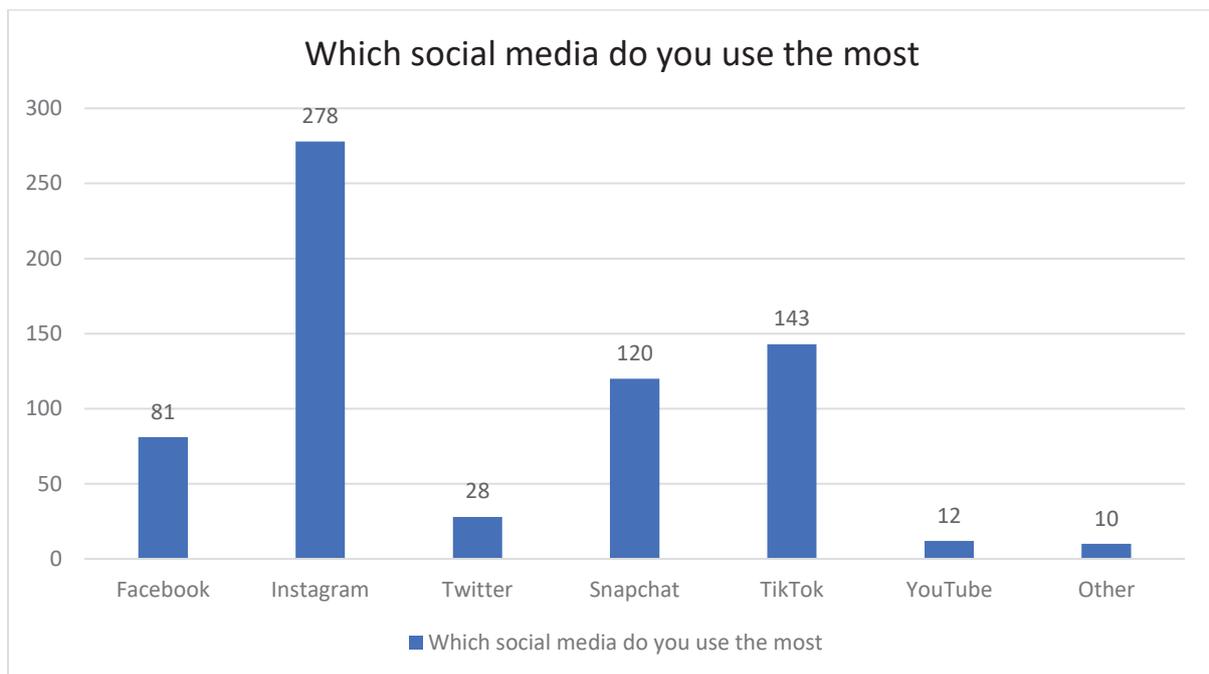
Commonly used social media

The following graphic shows which of the social media the high school students use the most.

¹⁵ https://famemass.com/time-spent-on-social-media/#What_Is_The_Average_Time_Spent_On_Social_Media_In_2021

¹⁶ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/433871/daily-social-media-usage-worldwide/>

(Photo 2)



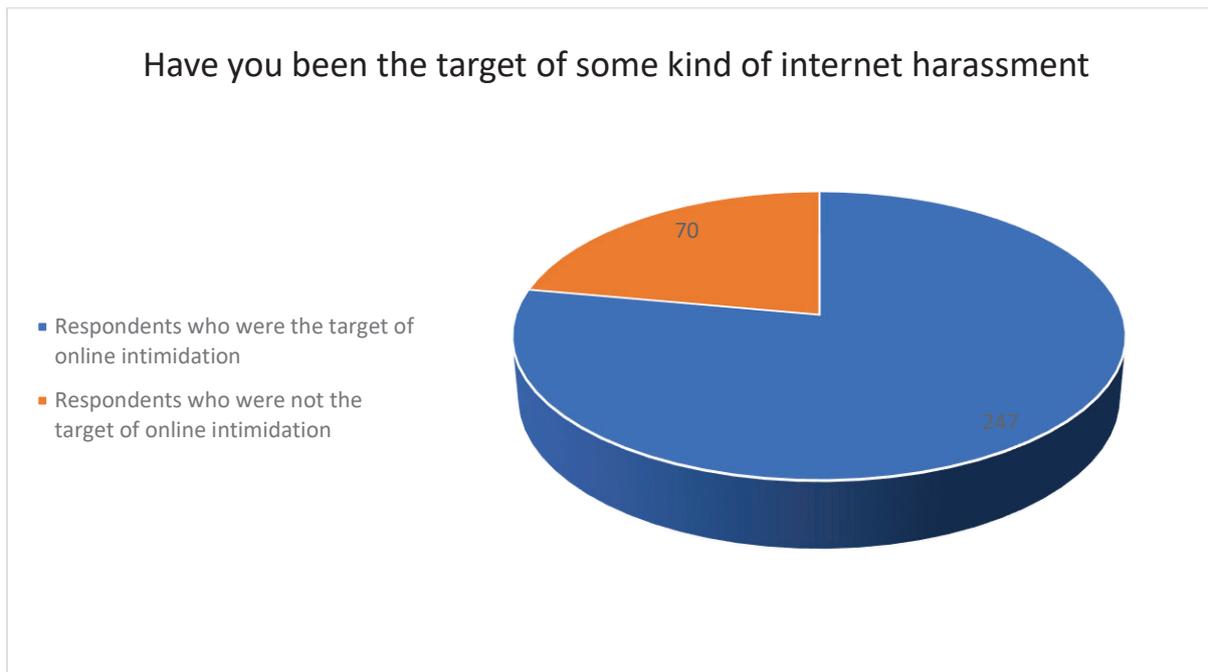
Young people mostly use the social medium Instagram, while the use of Facebook by young people has a declining trend. The number of youngsters using Facebook decreased by 13% in 2019, and it was anticipated to decline by 45% in the next 2 years.¹⁷

Prevalence of cyberbullying

When asked if they have ever been the target of any kind of cyberbullying, 247 respondents out of 317 stated that they had been the target of cyberbullying, or 78% of the people who participated in this survey. This figure is worryingly high, i.e., twice as high as the world average of 34%.

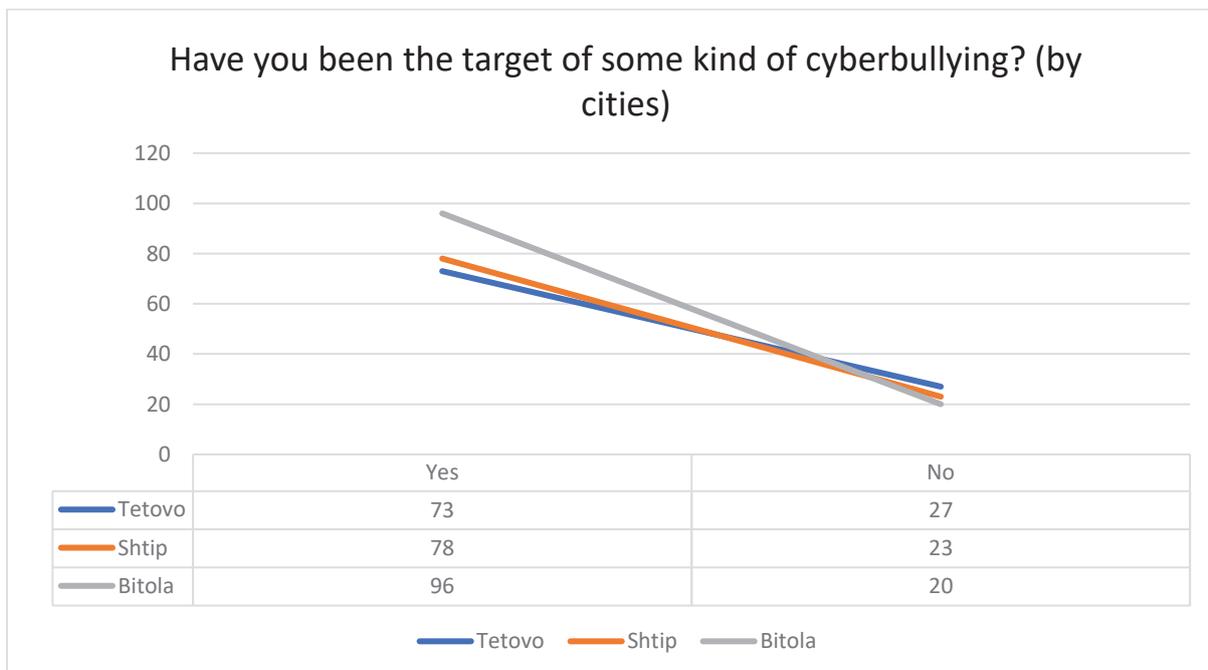
¹⁷ <https://www.theverge.com/22743744/facebook-teen-usage-decline-frances-haugen-leaks>

(Photo 3)



Cyberbullying is present in all three cities – in Tetovo with 73%, in Shtip with 77%, and in Bitola with 83% of the total number of respondents.

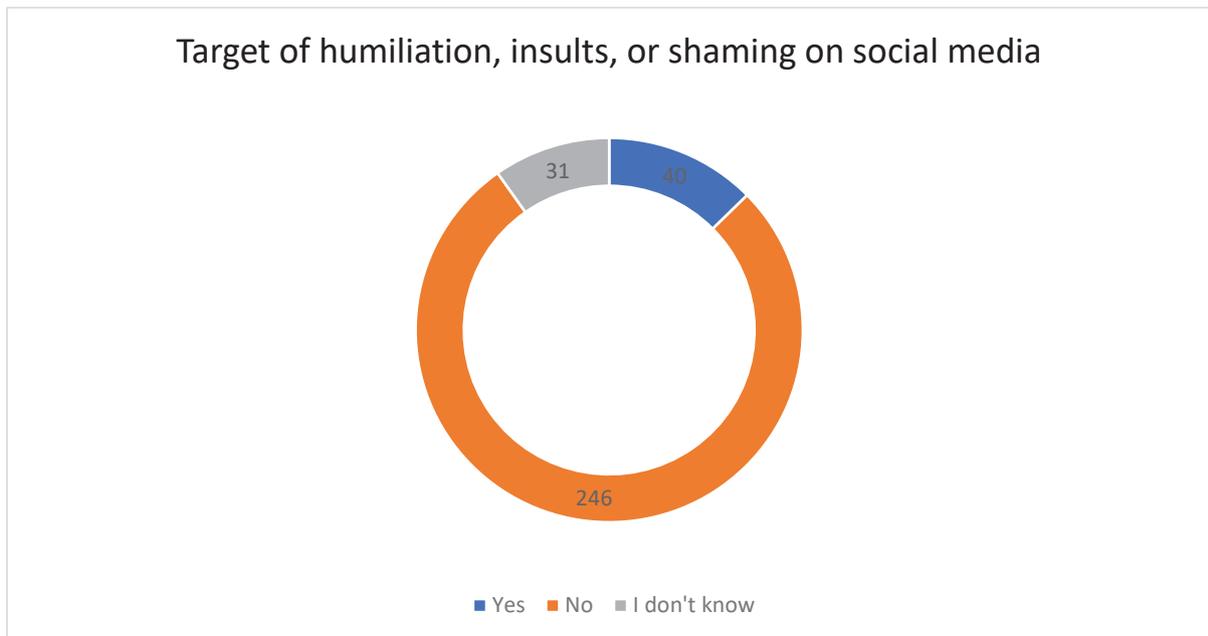
(Photo 4)



Humiliation, insults, and shaming on social media

To the question: "Have you been the target of humiliation, insults, or shaming on social media?", out of 317 respondents, 40 respondents answered in the affirmative, 246 answered in the negative, and 31 respondents answered that they did not know.

(Photo 5)

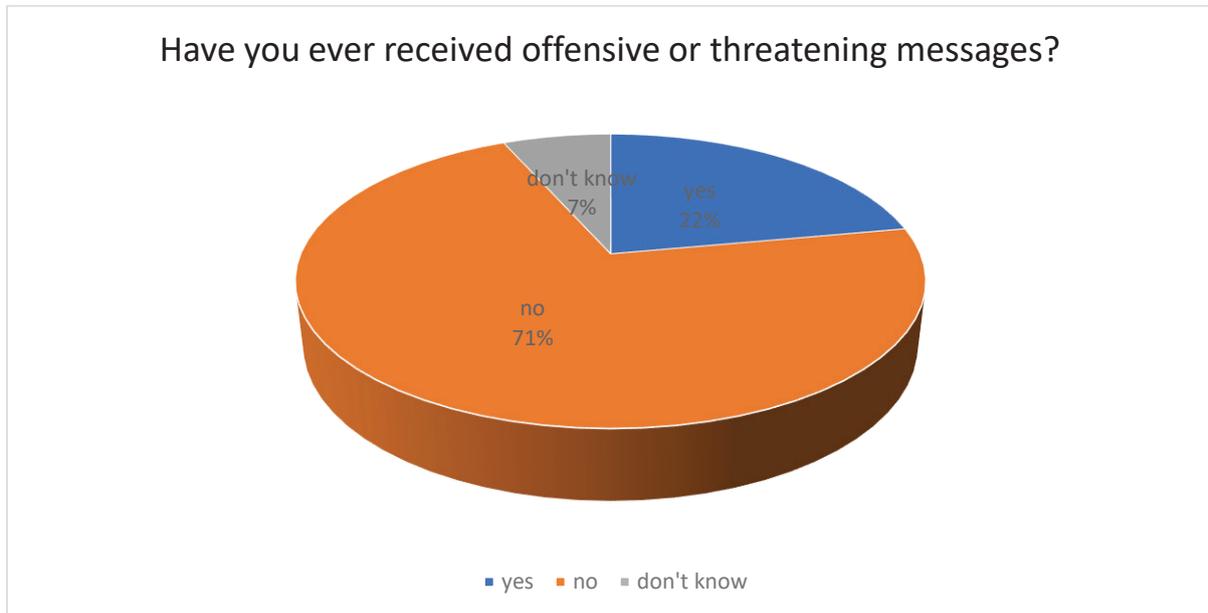


Out of the 40 people who answered in the affirmative that they had been the target of humiliation, insults, and shaming on social media, **25 are female and 15 are male**. Out of a total of 40 people, 31 people declared themselves heterosexual, one person declared themselves bisexual, and 8 refused to answer the question about their sexual orientation.

LOCAL  HATE
SPEECH

Offensive or threatening messages

(Photo 6)



Out of the 70 people who have received such offensive and threatening messages, 46 were female and 24 were male. Out of a total of 70 people, 53 declared themselves heterosexual, one declared themselves bisexual, and 14 refused to answer the question about their sexual orientation. Out of a total of 23 people who declared themselves to be persons with disabilities, 7 received offensive and threatening messages.

Calls from unknown numbers

As for the question whether the respondents have received calls from unknown numbers, as many as **227 or 72% answered in the affirmative**, while 71 or 22% answered in the negative. The remaining 19 answered with – I do not know. When it comes to those who identified as gay and transgender, all of them received calls from unknown numbers, while 71% or 175 of the heterosexuals received calls from unknown numbers; 8 out of 9 respondents or 89% of the bisexuals received calls from unknown numbers.

Blackmail

To the question: "Have you been blackmailed by a computer system?", 5% or 15% of the total number of the respondents gave a positive answer; 6 of them are persons with disabilities.

Threats

To the question: "Have you been threatened by a computer system?", 26 people or 8% of the total number of respondents answered in the affirmative, 4 of them or 100% of the

homosexuals said yes, and 22% or 2 of the bisexuals. 4 of them or 17% of the persons with disabilities confirmed that they had received threats through a computer system.

Theft of personal identity

To the question: "Has your identity been stolen on social media?", 41 or 13% answered in the affirmative. Among women, 31 confirmed that their identities had been stolen, compared to 10 males, out of whom 28 were heterosexual and 12 refused to answer.

Sharing recorded material

To the question: "Has a photo of yours been shared on social media in order for you to be humiliated?", 35 respondents or 11% answered in the affirmative, out of which 28 were female and seven male.

To the question: "Has a video of yours been shared without your consent in order for you to be humiliated?", 12 people or 4% answered in the affirmative, out of which 6 were male and 6 female. 50% or 2 of the total number of the homosexuals answered in the affirmative and 67% of the asexuals answered in the affirmative.

To the question: "Has an audio recording of yours been shared without your consent in order for you to be humiliated?", 5 people or 2% answered in the affirmative, out of which 2 were male and 3 female. 2 of them were heterosexual, and 3 students declared themselves as asexual.

Sharing recorded material of an intimate nature

To the question: "Has a photo of yours with a sexual connotation been shared without your consent?", 11 students or 3% of the respondents answered in the affirmative, out of which 6 girls and five boys. In terms of sexual orientation, 6 of them declared themselves as heterosexuals, 2 as homosexuals, and the rest refused to answer.

Consequences of cyberbullying

Emotional effects

Out of the 247 respondents who reported being the target of cyberbullying, 76 respondents or 31% felt anxious, 13 respondents or 5% felt ashamed, 16 respondents or 6% felt powerless, 12 respondents or 5% did not want to be hang out with anyone, 130 or 53% answered that they did not feel these specific emotional consequences.

Mental health effects

Out of the 247 respondents who reported being the target of cyberbullying, 19 respondents or 8% felt depressed, 18 respondents or 7% felt anxious, 17 respondents or 7% felt sad, 40 respondents or 16% were angry, 32 or 13% lost their self-esteem, 1 respondent wanted to injure themselves, **11 or 4% thought about suicide**. 109 respondents or 44% answered that they did not feel these specific consequences on their mental health.

Effects on physical health

Out of the 247 respondents who reported being the target of cyberbullying, 44 respondents or 17% had insomnia, 13 respondents or 5% could not eat, 20 respondents or 8% had stomach-ache, 171 respondents or 69% answered that they did not feel these specific effects on their physical health.

Recognizing and identifying with the role of aggressor or bully

Out of the total number of 317 respondents, 44 or 14% identify themselves as aggressors or bullies, while 273 or 86% stated that they had not been aggressors on the Internet.

There were 20 girls and 24 boys among the perpetrators of cyberbullying and violence.

Among the respondents who identify as aggressors and bullies, 30 are heterosexual, 2 homosexuals, 2 asexuals, and 10 refuse to say/do not know.

Among the respondents who declared themselves as persons with disabilities, as many as 11 out of a total of 23 or 48% declared themselves as aggressors or bullies on the Internet.

To the question: "Do you know any of your classmates who was a victim of cyberbullying?", 144 or 45% of the total number of respondents said yes, while 173 or 55% said no.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is no definition of the term cyberbullying on national level.
2. Children aged 15 to 18 use an average of 5 hours a day on social media.
3. Out of the total number of respondents, 78% said they had been a victim of cyberbullying.
4. There are many forms of cyberbullying, such as sending abusive messages and humiliation on social networks, SMSs and chat, calls from unknown numbers, blackmail, threats, identity theft, sharing photos with sexual connotations.
5. Although gender targeting has not been detected, females and people with different sexual orientations and gender identities appear to be more susceptible to cyberbullying.
6. A taboo subject has been detected among Muslim children regarding gender expression and sexual orientation.
7. Many of the children who were cyber-victims experienced some negative effects on their emotional, physical, or mental health, and as many as 11 people said they were considering suicide because of cyberbullying.
8. More than half of people with disabilities identify as aggressors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Define the significance of cyberbullying at national level.
2. To conduct trainings by the competent educational institutions so young people up to the age of 18 reduce the time spent on social media.
3. The state should establish a mechanism against gender stereotypes and promote gender equality through various school and extracurricular activities among young people.
4. In the Comprehensive Sex Education programme, special attention should be paid to the study of different sexual and gender identities in order to locate a forbidden (taboo) topic among the respondents, especially among children who come from Muslim families.
5. To establish a mechanism for prevention of hate speech, discrimination, and violence in all its forms and shapes, through various systemic programmes for raising awareness of parents, teachers, and all participants in the education system.
6. To establish a programme for active inclusion of persons with disabilities in a number of activities and their inclusion and socialization, as well as sensitization of students to accept diversity.
7. To establish mechanisms for early detection of symptoms of adverse effects on the mental and emotional health experienced by cyber-victims.
8. To establish an alarm system and SOS lines, and urgent psychological support that will be based on trust between a student and an authorized person from the school in order to support the cyber-victims.
9. Trainings and workshops on digital rights and responsibilities as well as the consequences of cyberbullying among young people, both children and parents.

THIRD PART

Hate speech between fan groups

The presence of hate speech at sports matches is a serious problem that initiates violence and misconduct that can escalate into hooliganism.¹⁸ The problem of hate speech at sporting events is widespread throughout the world. In 1985, the Council of Europe adopted the European Convention on Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events.¹⁹ It sets out a positive commitment by member states to prevent and combat violence and misconduct by spectators at football matches. At the same time, it is required to undertake legal and constitutional changes that will ensure the formulation and implementation of measures to prevent and control violence and misconduct of spectators.

Within the project "Joint Action against Hate Speech", cooperation was predicted with fan groups from the cities of Bitola, Shtip, and Tetovo. For that purpose, three focus groups with the fan groups from these cities were planned to be conducted.²⁰ The methodology according to which the focus groups will be conducted was previously determined.

The work with these fan groups was designed to openly approach these formal and informal groups, to perceive the essence or the source and motives of hatred for these local fan cores, and to strengthen the fight against hate speech in sports. From this work with the fan groups, there are some expected things – concepts for strengthening the educational, social, and cultural measures and strategies for preventing hate speech at sports competitions, organizing publicity campaigns in each participating country, with the participation of popular players, to encourage atmosphere of tolerance.

The project team spent several months preparing and trying to establish contacts with the representatives of the target fan groups. There were telephone conversations, attempts were made for direct meetings, but the contact persons from "Chkembari" from Bitola and "Falanga" from Shtip announced that they do not trust anyone and do not want to cooperate with anyone. Cooperation was realized only with the fan group "Vojvodi" from Tetovo.

¹⁸ Hooliganism generally refers to destructive, aggressive, and criminal behaviour that is associated with sports fans

¹⁹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=120>

²⁰ Chkembari from Bitola. Vojvodi from Tetovo, and Falanga from Shtip.

FINDINGS FROM THE CONDUCTED FOCUS GROUP __

1. Focus group profile

The focus group was attended by 7 participants of different ages, all males – the oldest was 47 years old and the youngest at 23 years old – all from the fan group "Vojvodi". In terms of ethnicity and nationality, all participants were Macedonians who speak Macedonian language.

2. Key findings

All participants feel a deep connection with the fan group, with a strong sense of unity and belonging to that community. They feel strong and safe because they are part of the group. Some of them have not missed a match played by the Football Club "Teteks". They all became fans at a young age, inspired by older friends, brothers, and neighbours. Younger members are currently more active, they learn from older ones, and they want to be like them. They are open to new members and to expanding the group.

They have two fan songs that are their favourite, originally sung by "Vojvodi". The first one is: " Излези, момче, право на тераса и поздрави ја Гоцевата раса" (Come out, boy, right on the terrace and greet Goce's race) and the second one is: "Наш клуб, наш град, нам ни припаѓа" (Our club, our city, it belongs to us).

Their favourite moment is the victory over "Shkendija" in the final of the 2015 Cup. They point out that there is fan rivalry at the matches, but they are often undervalued on national and religious grounds by burning flags, chanting slogans, shouting Karpalak,²¹ Vejce,²² "Macedonian girl, a big wh*re" and the like, and have the feeling that their rival fans Balistite do not respect the country and insult it. They indicate a division between Albanians and Macedonians in Tetovo.

They do not trust the police; they consider that they are discriminated against and that the police protect the Albanian against the Macedonian population. Due to the lack of trust when it comes to the police, they do not report the cases, but even those that are reported have no end. They believe that the police deliberately incite interethnic tensions and change the routes of movement of the fan group "Vojvodi", thus taking them to the Albanian part without considering the security. In the matches FC "Teteks" vs. FC "Shkendija", "Vojvodite" as a smaller group, always come out last from the stadium, and the Albanian fans are the first to

²¹ Karpalak massacre – the largest massacre of soldiers in the 2001 military conflict.

²² Vejce massacre – the bloodiest and most brutal massacre in 2001, in the recent Macedonian history.

go out. They consider that discrimination and that nowhere in the world is it a practice for the smaller group to come out last.

They point out that acts of hatred also occur, such as the stoning of the homes of the Macedonian population by "Balisti". They say that this is happening in front of the eyes of the police, but unfortunately no proceedings are conducted at all regarding these incidents, and for those for whom there are proceedings, there is no court resolution.

They are revolted by the fact that although Tetovo has three city stadiums, FC "Teteks" does not play at any of them. The three stadiums are under the possession of the Municipality of Tetovo, are given to the Albanian clubs, and are transferred to local authorities. They point out that they feel hurt due to the fact that FC "Teteks" does not play at the City Stadium, which was built by their parents with self-contribution as workers in the Textile Factory "Teteks". They say that they decided to mobilize and start a petition for this problem.

Comments:

- I am from the younger ones, I have been a fan for more than 5-6 years, we learn from the older ones, and we watch them. They are what we want to be and to keep the name Vojvodi as it deserves. They have kept it and we want to keep it even more and even better.
- You become one as a child. No one can force you. Either you are or you are not. There is an old saying: "You do not become a Duke; you are born a Duke".
- We have friends, companionship, community. But there are many flaws, you are shamed, you represent everything that is not beautiful; in fact, that is how you are characterized.
- Yes, we built a house, but we did not take pictures or promote ourselves, and we also do a blood donation campaign. And we plan to make a humanitarian organization and to work, that is the plan.
- There was humiliation, severe humiliation, Vejce, Karpalak, Balisti with slogans, with cars, with choreography. We react violently, but everything depends on the police. Provocations are mostly on national and religious grounds.
- Flags are set on fire, a child will be beaten on the way. It will be reported, but it will be covered up. It's like this non-stop, they were protected bears.
- At the celebration of the 30th anniversary, when I was returning home, I was stopped at a traffic light and attacked (points with his hand to his nose).

- Well, there is discrimination in every game. Vojvodi were at the end of the game, they were always stopped so Balisti can leave the place first, and then Vojvodi. Everywhere in the world, the smaller group is released first. If we are 1000, and they are 15,000, you cannot let them go first. And they are ready with rock that they throw; they can beat us up in 15 minutes. And this is during every Shkendija-Teteks derby. After that, they are out all over the city, and we wait for an hour, an hour and a half. We are waiting for someone to tell us that they went home.
- I did not report because the doctor in the hospital was the leader of Balisti (laughs). Two police officers were also theirs. We have reported minor incidents, but the perpetrators cannot be identified. The case is always in a drawer.
- We are the oppressed side of the police. They can hit us. Because on the other side they cannot.
- We are real second-class citizens, that is how we feel. It is like that in Skopje. Not only as fans, but also as Macedonians. Everywhere, even in the hospital.
- I have reported threats from the Facebook page of Balisti. Those threats lasted for a month. I consulted with an inspector what to do. And they wrote me messages, I see you, now you are going along the kindergarten, your day will come, we will kill you... and this is every day. And I reported to forensics, with my phone. They took pictures of the messages and told me that maybe I had also provoked them, that I had replied to them and deleted the messages. And I did not reply. Both of them were Albanian police officers and they told me that I had provoked them. And they told me that they would see what they could do. They have not texted me since then, but I have not received any answer as to who they are, what they are, or whether they have been caught.
- Currently, neither Teteks nor Ljuboten have a stadium, out of three stadiums. I do not know how the documents were lost. Now Teteks plays as a host in Bogovinje, in the villages. They are forbidden to play in Tetovo. I was raised there, and our parents built it. It is unfortunate, the politics is everywhere.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The fan groups do not cooperate with all external groups of institutions and individuals, including the civic society sector.
2. There is a greater involvement of younger fans in fan activities.
3. As a result of the social division based on ethnicity, there is a feeling of impatience, intolerance, and discord among the fans based on ethnicity and religious beliefs.
4. There is distrust, insufficient communication and cooperation between the fans and the police; hence, the negative perception of the police work among the fans.
5. There is a collective potential among the fans and a greater desire to organize charitable and humanitarian actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Educational, social, cultural measures and strategies to be strengthened to prevent hate speech and acts of hatred between fan groups.
2. Holistic approach at the institutional level aimed at integrating plans and strategies to combat hate speech and hate crimes motivated by sporting events.
3. Efficient and effective cooperation between concerned parties (fan groups, sports clubs, local government, police, etc.) in order to reduce hate speech and intolerance, including reporting and recording incidents.
4. Raising awareness through the implementation of campaigns that will influence the change of mentality, pointing out to the general public about the dangers of hate speech, establishing a mechanism for registering and reporting cases of hate speech at sports competitions.
5. Fight against the impunity of hate speech at sports matches through continuous reporting of cases.
6. The solidarity and the high level of organization of the fans as a positive example for the implementation of socially responsible actions.

ANNUAL REPORT ON MONITORING
**LOCAL HATE
SPEECH**

IN THE CITIES OF TETOVO,
BITOLA AND SHTIP IN 2021



FOUNDATION ФОНДАЦИЈА
OPEN ОТВОРЕНО
SOCIETY ОПШТЕСТВО
MACEDONIA МАКЕДОНИЈА