

## Bosnia Herzegovina

After taking a look, I must say that it seems very under-reported. Media in the Federation of BiH (that is, the Bosniak-Croat majority entity) are reporting very little, with *Oslobođenje* (a Sarajevo daily, Bosniak owned) having two articles, "British Gov't Named Two Russians Who Poisoned Skripal" and "British Minister: Putin Responsible for Poisoning Skripal", published on September 5 and 6. Both of these articles name their source to be FENA (the Federal News Agency from Sarajevo). Other portals in FBiH are following suit in copy/pasting the agency news. The state-level public broadcaster BHRT and the federal public broadcaster, FTV, both reported on the recent development and have articles on their portals as well. FTV even has an article I can't find anywhere else, "Leaders of USA, France, Germany and Canada supporting (Great) Britain," citing the Serbian agency Beta as their source (who in turn cites AP). Klix (Sarajevo), the most popular and most-visited news portal in Bosnia, is being very quiet on the issue, with nothing published since August. I wonder why.

Now this is curious: *Dnevni Avaz* (another Bosniak-owned daily) only has one article regarding the Skripal affair in recent days: ""Peskov: Russia is Not Connected in Any Way with the Skripal Affair" - their source is the Serbian daily, *Kurir* ([kurir.rs](http://kurir.rs)). The owner of *Dnevni Avaz* is Fahrudin Radončić, a local politician, former state-level minister of security (that is, interior affairs) whose party, SBB, is currently in the opposition. He is known for using the daily to try and achieve his political goals. He's also been very friendly with Milorad Dodik, and has shown signs of indirectly supporting him in the past (I can write in more detail on their relationship if needed). Which leads me to the *Republika Srpska* (the Serb-majority entity) based media, which are gone completely silent. For instance, *Nezavisne Novine* (a daily from Banja Luka, closely connected to Milorad Dodik) hasn't published a single article on Skripal since March. Nothing on Skripal on the RS entity broadcaster, RTRS, either. *Alternativna Televizija* (or ATV, Banja Luka, allegedly recently changed hands and is now owned by a friend of Dodik's) posted a series of articles since September 4, but out of the six articles there's only one that's not featuring the Russian viewpoint. The most interesting is the one published on September 6, with the headline: "Nebenzya: May's Address was Intentionally Timed Right Before the Provocation in Idlib". I haven't seen that one anywhere else.

As for social media, I can't seem to find much going on on Facebook. On Twitter, there's an interesting thing happening: given how Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian are mutually intelligible (not only that, but are rather dialects of the same language), there is a little bit of back and forth but mostly originating from Serbia. I've identified a couple of users, such as Blok Vesti (<https://twitter.com/blokvesti> odd name for a news portal/social media news outlet in our language - "Block News" is not a thing...) who are hyperactive, but with not that many followers - look at the stats on their profile: Then you have the usual suspects like the Sputnik news agency, also from Serbia. I could provide you with a more comprehensive overview, but in all honesty, it seems like the Skripal affair - at least in Bosnia - is taking a back seat compared to the usual domestic news-related trends.

Here's a list of quoted articles (in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian):

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/svijet/britanske-vlasti-imenovale-dvojicu-rusa-za-trovanje-skripala-391165>



<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/svijet/britanski-ministar-putin-odgovoran-za-trovanje-skripala-391398>

<https://avaz.ba/globus/svijet/411824/peskov-rusija-ni-na-koji-nacin-nije-povezana-sa-slucajem-skripal>

<http://www.bhrt.ba/vijesti/svijet/rusija-opruzuje-putina-za-trovanje-skripaljevih/>

<http://www.federalna.ba/bhs/vijest/249051/slucaj-sergej-skripalj>

I also wanted to add that Croat-owned or Croat-targeting portals are less active than the Bosniak portals and media, but are still relaying agency news. For instance, Dnevnik (Mostar-based Croat portal) has published the same article as Oslobođenje, but nothing else. Here's a link to that as well: <https://www.dnevnik.ba/vijesti/britanci-imenovali-osumnjicene-za-trovanje-sergeja-i-julije-skripal>

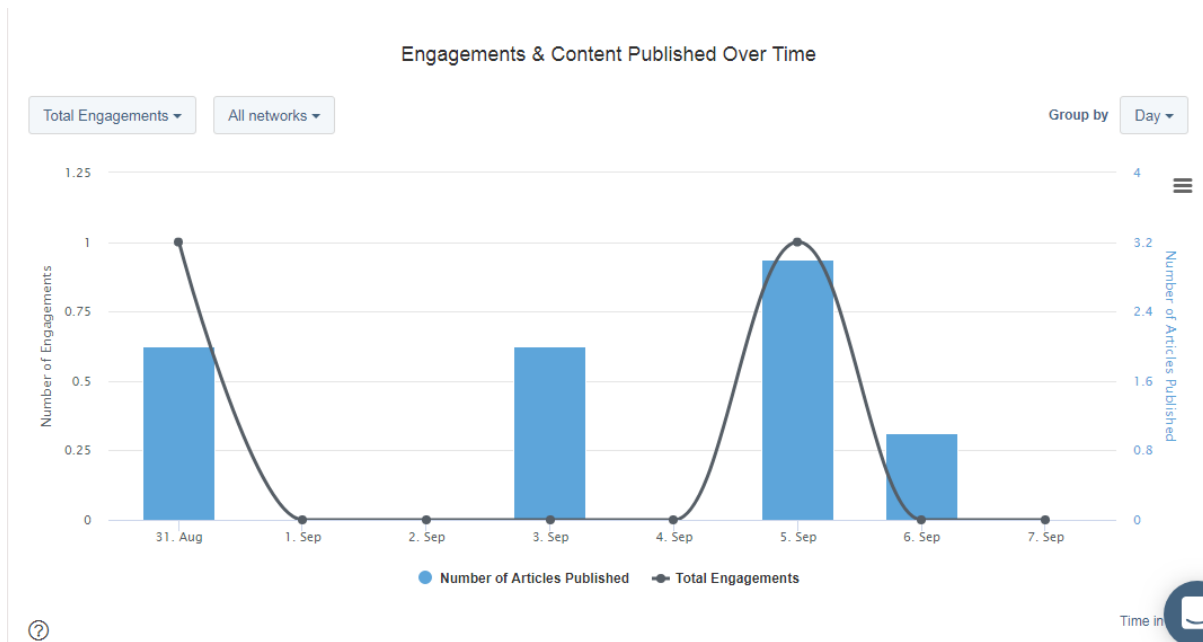
The Russian Embassy in BiH is quiet, so far. Nothing directly coming out of there that I can identify. The Russian ambassador Petar Ivantzov spoke with Dodik and the minister of foreign affairs Igor Crnadak on September 3, but allegedly the meetings were about the preparations for the upcoming visit of Sergey Lavrov to the Republika Srpska. Another announced visitor to the Serb-majority entity is the governor of St. Petersburg, Georgi Poltavchenko. Allegedly, Ivantzov and Dodik also talked about "further advancing the relations between the Russian Federation and the Republika Srpska". Here's a link (Nezavisne Novine, Banja Luka): <https://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/bih/Dodik-i-Ivancov-o-predstojecoj-posjeti-Lavrova-Srpskoj/495572>. Could it be that Ivantzov also used the opportunity to ask them to deal the Skripal affair? It's possible, I don't see why not.

<https://www.atvbl.com/vijesti/svijet/nebenzja-obracanje-mejove-namjerno-tempirano-pred-provokaciju-u-idlibu-6-9-2018>

## Montenegro:

Dear Simon,

When it comes to Montenegro, there's nothing out of ordinary. The major outlets didn't report anything suspicious, only that the UK charged 2 Russians for Novichok Poisoning. If anything of interest comes up, I will let you know.



## Lithuania:

Yes, Skripal is one of the main topics in LTU mainstream media in internet and main TV news channels. Generally speaking media presents case it self, UK gathered evidences on RF FSB involvement, other nations support UK, Skripal connections with Spain intelligence and RF's negative reactions. In 7 d. period we have approx 300 links to sources with Lithuanian language and approx 100 in Russian language articles overall. And of course Trolls factories are active under articles comments areas like always.

LTU society activity indications show interest to this case.

We saw an article (<https://www.msn.com/en-xl/europe/europe-top-stories/ba-hacked-380000-card-payments-compromised/ar-BBMYRou?li=BBKxJ6T&ocid=mailsignout>) and maybe this event is somehow related to Skripal case or/and with RF EXE VOSTOK 2018. because we had cyber attack of one of LTU news portals today:

### Statement of The Baltic Times

The website of *The Baltic Times* newspaper, [www.baltictimes.com](http://www.baltictimes.com), has been hacked and a piece of fake news on an unidentified NATO military object that ostensibly crashed and was found in Lithuania has been planted. The article was removed swiftly after having been alerted about it.

The management of the newspaper ensures it will do all it can to secure its website. We will immediately seek consultations in the effort from the Cybersecurity Center at the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence.

Alas, we live in a very sensitive cybersecurity environment and increased efforts of all of us are needed address the issue.

### *The Baltic Times*



Estonia:

Dear Simon,

The summary of publications presented by the main Estonian news outlets is the following:

**Postimees (the biggest newspaper in Estonia):**

Postimees has published 14 articles after the Skripal attack. Most of them are referring to the facts announced by the UK government or security forces.

Out of the three biggest stories, the first one is giving a broad overview of the GRU and its background, operating techniques and its subordination.

The second specifically focuses on the analysis of the Skripal case and examines whether such an attack was a rather unsuccessful secret murder attempt or a desire to show to the West through robust measures of violence, that no one is protected anywhere.

The third one cites the Russian official's responses by reporting the Russian ambassador to the UN Security Council, according to whom allegations, made by the UK officials that GRU is behind the attack are taken from the air and are full of contradictions. Her overall message is that the investigation is politically manipulated.

**Estonian Ekspress (also owns [delfi.ee](http://delfi.ee)):**

Express has published 12 articles that reflect the Skripal case. Similarly to Postimees, most of the articles are reporting what the UK officials have announced.

Out of the three main stories, the first one similarly to Postimees studies the GRU and its recent actions that connect it to the war in Ukraine, interference in the US elections and poisoning of Skripal. The second one concentrates on the two suspects that are accused and the third one is dedicated to the possible response through sanctions.

The third article also quotes Urmas Paet (the former foreign minister of Estonia and a current MEP in the European Parliament) according to whom obtaining unity to form new sanctions against Russia will not be easy for the UK due to the Austrian, German, Italian and Bulgarian governments soft or even favourable attitude towards Russia.

**Russian response:**

The Russian response has been active both in regular and social media.

Firstly, Postimees reported Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman told to news agency TASS that "names and photos published in media do not mean anything to us."

Secondly, the Russian Foreign Ministry made a statement today that denies any Russian participation in the Skripal case and insist that there are plenty of countries, including UK itself that can use Novichok.

In Postimees there was also published a report made by the Russian Foreign and Defense Policy Chairman of the Presidium of the Council Fjodor Lukjanov. According to him, sanctions that followed the Skripal case are made to destroy the Russian economy and resemble very much the ultimatum that was made to Iraq. He also thinks that the more successful the talks between Trump and Putin the more White House needs to prove lack of attachment towards Russia. Furthermore, he thinks

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that the US is basing new sanctions on the Skripal case, instead of the Russian interference into the presidential elections because it is much easier to prove them to the public that way.

Although the local Russian embassy in Estonia has not published anything directly regarding the Skripal case, it is strongly continuing with the Estonian Nazi narrative. For example, they just made a new announcement today after a new monument was opened in memory of those who fought against Bolshevism, that they see it as a Nazi glorification and call for its immediate end.

In addition, there have been several articles published in Russian media after Estonian secret service captured two suspected spies that were working for GRU. These articles cast doubt on all the accusations, considering it impossible for a person who appears to be a patriot in social media to become a spy. They also accuse Estonian public prosecutor Inna Omblar in being Russophobic because she has been responsible also for the previous evictions of people who have been working in the interest of Russian secret services.

## Moldova:

Dear Simon,

With regard to your request into coverage of "Skripal case" in the Moldovan mass-media, I made some review and here are my brief conclusions:

I cannot firmly say, that Moldova has its own point of view on that. Most of the news about it were copied from other international sources. Maybe there are some slight nuances in the titles or comments, that's it. But to say that it was an obvious pro-Russian or pro-Western position - well, I can't. For example:

1) <https://www.timpul.md/articol/chiar-atat-de-proti-sunt-agenii-gru-134632.html> - this article is a copy of an article from Romanian source translated as "Russian Page", and in this case the title has a bit of a pro-Russian position, like irony about the GRU agents who wouldn't be so stupid to act so openly if they were the assassins. The article itself is kind of a neutral analysis, but together with the title as a whole leaves an impression of a pro-Russian position.

2) [https://www.publika.md/theresa-may-cei-doi-suspecti-in-cazul-tentativei-de-otravire-a-lui-skripal-sunt-ofiteri-ai-gru\\_3017979.html](https://www.publika.md/theresa-may-cei-doi-suspecti-in-cazul-tentativei-de-otravire-a-lui-skripal-sunt-ofiteri-ai-gru_3017979.html) - just a piece of news, rendering of facts, without any pretension of an analysis.

3) <http://www.jurnaltv.md/news/72a1fe03bdf41b4d/cazul-skripal-cine-sunt-suspectii-in-cazul-otravirii-fostului-spion-oficial-luceaza-pentru-serviciile-secrete-ruse.html> - the title itself and the way the news is presented is more inclined in favour of UK/West.

4) <http://tv8.md/2018/09/06/ancheta-privind-cazul-skripal-franta-germania-sua-si-canada-sustin-concluziile-marii-britanii/> - this news goes loud about the Russian's crime and



announces the common position on the case of Germany, France, US and Canada, who support the UK on their conclusions.  
5) <https://www.svoboda.org/a/29476702.html> - Radio Liberty, not a Moldovan news site, but quite interesting, FYI. It gives an interesting point of view of another former Russian spy, who defected to UK more than 20 years ago. All in all, since 80% of mass media here is controlled by Plahotniuc and Dodon, both pro-Russian, the coverage of the news is either neutral on their sites, or slightly pro-Russian. The other sources are pro-Western.

## Jordan:

### Story Salisbury Developments in Arab and Russian media outlets

Developments on the Salisbury case crowded news channels as UK identifies Two Russian suspects in the poisoning of agent Skripal. Contrast is clear when viewing the coverage of news on this matter on Pro-Russian news channels and Pro-Western news channels.

#### Pro-Russian News Outlets

Russian news outlets moved towards dismantling and dismissing the British allegations with news covering the official Russian statements on this matter and distracting viewers through linking Salisbury case to other cases.

Dismissing the story was an obvious objective in the Pro-Russian channels.

RT Arabic and Sputnik focused mainly on Russian official statements in their coverage and focused on covering the assassination of Donetsk republic's leader Alexander Zakharchenko presenting Russia as an ally to Donetsk republic.

Sputnik also published a part of an interview with a Russian party leader [Democratic Liberal Russia] who stressed that "foreign media is trying to alter the truth and that's why we need media outlets like Sputnik".

Russian news outlets proposed a link between London's allegations and a White Helmets chemical provocation in Syria. Russian news outlets presented the Salisbury developments to be connected with a conspiracy which would lead to a White Helmets chemical provocation in Syria. RT Arabic published a story stating that "Syrian Army found American and Israeli weapons left behind by terrorists who fled Qunaitra....Syrian Army also found White Helmets equipment such as fake blood, makeup and plastic human limbs".

Sputnik also referred to New York Times report stating that Skripal also worked with Spanish intelligence in an attempt to dismiss the story.

RT Arabic coverage mainly focused on the official Russian statements with headlines dismissing London's allegations. RT Arabic website did run a report under the headline "Skripal many stories and little proof". The reports suggests that Russian involvement is still questionable, the report also turned to Porton Down facility stating that the facility had traces of the nerve agent.



The report ends with “Moscow described the case [Skripal] as a planned provocation and that Moscow wanted to collaborate in the investigation”.

There is conspiracy approach seen in the Pro-Russian media outlets coverage which as I believe relates to the common Arab viewer and would lead to a conclusion that Moscow is innocent of Salisbury case and that London is leading a conspiracy against Russia to reach goals in Syria.

Due to the proximity element in Skripal story the Arab viewers may find themselves irrelevant to the case. Yet Pro-Russian media outlets are trying to connect it to the Arab viewer by bringing in the element of White Helmets in Syria to the Skripal case.

Social Media seems to dismiss the case as a debatable case, there are no clear signs of engagement by activists on social media.

#### **Pro-Western media outlets**

Arabic Pro-Western [Arabia News & Al Jazeera news] media outlets have followed an aggressive stance on the Skripal case. A close detailed coverage with an aggressive tone is clear.