

Fake news in South Africa: Five websites you should definitely avoid

 By [Hadlee Simons](#)

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Whether it's to simply hoodwink people or to generate ad revenue, fake news websites have received mainstream attention in recent months.



Fake news © [Memeburn](#)

Now, we've already written a [guide to spotting fake news](#), but what about the websites themselves? Here are five websites you should be avoiding.

T1mesLive

"Before you read our disclaimer, we wish to state that, we are not connected to or linked to 'TIMES LIVE' in any way. Take note of the number '1' in our 'T1MESLIVE'. Please do not be deceived! Leave the website immediately if you have found yourself in the wrong place," reads the disclaimer.

The website hides behind the "satire" label then, which is interesting because its stories often involve prominent people dying rather than classic satire, which makes light of societal issues. Some of the most recent stories on the website include Winnie Madikizela-Mandela dying, Desmond Tutu passing away and Mandoza's untimely death. One of these stories is true though, making it rather odd for a "satire" publication.

Another similar website is TheGuard1an, also swapping out a letter to pull a fast one on readers.

African News Updates

Arguably one of the most popular fake news websites around, African News Updates frequently pops up on Facebook timelines, as people get duped into sharing their hoax stories.

The website also has a disclaimer page (or rather, “desclaimer”), calling itself a “news and political satire publication”.

There’s definitely a line between satire and fake news that these websites are missing

The disclaimer adds that anyone who believes their articles should “relieve and abandon themselves of that idiotic notion immediately”. It’s rather interesting that they would say this, given that a few of their stories are rewrites from reputable sources...

Now, if they actually put satire disclaimers in articles and tried fewer clickbait-type “Zuma has died!” headlines...

iMzansi

Another website hosting predominantly fake news is iMzansi, peddling gems such as ‘Government bans lobola starting 2017’ and ‘I will capture Mugabe: vows US President Elect Donald Trump’.

iMzansi calls itself a “news and political satire” publication, adding that “some of the news articles contained within iMzansi.co.za are fiction, and sometimes fake news”. It’s also worth noting that these websites seem to copy and paste disclaimers from one another, almost all of them declaring their sites to be for “mature, sophisticated, and discerning” audiences.

Live Monitor

The fourth website on the list, Live Monitor seems to do a combination of in-house “reporting” and syndicated content from other fake news websites.

Prominent stories on the website include ‘woman kills husband after learning he voted for Trump’, ‘gay baboon terrorises village’ and ‘four crocodiles escape Johannesburg Zoo floods’. As for their contact page? Well, it simply calls for you to like them on Facebook.

News24-TV

Another website trying to be associated with a well-known news brand, News-24 TV is obviously not associated with the proper News24 website. It still hasn’t stopped people from sharing their articles though.

Some of these stories include ‘shot former Wits SRC president has died’ and ‘bribery hits Zuma’s no confidence motion’. However, the website has a more international focus than others on the list. News24-TV claims to be based in Germany and says it has offices in 17 countries. “Almost all the stories contained on this website were broken by us,” the publication proudly declares.

ABOUT HADLEE SIMONS

Hadlee Simons is an editor at Verneburn. Terrible puns make Hadlee difficult to work with, but he brings almost seven years of tech journalism experience to the table. When he’s not at work or watching motorsport, he’s in the foetal position on a jiu jitsu mat.

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