



**\*\*Press Release\*\***

**COP26 ‘War Room’ launched to provide real-time monitoring on information attacks against the Glasgow summit**

- The [Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#) (ISD) and 8 partner organisations across the climate sector have launched a real-time monitoring unit (‘War Room’) to assess information attacks against the COP26 summit.
- The unit will pull data from bespoke Climate Dashboards built by ISD and CASM Technology over the past year to assess the prevalence, nature and penetration of anti-climate messages at scale.
- Monitoring will analyse content across public Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Reddit and Telegram on a daily basis, focussing on direct efforts to undermine or overturn key negotiated outcomes in Glasgow.
- The War Room is a collective effort with the participation of organisations including [Avaaz](#), [Climate Nexus](#), [Code for Africa](#), [Conscious Advertising Network](#), [Digital Climate Coalition](#), [Global Witness](#), [Greenpeace](#), [Purpose](#), [Friends of the Earth U.S](#) and [Stop Funding Heat](#).
- Daily analysis will be made available to key stakeholders at the summit and support efforts to mitigate and counter these threats as they emerge from Monday 25 October to 15 November 2021.
- Where relevant, harmful content may be flagged directly to tech platforms to enable an expedited response and prevent disinformation campaigns crossing a threshold of virality (e.g. through fact-checking labels and other interstitial alerts; active downranking or demonetisation; de-platforming of responsible accounts/networks).

Please contact Jennie King ([jk@isdglobal.org](mailto:jk@isdglobal.org)) and Tim Squirrell ([ts@isdglobal.org](mailto:ts@isdglobal.org)) for further details on War Room activity, to receive regular intelligence briefings or discuss potential media engagement during the summit. Jennie will be present in Glasgow from 7-13 November, alongside other contributing partners, and available for in-person interviews or debriefs on request.

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**ISD and its partner coalition have been monitoring the evolving nature of anti-climate messages and movements online for over a year.** This includes flagship research into the phenomenon of [‘Climate Lockdown’](#), a new conspiracy fuelled by the Covid-19 pandemic, monitoring of climate issues around the [German Elections](#), commentary on [climate and the culture wars](#), and spotlight pieces on the information landscape in [Poland](#), [Czech Republic and Slovakia](#), [Hungary](#) and [Germany](#).

**We anticipate that during the course of COP26 in Glasgow, various actors will attempt coordinated disinformation campaigns and targeted harassment on social media, either to distort public understanding of the summit and/or reduce the likelihood of key agreements being reached.** Detecting, flagging, and mitigating the effects of these attacks are the key functions of the COP26 War Room, a real-time analysis unit built by ISD in partnership with a range of expert NGOs.



The COP26 War Room does not aim to provide a general snapshot of discussion online, but rather to pinpoint attacks which could threaten summit outcomes, as seen with previous agreements like the [Global Compact on Migration](#). We will provide daily analysis on anti-climate trends across a range of key geographies and negotiating articles, using both Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) and Social Media Intelligence (SOCMINT) methods, with the aim of attribution wherever possible. This will support regular briefings to key partners, and provide an evidence base to drive wider advocacy and lobbying efforts across the sector (for example, the formal recognition of mis/disinformation as a threat to climate action by the IPCC and parallel inclusion in social media platforms' Terms of Service).

The War Room is grounded in a set of bespoke data analytic tools ('climate dashboards'), developed by ISD and CASM Technology since September 2020 to enhance the capability of the climate sector. This system enables monitoring of key amplifier networks and narrative threats across mainstream and alt-media in granular detail, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Reddit and Telegram. It has been built with support and contributions from a wide coalition including Avaaz, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Climate Nexus, Code for Africa, Conscious Advertising Network, DeSmog, Digital Climate Coalition, Eco-Bot.Net, Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit, Environmental Defense Fund, Friends of the Earth U.S., German Marshall Fund of the US, Global Disinformation Index, Global Witness, Greenpeace, InfluenceMap, MediaCloud, Open Society Initiative for Europe (OSIFE), Purpose and Stop Funding Heat.

**Monitoring at COP26 will assess key questions such as:**

- How prominent and/or salient specific anti-climate narratives are across social media;
- Whether information threats are on track to cross a 'virality threshold', and if so among which audience(s);
- Whether these narratives or disinformation attacks have the potential to derail COP negotiations as they develop in Glasgow;
- Relative reach and impact in the 'mainstream' digital commons;
- Whether disinformation campaigns show signals of coordinated inauthenticity or state affiliation;
- Which tactics are being used to spread attacks or manipulate algorithmic amplification (e.g. astroturfing, sock puppet accounts, proxy networks);
- The role of paid advertising in amplifying climate mis- and disinformation;

Specific 'threat vectors' as currently identified include: Article 6; Loss and damage; Enhanced transparency frameworks; Climate financing; Methane and coal targets; Cost of living; and a broader 'culture wars' framing.





**About the Climate Dashboards**

For fifteen years, ISD has been at the forefront of the fight against extremism, populism and disinformation, developing world-class tools for research and response. In September 2021, our bespoke system (Beam), developed in partnership with CASM Technology, won the prestigious US-Paris Tech Challenge organised by the State Department’s Global Engagement Center (GEC), the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab), the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), NATO, the UK’s Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Office of the Tech Ambassador of Denmark and Disinfo Cloud, among others.

The purpose of Beam is to detect and decompile online campaigns that exert illicit influence, either through established or emerging techniques. Disinformation forms part of that ecosystem, alongside other types of activity that falsify reach and influence (e.g. fake identities, social reputation gaming, hidden coordination, algorithmic manipulation etc.). Our approach places particular emphasis on underserved languages and geographies, and has always been deeply connected to our civil society networks around the globe.

To combat a new era of anti-climate tactics and activity, the sector requires in-depth, regular data from the digital space, which to date has been sorely lacking. In collaboration with climate partners, ISD has spent the past year developing bespoke tools to:

- Enable data collection and analysis at scale to support key stakeholders in their advocacy, public education, policy-making and strategic communications around climate;
- Provide real-time monitoring on anti-climate narratives and influencer networks, particularly in the run-up to key events;

Develop and drive execution of strategies to expose, disrupt and mitigate coordinated influence campaigns around climate



**Partner Quotes**

*“ISD has seen climate emerge as a new vector for actors pushing a culture war agenda. Our research continues to show how they connect disinformation, extremist and conspiracy ecosystems with a broader public, laundering unfounded or unscientific ideas into the mainstream. This is a pattern we have documented for other key policy challenges such as migration, electoral integrity and Covid-19, and one which could threaten climate action if left unchecked. This COP26 War Room is part of a year-long effort to build a real-time monitoring and investigation system, designed with partners in the climate sector, to identify and mitigate disinformation attacks. We hope it can become a sustainable resource for organisations across the globe.”*

- **Sasha Havlicek, CEO and Co-Founder, ISD**



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Powering solutions  
to extremism  
and polarisation

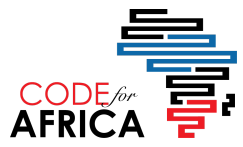
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*“As our planet faces the existential threat of climate change, industry-backed disinformers are polluting social media feeds with viral lies and conspiracy theories. We know these actors will go into overdrive to corrupt the negotiations at COP26, and we know the major tech platforms will fall far short of stopping them. That’s why our team at Avaaz is proud to join our partners on the ground in Glasgow to disrupt the most harmful disinformation campaigns”*

- **Rebecca Lenn, Senior Advisor, Anti-Disinformation Strategy, Avaaz**

*“Climate change is one of the defining issues of a generation, and misinformation threatens progress towards solving it. The Conscious Advertising Network recognises the role advertising plays in funding misinformation and the platforms which support it, and the responsibility we have to be part of the solution. We are thrilled to work on this global initiative with experts from ISD and beyond and will be using the findings to advise CAN members, the wider industry and tech platforms.”*

- **Harriet Kingaby, Co-founder, Conscious Advertising Network (CAN)**

*“Climate lies are already distorting key development decisions across African countries, with sophisticated influence campaigns pushing harmful industries and technologies at the expense of more sustainable development options. Many of these campaigns are driven by foreign State actors, or powerful profit-seeking industry lobbies who leverage fringe conspiracists to help seed dissent and fear. CfA’s researchers at our PesaCheck fact-checking network, our forensic analysts at the iLAB and our AI/machine learning team at CivicSignal are all thrilled to help unmask the puppet-masters.”*

- **Justin Arenstein, Founder and CEO, Code for Africa (CfA)**

*“As we face increasing threats from climate change and a ticking clock to take action, disinformation online erodes the progress that is possible. ISD’s monitoring network is critical to our ability to tackle climate disinformation during the climate conference. The Climate Disinformation Coalition is proud to be partnering with forward thinkers from around the world.”*

- **Julia Masters, Campaign Manager, Climate Disinformation Coalition**

*“Purpose is thrilled to be part of this global climate disinformation initiative, not only due to its application of new and bespoke analytic tools, but also because of ISD’s thoughtful consideration of the people-centred architecture required to bring a project of this scale and significance to life, including collaborative ways of working across a vast network of leading civil society actors”*

- **Dhakshayini Sooriyakumaran, Campaigns Director Australia, Purpose**

*“Unchecked, climate misinformation threatens to derail the most important climate summit in half a decade – perhaps ever. To monitor the online discussion around-the-clock is truly unprecedented. This project reflects a fast-growing recognition that climate misinformation should have no place in the media or online – and is a testament to the sector’s growing capacity to prevent it.”*

- **Sean Buchan, Lead Researcher, Stop Funding Heat**



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**ISD**

Powering solutions to extremism and polarisation

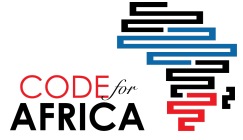
**CASM**  
technology



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*“Policy makers must take bold action to mitigate the worst effects of the climate crisis. But their ability to do so is being hindered by an information ecosystem built by Big Tech that profits from the proliferation of climate lies as fodder for polarising culture wars. This exciting project marks the beginning of an important collaboration between environmental campaigners and digital threats analysts who recognise the dangers of online disinformation to our offline existence.”*

- **Mai Rosner, Campaigner, Global Witness**

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