

**IMPACT:** Alp Services is a private global public affairs and intelligence firm based in Geneva, Switzerland. In 2023, it was revealed that Alp Services worked for the United Arab Emirates, and carried out the largest disinformation campaign against Muslims in Europe, linking successful business people, organizations, and individuals to the Muslim Brotherhood in an effort to smear and blackmail them. The campaign relied on Islamophobic tropes as it framed Muslim individuals and organizations of being tied to an alleged “Islamist movement.”

- Alp Service describes itself as a firm of “analysts, strategists, and communicators” helping clients with its expertise “spanning public affairs, reputation management, and corporate and legal investigations.” It says it “act[s] as a trusted advisor to governments, corporations and individuals across the globe,” and offers “in-depth intelligence, political, business and communication advisory services tailored to our clients’ needs” with eight languages spoken in-house and “80 geographies covered.”
- Alp Services was **created by Mario Brero, whom *Le Temps* has called “the pope” of Swiss investigators.** In the 1990s, **Federal prosecutors in San Francisco indicted Brero for violating laws against exporting sensitive American technologies to the Eastern Bloc.** Brero denied the claims but resolved them by exiting his former business. After meeting the US businessman Jules Kroll, whose 1972-established company, Kroll, Inc., was the first modern corporate investigation company, Brero established Alp Services. **He set it up in Switzerland, known for its banking secrecy, which asks few questions of private intelligence firms.** Intelligence Online, which “publishes daily exclusive information essential to understanding the intelligence world,” has listed several articles featuring Brero’s work as well as Alp Services.
- The European Investigative Collaborations (EIC) began an investigation into the Abu Dhabi Secrets, featuring 13 media outlets including Der Spiegel (Germany), Le Soir (Belgium), the Dutch De Standaard. **According to the EIC, the “Abu Dhabi Secrets reveals how the Swiss private intelligence company Alp Services has been contracted by the UAE government to spy on citizens of 18 countries in Europe and beyond. Alp Services has sent to the UAE intelligence services the names of more than 1000 individuals and 400 organizations in 18 European countries, labeling them as part of the Muslim Brotherhood network in Europe.”**
- In a **March 2023 *New Yorker* investigative report** titled “The Dirty Secrets of a Smear Campaign,” reporter David D. Kirkpatrick presented the first comprehensive piece on Alp Services. In the long report, he detailed how **Alp Services destroyed the life of the businessman Hazim Nada, by engaging in “a covert campaign against him,”** claiming that his company was a cover for Islamist movements and then even for terrorism, which led to Nada’s bankruptcy. The **piece revealed that Alp Services was hired by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ), the ruler of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).** The UAE paid Brero at least €5.7 million between **August 21, 2017 and June 30, 2020.**
- In a July 2023 article, **journalist Marc Menichini revealed that Alp Services promised to “seriously damage” the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe by identifying their network and figureheads,** “attacking them in the media” and influencing policymakers. In its work to identify an alleged Muslim Brotherhood network, **Alp Services compiled a list of over 1,000 names, addresses, and sometimes even mobile phone numbers of people living in Switzerland, France, Belgium, England, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, and Austria.** The list featured “individuals and organizations who it described, often wrongly, as being close to the Muslim Brotherhood.” Among the 200 French victims, it included ministers, mayors, as well as France’s prestigious National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). **These lists were then shared with the Abu Dhabi Secret Service in the form of infographics.** According to Doha News, the network “was reportedly behind the publishing of the English and Arabic edition of the book ‘Qatar Papers,’ which falsely accused Qatar of financing Muslim associations in Europe.” **According to a media report, Alp Services was also crucial in engineering the “Qatargate scandal” on behalf of the UAE.**

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- The **March 2023 *New Yorker* piece** also revealed that **Brero was connected to the UAE via the Lebanese-born French journalist Roland Jacquard, who had occasionally advised the French government as “an expert on the secret extremism of European Muslims.”** The *New Yorker* noted that in August 2017, Brero presented fourteen pages of talking points in Abu Dhabi. The notes say: “We would aim to discredit our targets by discreetly and massively diffusing the embarrassing and compromising information: in the eyes of the media/public/officials, they would appear as perverts, corrupts or extremists.”
- The ***New Yorker* report revealed that “one of Brero’s first moves after signing the UAE as a client was to seek out Lorenzo Vidino.” Vidino is an Italian-American academic whose research has promoted conspiracy theories about the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe and the United States, white nationalist theories, and is connected to numerous anti-Muslim think tanks.** It was reported that in January 2018, Vidino signed a contract with Alp Services. The contract paid him “three thousand euros [\$3,293] for ‘interesting leads/rumors’ about the Muslim Brotherhood, along with a ‘list of alleged members of the first tier organizations in European countries.’” The *New Yorker* piece stated: **“Vidino delivered to Alp a series of gossipy reports about the Brotherhood’s reach, and they undergirded Brero’s work for the Emiratis.** Vidino even appears to have promised Alp information that he’d obtain while consulting for European security services about Islamist threats. German authorities had invited him to Berlin ‘to work exactly on our topic,’ he told an Alp operative in a WhatsApp message in February 2020, adding, ‘Obviously I think that my memo would be ‘juicier’ after that visit.’ The next month, Vidino wrote that ‘many of the names on the list come indeed straight from various meetings with German intel.’”
- As the German *Der Spiegel* wrote: “For the Swiss, Vidino was of great value. He was able to establish contacts with quality media. He brought with him a network through which Alp Services could also obtain intelligence information - and which, conversely, enabled the company to feed its own information into intelligence and government channels. Vidino was apparently also in contact with government authorities in Germany.”
- In **one campaign, Alp Services was able to marginalize one of the most important Muslim aid organizations, Islamic Relief, in Germany.** Vidino conducted research for Alp Services on Islamic Relief Germany. As a result of the pressure created by Alp Services, which won the support of MP Christoph de Vries from the governing Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Islamic Relief was ostracized and has not received any funds since 2020, whereas before this campaign it was funded with millions of euros.
- In March 2023, the French investigative **Mediapart revealed that “Alp Services aimed to publish one hundred articles per year on behalf of the UAE.** Some were published via fake accounts, in particular in the Mediapart Club, the newspaper’s participatory space, under the pseudonym of ‘Tanya Klein.’ Between 2018 and 2021, this fictional blogger published fifteen posts, all directed against the Muslim Brotherhood and Qatar.” In a November 2012 piece for Valeurs Actuelles, Klein is quoted in Valeurs Actuelles describing the Council of Muslims in Europe as “the motherhouse of the Islamist octopus [...] established on French soil” which would be “spared by the government response” launched after the murder of Samuel Paty a month earlier. In a leaked email dated September 10, 2020, Roland Jacquard, a French contractor hired by Alp Services, reported to his Emirati interlocutor about a “private meeting” with advisers to President Emmanuel Macron, Prime Minister Jean Castex, Minister of the Interior Gérald Darmanin and the Minister of Justice Éric Dupond-Moretti, to prepare “with them” a law against radical Islam, which came in 2021.
- In a September 2023 investigative piece in *Profil*, Stefan Melichar and editor-in-chief Anna Thalhammer noted that the “Emirate’s networks reach well into Austria.” They discovered that **on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, a representative of Alp Services informed his contact in the UAE about Operation Luxor, Austria’s largest peace-time police raid, which targeted Muslim civil society in Austria accusing them of terrorism.** The contact wrote: “Confidential, Austria is planning to be more aggressive in the coming months with the local MB,” following up with the words on November

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9<sup>th</sup>, when the raid happened: “As you may have seen and as we wrote on August 24<sup>th</sup>, the Austrian authorities is currently conducting a massive anti-terror counterterrorism against the MB,” using the old covert name of the raid, Operation Ramses.

- European governments have been largely silent on the revelations on Alp Services so far. Sophie in 't Veld, a Dutch politician of the Volt party and Member of the European Parliament, submitted a [question](#) to the Vice-President of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in July 2023, asking what action they will take to address and counter Alp Service’s disinformation campaign. In their written answer in August 2023, they [replied](#): “The Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy took note of the findings by the European Investigative Collaborations in the Abu Dhabi Secrets investigation and follow the matter in close coordination with the Member States, expecting that their competent authorities will address it in substance.”

Bridge Initiative Factsheet