

Annex – supplementary information on London narratives in selected East and Southeast Asian online environments

Supporting annex – June 2026

This annex summarises supplementary analysis produced for the Greater London Authority (GLA) on international discussion relating to London in selected East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) online environments.

Methodology

The analysis covers the six-month period from December 2025 to May 2026. It builds on previous work for the GLA examining online narratives about London and its wider information environment.¹

The analysis focuses on narrative areas where previous work has identified a significant volume of false or misleading content related to London. Not all content in these areas is false or misleading. However, there are indications of coordinated inauthentic behaviour (CIB) within some of these narratives in ESEA online environments, as illustrated by the examples at the end of this note.

The findings are based on analysis of a large-scale, structured sample of anonymised data across multiple online platforms in the region, supported by a focused review of Japanese-language and simplified Chinese-language posts on X.^{2,3}

The findings reflect a substantial sample of relevant online discussion, but not a complete picture of all online activity. This is particularly the case for simplified Chinese-language discussion on X, given the platform is blocked in mainland China (by contrast, X has a large user base in Japan, with [estimates](#) placing Japan as the platform's second-largest market after the United States).

In general, findings should be treated as indicative rather than comprehensive.

¹ This annex builds on wider [misinformation and disinformation mapping and risk analysis](#) for the GLA.

² Boolean search terms were developed in English and translated into Japanese and simplified Chinese. These searches were used to monitor broad narrative themes across the wider X ecosystem where misinformation and disinformation could be identified and assessed.

³ Three caveats apply to X data:

- Japanese and simplified Chinese are used by diaspora communities as well as domestic audiences. Searches may therefore include some content from expatriates, internationally mobile users and other users outside Japan or the People's Republic of China (PRC).
- While X is widely used in Japan, with around [70–75 million users](#), it is blocked in the PRC.
- Domestic platforms also play an important role in both online information environments.

Key findings

The analysis indicates that:

- London features prominently in a range of news-driven, geopolitical, lifestyle and cultural discussions in ESEA online environments, reflecting its status as a global city.
- Several recurring mis/dis-information themes are also evident in online activity aimed at ESEA audiences:
 - The most prevalent theme across the region framed London as unsafe, lawless or in decline, with crime panic content – including AI-generated and other synthetic video – circulating across platforms.
 - Other recurring themes included anti-Islam and anti-immigration narratives (in some cases directly targeting the Mayor), as well as anti-ULEZ and climate conspiracy theories.

These narratives often appear to connect London-specific claims to wider debates about immigration or governance.

- More than 88,000 Japanese-language posts and reposts were identified through focused searches on X covering common mis/disinformation themes between December 2025 and May 2026. In some months, more than 15,000 related to London crime, safety, migration and asylum narratives, including significant volumes of claims portraying the capital as lawless or undergoing 'Islamisation'.
- A smaller volume of simplified Chinese-language content was identified through the equivalent searches on X, with around 5,900 posts and reposts found. This lower volume is likely to reflect, in part, the blocking of X in mainland China and the role of domestic platforms in Chinese-language online discussion.
- There are indications of inauthentic activity, particularly in the posts analysed on X. For example, some Japanese and Chinese-language accounts appear to mirror, translate or adapt English-language anti-Islam and anti-immigration posts in a template style. In some cases, similar messages were posted by multiple accounts over short timeframes, consistent with coordinated or engagement-seeking behaviour, including monetised engagement.

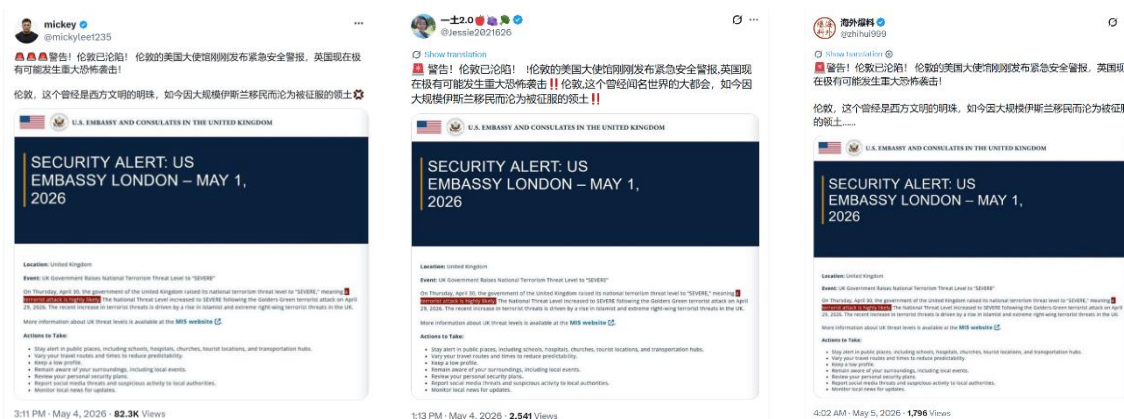
Illustrative examples of potential mis/disinformation in selected ESEA online environments

The screenshots below are examples of individual posts linked to the findings above. They are illustrative of wider posting patterns identified across accounts, including repeated use of the same images, claims or translated wording. Engagement figures for a single post do not capture the total reach of the narrative.

Example 1: US Embassy security alert misrepresented

A US Embassy security alert was shared by several Chinese-language accounts alongside near-identical claims that London had ‘fallen’. The posts used the same screenshot and appeared to mirror a US-based account’s framing, creating a cluster of similar content around the same misleading claim.

View an illustrative post [here](#).



Example 2: high-volume account posting near identical content

A Japanese-language X account with more than 100,000 followers posted near-identical content on multiple occasions, promoting anti-immigration and anti-Muslim narratives about London.

One set of posts shared footage falsely claiming to show a person described as an immigrant destroying a London wall said to be over 300 years old and part of England’s cultural heritage. The video does not originate from the UK.

Another set used a video clip of the Mayor discussing London’s diversity to suggest that he had promised benefits and housing specifically for Muslims. [Full Fact](#) has previously investigated the use of the clip and found that it has been widely misrepresented online.

View illustrative posts [here](#) and [here](#).



Example 3: exaggerated claims about rally attendance

Japanese- and Chinese-language social media posts exaggerated the scale of a 16 May 2026 UK rally, with some claiming that 'millions' of people had taken part. These figures were far above reported estimates of around 60,000 attendees.

The posts presented the rally as evidence of mass public resistance to immigration and the alleged 'Islamisation' of the UK. Several accounts reused or translated content from UK sources, while some posts also used old footage or AI-generated images presented as genuine protest footage.

A Chinese-language fact-check by [MyGoPen](#) found that claims of 'millions' attending were false. It also found that a widely shared image showing Keir Starmer dressed in Muslim clothing had been altered using AI. [Reuters](#) separately found that an AI-generated image of a large crowd had been falsely captioned as showing the London immigration rally.

View an illustrative post [here](#).



Example 4: London as a ‘cautionary tale’ for Japan

A Japanese-language social media post used a video clip of a littered London street, filmed after Arsenal’s May 2026 victory parade, to present London as being in decline. The post linked the scene to immigration despite the footage showing the aftermath of a large public event, and used it as a warning about Japan’s immigration policy.

The video appears to have been sourced from the English-language account ‘[MAGA Posts](#)’.

View an illustrative post [here](#).



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