

Newsletter №9

Topic of the Week

Disruption of the Muslim Prayer in Samtatskaro

03.06 –09.06.2013

Another fact of disruption of Muslim Prayer in the village of Samtatskaro, in Dedoplistskaro region, on June 7 received different coverage in different media outlets: TV Company Channel 9 created impression of manipulation of the facts, TV Company Imedi offered an incomplete coverage of the very core of the incident, while Rustavi 2 and Public Broadcaster provided the most comprehensive TV coverage of the police pressure on the Muslim cleric among media outlets being subject of MDF monitoring. Newspaper *Rezonansi* published the information by the *Interpress* -

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Netgazeti-ს ფოტო

MONITORING

Main Findings

The newsletter was made possible by the generous support of the American people rendered through the USA Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of the newsletter are the responsibility of Media Development Foundation (MDF) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the USAID or the USA.

The following trends were identified in the monitoring period of June 3-9:

- The main topic of the week was the disruption of traditional Friday Muslim prayer in the village of Samtatskaro. Rustavi 2 and the Public Broadcaster offered the most comprehensive coverage of the incident [among media outlets monitored within the framework of the project] when the Muslim cleric was taken away by the police for several hours during the prayer. Channel 9 created impression of manipu-

lation of the facts, video footage, and the sound bites. On its part, Imedi TV tried to link the disappearance of the Muslim cleric to certain unidentified persons, rather than to the police.

- Property dispute between the Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Georgian Eparchy of the Armenian Apostolic Church was covered in a most balanced manner by the Public Broadcaster; *Rezonansi* newspaper, even though presenting positions of both sides, has not attempted to verify certain information.

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Disruption of the Muslim Prayer in Samtatskaro

news agency providing the chronologically complete, accurate description of the fact when Muslims' spiritual leader Suliko Khozrevanidze was taken away by the police during the traditional prayer, and the disruption of the ritual.

Channel 9, Akhali at 9, June 7

News anchor

Tamta Sanikidze



მეცხრე არხი
ცხადე დღინახო მეტი

said that the ac-

tual reason of the disruption of the prayer was the cleric not feeling well and the absence of parish rather than the fact that the police took away the Muslim cleric for several hours, as reported by other news bulletins. The fact of keeping the Muslim cleric away by the Police for several hours was mentioned in the comment by the representative of the Democratic Initiative Giorgi Mshvenieradze, rather than by anchor. News anchor in an opening text also underlined that the village of Samtatskaro is located in a close proximity to border, which might serve the goal of somehow dramatizing the situation along with the anchor's comment concerning the deliberate escalation of the conflict.

Tamta Sanikidze, news anchor:

"At the same time, there are statements made concerning the intentional provocation of the conflict."

The journalist offers doubtful interpretation of the facts claiming that the actual reason of the disruption of the prayer was the denial of the cleric to perform the service and quotes his description of the situation completely out of the context. According to the journalist, local Adjarian Muslims are against conducting the prayer in the chapel, and in order to confirm this, the journalist brings two respondents' sound-bites, which creates no suffi-

icient grounds for the generalization of their position as a position of all local Muslims.

There is a seemingly manipulation of facts and video shots in the story and the spread of the inaccurate information as well. Media outlet develops the version that Khozrevanidze did not feel well after the received threatening phone call from a stranger. The information is attributed to Khozrevanidze however, he did not state that himself.

Journalist: *"Muslims' spiritual leader did not feel well following the stranger's phone call. According to him unidentified person demanded him to enter the mosque, not switch off the phone, and perform the prayer. In spite of the threatening phone call Suliko Khozrevanidze declined to conduct the prayer."*

Rustavi 2 and the Public Broadcaster reflect the Chronology of the events: law enforcers brought back the cleric to the chapel at 2, he made comments for the press there and later did not feel well; on the other hand, Channel 9 version first showed the phone call presented by journalist as a threat from a stranger, then the video reflecting the cleric feeling sick, showing Khozrevanidze sitting in the car being given sedatives and then, manipulating the video, the initial edited episode is shown in which police brought the cleric to the chapel where he made comments concerning the content of the meeting with police.

As a result, comments concerning Khozrevanidze's conversation with the law enforcers are linked to the stranger who according to the interpretation of the journalist, threatened Khozrevanidze. At the same time, it is another issue, whether Khoz-

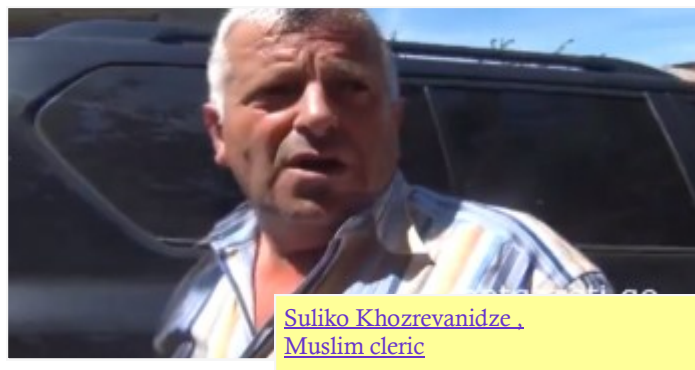
Disruption of the Muslim Prayer in Samtatskaro

revanidze's phrase with regard to law enforcers (*"Perform the prayer, your rights are protected, nobody is going to say anything to you"*) could be considered as a threat.

Though the journalist ignored this involvement of the police in incident, it was mentioned in a comment of the representative of a non-governmental organization. Meanwhile, action of the police and the local government is presented as a mediation between two confronting sides (*"Negotiations were conducted by the police and representatives of the local government"*) while according to the stories by other media outlets, as well as according to Giorgi Mshvenieradze's comments, police was engaged in disruption of a prayer.

Channel 9 was in breach of the Articles 12 and 13 (9) of the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters (reliability and accuracy), and Article 16 (4) according to which *"Broadcasters should separate the fact from the opinion. One-sided interpretation of opinions should be avoided."* At the same time, there is a violation of Article 18 (2) according to which the program or report is to be considered biased if *"it lacks comprehensive information on important facts, is based on minor facts, misleads the audience intentionally or unintentionally, or conveys biased views of a person in a hidden form."*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2061561



[Imedi TV, Oronika,](#)

[June 7](#)

In difference from Channel 9, news anchor of *Oronika* Nutsa Kopaliani says that the actual reason of disruption of the prayer was disappearance of the Muslim cleric. However, contrary to Rustavi 2 and the Public Broadcaster, she does not point out that he was taken away by the police, despite the fact that Soliko Khozrevanidze mentions this in his comment (*"From the Ministry of Militia"* [MDF - former Soviet name for the police]). News anchor's phrase: *"Muslim cleric disappeared for several hours prior to the prayer. Later some unidentified persons brought him to the place where the prayer had to be conducted."* This is a clear attempt by the media outlet to blame the incident on some "strangers".

Comment of the law enforcement agencies is not included in the story, despite the openly stated doubt by a representative of a non-governmental organization that disruption of the prayer might be linked either to the police actions with regard to Khozrevanidze or to his fear of local residents.

Violation of Articles 12 and 13 (reliability and accuracy) and Article 18 (2) (impartiality) of the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters was revealed in case of Imedi TV as well.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2062058

[Rustavi 2, Kurieri, May 7](#)

Kurieri accentuated the fact of the Muslim cleric Soliko Khozrevanidze being taken away by



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Disruption of the Muslim Prayer in Samtatskaro

Continued from p. 3

the police at the time of the prayer, and described the chronology of the incident. Comment of the representative of the Georgian Democratic Initiative Giorgi Mshvenieradze is included in the story - he views it suspicious that the police took Khozrevanidze away and kept him for an hour and a half, and after that the cleric would not even dare to enter his own chapel and perform a prayer. The journalist also asked for a comment of the Chief of Dedoplistskaro Police Giorgi Bubunuri, who denied having any sort of information concerning the fact.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2061703

[Public Broadcaster, Moambe, June 7](#)



Similarly to *Kurieri*, *Moambe* focuses on the actual reason of disruption of the prayer, fully showing the fact of the police taking the cleric away prior to the prayer as well as the comments of the Chief of Dedoplistskaro Police and the observer of the Democratic Initiative.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2061464

Religious Issues

The issue of the ownership of the *Norasheni* Church

Dispute between the Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Georgian Eparchy of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church over the *Norasheni* Church in Tbilisi was covered by the Georgian Public Broadcaster and Newspaper *Rezonansi*.

[Public Broadcaster, Moambe, June 3](#)

Moambe covered the issue from the angle of restoration works of the church that had been recently launched. At the same time, the story elaborated on the issue of the property disputes over the religious buildings that has to be resolved within the format of bilateral commission. It is also mentioned in the story that, apart from *Norasheni*, there are disputes over the 5 cult buildings in Tbilisi between the two congregations.

The report was balanced presenting the positions of both sides involved. However, the position of one of the respondents, namely the representative of the Georgian Patriarchy was discriminatory. She stated that the commission should work toward deciding "which temple belongs to which country". As according to the respondent, she presents dispute between two states of Georgia and Armenia, while the ownership of the cult building is claimed by the part of the citizens living in Georgia, representing the parish of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Such attitude toward the citizens of the state, based on their religious and ethnic grounds, promotes their alienation with the state they live in.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2056619

[Rezonansi, June 3](#)

Similarly to the Public Broadcaster, the newspaper puts the issue into the context of the restoration works of the church and broadly presents the positions of both sides concerning the dispute. Even though the formal balance is observed (Levon Isakhanian, Counselor of the Head of the Armenian Eparchy in Georgia, and Mikael Botkoveli from the Georgian Patriarchy), journalist Tatia Chapidze word-by-word transcripts the positions of the sides and does not even try to inform readers on the accuracy of facts and ar-

Religious Issues

guments, and verify the information spread by the sides, which could have been done prior to the completion of the work of the commission. For instance, representative of the Georgian Patriarchy states that Armenians claim the ownership of 600 churches in Georgia. The journalist could have checked this information with the Armenian side. Information concerning the 5 disputed religious buildings in Tbilisi was given by the Public Broadcaster as a backgrounder of the story. On his part, Mikael Botkoveli makes incorrect generalization basing on the inaccurate information and promotes stereotypes.



Norasheni Church, Tbilisi

Mikael Botkoveli,

Georgian Patriarchy: *“According to Armenians, they have 600 churches in Georgia, this is not serious. It turns out to be Armenia rather than Georgia then. They make so many unserious statements, that one doubts even when they speak truth.”*

Naturally, in given circumstances journalist’s function goes beyond the mere reflection of the hearsay, and implies providing the readers with the exact number of the disputed cult buildings, which could have shed light to the issue.

At the same time, there are other factual inaccuracies in the information provided by the sides. Namely, Levon Isakhanian says that the church was built in the 15th century, while Mikael Botkoveli ascribes it to the period of “Armenization of the Georgian churches” in the 17th and 18th centuries. The journalist could have clarified the origins of the architecture with an independent expert, could have checked the information concerning the erasure of the inscriptions on the graves and frescos, and then basing on that information she could raise relevant questions with the representative of the Patriarchy.

http://resonancedaily.com/index.php?id_rub=7&id_artc=15829

Discriminatory Attitude

[Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 7](#)

Leader of the Alliance of Patriots David Tarkhan-Mouravi develops the thesis that their organization prevented the construction of a Mosque in Batumi due to the survey of 60 000 citizens and the Prime Minister removed the issue from the agenda because of his ethnic Georgian origins: *“Prime Minister is a Georgian man and he knows where Georgia stands.”* The discriminatory approach clearly stands out that the realization of minorities’ rights should be solved in accordance with the will of majority, by ethnic Georgians.

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12295>



Mikael Botkoveli,
Georgian Patriarchy:

“According to Armenians, they have 600 churches in Georgia, this is not serious. It turns out to be Armenia rather than Georgia then. They make so many unserious statements, that one doubts even when they speak truth.”

Hate Speech

In the monitoring period, hate speech was mainly directed against sexual minorities, their rights' defenders, and representatives of the United National Movement.

At the same time, it should be mentioned that the newspaper *Kviris Palitra*, without any editorial comment reprinted from the facebook page Tamar Iveri's statement containing hate speech. Besides, the newspaper covered incompletely and with omission the developments following the statement, when the singer offered apologies to the organization *Identity*, because of her earlier statements.

Kviris Palitra, June 3-9

Newspaper *Kviris Palitra* fully and without editorial comment published the appeal to the President of the renowned Georgian singer Tamar Iveri performing in leading European opera theatres, initially published in the social network (see the report # 3, p.14). Iveri's appeal contains hate speech toward sexual minorities and anti-Western statements, in the context of the breakup of the May 17 rally. The article titled with the quote by Iveri, "Mr. Ambassador [US Ambassador in Georgia], this way you cannot make the whole nation bend over for the accession to NATO" reflects the editorial position of the newspaper. It should be noted that the editorial of the newspaper does not present singer's such expressions as problematic, neither offers apology for her homophobic expressions and hate speech as internet portal *Netgazeti* did earlier because of the similar expressions made by the majority leader David Saganelidze. *Netgazeti* then explained the fact of publication of Saganelidze's expressions by high social interest toward the position of the public figure. Instead, *Kviris Palitra* peremptorily replicated such expression.

The only valuable information is given in the end of the article as a post-scriptum, which notes that following the publication of Iveri's appeal Paris National Opera announced on its website that Tamar Iveri's concert planned for June 1 was cancelled due to her health condition, as officially stated. Journalist also notes that according to the information spread, the actual reason of the cancellation of the concert was the appeal translated by the organization *Identity* into French and sent to the partner organizations in Paris. Journalist Ketis Saginashvili in her post-scriptum

notes that they have tried to contact



Tamar Iveri in order to verify the information, however they could not reach her. It should be noted that the newspaper did not try to contact organization *Identity*. Therefore, the article does not mention the information published on *Identity*'s website concerning the apologies offered by the singer on June 1, and received by the organization via e-mail.

<http://www.kvirispalitra.ge/public/17399-qbatono-elcho-mthel-ers-am-gzith-natoshi-misaghebad-ver-tsakzavthq.html>

Asaval-Dasavali, June 3-9

Tamaz Tamazashvili, General:
"Generally, nationals are not human beings. They are the mobs of devil's apostles. They are deprived of the inner intellect i.e. the divine grace."

Asaval-Dasavali, June 3-9

Rezo Amashukeli, poet: *"I was ready to publicly smash against the wall these grant seeking ladies "striving for justice" and greedy for money. They will soon jump on their parents publicly in order to please their "liberast" [combination of liberal and "pederast"] conductors... Then I will take care of those women and guys, I will show them clearly the hate speech they seeded themselves... those growing mustard on their parents' graves, freaks tattooed on the devil's ass can go and complain to their stinky bosses and we'll see where Georgia stands – with those pants down mankurts without motherland, or with those striving to save the homeland, family, nation, and Mother Church!"*

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Tamaz Tamazashvili, General:
"Generally, nationals are not human beings. They are the mobs of devil's apostles. They are deprived of the inner intellect i.e. the divine grace."

Racist Expression

Alia, June 6

Khatuna Bokuchava, actor: “Stop granting the lands to Negroes, Chinese, Arabs, and Hindu. They should let us live where our fathers shed their blood so the Georgian nation could survive until today...”

If we shave their [supporters of the former government] heads, I am sure we’ll see the sign of “666” on their skulls, because they deprived us, Christians of the right to live in our motherland.”

Gender Stereotypes

Asaval-Dasavali, June 3-9

Tamaz Tsivtsivadze, writer: “Now, if all women stay in booths occupying themselves by embroiling and sewing, while all men leave the booths and take up the hooks and ploughs, there will be a way to salvation for us.”

Anti - Turkish Expression

Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 6

Soso Zaalishvili, host of the talk-show:

“This [results of the survey conducted in Batumi concerning the construction of a Mosque] was the failure of the Turkish policy of expansion in Adjara, because Muslim Georgians, Christian Georgians, as well as representatives of other congregations said “No” to the construction of a Mosque.”

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12280>

Alia, June 7-10

Temur Shashiashvili, Whites: “Half a million Georgians live in Turkey working as slaves. Turkish government even amended the law unilaterally during Saakashvili... Is not this an insult? Does it become Erdogan who says he is Georgian? Do you know what Turks say to Georgians there? – Agmashenebeli Avenue in Tbilisi belongs to us. Soon Batumi will be ours.”



Rezo Amashukeli, poet: “I was ready to publicly smash against the wall these grant seeking ladies “striving for justice” and greedy for money. They will soon jump on their parents publicly in order to please their “liberast” [combination of “liberal” and “pederast”] conductors”...

Sexual Minorities

Asaval-Dasavali, June 3-9

Gocha Kelenjeridze, member of the Spanish section of the Amnesty International: “It was police and clergy who prevented the bloodshed for which 20 individuals, considered to be sick by the World Health Organization until 1990, were brought as food for powder. In this regard, I totally share our brothers’ Jewish people’s attitude. Let alone such parades, even Shakira cannot sing on their land. Organizers of this disaster are trying to make Georgians hate Europe and Western civilization”.

Asaval-Dasavali, June 3-9

Article titled “Lasha “son of a spit” Bugadze” published in response to the writer Lasha Bugadze’s criticism of clergy, because of their actions at the violent demonstration on May 17.

Giorgi Gigauri, journalist: “After the “pederast provocation” on Rustaveli Avenue on May 17, there were no single “liberast”, greedy grant-seeker left who has not tried to bite with his dirty teeth our Mother Church and his leader, presenting the Georgian church as an enemy of the statehood!

Lasha, my friend, we can go and consider “pidarmon” as a pet name of “pederast”. If you ask me, it better suits you than the rude and blatant “pederast” or “sodomite”!

...Briefly, this degenerate Lasha Bugadze (a “clinical case”, really) feels great affection to pederasts and pidarmons and hates our Mother Church, Catholicos-Patriarch and hundred thousands of believers.”

<http://www.asavali.ge/archive/asdas/2013/972/972.pdf>

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Sexual Minorities

[Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 3](#)

David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: *"The whole mankind knows for sure that homosexuality is not normal. It has been considered as a disease until the 70's of the 20th century and many scientists stand by this until today. My position is that homosexuality is a disease. Medicine transformed the term homosapien i.e. "a man thinking" into homosexual by replacing the word "thinking" with the word "sexual", actually cutting off "thinking" from the term."*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12235>

[Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 6](#)

Alik Eskin, political observer: *"Here it is the best gay parade [break-up of the May 17 rally] was held in Georgia. I want to shake your hand and tell you that you proved once again that you really are the oldest and the greatest nation, you proved that you are civilized people, really love your traditions, and you will never allow any foreign flows to rot you from inside."*

Soso Zaalishvili, host: *"Thank you very much for your support of the Georgian people's position against this parade."*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12280>

Propaganda, restriction of the public space

Respondents elaborate on a thought that the sexual minorities have the guaranteed right of existence, although their right of free expression is equal to "propaganda" (Soso Jachvliani, Georgian Dream). According to some respondents and journalists (David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots; Soso Zaalishvili, *Obiektivi*) the propaganda of homosexuality should be legally banned while according to others the Church should be involved in fighting against this "problem" (Ani Mirotadze, Georgian Dream). The issue of restricting the access to public spaces in terms of freedom of expression of sexual minorities is also discussed (Ani Mirotadze, Georgian Dream; Gela Nikolaishvili, Former Political Prisoners).

[Alia, May 3](#)

Soso Jachvliani, Georgian Dream: *"Let's raise a very simple question: will we tolerate the propaganda of homosexuality? During the Soviet times, when homosexuals were being imprisoned, one renowned director whom I do not identify [here journalist clarifies that the respondent is talking about Sergo Parajanov convicted for homosexuality during the Soviet times] used to work at one of the studios... None of the studios employed him. Apart from being a sexual minority he was also a representative of the ethnic minority in Georgia. Godfather of the Georgian cinematography Rezo Chkheidze brought him to "Kartuli Pilmi" studio and he was directing the real pieces of cinematography till the very last days of his life... So there were and there are sexual minorities working in so many fields. However, they did not use to organize gay parades and ask for recognition either. Whatever happened on May 17 stinks like 30 silver coins."*

[Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 4](#)

Ani Mirotadze, Georgian Dream: *"Institution that has the highest public trust [church] has many instruments to confront such propaganda without violence. This is not the problem of Georgia only... We have a highly spiritual clergy and I hope if there is a sort of penetration, the Church will be able to overcome this peacefully."*

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Soso Jachvliani, Georgian Dream:

"So there were and there are sexual minorities working in so many fields. However, they did not use to organize gay parades and ask for recognition either. Whatever happened on May 17 stinks like 30 silver coins."

Sexual Minorities

There is a discussion on the restriction of the public space for sexual minorities in terms of their expression.

Ani Mirotadze: “We may discuss these issues... where it may be allowed, where - not... it is possible, and we should think about legal regulation, in order to prevent the recurrence, to prevent things like this in future.”

<http://obieqtivi.net/tv1.php?id=12251>

[Asaval-Dasavali, June 3-9](#)

Gela Nikolaishvili, Former Political Prisoners: “The problem could be solved if LGBT persons are allowed to gather in certain places. Similarly, nudists have assigned beaches. However, they are deprived of the possibility to walk around the central avenues naked, in order not to violate the rights of the rest of the society.”

Anti-Western Attitudes

[Asaval-Dasavali, June 3-9](#)

Valeri Chkheidze, Lieutenant-General of the Security Services: “Why do they impose gay parades on us saying that if gays are not allowed to stroll down the Rustaveli Avenue, they will not accept us to NATO. Fine, don’t accept us. I personally do not need such NATO... NATO is a terrorist organization that breaks all UN resolutions and makes arbitrary decisions.”

[Asaval-Dasavali, June 3-9](#)

Address of a group of citizens to the Prime Minister: “They think European values mean defending the sex between men and this is disaster... Go shake your asses in order to get admitted to NATO and EU, but will these respected organizations accept Georgia because of that? Imagine how fortunate the member states are!.. We, who could not join the street rallies before, will join now, if such provocative pederast rallies continue... Be careful, they are attacking Garibashvili and this way they are attacking you. Dissociate yourselves from Republicans and lame-minded intellectuals immediately!”

[Obieqtivi, Night Studio, June 3](#)

David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: “We should strive for a legal ban of the propaganda of the sodomy. If we fail to ban this, our state will face a serious threat.”

<http://obieqtivi.net/tv1.php?id=12235>

“If the Georgian people say that they do not want homosexuality and these LGBTs or whoever, that we are against such propaganda, Europe won’t even say a word.”

<http://obieqtivi.net/tv1.php?id=12236>

[Obieqtivi, Night Studio, June 6](#)

Soso Zaalishvili, host: “The public opinion survey will be hold all over Georgia in order to legally ban the LGBT propaganda.”

<http://obieqtivi.net/tv1.php?id=12280>

[Asaval-Dasavali, June 3-9](#)

Giorgi Gigauri, journalist: “So, if a fly lands on some pederast’s butt without warning the US State Department glaring angrily is almost ready to declare the high alert of its nuclear forces, but if Russian occupation troops drag around the border fences like Saakashvili’s movable tribune in Georgia, affirmed by the US as a strategic partner, our friends Americans only manage to mumble that they do support Georgia’s territorial integrity!”

Sorry, should we rename our country into “Georgian LGBT Republic” in order to make the civilized west recall the existence of fundamental principles and norms of international law?”

<http://www.asavali.ge/archive/asdas/2013/972/972.pdf>



Valeri Chkheidze, Lieutenant-General of the Security Services: “Why do they impose gay parades on us saying that if gays are not allowed to stroll down the Rustaveli Avenue, they will not accept us to NATO. Fine, don’t accept us. I personally do not need such NATO... NATO is a terrorist organization that breaks all UN resolutions and makes arbitrary decisions.”



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www.facebook.com/pages/მედიის-განვითარების-ფონდი-MDF-Media-Development-Foundation/275686875901735

Main Findings

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- ation as well as accuracy of facts and arguments, which in fact required the nominal effort.
- As earlier, hate speech was directed against sexual minorities, their rights' defenders (Rezo Amashukeli, poet; Tamar Iveri, singer) and the representatives of the United National Movement, UNM (Tamaz Tamazashvili, Police General).
 - Newspaper *Kviris Palitra*, without any editorial comment, reprinted from the facebook page Tamar Iveri's statement containing hate speech. The newspaper also incompletely covered the developments following the statement made.
 - There were racist (Khatuna Bokuchava, actor), anti-Turkish (Media Union *Obiektivi*; Temur Shashiashvili, *Whites*) expressions and the spread of gender stereotypes as well (Tamaz Tsivtsivadze, writer);
 - The issue of sexual minorities remained central and was mainly put in the context of May 17 events. Homosexuality was presented as a disease and perversion. The thesis has been developed that although sexual minorities have the guaranteed right of existence, their right of expression constitutes "propaganda" (Soso Jachviani, Georgian Dream) and has to be legally banned, according to the part of the society (David Tarkhan-Mouravi, The Alliance of Patriots; Media Union *Obiektivi*); moreover, the church should be engaged in fighting against this "problem" (Ani Mirotdadze, Georgian Dream). Restriction of sexual minorities' access to public spaces remains on the agenda as well (Ani Mirotdadze, Georgian Dream; Gela Nikolaishvili, Former Political Prisoners).

Civil Sector

On June 3, the Georgian Democratic Initiative (GDI), Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC), Georgian Young Lawyers Association, and Article 42 of the Constitution released joint statement concerning the negative role of the local and law enforcement agencies in the disruption of Muslim traditional Friday prayer in the village of Samtatskaro. Non-governmental organizations call for the state's due legal response to the actions of persons whose conduct goes beyond the sphere guaranteed by law.

<http://gdi.ge/?p=295>

Anti-Western Attitudes

Continued from p. 9

Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 3

Ilia Chachibaia, host: "How Americans can criticize us when just a few decades ago they used to kill Afro-Americans right in the streets, horrible things were happening there."

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12235>

Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 4

Nino Ratishvili, host: "Problem of sexual minorities – is this democracy?! Is the same sex marriage a European democracy for Georgia? Why does European democracy offer us things that are not in line with our traditions?"

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12250>

