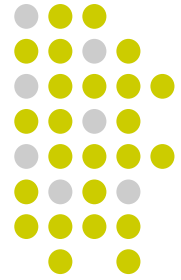




# Newsletter №7



## Main Findings of the Monitoring

Raiding of the rally against homophobia and transphobia on May 17 was the most topical issue of the week of May 20-26. There were numerous homophobic and discriminatory expressions against minorities, in this context.



Tabula.ge's photo

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:

- TV media news programs were generally more balanced than the print press;
- Humiliating terms like “pederast”, “sodomite”, “protection of one’s behind” “perverse sexual life”, and “lechery” were often used with regard to sexual minorities, both by journalists (newspapers “Kviris Qronika”, “Asaval-dasavali) and respondents (Koba Davitashvili, Levan Vasadze, Goga Khaindrava, Soso Tsintsadze, Jansug Charkviani).
- There has been a frequent replication of an entirely unsubstantiated thought that the priest did not swear at the rally and the video was falsified.

*Continued on p. 2*

20.05 –26.05.2013

## MONITORING

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**USAID**  
აშშ-ის საერთაშორისო განვითარების აგენცია



OPEN SOCIETY GEORGIA FOUNDATION  
ფონდი ღია საზოგადოებასა საქართველოში

## Main Findings of the Monitoring

However, the video recording reflects the opposite. Journalists (Imedi TV, Channel 9) avoided providing society with the full information.

- *Asaval-Dasavali* as well as *Kviris Qronika* acted as a side with regard to May 17 events. Editorial position of both newspapers clearly expressed the support of the radical groups that raided the LGBT rights defenders' rally. For example, Journalist Jaba Khubua, in his column titled "*Moral Wins*" congratulated readers on the failure of the rally, which he called a gay parade. "*Rejoice, there will never be gay parades, legalization of the same sex marriage, and the Georgian society will never tolerate the propaganda of lechery.*"
- Respondents (Bidzina Gujabidze, Georgian Dream; Kakha Kakhishvili, non-governmental sector) and occasionally journalists, without any factual justification, circulated the opinion that the United National Movement provoked May 17 rally.
- While the National Movement used to be a target for criticism and hatred for defending the rights of minorities earlier, the Republican Party, along with the Nationals, has been mentioned numerous times in the same context (in *Asaval-Dasavali* newspaper - Koka Kvinikadze, referred to as a political prisoner).
- Homosexuality was presented as being artificially imposed by the West, both by the respondents (Levan Vasadze, Irma Inashvili) and by journalists as well (*Obiektivi*, *Kviris Qronika*).
- Thesis that the freedom of sexual minorities and their rights' defenders is nothing but the propaganda of homosexuality is being promoted in media. It should be mentioned that along with the radical groups, members of the ruling party (David Saganelidze, Koba Davitashvili, Bidzina Gujabidze, Giorgi Targamadze, Soso Manjavidze) came up with the initiative to legally ban the propaganda of homosexuality.
- Monitoring of the media coverage of May 17 events reveals that neither journalists (*Kviris Qronika*, Imedi TV news *Qronika*), nor the members of the ruling party (David Saganelidze) understand the real meaning of a secular state.
- There were considerably fewer cases of ethnic and religious discrimination in the monitoring period. However, this should not be perceived as a change of attitudes toward these groups and can be explained by the fact that May 17 rally and sexual minorities became the cause of discrimination and hatred. This reaffirms that the clear line cannot be drawn between ethnic, religious and sexual discrimination in Georgia, especially when such expressions are mostly made in the political discourse.

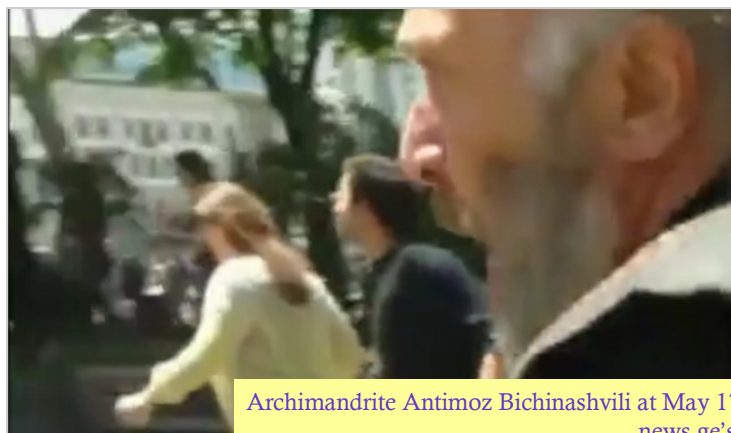
## TV News on May 17

TV media was more balanced than press. Even though the prime time news broadly covered the post May 17 developments such as citizens' protest statement, legal proceedings on the case, protest rally "No to Theocracy", and certain violent incidents following the raiding of May 17 rally, TV media failed to provide the audiences with the thorough and in-depth analysis.

- It would have been more important if media had focused on the investigation of the cases of suspects, the adequacy of the legal charges presented, and the penalty for the alleged criminal actions. Only Rustavi 2 noted that the charges were presented based on article that belongs to the category of the minor-crime. Furthermore, the host of the Channel 9 news at 9 Tamta Sanikidze framed the question in a way implying that the state had to choose between theocracy and the secular approach: *"Who is supposed to make a final decision on the punishment – the court or the church?"*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2049220](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2049220)

- TV Company Imedi dedicated three stories to the statements of the Archimandrite Antimoz Bichinashvili, claiming that the video reflecting him swearing (*"I'll kill you all, fuck your mothers..."*) was edited and falsified. Respondent's denial of the fact of using a bad language was accentuated rather than his call for violence (*"I'll kill you"*). On their side, none of the media outlets attempted to provide audiences with information on how and to what extent the video could have been edited, and what exactly proved the falsification of the sound. Furthermore, Channel 9 has not shown the above-mentioned video, and Imedi TV aired the shots partly (swearing was aired, but call for violence - omitted). Showing the full video could have given the viewers possibility to independently assess the adequacy of charges presented. TV Company Imedi aired the interview with Archimandrite stating that the sound of him swearing was heard in the shot



Archimandrite Antimoz Bichinashvili at May 17 Rally  
news.ge's photo

where he was standing with his back to the camera [http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2044942](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2044942). Rustavi 2, instead of showing the back to the camera shots, aired the front and profile shots, evidently showing that Archimandrite uses the curse language and calls for a violence. ([http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2049188](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2049188)). It should be noted that TV channels except for Rustavi 2 did not prepare reports on the incident which is the violation of articles 12 and 13 of the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters obliging them to provide audiences with unbiased and accurate information (Article 13.2 – "Broadcasters shall provide reliable and accurate information, shall not report any untrue or misleading information.").

- Two petitions were presented as equal ones by the TV Companies *Imedi* and *Maestro*: first the petition of the members of the society demanding the government to adequately punish participants of a violent raiding of May 17 action (12 000 signatures as of April 22), and the second – an alternative petition demanding the legal ban of propaganda of homosexuality. Despite noting that the signatories of the second petition were unknown (Imedi TV, *Qronika*, May 20), the host of *Qronika* Nutsa Kopaliani directly quoted the text of the petition (Nutsa Kopaliani: *"The other petition published today demands the legal prohibition of propaganda of perverse sexual life"*). She could have done it through the periphrasis. ([http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2044942](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2044942), [http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2044634](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2044634)).

## Hate Speech, Encouraging the Violence

Below are the examples of respondents either encouraging violence or using hate speech with regard to sexual minorities.

Bidzina Gujabidze, Georgian Dream:



Obiektivi, Open Studio, May 21

*"Our boys died heroically in Afghanistan, and whoever shows disrespect and says so impertinently and cynically that some rights are being violated, will get the social rage in response."*

<http://www.obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12032>

Rezo Amashukeli, poet:

Kavkasia, Spektri, May 21

*"If a man comes out showing me the hips and lip-stick, I will hit him so hard that even his mother will fail to recognize him.... Some day these people will really rush in rage."*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2045901](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2045901)

Asaval-Dasavali, May 20-26

*"I am not sorry at all that these pederasts and their rights' defenders were beaten up. Now these so called human rights defender ladies with their horny butts may go and raise complaints against me wherever they want."*

<http://www.asavali.ge/archive/asdas/2013/970.html>

Soso Jachviani, Georgian Dream:

Asaval-Dasavali, May 20-26

*"They come out demanding recognition from us whether we want it or not. Organizers of the gay parade make a lot of money and they are the most sinful, spoiled people."*

<http://www.asavali.ge/archive/asdas/2013/970/970.pdf>

Soso Tsintsadze, Politologist:

Kavkasia, Spektri, May 21

*"I am asking you, may a child raised in a family of pederasts be normal?...the hell with them. I also know what a threat these gays coming into power pose for a country. This is a threat, a serious threat."*

Goga Khaindrava, director:

Kavkasia, Spektri, May 23

*"There are countries in Europe absolutely, categorically resisting all sorts of homosexuality, rejecting the indulgence of people with different sorts of pathologies and their ideology. We should have the same approach."*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2049002](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2049002)

Maestro, Politmeter, May 24

*"This country will not tolerate pederasty... whatever is said about human rights by peo-*

*ple who see nothing beyond their own behinds, or exactly, beyond the pals' butts... (Host of the talk-show Nino Zhizhilashvili called on the respondent to retain courtesy).*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2048729](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2048729)

*Do you want people with their pants down walking around in Tbilisi? Men wearing tongues, french-kissing each other, and you..." (Respondent's microphone was switched off).*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2048776](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2048776)

*Continued on p. 2*



## May 17 – “Provocation”

Respondents, as well as journalists on some occasions, without any factual grounds, were promoting the thought that May 17 rally was orchestrated by external forces. Such speculations were mostly directly or indirectly expressed with regard to the United National Movement.

Bidzina Ivanishvili, Prime-Minister:

Rustavi 2, Kurieri, May 21

*“I think that the Minister of Interior has a grounded doubt that this was orchestrated from outside. There were forces encouraging and even financing this.”*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2049142](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2049142)

Channel 9, Mtavari Kitkhva, May 20

The Leader of the parliamentary majority David Saganelidze indirectly hints on provocateurs that in his opinion had a political motivation to escalate the situation and financially backed the rally. David Saganelidze also raises the issue of inspirators' responsibility.

David Saganelidze, GD:

*“I have information that certain forces and even finances backed them (organizers of the rally against homophobia). The number one task was to somehow drive police into making a mistake and confronting the people...”*

*At the same time, I demanded and still keep demanding to punish inspirators as well.”*

In response to journalist Eka Beridze's attempt of making respondent identify these forces, David Saganelidze points out to hypothetical political opponents trying to escalate the issue for years.

David Saganelidze: *“You know better than me who was working in this sphere doing everything to somehow escalate this issue once again.”*

<http://tv9.ge/?l=G&m=2&sm=1&sm=1&id=2217>

*Continued on p. 6*

## Hate Speech, Encouraging the Violence



Levon Vasadze:

Maestro, Politmeter, May 20

*“I do not think that I confronted a lesser filth on May 17 than the Soviet army that came and has been killing us on April 9 on Rustaveli Avenue.”*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2045954](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2045954)



Jansug Charkviani, poet:

Kviris Oronika, May 20-26

*“Dude, what's the problem, you are a guy and you like a man? Go and undergo a surgery, turn into a woman! I wrote a poem on May 17:*

*“Look how they are running,*

*Alas, we are witnessing this,*

*A Kakhetian donkey's better*

*Than pederasts from Tiflis.”*



Guram Pirtskhalava, actor:

Asaval-Dasavali, May 20-26

*“This bitch Ninia Kakabadze and all organizers of the gay parade should be arrested!”*

## May 17 – “Provocation”

[Kviris Palitra, May 20-26](#)

In difference from the leader of majority, Director of the Center of Election and Political Technologies Kakhi Kakhishvili directly blames National Movement in provoking the recent developments. In his opinion, National Movement is directly associated with sexual minorities.

**Kakhi Kakhishvili, expert:**

*“Aggression toward the people of non-traditional orientation is especially strong, because at some point they are associated with the National Movement which for years has been defending its own and their rights only.”*

*National Movement managed to achieve its goal at the expense of sexual minorities: once again, they positioned themselves to the West as so called democrats. This rally had political goals rather than those of demonstration against homophobia.”*

<http://www.kvirispalitra.ge/kviris-tema/17180-q17-maisis-notaze-qnacionaleb iq-mthel-evropas-shemoivlianq.html>

[Obiektivi, Open Studio, May 21](#)

Member of Parliament from the Georgian Dream Bidzina Gujabidze links May 17 violence to the representatives of the previous government maintaining their positions in the governmental structures (mostly meaning Giga Bokeria, Secretary of the National Security Council).

**Bidzina Gujabidze, GD:**

*“This rally was planned in the structures still remaining from the previous government, anticipating higher number of victims.”*

*There were corpses of those killed in Afghanistan and the ceremony was in progress nearby, so holding a gay parade was entirely out of context. That’s what Bokeria counted on with regard to this international day.”*

<http://www.obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12032>

**Sandro Bregadze, Patriots:**

[Kviris Palitra, May 20-26](#)

*“Organization Identity is a branch of National Movement, and the Secretary of the National Security Council is its curator. The phrases were heard in the National Movement’s offices: “There should be bloodshed, it serves our interests if there are victims... it is our interest.”*

[Alia, May 24-27](#)

**Gela Zedelashvili, journalist:** *“Bokerias and Merabishvilis have chosen this day intentionally, knowing very well what would follow.”*

**Giorgi Popkhadze, journalist:** *“What happened in Tbilisi was a well planned provocation by Saakashvili’s team. They counted on people’s ignorance.”*

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**Kakhi Kakhishvili:**

*“Aggression toward the people of non-traditional orientation is especially strong, because at some point they are associated with the National Movement which for years has been defending its own and their rights only”...*

## May 17 – “Provocation”

### Kavkasia, Spektri, May 21

Host of the talk-show *Spektri* David Akubardia shares poet Rezo Amashukeli's opinion that spouse of Secretary of the National Security Council (he refers to her by the name of an animal, “mongoose”) and Secretary General of the National Movement are the organizers of May 17 provocation (David Akubardia: “It's obvious”, “vicious plan”). At the same time, host of the program does not react when respondent refers to a person as an animal or claims that homosexuals are sick people.

Rezo Amashukeli, poet:

*“This is a clear provocation planned by the Liberty Institute, by Mrs. Mongoose, our Bokeria's wife, same as Merabishvili. Do you really think that such rage and exaltation was directed toward these people who allegedly are not sick anymore? This was letting out the anger accumulated over the last nine years.”*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2045881](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2045881)

### Kviris Qronika, May 20-26

Journalist of *Kviris Qronika* develops the similar conspiracy, claiming without bringing any facts that secretary of the National Security Council Giga Bokeria, member of the parliament from the National Movement Chiora Taktakishvili, and certain non-governmental organizations are the organizers of May 17 rally.

Khatuna Elbakidze, journalist:

*“Non-governmental organizations enthused by the National Movement and with their efforts financed by the foreign grants mobilized the “sexual minorities of all Georgia” and aspired to hold a parade on the Rustaveli Avenue. Those, against the gay parade, moral people planned the counterdemonstration against this perverse, immoral rally.*

*Chiora Taktakishvili demanded categorically that, despite excessive number of people, the participants should manage to get into the center of the thousands of people and not retreat. Did those leaders of gays and lesbians have a choice? Without Chiora's approval they cannot obtain grants, and they drove these sinful people to the slaughter place, led them right into the heart of the crowd.*

*Giga Bokeria and other members of this caste of the faithless aspire for the bloodshed, at any demonstration, whether political or apolitical.”*

[http://www.alia.ge/com/news/view/927?fb\\_action\\_ids=447590392001527&fb\\_action\\_types=og.likes](http://www.alia.ge/com/news/view/927?fb_action_ids=447590392001527&fb_action_types=og.likes)

## Republicans

While the National Movement has been a target for criticism and hatred for defending the rights of Minorities earlier, the Republican Party along with the nationals has been mentioned numerous in the same context.

### Asaval-Dasavali, May 20-26

Journalist Giorgi Gigauri criticizes the member of the Republican Party and the deputy Minister of Education David Zurabishvili for his views expressed in social network concerning May 17 rally and touching upon the problem of ethnic and religious nationalism and the role of the church in this process.

#### **Giorgi Gigauri, Journalist:**

*"How he (Bidzina Ivanishvili) can fulfill the Georgian Dream while standing by the anti-Georgian, haters of Georgians - the Republican Party?! If the domination of pederasts, Liberty Institute, and Republican Party continues in Georgia, I would like to ensure everybody, that millions of Georgians rather than just 100 000 will come out into the streets. Republican Party is a cancer that has been sucking life out of Georgian national body since 1990, for 23 years now. It should be cut off from the political reality of Georgia, together with the NatMo [United National Movement]."*

### Alia, May 22

**Koka Kvinikadze (identified as political prisoner):** *"Republicans represent a liberal group directly motivated to introduce such way of life around the world. There is a doctrine in action by the former head of the American Intelligence Service Dulles stating that they should introduce lechery and homosexuality everywhere, and whoever opposes should be labeled as dark and marginal groups."*

<http://www.alia.ge/com/news/view/973>

## Anti-Western Attitudes

There were anti-Western statements mostly with regard to rally of May 17 in the reporting period. Respondents and journalists presented homosexuality as imposed by the West. It should be noted that other issues related to the equality of persons (linguistic diversity, cult buildings, etc) are also being presented as values forced from outside.

### Obiektivi, May 21

Host of the *Obiektivi Night Studio* program Nino Ratishvili presented incorrect information concerning the US State Department report, claiming that this document allegedly states that the Orthodox Church is an obstacle to Georgia's development. State Department report covering many states around the world, provides information on the violation of human rights including religious rights basing on the local sources (governmental and non-governmental) of information.

#### **Nino Ratishvili, host:**

*"I was listening to the US State Department earlier today. They perceive Church - our mother church - as a problem for Georgia, problem for them because this spirituality keeps us away from what they - US and even Europe - offer us."*

*"These Ambassadors of various countries keep lecturing us like Secretaries of the Central Committee."*

#### **Irma Inashvili, founder of Obiektivi:**

*"We know what Europe and US require from Georgia. One of the key demands to Georgia - Georgians, be aware that you should use your ass as genitals! This is first, and second, Georgians, you should grant the status of regional languages to these, these, and these... You should teach your children English first, and then Armenian, Azeri and other languages. Finally, you may teach them Georgian or not, as you wish."*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12031>; <http://www.obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12032>

### Obiektivi, May 26

Guest of the program, leader of the Alliance of Patriots David Tarkhan-Mouravi agrees with the listeners' opinions, while host Gia Areshidze leaves incorrect expressions without response.

**Listener:** *"First of all, we should respect ourselves, so the US Ambassador would not dare to come out at Rustaveli Avenue glaring at us angrily, he would not dare it either with Lichtenstein or Luxemburg."*

**Listener:** *"Democracy is not consent to the anal sex. Sorry for the expression, I would give you one more hint - the first Satanic Church was established in America in 1925. Now, let the people make their own conclusions on the rest."*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12114>



## Anti-Western Attitudes

Levan Vasadze:

[Maestro, Politmeter, May 20](#)

*"I have nothing to do in Europe where the same sex marriages are allowed, neither my wife, nor my children, and friends have. If they come and tell me, hey dude, this is our standard and if you want to hang out with us, you should be like we are, then we'll tell them, sorry..."*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2045993](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2045993)

Rezo Amashukeli, poet:

[Kavkasia, Spektri, May 21](#)

*"In response to our deeply respected Hammarberg - a very likable guy stating that he cannot explain to Europeans, that the place where such things happen has a democracy - I would say timidly and with respect, that I cannot explain to Georgian people if this is an inherent attribute of democracy... if Georgians should walk around with shiny asses and we should have guys in women's traditional headwear, I cannot explain this in Georgia."*

Rather than perceiving respondent's attitudes as problematic, host David Akubardia defends Hammarberg, who in his opinion is not a flagman of homosexuals. ("Come on, this man is not their flagman"). [http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2045901](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2045901)

[Alia, May 23](#)

*"The Russian never demanded from me to marry my nephew, or any other man. Hell with both Russia and America if my country is not doing well!"*

[Asaval-Dasavali, May 20-26](#)

*"Let's not follow these sick people, these handicapped, let them talk as much as they want! I am saying directly: because of these mankurts, stinky sons of bitches, the Georgian people hate America! I was a dedicated US fan myself, I cannot stand them now."*

Giorgi Popkhadze, journalist:

[Alia, May 24-27](#)

*"I don't understand, what sort of formation the EU is, and why it should give us any directives?"*

Khatuna Elbakidze, journalist:

[Kviris Oronika, May 20-26](#)

*"US and EU have been actively supporting the gay rally, therefore they were against the patriots' demonstration. Our politicians, despite their political orientation, are all flirting with the leaders of the EU and US."*

Nugzar Kvashali, singer:

[Rezonansi, May 20](#)

*"This is not Europe where they have a lot of such filth, Hell with them! This is the Orthodox Christian country. The whole nation should not be stressed out because of some 50 persons. That's why I justify the actions of every single person, who adequately responded to them."*

[Kviris Oronika, May 20-26](#)

Journalist Nino Samkharadze draws a number of unjustified parallels between the embezzlement of funds and arrest of several persons in the railway sphere and the defense of homosexuals' rights and neglect of the majority's interests. Journalist even uses the offensive and incorrect expressions ("pederast", "protection of one's behind").

*Continued on p. 10*

## “Propaganda” of Homosexuality

There is a cultivation of the opinion that the freedom of expression of sexual minorities and their rights’ defenders is nothing but the propaganda of homosexuality. Both politicians (mostly representatives of the ruling party) and respondents demand the legal prohibition of propaganda of homosexuality, however, journalists does not even try to clarify what in this case the exact meaning of the term “propaganda” is.

For information, the Russian Federation adopted a law banning the propaganda of homosexuality and is being sharply criticized by the international human rights organizations.

### Koba Davitashvili, Georgian Dream:

[Kavkasia, Spektri, May 22](#)

*“I do not want my kids being raised with the idea that sodomy is normal, ordinary, acceptable and even likable. I do not want such propaganda. Democracy is the rule of majority. Let’s draft a law and discuss the issue.”*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2048976](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2048976)



### Gubaz Sanikidze, Georgian Dream:

[Maestro, Politmeter, May 24](#)



*“Propaganda of homosexuality carried out by mass media in Georgia should be restricted, necessarily. Very often you see man wearing a dress on TV. This is propaganda. This happens in comedy shows, entertainment programs. Laughing and smiling they make us get used to coexisting with the filth.”*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2048812](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2048812)

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## Anti-Western Attitudes

*Continued from p. 10*

**Nino Samkharadze:** *“They react and focus on the defense of pederasts’ behinds. Why did the protection of a homosexuals butt become a national tragedy, or why did the world and the civilized Europe go blind and unjust failing to see the interests of the majority and elite corruption of the previous government, defending the rights of minorities while ignoring the will of the majority? Sorry, but if the asses of these tenish pederasts are so important, we don’t need either NATO or EU.”*

[Alia, May 22](#)

In his interview with *Alia* newspaper, Koka Kvinikadze, released as a political prisoner, makes unjustified comparisons concerning the statements by the Young Lawyers Association and the former US Ambassador concerning May 17 rally.

**Koka Kvinikadze:** *“US ambassador and Young Lawyers saw very well whatever they did to our citizens at the Rustaveli Avenue on May 26, but they gave a green light then. Both made statements that the government had a legitimate right to break up the demonstration and now these people defend LGBT rights. How can we say that they are human rights defenders? Now, the US embassy and EU representatives call on the government to punish the priests. Where were you when Saakashvili’s government has been killing people in the streets?”*

<http://www.alia.ge/com/news/view/973>

## “Propaganda” of Homosexuality

Bidzina Gujabadze, GD:

[Obiektivi, Open Studio, May 21](#)

*“The freedom of expression, advertising and propaganda of something...[unacceptable] for the large part of society should not be allowed.”*

<http://www.obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12032>

Giorgi Targamadze, Kristian-Democrats:

[Rezonansi, May 22](#)

Newspaper publishes information by the news agency Iveroni titled “Targamadze will also fight against gays.”

*“Perverse sexual way of life is abnormal. We are talking about the propaganda in public spaces only as no one breaks into their houses. Therefore, we should fight against this by all means, if we do not want gay parades being held in the center of Tbilisi.”*



Soso Manjavidze, Alliance of Patriots:

[Kavkasia, Barrier, May 21](#)



*“Our entire historical narrative is against this (homosexuality). Saint Nikolas hit Urikine (Heretic Arius) at the Nicaea Church Council, but he remained being Saint Nikolas. That’s why the Parliament exists – to reflect the opinion and attitudes of majority in the laws, so we will not get such provocations in future.”*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2046410](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2046410)

David Saganelidze, GD:

[Channel 9, Mtavari Kitkhva, May 20](#)

*“Their movies, video clips, photos... Would they put it on the walls in our entrance halls and elevators? This should be banned.”*



Jondi Bagaturia, Georgian Troup:

[Kviris Oronika, May 20-26](#)

*“Everybody has the right of a private life. The Church says that no one has the right to interfere harshly and violently into other’s personal life. However, publication and propaganda of your abnormal private life is an entirely different issue.”*

Giorgia Gabelava, released as a political prisoner:

[GPB, Moambe, May 24](#)

*“Propaganda of lechery should be legally banned in Georgia.”* [http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2049001](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2049001)

[Rezonansi, May 20](#)

Zaza Khutsishvili, singer:

*“I think, we have to urgently adopt legal amendments guaranteeing their rights but prohibiting propaganda. Last year, men were kissing each other right in the streets... They should not be allowed to do this.”*

## Restriction of the public space

[Kavkasia, Barrier, May 24](#)

Gela Nikolaishvili, Former Political Prisoners for HR:

*“At this stage, maybe we could give these people some territory, for instance, gay clubs or bars. There, they may have a possibility to organize demonstration or whatever. Just on a certain territory... and intrusion into their territory will be a crime, like nudists have their beaches.”*

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2049158](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2049158)

Gia Kruashvili, Free Georgia:

[Kviris Oronika, May 20-26](#)

*“Law should regulate this, otherwise stopping them will be impossible. Let them use certain places for the gay parades.”*

Mikheil Saakashvili, Presidebt of Georgia:

[GPB, Moambe, 24 May](#)

Even though President Mikheil Saakashvili condemned the violence of May 17 stating that any citizen has the guaranteed freedom of expression, he speculatively linked the appropriateness of holding the rally against homophobia to the funeral ceremony of the soldiers killed in Afghanistan that took place several days before on Rustaveli Avenue.

*“Naturally, everybody has the right to rally. However, whether it is appropriate holding the rally in a close proximity to the place where the funeral ceremony of soldiers killed in Afghanistan was being held is a different issue and a separate topic, as far as I know... and I am not touching upon it.”* [http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2046206](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2046206)

Aleko Elisashvili, host of the TV Company Kavkasia's program Barrier shares the President's position, on May 21:

*“I agreed with Saakashvili on a single thing: he said, it would have been good to respect the soldiers killed in Afghanistan and not to gather at the same place the next day.”*

## Theocracy or the Secular State?

Monitoring of the media coverage of May 17 events reveals that neither journalists nor the members of the ruling party understand the core essence of a secular state.



Civil.ge-ს ფოტო

[Channel 9, Mtavari Kitkhva, May 20](#)

In response to host Eka Beridze's question concerning the legal responsibility of offenders (“My question is whether the offenders should be punished. Are you saying that what happened was a fault of the organizers of the rally?”), the leader of the parliamentary majority David Saganelidze brings up the canonical justice, referring to violent offenders as rebels.

**David Saganelidze, GD:** *“The church has its own laws and makes decisions, who am I to judge the laws of the church. If one is to be judged by the church, the church will judge him...”*

*Concerning the violent offenders, let the prosecutor use this term, I would use the term rebels, in this case.”*

[Kviris Oronika, May 20-26](#)

**Khatuna Elbakidze, journalist:** *“Policeman is a Christian first, and only then a policeman.”*

[http://www.alia.ge/com/news/view/927fb\\_action\\_ids=447590392001527&fb\\_action\\_types=og.likes](http://www.alia.ge/com/news/view/927fb_action_ids=447590392001527&fb_action_types=og.likes)

## Anti-Turkish Attitudes

The leader of the political union *Tetrebis* (Whites) Temur Shashiashvili made anti-Turkish statements, and Journalist of *Kviris Qronika* Gela Zedelashvili shared his opinion. In case of *Obiektivi*, there was an exaggeration of events by the listener developing conspiracy theories about enemies. The host of the program failed to ask for the clarification of facts.

### *Kviris Qronika*, May 20-26

**Temur Shashiashvili, Whites:** *“We have turned ourselves into the slaves of Turks in Georgia, and served as their slaves in their country as well. You should check this: Agmashenebeli Avenue belongs to Turks. One of them arrived and opened the casino there without any permit saying that the avenue belongs to them.”*

### *Obiektivi*, Open Studio, May 23

**Viewer:** *“I was there on May 26. I was raided and beaten up brutally. Can you imagine my bewilderment seeing that not only our mankurts were against us but Turks were also fighting us? Turkish conversations were heard all around.”*

<http://obieqtivi.net/tv1.php?id=12065>

## Discrimination on Religious grounds

### *Kviris Qronika*, May 20-26

Journalist Khatuna Elbakidze evaluates national Movement’s policy, namely Basil Mkalavishvili’s detention for his attacks on Witnesses of Jehovah as an action against the Christian Orthodox parish rather than in the context of the rule of law. In a discriminatory manner, journalist calls Pentecostals and Witnesses of Jehovah “sects of various origin.” Besides, she considers legal amendments providing religious organizations with the right to register as legal entities of public law as discriminatory.

**Khatuna Elbakidze, journalist:** *“For obvious reasons, it was very important for them to imprison priest Basil, destroy the churches and terrorize the Orthodox parish. However, there is nothing surprising here – Witnesses of Jehovah went beyond any bounds since then in Georgia. Pentecostals, other sectants and Giga Bokeria, within a month after that, managed that Tbilisi City Court registered Jehovah’s sect as a religion and a legal entity.”*

[http://www.alia.ge/com/news/view/927?  
fb\\_action\\_ids=447590392001527&fb\\_action\\_types=og.likes](http://www.alia.ge/com/news/view/927?fb_action_ids=447590392001527&fb_action_types=og.likes)

### *Obiektivi*, May 21

**Irma Inashvili, founder of *Obiektivi*:** *“Is this Ilia’s way [reference made to the new slogan of the National Movement – New National Movement], selling your soul to Jehovah’s Witnesses for a bagful of flour?”*

<http://obieqtivi.net/tv1.php?id=12031>

*Continued on p. 14*





Al. Chavchavadze №54,  
Entrance 5, Floor 4.  
Tbilisi, Georgia 0179

Tel/Fax: (+99532) 2 22 00 16

E-mail: [info@mdfgeorgia.ge](mailto:info@mdfgeorgia.ge)  
[mdfgeo@gmail.com](mailto:mdfgeo@gmail.com)

[WWW.MDFGEORGIA.GE](http://WWW.MDFGEORGIA.GE)

### Disputed Construction

*[Imedi TV, Qronika, May 24](#)*

Qronika story touches upon the construction of a mosque in the village of Soganlugi and related confrontation among the locals. According to the official information provided by Tbilisi City Municipality the permit is issued for the construction of a house. The same is confirmed by one of the citizens at the construction site – he is not identified in the story, and he refuses being a Wahhabite. However, the story is presented in the light of unacceptability of a construction of a Wahhabite chapel. There is no mentioning that the right to perform prayer in private property does not fall into the sphere of public regulation.

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2048972](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2048972)

**[Public Broadcasting, Moambe, May 24](#)**

Journalist Mari Tsarelashvili in the similar story, basing on the same respondent who declined the fact of construction of a Mosque on Imedi TV, states that the respondent confirms the fact of religious construction. However, relevant sound bite was not included and the journalist offered her interpretation only, thus promoting the spread of incorrect information.

[http://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=2049004](http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2049004)

### Civil sector

14 921 citizens of Georgia signed the petition to the President of Georgia, Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Parliament concerning the need of timely and adequate investigation of the raiding of May 17 rally against homophobia and transphobia. “Georgia’s democratic statehood might pay a high price for inaction as we are facing a serious threat of religious fundamentalism and theocracy,” – the statement read.

<http://sazogadoeba.com/>

Public defender filled in a statement to Chief Prosecutor, on May 21, demanding the proper investigation of May 17 developments and numerous facts of violence against the organizers of May 17, occurred later.

<http://ombudsman.ge/index.php?page=1001&lang=0&id=1710>

Non-governmental organizations - Georgian Democratic Initiative (GDI), Transparency International - Georgia, Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC), Georgian Young Lawyers association, Article 42 of the Constitution, and International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy – released the joint statement concerning the developments following May 17 rally and called on the law enforcement agencies for effective response to the risks facing LGBT persons and provision of the constitutional rights of the participants of the rally “No to Theocracy”. The statement also focuses on the need to raise political responsibility of high rank persons and politicians making homophobic statements. The statement also stresses the negative role of media as a source and a replicator of hate speech.

<http://gdi.ge/?p=284>

On May 21, the Georgian Charter for Journalistic Ethics presented the findings of the monitoring of the coverage of May 17 events by seven major TV Companies.

<http://qartia.org.ge/?p=1026>

