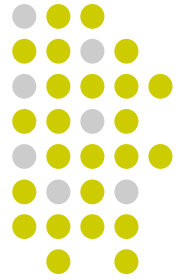




Newsletter #3



The Assessment of the Events Related to the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, on May 17

16.05 -19.05.2013

MONITORING

Media Development Foundation, MDF dedicates a special report to the media coverage of May 17 events related to the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia. Apart from the other factors, media has also contributed to the creation of an atmosphere of hatred, reflection of which society witnessed on May 17. It should be noted that media, with the exception of several outlets, has tried to cover the events in a balanced manner, although its responsibility goes beyond the one day coverage. Studies conducted by our organization demonstrate that the lack of knowledge on certain issues among journalists, unintended ignorance of the professional standards and on some occasions, the deliberate discriminatory editorial policy laid the grounds for promotion of intolerance within the society.

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Monitoring of the Media Coverage of May 17 Events

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 Government.

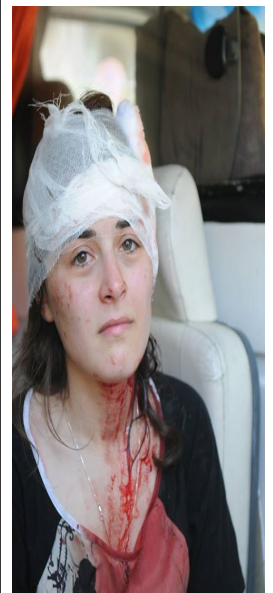
The monitoring focuses on the coverage of the day before the May 17 rally, raiding of the rally, and the follow up developments. Monitoring is carried out on the basis of a random selection and apart from the coverage by the Public Broadcasting, Rustavi 2, Imedi TV, Maestro, Kavkasia, Channel 9, and Media Union Obiektivi, newspaper Rezonansi and Alia, focuses on publications by Radio Freedom, Netgazeti, Tabula, Ambebi.ge, Info 9,

Iverioni, as well as materials circulated in social media, reflecting the violence and the calls for violence. Monitoring covers the period of May 16-19.

Main findings of the monitoring:

- Terminological inaccuracy was one of the main problems revealed during the May 17 events. Throughout the day, the majority of TV Companies including Rustavi 2, Imedi

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Radio Fortuna journalist Khatia Kalandadze have been injured by hit of a rock in her head during May 17 rally.



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Monitoring of the Media Coverage of May 17 Events

Continued from p. 1

TV, and Channel 9 referred to the organizers of the rally against homophobia as representatives of sexual minorities. Later, the host of the Rustavi 2, Giorgi Gabunia apologized. However, in some cases journalists in their live reports continued to describe the participants of the rally as LGBT representatives. The same could be said concerning Imedi TV. The hosts of the Channel 9 news program at 9 continued referring to the organizers of the demonstration as the representatives of sexual minorities while one of the journalists' reports described them as gays. Imedi TV identified LGBT rights defenders as LGBT representatives, in the news program at 8, on May 18. In this regard, TV Company Kavkasia, Maestro, and Rustavi 2 prime-time news programs, P.S. were exceptional, against the general background.

- Terminological inaccuracy has been revealed in a print press as well: *Alia* on May 16 published the interview with Elizbar Javelidze, in which journalist Nino Samkharadze describes the rally as a gay parade.
- It should be noted here that the sexual orientation, as well as the religious faith, ethnic and political identity etc. represent the sphere of a person's self-identification. Therefore, describing organizers of the demonstration as sexual minorities if they themselves do not identify their sexual orientation is wrong and constitutes the violation of the professional standard of media.
- The host of the TV Company Imedi has also made a terminological mistake, saying that the rally was sanctioned, as the Georgian law on assembly and manifestation does not require any official sanction. In this case, we are dealing with the violation of the norm requiring accuracy and preventing the spread of misleading information.
- In *Moambe* at 8 on GPB, the balance in the selection of respondents has been violated in favor of the counter demonstration participants. Though interviewing participants of the rally against homophobia was rather difficult due to their safety reasons, but in the evening news, the TV Company could have equally presented the position of the human rights defenders talking about the constitutional rights of the victims of the violence.
- Some broadcasting media companies were in breach of the Code of Conduct (Article 12-13), requiring the accuracy of facts in reporting. TV Company Channel 9 aired the information at 13.00 that the police used the tear gas to break up the demonstration. The information was refuted at 14.00, however,

Monitoring of the Media Coverage of May 17 Events

there was no apology offered by editorial staff. The story aired by the TV Company Imedi at 8, on May 17 was notable in terms of inaccuracy - it was related to the gay parade of May 17, 2012 in Batumi, and even though the conduct of the parade has never been confirmed, the story presented it as an objective fact.

- The abovementioned story contained an entirely unjustifiable generalization that the clergy, members of the orthodox congregation, and non-governmental organizations usually unite annually, on May 17, and therefore, the violence against LGBT rights defenders on that day is regular and customary.
- The cases of respondents describing homosexuality as a disease and journalists failing to act in response properly, basing on the medical arguments, were revealed (Position- Rustavi2, Gia Eteri – Imedi TV, Qronika – Imedi TV, and Obiektivi). In some cases, (Obiektivi) journalists themselves reproduce such opinions. Only *Maestro TV*, on May 17 noted that the homosexuality has been removed from the list of diseases.
- The identification of the persons targeted by the counter demonstration participants was made possible in some cases. For instance, (Rustavi 2) aired the video recorded from inside the bus full of participants of the rally against homophobia, evacuated by the police from the scene of the violence. The destination of the bus was openly noted, which could not be justified, especially against the background of the counter rally participants still chasing the members and organizers of the rally, all over the city.
- The hosts also failed to act in any way in response to the hate speech used by the respondents.
- It should be noted that *Netgazeti* apologized for the publication of the statements made by the leader of the majority, live on air at Rustavi 2, justifying the necessity of publication with the legitimate social interest towards the opinion of the ruling team's parliamentary leader.

<http://www.netgazeti.ge/GE/105/News/19709/>

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CHRONICLE of VIOLENCE

Violence, call for violence

Rustavi 2, May 17

The video footage of a cleric swearing and threatening to kill the participants of the rally has been aired in the news program *Kurieri* at 9:

The cleric, participant of the rally: *"I'll kill you, f...ck your mother!"*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041492

Channel 1, May 17

The cleric, participant of the rally: *"Don't get scared, let's bust their faces. Let's break the Satan' backbone! Let them be afraid of even making a noise in future."*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2050099

Netgazeti, May 17

Netgazeti publishes the video showing the clerics crashing the fences set by the police and rushing towards the participants of the LGBT rights defenders' rally.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=eZ9KslP9aGo#

Netgazeti published the video material of the meeting of the Minister of Internal Affairs with the clergy, showing clerics threatening with the bloodshed and claiming that they will have a support of the military on their single call if the rally is hold:

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Monitoring of the Media Coverage of May 17 Events

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Concrete Examples

Alia, May 16

Journalist Nino Samkharadze, apart from the terminological inaccuracy, assesses the actions of the new government towards the minorities as incompatible with Georgia's national and religious issues:

Nino Samkharadze: "Mr. Elizbar, the new government came into conflict with the national and religious lines. There is a gay parade planned on May 17 and the Prime Minister fails to avert it. However, the Patriarchy is alarmed and the clergy is going to protest against the gay parade at the counter demonstration. As far as I know, the Ministry of Internal Affairs will be on alert. How do you think, are we going to have a civil confrontation on that day?"

Imedi TV, Oronika, May 17

Even though the hosts of the news program correctly described the organizers of the rally as LGBT rights defenders, journalist Vasil Dabrun-dashvili and the author of the story Levan Pochkhua referred to organizers as LGBT and sexual minority representatives.

It should be noted also that the host of the program, Nutsa Kopaliani incorrectly uses the term "sanctioned place" with regard to the rally, as the Georgian legislation does not require either sanction or authorization for the assemblies and manifestations. This has been clarified by the Tbilisi Municipality and the Prime Minister's representative on May 16, in response to the Patriarchy's request to reverse the official permit to hold the rally.

<http://www.myvideo.ge/?act=dvr&chan=imedi&seekTime=17-05-2013%2020:01>

Imedi TV, Oronka, May 17

The main story line of the report concerning the demonstrations held earlier against homophobia contains several factual inaccuracies. The story focuses on the gay parade thwart in Batumi and the counter demonstration of the Orthodox con-

gregation in 2010, however, journalists fail to emphasize whether the initial information concerning the earlier events is correct, as the internet portal *Netgazeti* did in 2010:

Netgazeti: "The information on the gay parade in Batumi, on August 26 is widely spread. However, none of the media outlets identifies the source of this information. The Patriarchy, which released a denouncing statement, has not referred to the source either." (August 26, 2010)

<http://netgazeti.ge/GE/22/News/2292/>

The story also contains incorrect information concerning the rally against homophobia held in 2012. It implies that the police arrested only defenders of the rights of LGBT. Though, according to *Netgazeti*, "5 persons were detained – three participants of the rally against homophobia, and two clerics." (May 19, 2012)

<http://www.netgazeti.ge/GE/105/law/9584/>

At the same time, there is no information given concerning the rally organized by the Identity and LGBT rights defenders held on May 18, a day following the incident, in front of the Parliament building. The rally has been conducted without any physical confrontation. Please, see news.ge at <http://news.ge/ge/news/story/14802-homofobiis-tsinaaghmdeg-gamartuli-aqtsia-mshvidobianad-dasrulda>

Apart from inaccuracy, the story is extremely unbalanced and presents the violence against sexual minorities as customary and legitimate. In conclusion, journalist remarks that the clergy, orthodox parish, and non-governmental organizations get together

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Dima Jaiani: "I know that 98% of the policemen deep inside were against the people conducting the parade. Despite this, they jumped above their heads and defended them. I know they hated them while seating them in those buses."

Monitoring of the Media Coverage of May 17 Events



every year on the day against homophobia. Likewise, bringing up the quote of a clergyman using hate speech and considering homosexuals as those suffering from a disease, as a definition of homophobia is completely inappropriate.

Deacon Teodor Gignadze: *“Exactly, this is what Demonism and Satanism, the lack of love towards a human being is. This is homophobia. God bless, the man is sick, and instead of trying to help him, pushing him towards the normal life... You have a family, you get married and happy. Does not he want the same? He has the similar desires and where are you pushing him instead?”*

<http://www.myvideo.ge/?act=dvr&chan=imedi&seekTime=17-05-2013%2020:30>

Channel 9, Akhali 9, May 17

The hosts of the TV Company Channel 9 prime-time news program at 9, Tamta Sanikidze and Levan Javakhishvili, as well as the author of the story, journalist Tamar Gogesashvili keep describing the organizers of the rally against homophobia as sexual minorities. The story also contains the sound bite of the journalist asking a question to the head of the PR department of the Ministry of Interior and describing the participants of the rally as gays:

Unidentified journalist: *“Nino, if they are not allowed, would not it violate the gays’ rights?”*

<http://tv9.ge/?l=G&m=3&sm=17&id=2175>

Imedi TV, May 17

Promotion of hatred towards the sexual minorities by Actor Dima Jaiani in the *Gia Eteri* studio left without reaction of the talk-show host Vakho Sanaia.

Dima Jaiani: *“I know that 98% of the policemen deep inside were against the people conducting the parade. Despite this, they jumped above their heads and defended them. I know they hated them while seating them in those buses.”*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2044973

CHRONICLE of VIOLENCE

The cleric: *“Don’t hold the rally here, otherwise you’ll get the bloodshed and if anyone is arrested you’ll get the results even worse than others have ever got before. We only need to whistle once and the entire military will be here.”*

<http://www.netgazeti.ge/GE/105/News/19687/>

Attacks on Yellow Buses

Several media outlets (Rustavi 2, *Netgazeti* and Info 9) circulated the footage of the attack on buses full of participants of the rally against homophobia being evacuated by the police. The threatening shouts can be heard in the video: “break it down!” The participants of the counter demonstration are throwing rocks, bottles, metal fences, and batons to the vehicle.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041016

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2042578

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kLQB0SG6jQ>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=f4lMuAhORU

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041246

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGBohOuGwiY>

Netgazeti, May 17

Netgazeti published the video material showing the attack on the bus transferring two girls - participants of the anti-homophobia rally.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZ5QTXm-4Mo>

Rustavi 2, May 17

Rustavi 2 aired the shots of the attack on the empty bus and its driver.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8TJ2_iXqHc&feature=youtu.be

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In the same program, Dima Jaiani improperly generalizes both, the expression of one of the politicians and the western institutions as well. Again, the host's criticism did not follow.

Dima Jaiani: *"One of the politicians said that we won't be able to join NATO if we break up the gay parade. Should we all be gay to join NATO? Then I don't want to NATO, Sirs."*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2050182

Rustavi 2, Position, May 17

When one of the counter demonstration organizers, Giorgi Gabedava, released from prison as a political prisoner says that LGBT rights defenders are sick and instead of getting treatment, they turn to aggression, Nino Shubladze, rather than appealing to the modern medicine proving the opposite, asks a question on how exactly their aggression is being manifested. Such question to the organizer of the counter demonstration, especially against the background of the aggression and violence carried out exclusively by the participants of the counter demonstration as shown in the video, was extremely inadequate.

Giorgi Gabedava: *"...Instead of staying home, ashamed, and ask for treatment - and we will help them - they become aggressive."*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2045641

In the same program, the respondent described twice the representatives of the sexual minorities as sick people, and on the second occasion the host just said "thank you" expressing the gratitude to the respondent:

Giorgi Gabedava: *"They need treatment. People, they have a disease. They were recently removed from the list, but nevertheless, they are sick."*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2045652

Imedi TV, May 17

Expressions concerning the illness of the LGBT persons were heard in Vakho Sanaia's *Gia Eteri* as well, however, such assessments were not followed by journalist's comment based on the scientific argument either.

Obiektivi, May 17

The host of the *Obiektivi* night studio, in a grave violation of the professional standard, promotes the thesis that homosexuality is a disease. At the same time, the host adds some dramatic touch to the issue and plays with the emotions.

Nino Ratishvili: *"For somebody, this is a choice, for others – the biological problem and a disease. I understand that, but it does not necessarily mean encouraging it. Do you think that today's rally, the silent rally next to the school number #1 right in front of Akaki and Ilia... isn't it an encouragement of this perversion?"*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=11971>

Gia Maisashvili also refers to homosexuals as those being sick.

Gia Maisashvili: *"When the one is sick - and people you are talking about are sick (on LGBT*

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Nino Ratishvili:
"For somebody, this is a choice, for others – the biological problem and a disease. I understand that, but it does not necessarily mean encouraging it."

representatives) - I do not want my country and the society to fall into this adventurism and the whole country to burst up."

<http://obieqtivi.net/tv1.php?id=11970>

Obieqtivi, May 16

The host of the night studio Soso Zaalishvili fails to respond to the viewer's phone call containing excessive hatred and demanding the identification of the non-governmental organizations - enemies of the people trying to destroy the genetic fund for money.

Viewer's phone call: *"Which are those non-governmental organizations supporting this and going to rally tomorrow? We all have to know the names of our enemies - those who receive money for the destruction of our genetic fund."*

In response, the host only remarks quite equivocally, that either fortunately or unfortunately, he knows none of them, and identifies only *Identoba* while promising to the aggressive listener to provide additional information concerning other engaged organizations.

<http://obieqtivi.net/tv1.php?id=11958>

GPB, Moambe, May 17

In *Moambe* at 8, the balance between the sides was substantially compromised in favor of the participants of the counter demonstration. One particular report aired by the GPB contained the sound bites of 12 participants of the counter rally. Of course, it was possible to achieve the balanced coverage if the interviews with the human rights defenders were included into a pre-recorded prime-time news report.

<http://1tv.ge/video/18156>

Rustavi 2, Position, May 17

The guest in the studio, Giorgi Gabedava refers to the leader of the Patriots' Movement with humiliating and insulting name.

Giorgi Gabedava: *"Giorgi Anjela Mazmaniani was a brigadier of those pederasts while being in prison... he established the organization Patriot, and he is the president. This is a disgrace; and the LGBT community stood by him."*

Even though Nino Shubladze calls on the respondent to maintain courtesy, she notes at the same time, that what he says is completely understandable; "although, this is a different topic," she remarks. It is uncertain indeed, why insulting a person is understandable for a host, and why discrimination of person due to his/her sexual orientation is a subject of a different discussion.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2045650

Maestro, Politmeter, May 17

The leader of the Georgian Dream parliamentary fraction Zakaria Kutsnashvili emphasizes the provocative nature of the LGBT rights defenders' actions and deems appropriate them to hold a rally somewhere else, in a closed space.

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CHRONICLE of VIOLENCE

Radio "Liberty", May 19

Radio *Liberty* broadcasted the video provided by one of the participants of the rally against homophobia, recorded from inside the bus and showing aggressive crowd physically assaulting the people inside the bus.

<http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/media/video/24990332.html>

<http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/media/video/24990333.html>

Info 9

Info 9 had the shots of the scene in which the cleric is being asked not to hit the participant of their own rally, who is considered by the cleric himself to be a representative of the sexual minority.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2040814

The cleric with a stool

The topic of a discussion in media and social networks was a cleric moving around during the rally with a stool in his hands. The video of an episode aired by *Rustavi 2* shows the cleric walking around holding a stool in his hand and threateningly aiming it at the yellow bus, and later one of the demonstrators standing next to him taking the stool out of the cleric's hands. After that the cleric punches the bus with his fist.

The Vice Speaker of the Parliament from the *Georgian Dream coalition*, Manana Kobakhidze, in the

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Assessments of the violent raid against the anti-homophobia rally

David Saganelidze: “I do not even want to mention the name of this organization (MDF: “Identoba”) since its members have not done anything good for the country, for the family, for the future, for the traditions or for anything good in this world. Obviously, these people are not for good, rather to make money. That’s why they will try to escalate the situation.”



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Zakaria Kutsnashvili, MP: “...They could have held that rally in a closed building and express their ideas there, by speeches, flags and posters. They have chosen provocative form, which naturally caused irritation in large part of our society, because their Georgian identity historically developed as an ethnos, one of characteristics of which is its religiousness, Orthodox Christian religiousness, and I think people felt inside that this was the basis for losing their Georgian identity, for its violation.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-4VVbOkrls&list=HL1369472894>

In response, the host of the program Nino Zhizhilashvili focuses on the obligation to protect the rights of minorities, and notes the existence of differing opinions on the issue among the ruling party members. At the same time, journalist stresses that according to the Constitution citizens have the right to choose the place to hold an assembly. In response, Kutsnashvili underlines the essential incompatibility of the Georgian identity and sexual minorities.

Zakaria Kutsnashvili, MP: “...Of course, an open rally would have naturally caused reaction in our society, because Georgians don’t share identity with gays and lesbians, Georgians share identity with Orthodox Christianity, with tradition.”

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2044486

Public Broadcasting, *Aktsentebi*, May 17

Those who are against marking the day against homophobia, develop a thesis that minorities should be taking into account the negative attitude and unacceptability towards the issue among the majority. Such statements were echoed in a number of programs. However, the host of the *Aktsentebi* Eka Kvesitadze has rightly pointed out to the equality of rights, in response to Jondi Bagaturia’s remarks.

Jondi Bagaturia: “I would like to address Bidzina Ivanishvili... he should think about where he stands today. Yesterday he was at his peak of popularity and social trust, and today he turned out to be against his own people and supporters, together with a tiny LGBT community.”

Eka Kvesitadze: “Those few people have the same constitutional rights as you, Jondi Bagaturia.”

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2044454

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Zakaria Kutsnashvili: “...Georgians don’t share identity with gays and lesbians, Georgians share identity with Orthodox Christianity, with tradition.”

Assessments of the violent raid against the anti-homophobia

Justification of violence

Rustavi 2, Kurieri, May 17

Assessments made by the majority leader David Saganelidze concerning the May 17 violent attack on the rally against homophobia, not only contain the homophobic and discriminatory expressions, but also encourage violence.

David Saganelidze, Georgian Dream: *"I am a man raised according to traditions. I have my own life and I do not interfere with other peoples' lives. I know that everybody has the right of expression, but, on the other hand, the violence originating from such organizations, when they are trying to impose their way of life on the whole society, is also not acceptable."*

"... Those people, and I do not know how many of them were there exactly - ten, twenty, fifty - it does not matter. They would not have had a single bone intact, if not the courage of the police, stopping the thousands of people until they were able to, so those could have had their rally, or whatever. They [police] managed to transport these people, healthy and unhurt, by buses, away from the territory. The fact that the police officers are injured, as they took the major strike, and those instigating trouble are healthy and still complaining, is the success of the police; and I would like to express gratitude to each of them."

"It is understandable that the society could not accept the ideology of this small group and was outraged. The police did everything to evacuate those 10, 20 or 30 people, who had planned this provocation and then were sitting in the bus with happy faces while the police received injuries. What more should the police have done? Should the police have fired bullets or used tear gas against the people who were outraged by the offensiveness of the [anti-homophobia] rally organizers? Police took the strike and defended the people."

"Identity" or whatever that NGO is called... I do not even want to mention the name of this organization since its members have not done anything good for the country, for the family, for the future, for the traditions or for anything good in this world. Obviously, these people are not for good, rather to make money. That's why they will try to escalate the situation."

Responding to journalist Giorgi Gabunia's question, whether the organizers of the counter demonstration should be punished, leader of the majority stated that those provoking the violence should be punished.

David Saganelidze: *"Those who provoked these events should be punished."*

<http://www.myvideo.ge/?act=dvr&chan=rustavi2&seekTime=17-05-2013%2015:46>

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CHRONICLE of VIOLENCE

program *Press-Press* (May 18), tries to justify the cleric' actions prior to the completion of the investigation.

Manana Kobakhidze: *"this small chair... one of the participants of the counter demonstration was holding it rather than the priest... The priest simply took it out of his hands in order to avoid the incident, and I guess he was going to move it somewhere else."*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=wwWQO27-fSc#

Violence against journalists, policemen and other citizens

Rustavi 2, May 17

The news program *Kurieri* aired the video documenting the violent attack on a yellow bus, as well as the injuries received by journalist of the radio *Fortuna* Khatia Kalandadze, policemen, and one of the rally participants, who had been taken to the hospital on a stretcher.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041497

Facebook

The video shots that appeared in the social network reflect the cleric, together with the group of aggressive people persecuting journalists. The cleric shows the interest in whether one of the journalists is an Orthodox Christian. The journalists called on law-enforcement agencies to arrest the offenders.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=474853219256562>

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Assessments of the violent raid against the anti-homophobia rally

Maestro, Press-Press, May 18

The Vice Speaker of the Parliament, Manana Kobakhidze tries to explain the violent attacks on May 17 with the European analogy and discusses the LGBT rights defenders' rally in the context of the gay parade:

Manana Kobakhidze, Georgian Dream: *"In European countries such things happen too. They like such parades in no country."*

In response to the *Pres-Press* host Diana Trapaidze, whether the clergy are associated with the source of violence, Manana Kobakhidze denies that the priests were encouraging violence.

"I really cannot say that the priests were encouraging violence... As you remember, they had all these things in Europe - Crusaders, Inquisition... While here, the Church has always been a uniting force. The Church will still say its word".

At the same time, Manana Kobakhidze expresses confidently that there is no violation of sexual minorities' rights in Georgia and the issue is overly exaggerated:

"If these people's rights are violated, see the reports, the Public Defender's or any other; tell me where are these violated rights. Let the people of this orientation come and say where are their rights violated... Tell me where it is, maybe some things are over-stated?"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_HuHP4bsGg&feature=player_embedded

Hate speech, encouraging violence

Alia, May 17

Father Elizbar (Diakonidze), Deacon of the Sameba Cathedral: *"During the previous government, we saw several times His Holiness calling on to decline the notorious law on religion, and they did not take it into account. What does that mean, when, in spite of the Patriarch's request, the parade and the public appearance of those perverted spiritually and bodily is not postponed? Why do both the old and the new governments try to spoil our children's souls? Will they stand this sort of people living next to them, in their homes? If it is that acceptable to them why do not they marry - a man to a man, and a woman to a woman? How can you promote such things in an Orthodox Christian world?"*

In response to Shorena Gogoladze's remark, that the government considers the sexual minorities as full-fledged citizens of the society, the Deacon of the Sameba Church once again resorts to hate speech and humiliating, insulting expressions.

"Let him [MDF: Prime Minister] take them home instead of penguins - it is better to have three pederasts tied somewhere in the backyard. If anybody regards them as citizens, I am fine with that, they are citizens of the country, but let them get together somewhere else. The President has a great palace here and let him keep them there. He loves hugging people like that, remember, he used to hold "Anjela" in his arms?"

Kavkasia, Dges, May 17

Father Jacob: *"Although, it is not fair either when several bastards try to stir up a situation just to receive grants. People's anger is justified, but aggression is bad... Look at this ocean of people - if the government fails to solve this, we will do."*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041486

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Manana Kobakhidze: *"As I know, the LGBT rally did not start when it was supposed to. I was delayed. Meanwhile, on the other side, the number of people was closing critical. Maybe these people were waiting just for this critical line? It should be investigated too. Do you think members of "Identity" are free from responsibility?"*

Assessments of the violent raid against the anti-homophobia rally

Obiektivi, May 17

Tamaz Daushvili, Former MP: *“Most of all, I was amazed and happy to see on TV the broken windows of those buses...”*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=11971>

Maestro, May 17

Dimitri Lortkipanidze, Free Georgia: *“An attempt of establishing immorality should not be tolerated, and above all if it has a concrete patrons and subsidizers.”*

<http://www.myvideo.ge/?act=dvr&chan=maestro&seekTime=17-05-2013%2015:13>

Accusing the victims and external forces in provoking the violence

The members of the ruling team have noted both directly and indirectly that the LGBT rights' defenders and certain external forces provoked the violence.

Rustavi 2, May 17

David Saganelidze: *“What is happening today is directly encouraged by certain forces. Such events do not happen by accident. This organization, LGBT or whatever it is called, their association, they have their own way of life and nobody restricts them in this country. But they want to advertise and promote themselves, which they did successfully today, and this was their goal - to attract attention and, unfortunately, they succeeded in that.”*

“This process is controlled from the outside, certain forces and financial resources are behind it, and this should be investigated. Where and whom do these organizations get their funding from? What are the interests behind them?”

“This is inspired by certain forces. This organization, LGBT or some sort of association... I do not even want to say their names. They were waving the colorful flags, but they will sell their bodies for money.”

<http://www.myvideo.ge/?act=dvr&chan=rustavi2&seekTime=17-05-2013%2015:46>

Maestro, May 18

In response to the question of the *Press-Press* host, regarding who is responsible for the recent violent events, the Vice Speaker of the Parliament, Manana Kobakhidze stresses the responsibility of the organization Identity.

Manana Kobakhidze: *“As I know, the LGBT rally did not start when it was supposed to. I was delayed. Meanwhile, on the other side, the number of people was closing critical. Maybe these people were waiting just for this critical line? It should be investigated too. Do you think members of “Identity” are free from responsibility? When you plan such a rally, you must take everything into account. They should have considered that that it was day of mourning, the previous day. “Identity” should have taken this all into consideration when there is such a tension on the other side.”*

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CHRONICLE of VIOLENCE

Imedi, May 17

Interview with the New York Times photographer targeted by the counter rally members was broadcasted by the news program of Imedi TV *Qronika* at 20:00. According to the photo reporter, he felt offended as he was attacked by the demonstrators while performing his professional duties as the participants of the rally perceived him as a representative of the sexual minority.

<http://www.myvideo.ge/?act=dvr&chan=imedi&seekTime=17-05-2013%2020:01>

Channel 9, May 17

The video material showing a policeman being attacked by the cleric was aired by the news program at 9.00 by the TV Company Channel 9.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041476

Kavkasia, May 17

The news program of the TV Company *Kavkasia* “*Dges*” broadcasted the video of a policemen injured by the stones thrown at him, as well as the interview with the observers of the monitoring organization *IDFI* stating that the members of the counter rally spat at them, used insulting terminology, and attempted to break the camera as well.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041487

Threats against the Transparency International Georgia

Giorgi Gabedava, released from the prison as a political prisoner, threatened the representatives of the nearby located non-governm-

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Assessments of the violent raid against the anti-homophobia rally

Channel 9, May 17

The Chairman of the Human Rights Committee Eka Beselia in her assessment emphasized the inexistence of the absolute freedom and hinted that those claiming to fight against the violence may be responsible for the creation of the environment that provokes the violence.



Eka Beselia, Georgian Dream: *"The Constitution obliges us to respect everyone's rights, but human rights and freedom of expression ends at the point where another person's rights begin. Nobody has absolute freedom. This threshold must be protected. We must also consider that it was the day of mourning yesterday. The Patriarchy made a statement, there was the Patriarch's statement. Naturally, there is very big risk of tension. One should consider everything. That is if the task is to fight against violence. But if the task is to create a provocative environment and to have injured people, bloodied police officers, etc. as a result..."*

Journalist Tamta Sanikidze asks a question concerning the persons referred by Eka Beselia as provocateurs. In response, Beselia states that the provocative environment has been noticeable and she would refrain from identifying the concrete names.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9y-d6gTv_I

Tabula, May 17

Nino Burjanadze, Democratic Movement: *"I am sure that this demonstration is backed not by representatives of [sexual] minority who have never experienced problems in our country, but by those people who are trying to instill alien values in our country. It was, first of all, Giga Bokeria and Mikheil Saakashvili who were trying every year, at this period of time, to pitch an idea of conducting such a parade to me. However, my response was always categorically negative. I clearly remember Mr. Bokeria's words: "Mrs. Nino, you will get used to the idea that a gay parade will be held in Georgia. This is an aggravated issue and the National Movement will benefit from it."*

<http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/71212-burjanadze-dghevandeli-aqciis-ukan-upirvelesad-bokeria-da-saakashvili-dganan>



Imedi TV, May 17

Giorgi Tsagareishvili, the Georgian Dream: *"They started marching towards the place of the mass gathering from Kolmeurneobis Moedani (square of collective farming); among them were organizers of the rally who acted rather provocatively. There were provocative actions on the side of minorities and we should acknowledge it. By the way, this was followed with the reaction of the society gathered there."*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2045633

Shalva Natelashvili, Labor party: *"The yesterday's rally was provoked and organized by the Prime Minister Ivanishvili, candidate for Presidency Margvelashvili, and Speaker of the Parliament Usupashvili, in concert with the National Movement. Moreover, according to Prime Minister's statement it turns out that we should be getting ready for the same sex marriage."*

Kakha Kukava, Free Georgia: *"The entire responsibility for the violence rests with the LGBT activists, who sought to hold their rally exactly in three meters from the place where 20 thousand believers were gathered. I will tell you about the responsibility of the government and particularly of Bidzina Ivanishvili - as far as I know, Irakli Garibashvili yesterday night has been begging Bidzina Ivanishvili to allow him to arrange the second safety cordon near the Pushkin Square."*

<http://imedi.ge/index.php?>

Newsletter №3



Giorgi Gbedava: *"This march is meant to protect our morality. In Georgia, we will not allow the gay parade and the similar perverted actions, financed by America and Europe."*

Assessments of the violent raid against the anti-homophobia rally

Anti-Western Sentiments

Kurieri, May 17

While assessing the May 17 events, Father Jacob makes anti-western statements and political assessments.

Father Jacob: *“The time of their domination should end. None of the foreign countries can patronize us and force us to watch things like that. What they were doing with people, raping in prisons, and now, whom do they call offenders? They were seizing businesses, changing the law daily; if they want a courageous resistance, we will meet them as men do. Let them behave, otherwise the nation will not forgive them!”*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041501



Kavkasia, Dges, May 17

In response to journalist's question - where is the vehicle that transported the LGBT rights' defenders - one of the participants of the counter demonstration replies:

Participant of the counter demonstration: *“They will transfer them... They are leaving for the United States. Here we did not give them the chance to follow their business...”*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041486

Channel 1, May 17

Giorgi Gabedava: *“This march is meant to protect our morality. In Georgia, we will not allow the gay parade and the similar perverted actions, financed by America and Europe.”*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2050107

Imedi TV, May 18

Shota Apkhaidze who was serving a sentence for invasion into the TV Company Kavkasia's studio, together with Giorgi Gabedava, and released as a political prisoner in 2012, addresses the diplomatic corps:

Shota Apkhaidze: *“Mikheil Saakashvili's team and their western lobbyists activated these sexual minorities' organizations. I have to ask the western diplomatic corps to refrain from making any preliminary, sharp statements.”*

<http://imedi.ge/index.php?pg=ews&id=4483>

Rezonansi, May 18

Newspaper *Rezonansi* disseminated the information that charge d'affaires of the US Embassy in Georgia was met with the aggressive outcries by the participants of the counter demonstration:

“Bridget Brink's appearance was followed by the anti sexual minority and anti- NATO exclamations. One of the participants shouted, “Georgia will not join NATO.”

http://resonancedaily.com/index.php?id_rub=7&id_artc=15625

CHRONICLE of VIOLENCE

ental organization Transparency International Georgia, after the march of the participants of the counter demonstration on the Rustaveli Avenue.

Giorgi Gabedava: *“I address the office of the Transparency International Georgia: I know that you are supporting Identoba. I want to tell you, that all of you supporting Identoba are the enemies of Georgia, and you will cease to exist as an organization in Georgia, very soon.”*

Giorgi Gabedava who invaded the studio of the TV company *Kavkasia* during the live show together with the radical orthodox group in 2010, and therefore was serving his sentence, had been released from the prison with the status of a political prisoner, according to the law adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in 2012.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=557714644252082>

Violence against the Ombudsman Rustavi 2, May 17

The story aired by the news program *Kurieri* shows the crowd attempting to break into the building of the metro station *Tavisupleba*, events occurred on Belinski Street where the office of the organization *Identoba* is located, and the Ombudsman being deprived of the possibility to execute his duties. For safety reasons and because of the counter rally participants' threats, police had to evacuate Ombudsman from the place of the incident.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041499

Police actions during the rally

Netgazeti and *news.ge* publish the video showing police opening the safety fence while not preventing the counter rally participants from moving towards the place where participants of the rally against homophobia were gathering.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQ7DqOiap9o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQ7DqOiap9o> Continued on p. 17

Assessments of the violent raid against the anti-homophobia rally

Anti-Western Sentiments

ambebi.ge, May 19

Following the May 17 events, singer Tamar Iveri who performs at the leading European operas, published an address to the President of Georgia, on her facebook page, containing anti-western expressions and insulting terminology. Un-News portal *ambebi.ge* published the address without editorial comments:

Tamar Iveri, singer: *"...please, stop vigorous attempts to bring West's "fecal masses" in the mentality of the people by means of propaganda. Do not try to wrap this mass in beautiful packages, pour Chanel perfume on it and present it to people as if it was something of medical, recreational qualities. No matter how unhappy "friendly West" might become, fortunately, the Georgian people are well aware of what fruits, offered by the West in their menu, to eat and what to discard. Just like my small dog guesses it."*



"Even today, U.S. ambassador said that the people who raided the rally yesterday were against NATO. No, Mr. Ambassador: those, who yesterday raided the rally, are Georgian youth of pure blood, still unspoiled by you. I will never forget a trembling young man, who said in front of TV cameras: "People, 50 thousand men have come out in the street against 50 people, because I have a 5-year-old son at home, and I will not let anyone get away with corrupting his mind." From my side I would tell you, Mr. Ambassador - I spat at your NATO, which tells me that first, I have to put up with and permit all these and then I will be accepted [in NATO]. There might be 20, 30, or even 100 people like this to please you, but you won't be able to stoop [the term that is used in the original version means "bending down for anal sex"] the whole nation to get into NATO! Georgia existed perfectly well for many centuries before creation of US and NATO."

<http://www.ambebi.ge/faceambebi/78102-thamar-iveri-prezidents-qnu-atenith-qarthvel-khalkhs-pirshi-dasavlethidan-tsamosul-fekaliebsq.html#ixzz2UaOzwneu>

Obiektivi, May 16

Listener: *"Let's put aside America and Europe. Why should we copy them, they should be copying us... We had a first king to prohibit the killing of men. In the history of mankind Tamar was the first king to abolish the death penalty, in the 12th century... we do not need any sorts of minorities."*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=11958>

Assessments of the violent raid against the anti-homophobia rally

Freedom of Expression or the propaganda of homosexuality

Kavkasia, May 17

Ilia II, the Patriarch of Georgia: *"We dissociate from violence. However, such propaganda is unacceptable - the man may commit a sin. It should be noted that this is a sin and none of the religions can support it."*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041482

Rustavi 2, May 17

In his interview with *Kurieri*, on May 17, the Vice Speaker of the Parliament and the representative of the Georgian Dream Zviad Dzidziguri stated that demonstration of the same sex relations gravely violates the rights of majority.

Zviad Dzidziguri, Georgian Dream: *"My view is that everyone has the right to privacy, but one cannot simply demonstrate [one's sexual orientation]... I have children and the rights of the majority are seriously violated, when they come out and start to demonstrate that they are gays and thus, cool. This is unacceptable for me as a conservative and head of the family."*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041518

Netgazeti, May 17

In his assessment, member of the parliamentary majority Zurab Abashidze focuses on the unacceptance of the sexual minorities by the society, noting that popularizing homosexuality and imposing it on a society can

not be allowed:

Zurab Abashidze, Georgian

Dream: *"In my opinion, the society is not mature enough for this. We, the people and the country, are not ready to instantly accept sexual minorities. One should not be promoting and imposing this."*

<http://www.netgazeti.ge/GE/105/News/19710/>

Iveroni, May 17

Soso Jachvliani, Georgian

Dream: *"I am an Orthodox Christian. I have my own lifestyle. I follow traditions. Why do not you live by yourself when no one is after you, no one is beating you up? You can live the way you want, but do not try to promote this and ask for recognition from people..."*

<http://www.iveroni.com.ge/politika/33594-soso-jatcvliani-qes-saqarthveloa-da-yvelam-garthulad-unda-ickhovrosq.html?lang=ka-GE>

Public Broadcasting, Moambe, May 18

Evgeni Mikeladze, National

Front: *"We demand the government to legally forbid the propaganda of philandering including the sexual wrongdoing and its propaganda and agitation."*

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2044163



Zviad Dzidziguri:

"I have children and the rights of the majority are seriously violated, when they come out and start to demonstrate that they are gays and thus, cool. This is unacceptable for me as a conservative and head of the family."

Reaction of Civil Sector

- On May 16 *The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics* and *Media Development Foundation*, MDF released the statement calling for media outlets to cover the announced rally against homophobia in compliance with professional standards, at the same time, take appropriate security measures in order to enable policemen to identify media representatives among the demonstrators.

<http://qartia.org.ge/category/განცხადებები/>
<http://mdfgeorgia.ge/index.php?menuid=4&lang=1&id=124>
- On May 16 the statement was spread by *Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI)*, *Transparency International Georgia*, *Georgian Young Lawyer's Association (GYLA)*, *Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC)*, *42 Article of Constitution and International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)*. Taking into account the scale and the context of the rally human rights defenders addressed the police to work out an effective security strategy and take all measures to ensure peaceful and safe conducting of the both rallies. Non-governmental organizations called for the organizers and demonstrators of the rallies to protect the law.

<http://gdi.ge/?p=272>
- On May 17, during the process of covering the rally, MDF spread the statement calling for media outlets not to identify the organizers and participants of the rally against Homophobia as sexual minority representatives. The recommendations had been taken into account by some media outlets in further programs.

<http://mdfgeorgia.ge/index.php?menuid=15&lang=1&id=123>
- On May 17 the organization *Identoba* spread the announcement stating that the prosecution of potential participants of the rally is still going on, and the raiding of the office of the organization was being planned. *Identity* demanded the immediate prevention of the identified crime, arrest of the offenders and beginning of the investigation to prevent the violent actions towards the staff of the organization or participants of the rally.

<http://identoba.com/category/მთავარი/განცხადებები/>

Reaction of Civil Sector

- On May 17 *Transparency International Georgia* spread the statement in social network regarding the evaluations made by majority leader - David Saganelidze in live stream of TV company *Rustavi 2*. According to the organization such statements promote aggravation of the problem instead of resolving them.
https://www.facebook.com/tamar.kintsurashvili/posts/10200782041966460?notif_t=like
- The six organizations (*GYLA, GDI, EMC, ISFED, TI Georgia, 42 Article of the Constitution*) released on May 17 the preliminary evaluation of the rallies and raised the question of legal responsibility of the relevant institutions and persons.
<http://gyla.ge/geo/news?info=1569>
- The adequate legal evaluation of the May 17 events had been requested by the foundation *ALPE* and *The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics*. *ALPE* condemned speculation with human feelings by supporters of political and religious radicalism against background of such tragic developments.
<http://qartia.org.ge/category/განცხადებები/>
- The monitoring of covering the events of May 17 had been conducted by internet portal - *media.ge* and *The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics*.
<http://www.media.ge/ge/portal/news/300380/>
<http://qartia.org.ge/2013/05/21/ქართვის-მონიტორინგის-შედეგად/#more->



CHRONICLE of VIOLENCE

<http://news.ge/ge/news/story/55027-kadrebi-rogor-gaarghvics-kordoni-aqtsiis-moantsileebma>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMWk37Wx8Jo&feature=player_embedded

Netgazeti is trying to find out from one of the policemen on the Freedom Square why they have dismantled the fences. It is possible in the video to identify the words of the policemen explaining that the Deputy Chief of the Criminal Police gave the instruction to take apart the fences.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8OghfK5b50>

Netgazeti had also circulated the video of one of the policemen referring LGBT defenders as pederasts.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dci9OzDSwUU>

The comment of the Deputy Minister of Interior, Vakhtang Gomelauri was aired in the news program *Kurieri* of the TV company *Rustavi 2* (May 17) in which he explains the actions of the counter rally participants' with the argument of them being Georgians:

Vakhtang Gomelauri: "We are anticipating trouble, we are Georgians and simply people don't want this intended rally to be held."

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2041506

After May 17...

PS, May 19

Following the events on May 17, several representatives of the *Identoba* asked media to broadcast their interviews without identifying them, explaining the request with the augmented aggression against them.

The interviews recorded prior to the rally were broadcasted, though with the interviewees' faces covered in the program *PS* of the *Rustavi 2*, on May 19.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2044881



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The Assessment of the Events Related to the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, on May 17

Continued from p. 1

The cases of media reproducing the discriminatory expressions of the public persons, without any criticism, should be mentioned separately. The assessments of some politicians, their public statements blended with homophobic, xenophobic expressions and hate speech further promote intolerance towards people with different opinions and minority groups as well.

The state institutions share the responsibility along with the public persons. Information spread by media and observing organizations concerning the homophobic statements and attitudes toward the LGBT rights defenders among the police officers are especially worrying.

Media development foundation

- Aligns itself with the statements of the non-governmental organizations and civil society demanding the effective investigation of the facts of mass violence, including those committed against journalists, an increasing number of attacks on citizens following the May 17 events, as well as the punishment of those guilty.
- Addresses the Ministry of Internal Affairs and calls on the investigation of actions of the policemen notable for their homophobic statements and attitude toward the LGBT rights defenders.
- Calls on media to provide the coverage of minority issues according to the supreme principles of the professional responsibility, and refrain from discrimination due to the ethnic, religious, and gender identity, as well as sexual orientation.
- Attaches great importance to the continuation of public discussion on these issues and cooperation between media and the civil sector, aimed at solving the revealed problem.
- Underlines the importance of public persons and especially politicians to acknowledge the full responsibility for their statements and refrain from unintentionally or deliberately encouraging the violence that may lead to the irreparable negative outcomes for the society.

