



Newsletter №10

Joint Initiative of GDI and MDF



Press Conference, June 14

In order to eradicate ethnic, religious, sexist and homo/transphobic rhetoric in politics and making the Georgian politics healthy, Georgian Democratic Initiative (GDI) and Media Development Foundation (MDF) announced an joint initiative at the press-conference held on June 14:

„We would like to once again turn the public’s attention to the xenophobic statements and assessments that have assumed a dangerous scale in Georgia’s political discourse and already established themselves as the norm. The Georgian media landscape is pervaded with such rhetoric, which is clearly shown by the results of a number of studies conducted in the corresponding direction. It is clear that one of the sources of this wicked practice is the political class active in Georgia.

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Review of the Week

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 issues were topical during the week of June 10-17:

- Among the monitored media outlets Newspaper *Rezonansi* offered the most comprehensive coverage of the disruption of a traditional Muslim Friday prayer and the complete background of the problem. In difference with the Public Broadcaster, Imedi TV did not mention the substantial detail, that the conduct of the prayer became possible after the arrival of the State Minister for Reintegration in the village, however, only visiting Muslims took part in the prayer while the

local Muslims did not participate;

- Coverage of the religious superstitions in media was related to the issue of electronic ID cards (Newspapers *Rezonansi*, *Asaval-Dasavali*);
- The fact of discrimination on linguistic grounds was revealed on the part of the respondent (Gvtiso Mamisimedashvili, Caucasologist);
- Media Union *Obiektivi* and a representative of the Alliance of Patriots David Tarkhan-Mouravi continued the promotion of anti-Turkish attitudes;

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10.06 –16.06.2013

MONITORING

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Religion

Traditional Muslim Prayer in the village of Samtatskaro

Among the monitored media outlets Newspaper *Rezonansi* offered the most comprehensive coverage of the traditional Muslim prayer, on June 14 in the village of Samtatskaro.

[Rezonansi, June 15](#)

Journalist Eka Basilaia comprehensively reported that Muslims were able to conduct a prayer on June 14 following the arrival in the village of the State Minister for Reintegration Paata Zakareishvili. In addition, she offered the readers the complete background of the emerged problem including the earlier developments in Nigvziani and Tsintskaro. It has to be mentioned that the analysis of the events as well as identification of key trends is offered through the interview with the Chairman of the Muslim Union Tariel Nakaidze, rather than through the journalist's generalizations. The journalist also accentuated that the prayer was held but most likely, due to the immense psychological pressure and that local Muslims did not take part.

On the one hand, the editorial reflected the position of the village Attorney Gulo Nadirashvili stating that Muslims have a guaranteed right to pray and nobody can hinder it, while on the other, in difference with the rest of media outlets, basing on Kakheti Information center, the journalist recalled the earlier position of the local authorities. By bringing up the previous statements of Dedoplistskaro Governor Irakli Shiolashvili and village Attorney Gulo Nadirashvili (stating that they were committed to protect the interests of majority which is against the opening of the Muslim prayer chapel), newspaper provided readers with the opportunity to assess the shift in the point of view of one of the local authorities (Gulo Nadirashvili), following the arrival of the State Minister to Samtatskaro.

[Public Broadcaster, Moambe and Imedi TV Qronika, June 14](#)

Both *Qronika* and *Moambe* journalists under-

lined that after the arrival of the State Minister for Reintegration Paata Zakareishvili in Samtatskaro the traditional Muslim Prayer was conducted. However, only *Moambe* accentuated that local Muslims did not attend the traditional Friday prayer and only those believers visiting the village took part in the ceremony.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2067668

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2067653

[Imedi TV, Qronika, June 13](#)

The story reports on the meeting of the Ombudsman and Religious Council with the Minister of Justice re: situation in Samtatskaro.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2066876

[Kavkasia, Dges, June 14](#)

TV Company *Kavkasia* has broadly covered the Muslim solidarity rally organized by a group of citizens and non-governmental organizations in Tbilisi. Initiators of the rally condemned the facts of hindering the Muslim religious liturgy in the village of Samtatskaro.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2067870

Prejudices

[Asaval-Dasavali, June 10-16](#)

Tea Tsulukiani, Minister of Justice:

"I do not want to frighten believers, but tens of thousands of ID numbers contain consequently placed three numbers "six". There will be no such numerical combination in new electronic ID cards."

<http://www.asavali.ge/archive/asdas/2013/973/973.pdf>

[Rezonansi, June 10](#)

The newspaper dedicates a comprehensive article to the meeting of the *Union of Orthodox Christian Citizens* demanding the provision of the alternative of electronic ID cards, on June 8. Title of the article *"Believers Demand Discontinuing the Release of ID Cards"* is not in line with the content of the article that focuses on the demand of the alternative identification documents.

Ethnic Minorities

Teaching the Chechen Language

Public Broadcaster, Moambe, June 10 and 11

Moambe dedicated two stories in a row to the demand of Duisi population concerning the teaching of Chechen language at schools. The first one, aired on June 10, was quite positive - the representative of the State Ministry for Reintegration whose comment was included, talked about the possible introduction of educational program in September. Although the second story, aired on June 11, presented the issue of teaching the Chechen language at public schools in Duisi as problematic and the Minister of Education underlined that some time was needed to study the issue. It is uncertain though, why the journalist addressed the Minister of Education of Chechnya just because the locals sent a letter to the Chechen agency, against the background when a Georgian Ministry which is responsible for the school curriculum has not made decision yet, as revealed by the June 11 story. In this case, we have an irrelevant choice of a respondent by the journalist.

The story also presents different positions of Caucasiologists concerning the appropriateness of teaching Chechen language at schools. One expert (Mamuka Areshidze) endorses the position in favor, while two others (Giorgi Shaishmelashvili and Gvtiso Mamisimedashvili) are against the idea. According to Shaishmelashvili implementation of this initiative is out of place while the issue of the ratification of the Charter for Regional Languages is being discussed. On his part Mamisimedashvili discriminates while questioning the linguistic authenticity of the Chechen language.

Gvtiso Mamisimedashvili, Caucasiologist: *"There is no need of introducing the Chechen Language course at schools. The Kist dialect is no less rich than the Chechen Language, although the Georgian literary language has influenced the Kist dialect while Chechen is full of Russian vocabulary."*

Since the issue of preserving the language, realizing the linguistic rights was concerned, rather than a scientific discussion on languages, it would have been more appropriate if the journalist approached the subject from the angle of human rights and raised the issue with relevant expert or representative of the Ministry whether teaching the language as unobligatory or selective course was possible.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2063712

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2064922

Issue of Environmental Migrants

Imedi TV, Oronika, June 15

News anchor Tornike Kverenchkhiladze announcing the story concerning the socio-economic problems of eco migrants accentuated the issue of their eviction by ethnic Greeks not mentioning that the houses belong to Greeks and it is the obligation of the state to provide the shelter for the citizens - victims of natural disasters. Such framing of the story promotes a negative attitude among the viewers toward this ethnic group, especially against the background of the hardest social and economic conditions in which this homeless group lives.

Tornike Kverenchkhiladze, news anchor: *"Eco migrants evicted by the Greeks in Tsalka Region urge for government's help."*

It's worth mentioning that the journalist absolutely correctly reports the core of the issue while assessing the placement of the eco migrants into the houses abandoned earlier by Greeks as a temporary measure, on the part of the government.

The legitimate right of Greeks - to get back their property upon the return to the country - is not developed in the story, as the hard social conditions of eco migrants is the main line of the story. However, one of the eco migrants whose interview is included discusses this issue in a negative context.

Vazha Iakobidze, eco migrant: *"They say, the Greek are coming and they have the right to evict a man from their private property."* http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2069315

Ethnic Minorities

Public Broadcaster, Moambe, June 15

Public Broadcaster covered the abovementioned story from the angle of the socio-economic problems. Neither the journalist nor the anchor presented ethnic Greeks in the negative discourse.

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2069378

Anti-Turkish Attitudes

Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 15

In a response to a phone call by an unidentified viewer, whether the appointment to high governmental positions in Batumi of some Turks, Osman and Tamaz (viewer fails to identify the last name), recently granted the Georgian citizenship is appropriate, the leader of the Alliance of Patriots David Tarkhan-Mouravi makes xenophobic statements and develops the thesis "Georgia for Georgians." His statement - the Georgian should be the master in Georgia while others should remain guests - is a vivid illustration of this discriminatory approach.

Viewer: *"We should not be asking for the opinion of those who became Georgians just yesterday and now occupy high positions."*

David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: *"Obviously, in Georgia and especially in Adjara, Adjarians should be appointed to high positions and not Turks... this deeply concerns me. The Georgian should be masters in Georgia, while the rest should remain guests, and not vice versa."*

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Both respondent and the host Soso Zaalishvili make unjustified parallels between the conquer of Georgia by Turks and allegedly existing plan of the restoration of the Osman Empire, which according to them, is developed by the Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu.

David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: *"Adjarians have suffered enough from these Turks. Now it turns out that Turks assume high governmental positions and govern Adjara. Can you imagine how "well" we'll be doing?"*

Soso Zaalishvili, host: *"In fact, this is the confirmation of Davutoglu's statement aired by our channel every now and then. He is not speaking about Adjara only. This man has got serious ambitions."*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12420>

Land Property

Rustavi 2, Kurieri, June 15

Business-Kurieri frames the story concerning the land sales in Samtatskaro in the context of discontent among the local farmers. There are a number of discriminatory statements with regard to investors of different ethnicities:

Resident of Samtatskaro: *"Georgia does not belong to Italians, Georgia belongs to Georgians."*

Resident of Samtatskaro: *"If they could take away my 4/100 of Georgian land and give it to some Italian or Chinese, was it impossible to register it in my name?"*

Resident of Samtatskaro: *"They allowed foreigners here, they sold my land to them, and now I am forced to go abroad."*

Sexual Minorities

Asaval-Dasavali, June 10-16

The newspaper publishes psychiatrist Francesco Bruno's (La Repubblica) homophobic assessments discriminatory not only toward the sexual minorities but also toward the persons with disabilities and stigmatizes them.

Francesco Bruno, psychiatrist: *"From a conceptual point of view, homosexual appears to be in the position as an invalid, deaf or blind... Gays are differently positioned from the point of sexuality and these differences are pointing on a mutation from the natural."*

Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 11

Public Assembly's Presidential Candidate and the leader of the Democratic Movement Nino Burjanadze made a number of homophobic statements. Respondent thinks that loosening the votes of sexual minorities is not important, and calls on them either refrain from expressing publicly their identity or to become like she is [meaning ordinary people]. Host of *Obiektivi* shares respondent's position.

Nino Burjanadze, Democratic Movement: *"It turns out that our problem is that LGBT persons used to show our children that mother may be called mother and father - father. I am against this, and I will do whatever I can to prevent this, like I did when I used to be in power as a Chairman of the Parliament. What I can do, I might lose some votes, but I cannot act in a way to attract LGBT votes. The single thing I promise is that I will do my best to prevent violence and abuse against them, but they should stay in their rooms doing whatever they wish and behave like ordinary people, like me and you, when they come out. Let's not shout, 'I am a woman, or I am a man' - that's obvious, anyway."*

Ratishvili Nino, anchor: *"Sure, I agree with you, we do not have to apologize because we are women, Orthodox Christians, and Georgians etc."*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12356>

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Nino Burjanadze, Democratic Movement: *"...they should stay in their rooms doing whatever they wish and behave like ordinary people, like me and you, when they come out. Let's not shout, 'I am a woman, or I am a man' - that's obvious, anyway."*

Hate Speech

Asaval-Dasavali, June 10-16

Levan Anjaparidze, director: *"We should seat Saakashvili on the araba and drag him around Georgia so that people could spit into his face. I am not sure how hard this punishment may be for a scoundrel like him, but at least it is a preventive measure for those who is going to replace him!"*

We should treat the same way other Nationals. I call on all true Georgians, refrain from getting your hands dirty with these parasites. Do not take a revenge on them at the restaurants or any other public places. Just spit on them and pass by. Sorry, I speak quite harshly but this is true. We have to make them wish to leave the country!"

<http://www.asavali.ge/archive>

Land Property

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The position of the representative of the Italian investor is presented disproportionately in the story – with a very short sound-bite mostly reflecting his emotional condition, rather than a legal position. There is a brief note in the story that the investigation of the case is ongoing.

As a backgrounder of the story, the journalist recalls the problems with foreign investors emerged in other regions and links the issue to the process of Copts' migration, who due to their religion are forced to leave Egypt and plan the development of small businesses in Georgia. http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2067975

Asaval-Dasavali, June 10-16

Khatuna Bokuchava, actor: *"They can call me racist if they want to, but I demand categorically to stop granting lands to Negroes, Chinese, Arabs, and Hindu."*

Sexual Minorities

Anti-Western Attitudes, Unjustified Parallels

Maestro, Politmeter, June 14

President of Georgian's Union in Russia, Mikheil Khubutia makes ungrounded parallels between the rights of sexual minorities and Georgia's Foreign strategic choice, while linking Georgia's membership in the North Atlantic Alliance to the gay parades, and talking about the appropriateness of holding a referendum on the issue. The host of the program Nino Zhizhilashvili reminded the guest that the Georgian people have already expressed their will concerning NATO.

Mikheil Khubutia, Georgians' Union in Russia:

"What do we wish for 2020, or 2030? Do we aspire for gay parades everywhere or do we aspire to join NATO? We have to decide how it's [NATO] going to help us, what we are going to get in return?! Maybe we want Russia, what do we get as a result in this case?! We have to hold a referendum."

http://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=2067624

Kviris Oronika, June 10-16

Journalist Nino Samkharadze speculates that the West has its own priorities in terms of rights and the lives of those who died in Afghanistan are less important in the eyes of the West than the rights of sexual minorities. At the same time, the journalist approaches the NATO mission in Afghanistan as a military operation of the West (Life of soldier sacrifice to their operations), rather than a global peacekeeping mission. Leader of the Democratic Initiative Nino Burjanadze shares the journalist's pathos.

Nino Samkharadze, journalist:

"You said that the West is a partner that we cannot let down, but where does the West stand today defending ardently LGBT society on May 17. Are the sexual minorities more important for them than the lives of soldiers fighting against terrorism who, by the way, sacrifice their lives to their operations? Is that right, when we, Georgians, learn from Appathurai about the death of our soldiers and only after that the Ministry of Defense confirms the information?"

Nino Burjanadze, Democratic

Movement: *"May 17 was a big deal for the West and very irritating for them. Because of this, almost entire West confronted Georgia, while a day before the bodies of our three servicemen were flown back from Afghanistan. Neither then nor now did we hear the West's concern and regret."*

Asaval-Dasavali, June 10-16

Journalist Giorgi Gigauri criticized Minister of Foreign Affairs Maia Panjikidze for her phrase "Stalin is a criminal just like Hitler." It should be mentioned that as a rule Asaval-Dasavali considers views unacceptable from the point of its editorial position as coming from the so called "liberast elite" [combination of two terms, liberal and pederast]. In this particular case, unjustified parallel is related to the sexual orientation of German Foreign Minister and has nothing to do with Stalin.

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Mikheil Khubutia, Georgians' Union in Russia:

"What do we wish for 2020, or 2030? Do we aspire for gay parades everywhere or do we aspire to join NATO?"

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Giorgi Gigauri, journalist: *“Of course, the liberast elite of the civilized world would have loved Maia Panjikidze’s barren historic education and her squint-eyed political world-view, but this lady is a Foreign Minister of Georgia and not of Germany, for instance! This country already has Guido Westerwelle as a chief diplomat and openly gay who just two years ago married a man like him and now has a happy LGBT family.”*



Levan Anjaparidze, director: *“I do not want to enter either NATO or EU as a pederast!”*

Asaval-Dasavali, June 10-16

Nino Bendeliani, journalist: *“Mr. Levan, in your movie, you say a phrase: “If we want to survive, we should preserve our identity.” People prevented the attempt of holding a gay parade on Rustaveli Avenue on May 17 and the huge resonance followed - “how did you dare to restrict the rights of minorities.”*

Levan Anjaparidze, director: *“I do not want to enter either NATO or EU as a pederast!”*

Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 12

General Koba Kobaladze invited to the studio to discuss the mission in Afghanistan makes quite fair comment with regard to the host Bondo Mdzinarishvili. The General states that the viewer’s phone call, followed by the host’s quoting of one of the publication concerning the US policy is a vague parallel and has nothing to do with the discussed issue.

Viewer: *“I just cannot understand one thing, our politicians tell us that we defend Georgia in Afghanistan and this is the world mission. At the same time the whole world, EU, and European Parliament tell Georgia: “defend gay, LGBT, and whoever’s rights!” Defending Georgia has nothing to do with defending LGBT and how European Parliament can teach us. We are rushing toward the country – US – in which immorality rules. Aren’t we?”*

Koba Kobaladze, General: *[Addressing the host] “Precondition of our relations and a topic for conversation is absolutely different, and changing the context, bringing up the LGBT issue is totally different.”*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12373>

Banning the Propaganda

Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 15

The leader of the Alliance of Patriots develops the thought that homosexuality is a disease and its propaganda should be legally prohibited.

David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: *“One may say, “I am a horse”, and people respond that he is crazy. When a man says that he is an alien, he is considered to be out of his mind, and why a man saying he is a woman is normal? I believe homosexuality is a disease. The world science thought the same way until 1973, when the scientific circles of the US started claiming otherwise, and I think this decision has been made due to homosexuals and a lot of spent money. Whatever two homosexuals do at their homes is nobody’s business, but propaganda is unacceptable for the society. We are conducting two surveys now - the second one is concerning the ban of propaganda of homosexuality.”*

<http://obiektivi.net/tv1.php?id=12419>

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Sexual Minorities

"...The law should be adopted against homosexuals and propaganda of homosexuality."

<http://obieqtivi.net/tv1.php?id=12420>

Obiektivi, Night Studio, June 10

Host Ilia Chachibaia, and representative of the Alliance of Patriots Manuchar Machaidze approach the legal ban on so called "propaganda" of homosexuality from the point of view of taking into account the position of majority, which is a discriminatory approach as issues related to the rights of minorities in democratic states are not solved according to the majority's command. The dialogue in the studio touches upon the survey planned by the Alliance of Patriots – analogous to a survey conducted earlier in Batumi, concerning the construction of a Mosque.

Ilia Chachibaia, host: "I guess, whatever his Excellency Georgian people say should be executed."

Manuchar Machaidze, Alliance of Patriots: "We are confident that propaganda carried out by sexual minorities in Georgia is wrong and we know that the large part of the population being an Orthodox Perish is against it."

Ilia Chachibaia, host: "Generally, how detrimental this way of life is for our future, for our children?"

Manuchar Machaidze, Alliance of Patriots: "Of course, propaganda is disastrous, but even worse is whatever was happening in Georgia over the last year. Two thousand people complain that they were raped in prisons at different times... This was intentional rape of sexual majority, straight, ordinary people by the sexual minorities. Neither US nor EU can justify this, despite of how many supporters those people who committed this have".

Ilia Chachibaia, host: "Do you think that international organizations take into account the scarce food and water resources around the world? If a man does not marry a woman, i.e. the same sex marriage is legalized, this means that they won't have children, and therefore the world society will shrink."

<http://obieqtivi.net/tv1.php?id=12341>

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Ilia Chachibaia, host: "Do you think that international organizations take into account the scarce food and water resources around the world? If a man does not marry a woman, i.e. the same sex marriage is legalized, this means that they won't have children, and therefore the world society will shrink."

Assessment of the May 17 Events by the Minister of Interior

Asavali-Dasavali, June 10-16

Irakli Garibashvili, Minister of Internal Affairs: "I guess, representatives of the National Movement" were dreaming of police breaking up the counter demonstration. Who should we raid? 300 priests, parish, and 40 thousand of our citizens?

I cannot say with confidence, since it is not confirmed by the investigation, but I know who was behind the planned provocation on May 17. It is very easy to deduce, you and the readers will guess simply."

<http://www.asavali.ge/archive/asdas/2013/973/973.pdf>

Feedback of the Information Center of Kakheti, ICK

Head of the Information Center of Kakheti, Gela Mtvlishvili contacted MDF following the release of the MDF report #9 concerning the media coverage of the incident related to the traditional Muslim prayer in the village of Samtatskaro, on June 7. He sent us publications and video footage prepared by ICK internet portal which in fact provides more comprehensive information than the media outlets monitored by our organization. Even though Information Center of Kakheti and other internet portals are not monitored by MDF, we believe that information gathered by this regional media outlet concerning the problems related to the Muslim prayer in Samtatskaro could be a valuable resource for journalists, in terms of factual information and correct perception of the context as well. That's why we are publishing the chronological list of materials and web links of the resources provided by ICK, hoping that it will help interested journalists in preparing publications on the abovementioned issue:



Information
Center of
Kakheti

- Rivals of the opening of the Muslim prayer house in Samtatskaro violently expelled local Muslims from the prayer house, first time on May 24. <http://ick.ge/articles/14431-i.html>
- The second time, on May 31, residents of Samtatskaro did not allow the leaders of the Muslim congregation into the village. <http://ick.ge/articles/14503--videos.html>
- Third time, on June 7, local Khoja was subjected to a pressure. Consequently, he could not conduct prayer, felt sick, and was called a medical emergency brigade. <http://ick.ge/articles/14566-i.html>
- On Friday, June 28, residents of Samtatskaro in Dedoplistskaro region attacked Khoja Suliko Khozrevanidze's family. <http://ick.ge/articles/14818--video.html>
- On July 3, Public Defender of Georgia released the statement. According to the office of Ombudsman, "representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs threatened Khoja with a long-term imprisonment." MIA declined this accusation. <http://ick.ge/articles/14873-i.html>
- In the morning of July 5, in an interview with the Information Center of Kakheti, Khoja Suliko Khozrevanidze stated that on June 29, about 15 local residents came to his house and asked him whether he and his children were going to attend the Friday prayer. "We told them that we were not going to attend the prayer, we don't have a choice. They demanded us not to allow anybody into our house and yard, including journalists," Suliko Khozrevanidze said in an interview with ICK; <http://ick.ge/rubrics/politics/14862-i.html>
- Traditional Friday prayer was held in Samtatskaro on July 5. However, again, local Muslims did not attend it. <http://ick.ge/articles/14649-jjja.html>
- On July 8, the leader of Muslims, Khoja Suliko Khozrevanidze left the village. He told ICK that the threats against his family on religious grounds caused his health problems and he left for Adjara to get treatment. According to him, one of the reasons for his decision to leave was the extreme tension in the village. <http://ick.ge/articles/14953-i.html>
- On Friday, July 12, none of the Muslims had the courage to come to the prayer house and the prayer was not performed. At about 13.00 – usual time to begin Jumash [traditional Muslim Friday prayer], two guest came to the house of Piruz Jaiani who lives just across the street from the Muslim Prayer house. The guests were the Bishop of the Bodbe Eparchy, Jacob (Catholicos Patriarch's Choir-Bishop) and the Bishop of Khornabuji and Hereti, Melkisedek. <http://ick.ge/articles/15033-main.html>

MDF Response to Channel 9

Media Development Foundation, MDF discussed the letter of Channel 9 in which the leadership of the channel's news service expressed its disagreement with the conclusions of the monitoring conducted by the Foundation according to which the story aired by Channel 9 news service on June 7 concerning the disruption of the Muslim prayer in Samtatskaro was in breach of certain professional standards.

We admit that any product and especially TV story may be a subject for interpretation and could be perceived differently by the viewers. However, the goal of MDF is the analysis of media within the context of the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters, which, in its turn, may be a matter for discussion. We would like to remind our colleagues that the key formulations of the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters are used in the monitoring. We are confident that articles 12 and 13 (reliability and accuracy), 16(4), 18(2) (impartiality) and 13(9) were adequately applied during the monitoring.

With regard to the accuracy of the facts reported, an interested society may get acquainted with the stories prepared by other TV channels (Rustavi 2 and Public Broadcaster), reports offered by the Information Center of Kakheti (which is not monitored by MDF, however, remains an interesting source for the issue concerned), as

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The leaders and members of the political parties, unions, and movements, as well as public persons supporting them, despite the officially declared views of their organizations, often base their political rhetoric precisely on xenophobia and hate speech.

All this creates a favorable background for those extremist groups that translate this rhetoric into action. A clear example of this were the events that took place on May 17 and the following days when the day against homophobia and transphobia itself became the day on which homophobia and transphobia were demonstrated.

In order to overcome the aforementioned problems, we consider it necessary that the civil sector unite under the idea of struggle against xenophobia, so that a unified civil platform is created. In the aforementioned format, it will be possible to carry out effective monitoring (and, if necessary, response) on every single fact of using this rhetoric, on the one hand, and to contribute to correct formation of public opinion, on the other hand.

We consider it necessary that the political unions active in Georgia create or strengthen inter-party mechanisms which will ensure that all kinds of manifestations of xenophobia are eradicated in political activity. At the same time, we express our readiness to actively support political organizations in cooperating with the civil sector in this direction.

Georgian Democracy Initiative, GDI
Media Development Foundation, MDF

<http://mdfgeorgia.ge/index.php?menuid=15&lang=1&id=137>

Review of the Week

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- Issues related to the ethnic origins were topical in the context of socio-economic problems (problems of eco migrants' housing and land property);
- There were homophobic statements and discriminatory attitudes not only with regard to sexual minorities, but also with regard to persons with disabilities as well (Francesco Bruno, *Asaval-Dasavali*);
- Promotion of anti-Western attitudes continued in the context of sexual minorities on the part of the respondents (Nino Burjanadze, Mikheil Khubutia, Levan Anjaparidze) and journalists as well (Newspaper *Asaval-Dasavali*, *Kviris Qronika*); Media Union *Obiektivi* and the Alliance of Patriots continued accentuating the issue of a legal ban on "propaganda" of homosexuality.

MDF Response to Channel 9

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well as with the Public Defender's address to the Ministry of Internal Affairs demanding the investigation of the incident which is based on explanations by Suliko Khozrevanidze describing in detail the June 7 developments in Samtatskaro. We hope that this material will help our colleagues to better analyze MDF assessments and conclusions.

At the same time, we would like to ensure our colleagues that the goal of the Media Development Foundation is the support of media in its endeavors, rather than confrontational criticism. We remain open and ready to discuss your comments and opinions.

At the same time, we would like to offer our apologies to journalist Tamta Sanikidze for mentioning her name incorrectly.

<http://mdfgeorgia.ge/index.php?menuid=4&lang=1&id=153>

