

PRE-ELECTION MONITORING



**ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES
HATE SPEECH
FAKE NEWS**



2020

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Hate Speech

Fake News

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INTRODUCTION

The present report provides the results of monitoring conducted by the Media Development Foundation (MDF) ahead of the 2020 parliamentary elections. The monitoring was carried out on the cases of anti-Western messages and hate speech voiced by electoral subjects and political parties, as well as fake news and discrediting campaigns.

The monitoring covered both mainstream and social media outlets, including regional media outlets and social accounts affiliated with political stakeholders.

Part 1 of the report covers anti-Western messages; part 2 – hate speech; part 3 – discrediting pre-election campaigns; 4- fake news spread by political parties; and part 5 – fake news spread against political parties.

The monitoring of hate speech and anti-Western narratives covers the period from August 1 to October 25, 2020, whereas the monitoring of fake news involves the cases revealed in the period between August 1 and November 10.

METHODOLOGY

The report applied a mixed research methodology:

- **Content analysis.** Narratives and their sources are identified through content analysis of traditional Georgian language media (TV, print and online outlets), allowing to understand the context and observe the trends, as well as to process quantitative and qualitative data. A quantitative part provides the amount of anti-western and hate speech messages broken down by topics and electoral subjects, while the qualitative part focuses on the typology of messages.
- **Identification and verification of fake news.** CrowdTangle analytics tool is applied to identify fake news stories posted by Facebook pages and groups, to verify them and look into their sources. Additionally, fake stories supplied by readers are also verified but these stories and their sources are identified through random sampling rather than systematic monitoring.

Media outlets subject to monitoring were selected from both nationwide and regional media outlets. Besides mainstream media outlets, CrowdTangle analytics tool was applied to monitor Facebook accounts, as well as personal accounts of party activists. It is worth noting that the database of social media outlets is being updated on a regular basis.

16 nationwide media outlets: Daily prime-time news and weekly analytical programs on four TV channels: Georgian Public Broadcaster (Moambe; Akhali Kvira); Rustavi 2 (Kurieri; P.S.); Imedi (Qronika; Imedis Kvira); Obieqtivi TV (Akhali Ambebi). Talk-shows of five TV channels: Georgian Public Broadcaster (Kviris Interviu); Rustavi 2 (Archevani) thereafter Mtavari (Archevani); Imedi (Pirispir); Obieqtivi (Ghamis Studia; Dghis Bolos); Kavkasia (Barieri; Spektri). Seven online media outlets: Sakinformi, Netgazeti, Interpressnews, Georgia & World, PIA, Marshalpress, News Front. Four newspapers: Rezonansi, Kviris Palitra, Asaval-Dasavali, Alia.

Regional media involves media outlets of five regions (Adjara, Imereti, Samegrelo, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli): prime-time news programs of seven regional broadcasters: Rioni TV (Dgis Ambebi); Mega TV (Mtavari); Trialeti (News Program); Odishi (News Program); Parvana TV (News Program); Marneuli TV and Radio (News Program); Channel 9 (News Program Echo). Talks shows, analytical programs of six regional broadcasters: Rioni TV (Politikuri Ruka); TV12 (Gushin, Dges, Khval); TV12 (Ekspertis Azrit); TV12 (Mediator); Trialeti (Regionis Saati); Trialeti (Dgis Tema); Trialeti (Newsroom); Odishi (Realoba); TV4 (Archevnebi 2020); Marneuli TV (Archevnebi 2020). Eight online outlets: 24News.ge, InterPress.ge, Kutaisi Post, Shida Kartli Information Center, Livepress, Info Rustavi, Jnews, Akhalkalaki News.

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KEY FINDINGS

Following trends were revealed during monitoring period:

- **Anti-Western messages:** A total of 157 anti-Western messages were voiced by electoral subjects during the monitoring period with the largest share targeting the West as a common geopolitical space with shared values, as well as geographical and institutional unity. NATO comes next followed by the United States, civil society organizations and Soros, and finally, the European Union.
- The Alliance of Patriots most frequently made anti-NATO comments highlighting the need for supporting neutrality and direct talks with Russia as a solution to the problems.
- The anti-Western messages were mainly targeting the imposed liberal laws: alongside statements to revise antidiscrimination law, legislation on domestic violence and children's right, Georgian March pledged to initiate restoration of ethnicity line in ID cards and adoption of blasphemy law.
- **Hate speech:** A total of 140 comments containing hate speech were made during the monitoring period with the largest share accounting for xenophobic comments, followed by homophobic remarks.
- During the election campaign, antiliberal parties dubbed their opponents as "gay revolutionaries," "LGBT coalition" and "liberast infidels," focusing on the fact that Georgian people had to make a choice between gay revolutionaries and national forces.
- **Disinformation spread by politicians:** During the reporting period, Myth Detector verified 22 pieces of disinformation and manipulative content spread by politicians and election stakeholders. Most frequently, the Alliance of Patriots was manipulating history, using this issue for fomenting Turkophobic sentiments. Besides focusing on the threats of identity loss, the Georgian March was echoing Kremlin's disinformation messages regarding the Baltic States. Members of this ultranationalist party spread three fake news stories with a clearly discrediting nature against Estonia's incumbent and Lithuania's former Presidents, as well as against the U.S. Ambassador to Georgia.
- **Covid-19 conspiracies:** Coronavirus and vaccination related conspiracies by politicians (Alliance of Patriots, Georgian Idea, Zviad Tomaradze) concerned non-existence of the virus and danger posed by vaccination.
- **Sources:** Among political parties, pro-Kremlin Alliance of Patriots party is leading with anti-Western comments, as well as hate speech, followed by ultranationalist parties Georgian March. Alliance of Patriots and other ultranationalist parties were also in the lead of spreading disinformation.
- The majority of electoral subjects identified through the monitoring are featured in various documents concerning Kremlin's interference in the 2020 parliamentary elections. In particular, an investigative report released by Dossier Center, a Russian investigative project, uncovers the pre-election cooperation between the Alliance of Patriots and the Kremlin; further, the 2019 report released by the Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service names Georgian March and the Primakov Georgian-Russian Center as the subjects affiliated with the Kremlin.
- **Pre-election discrediting campaigns:** The most influential discrediting campaign unleashed by the government against the opposition ahead of the parliamentary elections was related to David Gareji Monastery Complex located on the disputed section of the Georgian-Azerbaijani state border with demarcation works still ongoing. The campaign promoted the narrative that opponents are selling churches and homeland, while the government is neutralizing the threats.
- The campaign was accompanied by criminal investigation launched on the basis of topographic maps provided by businessmen with close ties to Russian intelligence services.
- **Disinformation on social media against political and other stakeholders:** Besides disinformation by politicians, out of 31 pieces of disinformation revealed in social media, the largest share (16) were against opposition and eight against Georgian Dream. In four cases, disinformation as well as manipulative content was spread in support of the ruling Georgian Dream party. Two pieces of disinformation targeted the U.S. Ambassador and one disinformation was spread by Georgian pro-Trump page against Joe Biden.

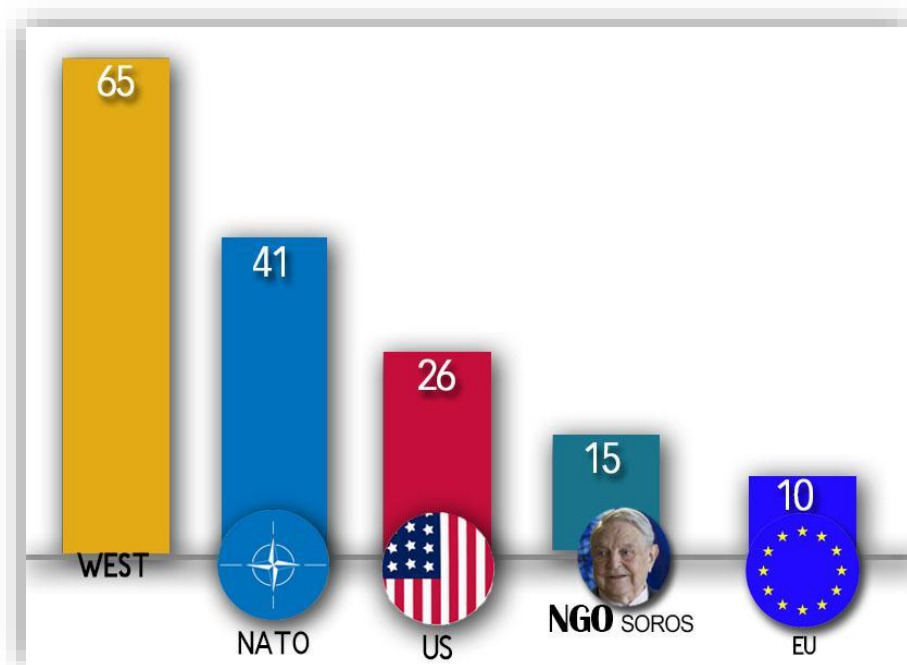
- The most widespread form was falsification of quotes (9) and fake news (9), as well as spread of fabricated posts/documents and photo/video manipulations (8). The monitoring also revealed three cases of creating false expectations in favor of the ruling party on clickbait sites and two cases of creating false support pages targeting the opposition.
- 56 accounts were identified that were spreading fake news against the opposition and were mainly affiliated with the ruling party; moreover, 30 accounts were spreading fake news against the ruling party and were affiliated with the opposition United National Movement (UNM).
- Number of accounts affiliated with the pro-Russian Alliance of Patriots party (9), as well as ultranationalist/antiliberal (4) social media accounts was relatively small. However, representatives of these groups are dominating in the component of fake news spread by politicians, where all 22 disinformation comments were made by pro-Russian and ultranationalist electoral subjects.
- The largest share of disinformation covered internal political confrontation; in two cases, disinformation both against the opposition and the government was echoing Kremlin's propaganda agenda and was coming from pro-Kremlin actors. However, in certain cases, government affiliated accounts were manipulating with the threats of losing religious and sexual identity similar to Kremlin propaganda.
- It is worth noting that after Myth Detector labeled fake news on Facebook as disinformation that became possible through Facebook's Third-Party Fact-Checking Program, Facebook accounts reacted to 17 debunking articles and removed posts labeled by Myth Detector as false.

I. ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES

1.1. Aggregated quantitative data

A total of 157 anti-Western messages were voiced by electoral subjects during the monitoring period (August 1 – October 25) with the largest share (65) targeting the West¹ as a common geopolitical space with shared values, as well as geographical and institutional unity. NATO comes next with 41 messages followed by the United States (26), civil society organizations and Soros (15), and finally, the European Union (10).

Chart 1. Pre-election anti-Western messages voiced by politicians by topics



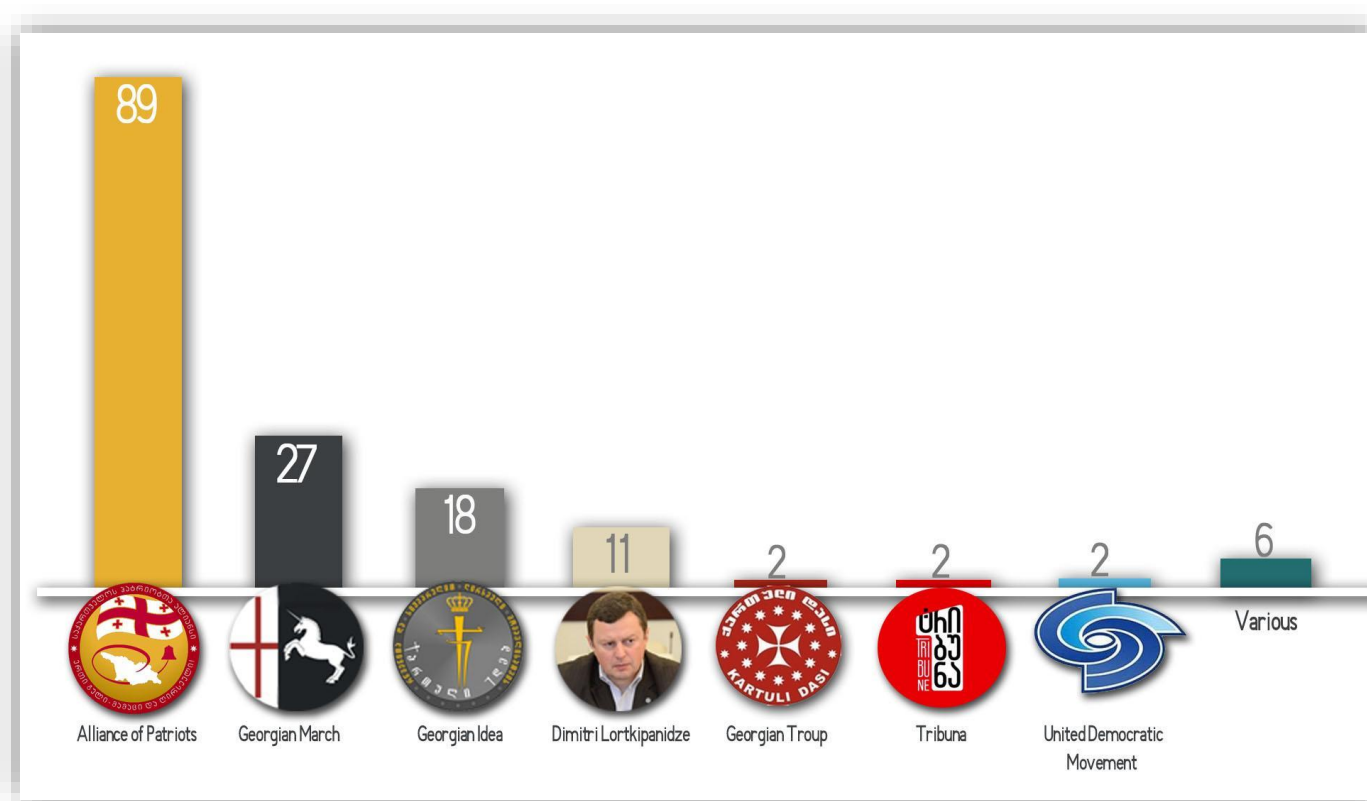
Among political parties, pro-Kremlin Alliance of Patriots party is leading with anti-Western comments (89), followed by ultranationalist parties Georgian March and Georgian Idea (18), as well as Dimitri Lortkipanidze with links to antiliberal groups (11), who simultaneously leads the Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center and ran in Didube-Chugureti single-mandate constituency as an independent candidate during the 2020 parliamentary elections. Two comments were made by each of the following parties: Tribune, United Democratic Movement and Georgian Troupe. The category “other” unites those subjects that made only one comment.

¹ This category involves the messages simultaneously targeting the United States, Europe and international institutions; as well as the cases when the West is viewed as an common geopolitical space with shared values.

The majority of electoral subjects identified through the monitoring are featured in various documents concerning Kremlin's interference in the 2020 parliamentary elections. In particular, an investigative report released by Dossier Center, a Russian investigative project, uncovers the pre-election cooperation between **the Alliance of Patriots** and the Kremlin²; further, the 2019 report³ released by the Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service names **Georgian March** and **the Primakov Georgian-Russian Center** as the subjects affiliated with the Kremlin.

One more ultranationalist party Georgian Idea, along with the Primakov Center, is actively involved in the events supported by the Russian World Foundation⁴.

Chart 2. Pre-election anti-Western messages by politicians by parties



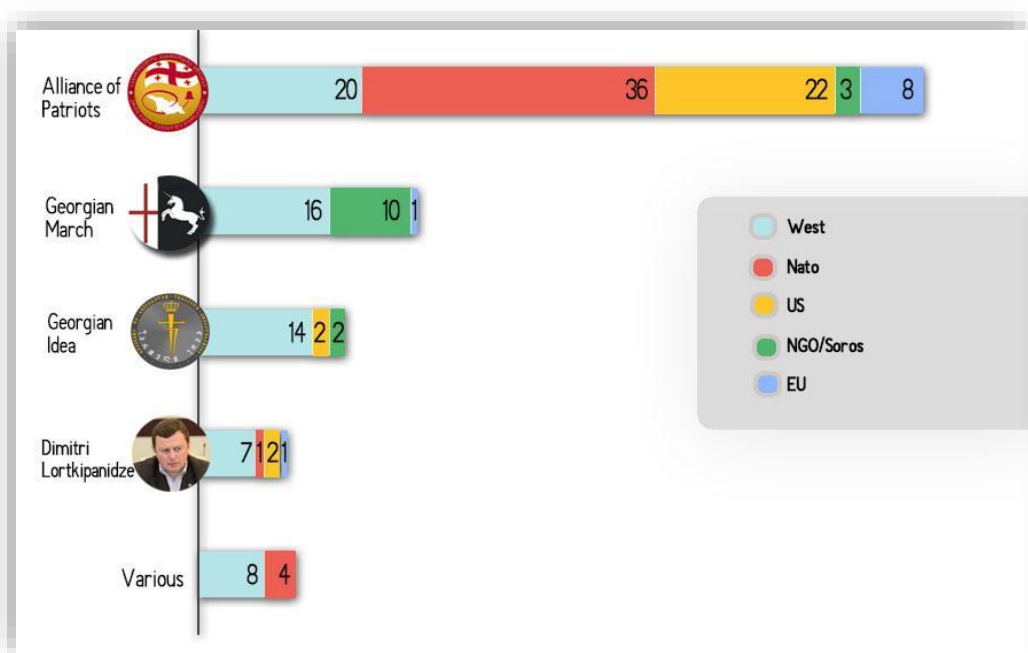
² Dossier Center, a Russian investigative project established by the prominent Kremlin critic, Mikhail Khodorkovsky released an investigative report, claiming that the election campaign of the Alliance of Patriots was backed by the Kremlin, prompting the opposition to demand the launch of investigation into alleged interference of a foreign country in Georgia's elections. <https://bit.ly/2l20xBt>

³ International Security and Estonia 2019, page 51 <https://www.valisluureamet.ee/pdf/raport-2020-en.pdf>

⁴ MDF, Russian World in Georgia, <http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/117/>

The Alliance of Patriots most frequently made anti-NATO comments (36) mainly aimed at fomenting skeptical attitudes towards the integration into the alliance, as well as highlighting the need for supporting neutrality. NATO is followed by the remarks about the United States (22) and the West (20). The majority of comments made by the Georgian March were directed against the West (16), as well as George Soros and non-governmental organizations (10). Georgian Idea (14) and Dimitri Lortkipanidze (7) most frequently made comments against the West, focusing on the need of abolishing the imposed antiliberal laws. Both statements made by the United Democratic Movement were about NATO.

Chart 3. Messages by political parties and topics



1.2. Topics of anti-Western messages

1.2.1 The West

Legislation. The anti-Western messages were mainly targeting the imposed liberal laws with Georgian Idea, Georgian March, Dimitri Lortkipanidze and Alliance of Patriots pushing for their revision. The following laws were subject to criticism:

- **Anti-discrimination law**, mainly associated with LGBT community and same-sex marriage
- **Juvenile Justice**, was aligned to juvenile fascism similar to the Kremlin discourse
- **Code on the Rights of the Child**, which was portrayed as targeting the family institution
- **Law against domestic violence** was associated with infringement of family unity and interference in family affairs
- **Law on lands** was portrayed as an anti-Georgian regulation

As part of their campaign promises, antiliberal political parties and candidates pledged to revise or initiate the following laws:

<i>Restoration of a ethnicity line in ID cards</i>	Giorgi Gigauri, Georgian March, journalist: „Our newspaper has long been demanding the return of a line indicating the nationality of an ID holder seized from Georgians by Sorosist-reformers of the Citizens' Union! Now, the ice is finally on the move! ⁵ ”
<i>The blasphemy law will protect the church against uncontrolled campaign</i>	Sandro Bregadze, Georgian March: “The first bill we will submit to the Parliament will be the bill initiated by the Georgian Patriarch on insulting religious feelings. By this law, we will finally end the uncontrolled, dirty campaign unleashed against the Orthodox Church and other confessions. ⁶ ”
<i>Code on the Rights of the Child</i>	Mikheil Makharadze, majoritarian candidate to the Adjara Supreme Council, Georgian March: “This code [on the rights of the child] openly aims at destroying a Georgian family. ⁷ ”
<i>Anti-discrimination law, juvenile legislation, land code</i>	<p>Ramini Abesadze, Kutaisi majoritarian candidate, Georgian Idea: “The West and the United States that offer us dirty laws, anti-discrimination law, the code on the rights of the child are the same occupiers, even the worse occupiers.⁸” “This anti-discrimination law should either be abolished, or the terms “gender identity” and “sexual orientation” should be removed from it. These two articles should be removed.⁹”</p> <p>Dimitri Lortkipanidze, independent majoritarian candidate in Didube-Chugureti constituency: “The existing legal framework, from the so called anti-discrimination law, juvenile fascism triad to land code or other anti-Georgian laws, will be revised... Let’s finish neoliberal tyranny in the country once and forever.¹⁰”</p> <p>Zurab Meskhi, majoritarian candidate in Samtredia, Tskaltubo, Vani and Khoni constituency, Georgian Idea: “No to the anti-discrimination law! It should be abolished through the referendum because it is the source of all depravities!¹¹”</p>
<i>Law against domestic violence</i>	Malkhaz Topuria, Alliance of Patriots, majoritarian candidate in Krtsanisi constituency: „I see a breakthrough in that populism, those liberal ideas... Violence cannot not be called gender equality, they invent some violence, is not it called equality? Presently, over 3,000 men are serving their prison terms on charges of domestic violence and this is statistics... There are light cases, when a couple simply quarreled and it is absolutely unacceptable when they follow Baia Patarai’s [women rights activist] instructions. ¹² ”

⁵ Asaval-Dasavali, October 12-18

⁶ October 28 <https://www.facebook.com/QartuliMarshi/posts/1061725864248433>

⁷ TV12, Elections 2020, October 2, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3976056>

⁸ Kutaisi Post Studio, Elections 2020, October 19, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3978839>

⁹ Mega TV, Mtavari, October 23, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3978953&rc=1>

¹⁰ Georgia and World, September 29, <https://bit.ly/2HBV2tk>

¹¹ Facebook account, October 1, <https://www.facebook.com/zurab.meskhi.5/posts/1682785138566466>

¹² Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia, September 9, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3965122>

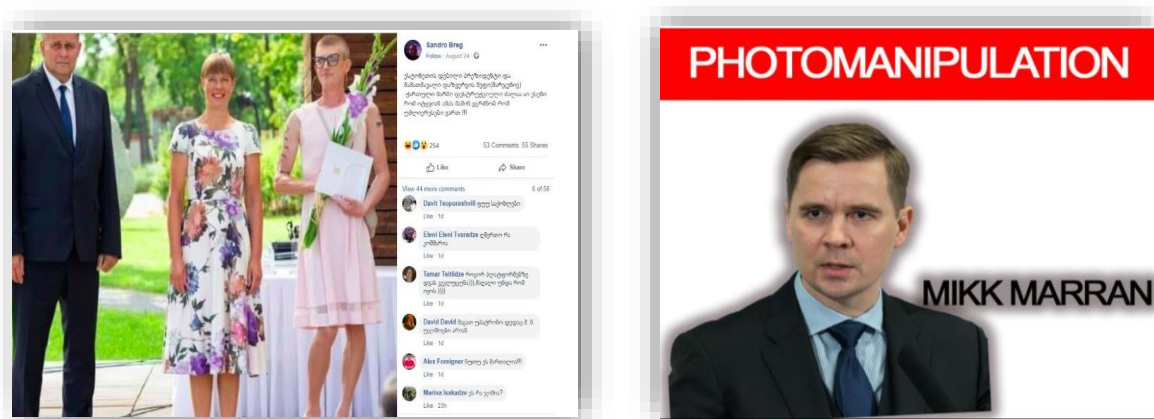
Unacceptable values/imposed homosexuality. Most frequently, the messages about the West allegedly imposing liberal values and homosexuality on Georgia were voiced by Georgian March. Its leader, Sandro Bregadze used a false dilemma technique¹³ when portraying the western policy of protecting “homosexuals” as a counterweight to the protection of David Gareji Monastery Complex by the Kremlin:

Sandro Bregadze, Georgian March: “If the protection of David Gareji and Georgia’s territorial integrity is in Kremlin’s interests and the protection of homosexuals is a western policy, then those people who are talking about it are discrediting the West most of all. Abkhazia, Tskhinvali Region and David Gareji are presently occupied and we should liberate all these regions from occupation¹⁴.”

The 2019 report of Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, which, among other issues, reviews Russia’s plans to interfere in Georgian elections and refers to the Georgian March as the group that voices antiliberal discourse, reads:

“Recent years have also seen a significant increase in propaganda to promote so-called traditional values in Georgia. The Georgian March, an umbrella organization for extremist movements established in 2017, plays a major role in this. Its mission is to resist the values supposedly imposed on Georgian society by the West, allegedly threatening the very existence of the Georgian people and society. It is an aggressive movement that does not shy away from physical attacks against its opponents. It is aimed at rattling public support for joining the European Union and NATO – a foreign policy consensus that has held for nearly 15 years – as well as creating internal tensions and escalating conflict within Georgian society. Among the leaders of the Georgian March are several individuals with ties to Russia and its influence activities¹⁵.”

In response to the report, Sandro Bregadze spread homophobic disinformation based on the photo manipulation, claiming that the photo depicted the gay chief of Estonian intelligence and his supporter, Estonian President, calling the latter “dumb.”¹⁶



¹³ The false dilemma i.e. an “either/or” reasoning means claiming that there are only two options of a situation, and giving preference to either of the two, ignoring any additional option.

¹⁴ Marshalpress, October 9, <https://mpn.ge/archives/34462>

¹⁵ <https://netgazeti.ge/news/427239/>

¹⁶ <https://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/whos-person-sandro-bregadze-passes-chief-intelligence-service-estonia>

Coronavirus pandemic. During the monitoring period, politicians made 5 conspiratorial messages and 10 comments about the coronavirus and vaccination:

<i>Coronavirus = total control of citizens</i>	Dimitri Lortkipanidze, majoritarian candidate, the Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center: “The coronavirus pandemic is the beginning of digital dictatorship!.. So, it is the final phase of globalization, meaning that total control of the world population will further increase. ¹⁷ ”
<i>The coronavirus does not exist</i>	Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: “The coronavirus actually does not exist. The entire world has noted that it is a lie. The entire world says that it will not close anything; neither does Europe close movie theaters. ¹⁸ ”
<i>Corona exists! Trump's enemies plan to infect the leaders of the Alliance of Patriots with the coronavirus</i>	Soso Shatberashvili, Leftist Alliance/Alliance of Patriots: “There is a plan to infect the leaders of the Alliance of Patriots with the coronavirus. Particularly, it is the group fighting against Donald Trump. This group is represented in Georgia by Director of the McCain Institute, David Kramer ¹⁹ .”
<i>UNICEF imposes mandatory vaccination on us</i>	Levan Chachua, Georgian Idea: “SOS!!! SOS!!! SOS!!! We have obtained the document, according to which the United Nations Children’s Fund, on behalf of the COVAX Facility, a mechanism to ensure global access to COVID-19 vaccines, is working with vaccine manufacturers and partners over the purchase of vaccine doses, as well as the issues of vaccine transportation, logistics and storage... Let’s gather and demand the government to reject the imposed mandatory vaccination! Also, let’s demand UNICEF’s expulsion from Georgia!!! ²⁰ ”
<i>Soros, Bill Gates and Elon Musk promise fraudulent vaccination and enslavement with face masks</i>	Ramini Abesadze, Kutaisi majoritarian candidate, Georgian Idea: “If these people are coming on behalf of George Soros, Bill Gates and Elon Musk and plan to impose fraudulent vaccination and face masks on us like on slaves, why should we be ashamed to come on behalf of Christ? Thus, today we are coming just on behalf of Christ. ²¹ ”

¹⁷ Asaval-Dasavali, September 28 – October 4

¹⁸ Obieqtivi, Kvelas Gasagonad, September 22, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3969429>

¹⁹ Asaval-Dasavali, October 12 – 18

²⁰ News Front, September 13, <https://bit.ly/3kFqbKD>

²¹ Kutaisi Post Studio, Elections 2020, October 19, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3978838>

1.2.2. NATO

The majority of anti-NATO comments were made by the members of the Alliance of Patriots party (36). The following messages were dominant:

<i>NATO = Turkish troops in Georgia</i>	Guram Nikolaishvili, Alliance of Patriots: “If NATO enters Georgia, it will be Turkish NATO!” ²²
<i>NATO = Loss of territories</i>	Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: “...So, it means that we should cede everything - Sokhumi, Tskhinvali, Batumi, Akhaltsikhe, Ozurgeti in exchange for NATO entering Georgia and most important is that even this is not enough for NATO to enter.” ²³
<i>NATO will not be able to defend us</i>	Guram Nikolaishvili, Alliance of Patriots: “If Russia decides, who will stop it? Tell me, which international organization or military bloc will resist it?” ²⁴
<i>We should normalize our relations with Russia by declaring neutrality</i>	Vazha Otarashvili, Alliance of Patriots: “I think, the only solution is that Georgia should normalize its relations with Russia and what is extremely important, we should declare military non-alignment . So, it will ultimately guarantee that neither the West nor another political vector will use us as a stronghold.” ²⁵
<i>Neutrality + direct dialogue with Moscow, Tskhinvali, Sokhumi</i>	Gocha Tevdoradze, Alliance of Patriots: “Yes to military non-alignment, Yes to direct dialogue with Moscow, Tskhinvali, Sokhumi, Yes to development and Yes to better tomorrow for our country and our population.” ²⁶

Besides traditional anti-NATO messages, the member of the Alliance of Patriots party voiced an opinion that the resumption of hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh had been linked to the NATO exercises.

Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: “This [Nagorno-Karabakh conflict] is certainly linked to the NATO exercises here. It poses a threat of a large war; it depends on how the sides will act”²⁷.

Such messages echoed the narrative promoting an opinion that great powers were provoking Russia, using Georgia as a proving ground for confrontation with Russia. Besides the Alliance of Patriots, the Director of the Primakov Center also voiced the same opinion:

Dimitri Lortkipanidze, majoritarian candidate in Didube-Chugureti constituency: “Some influential international experts suppose that the Great Britain is interested in strengthening Turkey’s influence in the Caucasus region and weakening Russia’s positions. It means that the West is interested in turning the Caucasus into a proving ground for confrontation between superpowers; thus, dragging Russia into a large-scale war through Turkey’s provocative actions will actually mean the beginning of such confrontation. So, what is presently happening between two

²² Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia, September 10, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3965544>

²³ Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia, August 7, https://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=3957432

²⁴ Alia, October 12-18

²⁵ Georgia and World, August 12, <https://bit.ly/31GIHuI>

²⁶ Obieqtivi, Namdvili Ambebi, September 30

²⁷ Obieqtivi, Namdvili Ambebi, September 29, https://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=3971530

sovereign states of the South Caucasus – Armenia and Azerbaijan – can just be assessed as an attempt to achieve this goal.” However, there is no less interest towards Georgia that is clearly seen in the West’s provocative actions taken immediately after positive signs of Russian-Georgian normalization emerge.²⁸”

1.2.3. The United States

The anti-U.S. messages were mainly related to infringement on the sovereignty and interference in internal political processes. Most frequently, such messages were voiced by the Alliance of Patriots.

<i>The U.S. rules us</i>	Victor Tsaava, majoritarian candidate of the Alliance of Patriots in Martvili-Abasha-Tsalenjikha-Chkhorotsku constituency: "The Georgian government is not authorized to take any steps independently. The U.S. Department of State should dictate our leadership what to do ²⁹ ."
<i>The U.S. is divided: the same forces are fighting against the Alliance of Patriots and Donald Trump</i>	Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: "No to David Kramer, Mikheil Saakashvili and Giga Bokeria, and Yes to Donald Trump, because we and Donald Trump ...are actually in the same situation . It was just David Kramer and his team, who initially accused Trump of covert ties with Russia that proved to be a lie and now he accuses us that also is a lie... We have open relations, so we do not need any covert ties. ³⁰ ."
<i>Encourages color revolutions</i>	Giorgi Lomia, Alliance of Patriots: "They [the McCain Institute, George Soros and Matthew Bryza] have developed the case of color revolutions and are now organizing these color revolutions in various countries ³¹ ."
<i>The U.S. will not be able to defend us</i>	Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: "Let them sign [the treaty similar to that between the U.S and Israel]! Why do not they do it? Are not we strategic partners?.. They are openly stating that it is not in the U.S. interests to engage in war with Russia for the sake of Georgia ³² ."

²⁸ Georgia and World, October 20, <https://bit.ly/3kFCPt5>

²⁹ Georgia and World, September 15, <https://bit.ly/31RWQ8l>

³⁰ Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia, October 9, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3974560>

³¹ Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia, October 3, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3972843>

³² Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia – Kvelas Gasagonad, September 15, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3967028>

1.2.4. Non-governmental organizations/George Soros

The majority of comments against non-governmental organizations and American philanthropist George Soros were made by the Georgian March (10). The same party called for imposing legal restrictions on the activities of foreign-funded NGOs.

<i>Soros supporters are fulfilling the instructions of foreign countries</i>	Ermile Nemsadze, Kutaisi majoritarian candidate of the Georgian March: “So, here are former presidential candidates of Belarus... reportedly, all three of them have foreign citizenship ... It’s nothing new, because Soros supporters generally have two or three or even more homelands. ³³ ”
<i>Foreign-funded foundations should be banned</i>	Giorgi Gabedava, Zugdidi majoritarian candidate of the Georgian March: “Eka Gigauri [Head of Transparency International Georgia] is doing her best to link us to certain foundations... when we demanded the expulsion of the Soros Foundation from Georgia, we did not forget about the Primakov Foundation! Russian, American, Turkish, Iranian or Argentine funding should be banned by law especially when such organizations grossly interfere in internal political issues, when they pose a threat to the territorial integrity, when they foment strife among fellow citizens, when they promote wars in other countries. ³⁴ ”
<i>There is no place for Sorosist-Liberast forces in Georgia</i>	Mikheil Makharadze, Batumi majoritarian candidate to the Adjara Supreme Council, Georgian March: “We believe that Sorosist-Liberast forces should be rooted out in Georgia ³⁵ .”

1.2.5. European Union/Europe

Fewer negative comments were made regarding the European Union and most of them were made by the Alliance of Patriots (8). The following messages were made:

- **Gaining access to the EU market is unrealistic for Georgia:** “The Spanish and Italians are killing each other to gain access to the market and who will admit you there?”³⁶ (Nana Devdariani, majoritarian candidate of the Alliance of Patriots).
- **Imposes unacceptable values on us:** “Let them give up imposing on us the laws that are against our national dignity, consciousness. I will repeat once again, it destroys the nation’s consciousness³⁷” (Vazha Otarashvili, Alliance of Patriots).
- **Rules us and interferes in the country’s sovereign issues:** “Are we the nation known for its domestic violence? It is nonsense... because Europe said that people should be strictly punished for domestic violence³⁸” (Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots).

³³ News Front, August 17, <https://bit.ly/31TPHnY>

³⁴ Personal Facebook account, August 3 https://www.facebook.com/gabedava.gio/posts/1587501674760707?_tn=-R&https://archive.ph/SX80G

³⁵ TV12, Elections 2020, October 2, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3976054>

³⁶ Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia, October 19, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3977530>

³⁷ Georgia and World, September 23, <https://bit.ly/2Jk8ani>

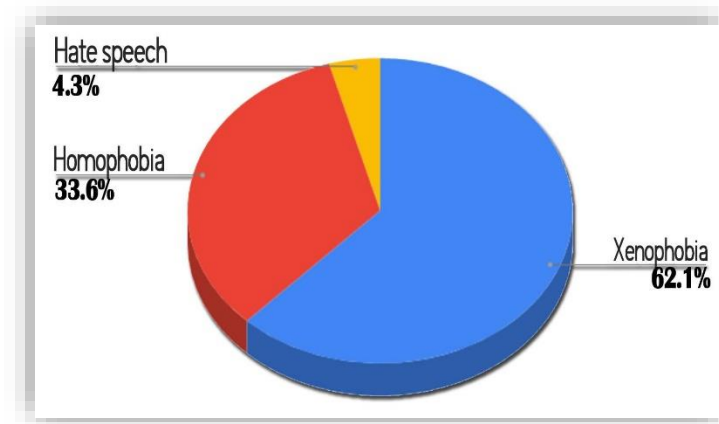
³⁸ Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia, August 7, https://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=3957468

II. HATE SPEECH

2.1. Aggregated quantitative data

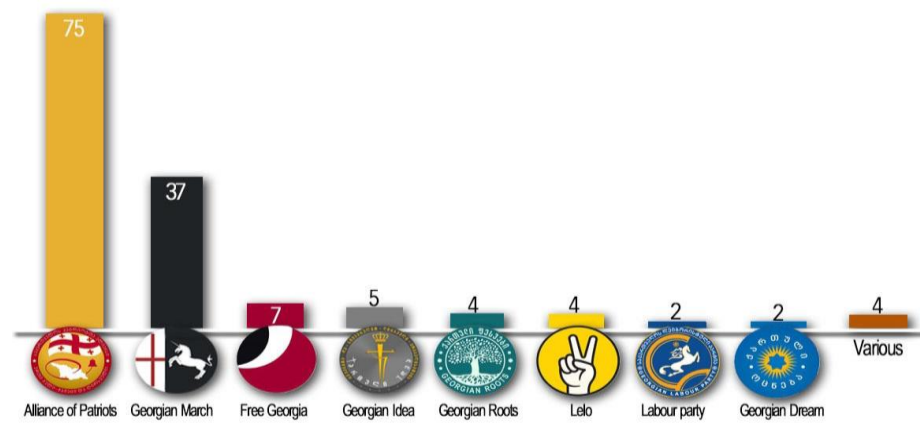
A total of 140 comments containing hate speech were made during the monitoring period with the largest share accounting for xenophobic comments (87), followed by homophobic (47) remarks and statements fomenting strife (6).

Chart 4. Typology of hate speech



Among politicians, the majority of discriminatory remarks were made by the members of Alliance of Patriots (75), followed by Georgian March (37), Free Georgia (7), Georgian Idea (5), Georgian Roots (4) and Lelo for Georgia (4); as for Labor Party and Georgian Dream, each of them made two statements. The category “various” units per comment made by the United National Movement, Our Georgia, Aleksandre Erkvania and Dimitri Lortkipanidze.

Chart 5. Hate speech by political parties



2.2. Xenophobia

The largest proportion of xenophobic messages accounted for Turkophobia (59) largely driven by the traditional campaign of the Alliance of Patriots, trying to mobilize its supporters through reopening historical traumas and diverting attention from Russian threats to historical threats. The statements about migrants (12) and sale of lands to foreign nationals (6) come next, followed by Armenophobic comments.

Xenophobia	Turkophobia	Migrants	Against sale of lands to foreign nationals	Armenophobia	Various
Alliance of Patriots	51	6	5		1
Georgian March	4	2	1	2	3
Free Georgia	1	3			1
Labor Party	1	1			
Georgian Roots	1			1	
Various	1				
National Movement				1	
Georgian Dream				1	
	59	12	6	5	5

Turkophobia. Turkophobia was a component of Alliance of Patriot’s election campaign reflected in its video clips and outdoor ads, where Adjara was portrayed as occupied by Turkey, as well as in the comments made on both mainstream and social media. Like in previous years, the party spread the following messages:

- **Carries out expansion:** “We have long been talking about the fact that Turkey is carrying out targeted economic and ideological expansion in Adjara... Of course, Adjara should be defended; our share of Georgia should be defended!³⁹” (Irma Inashvili, Alliance of Patriots). “In those gravest years, when the Ottoman Empire was annihilating Orthodox Christianity, including Georgia, it was also carrying out economic expansion in various forms⁴⁰” (Vazha Otarashvili, Alliance of Patriots).
- **Turkey is a threat:** “... And quite soon, without any need to use force or hold a referendum, they will grab us and, with a high probability, they will even create a political party and form the majority in Adjara Supreme Council!!!⁴¹” (Giorgi Lomia, Alliance of Patriots)

³⁹ Pirveli news agency, August 29, <https://pia.ge/ka/news/politics/irma-inashvili-baneri-sruliad-ganskhvavebuli-sakhit-mivighet-politsabchoze/>

⁴⁰ Georgia and World, August 12, <https://bit.ly/31GIHuI>

⁴¹ Alia, September 21-27

- **If Russia is an occupier, Turkey (other neighbours) is an occupier too:** “Foreign troops are deployed in one part of Georgia without agreement with the Georgian government; it is an occupation. So, Georgia is occupied by two, three or more countries and that is true, though nobody talks about it. Georgia is a colony⁴²” (Victor Tsaava, majoritarian candidate of the Alliance of Patriots in Martvili-Chkhorotsku-Tsalenjikha-Abasha constituency).

Against migrants. The statements against migrants were made by the Alliance of Patriots, Georgian March, Free Georgia and Labor Party.

- **Shalva Natelashvili, Labor Party:** “The nation, which is on the path to extinction, the country which is in decline, those people who are still alive are running away from here and those who have not run yet are going to do it, and what happens simultaneously, we have opened the doors to Iran, Pakistan and Arab countries to resettle them to Georgia and achieve internationalization.⁴³”
- **Sandro Bregadze, Georgian March:** “We managed to achieve much only through street protests... We made them ban the sale of Georgian lands to aliens and we will manage to achieve much more from the Parliament rostrum... We will achieve mass deportation of criminal foreigners illegally residing in Georgia.⁴⁴”
- **Kakha Kukava, Free Georgia:** “We should limit migration of Chinese, Arab or other nationals to the country as well as issuance of residence permits to them.⁴⁵”

Islamophobia. Number of Islamophobic comments was relatively small and they were mainly made by regional representatives of political parties.

- **Goderdzi Kublashvili, Free Georgia’s majoritarian candidate in Samtskhe-Javakheti constituency:** “When the Orthodox population represents the majority in the country, of course, such issues should be solved through a referendum, because the Orthodox population lives in the region, in the village, where a minaret has been erected and their rights have been violated, first of all. There already are a lot of minarets in the region that we call an upper zone with loudspeakers attached to the mosques and it is not pleasant to listen to Mullah’s voice all day long⁴⁶.”
- **Nino Kvaratskhelia, Alliance of Patriots, Zugdidi constituency:** “Does not Batumi need any defense? Now, turn this video on and listen to Mullah’s howl⁴⁷.”

⁴² Georgia and World, September 9, <https://bit.ly/33ikllc>

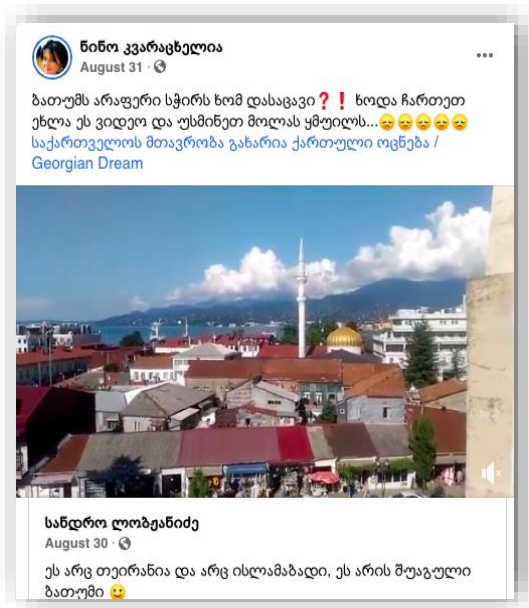
⁴³ Mtavari Arkhi, Gamis Mtavari, July 28, https://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=3958056

⁴⁴ Asaval-Dasavali, August 31 – September 6

⁴⁵ Georgian Public Broadcaster, Moambe, October 20, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3977935>

⁴⁶ SK.TV, September 9, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3967642>

⁴⁷ Facebook post, August 31, <https://www.facebook.com/nino.kvaratskhelia.92775/posts/395306794774986>



Armenophobia. Number of Armenophobic comments was relatively small and they were made by representatives of the ruling party, as well as the National Movement and other political parties:

- **Shmagi Khubuluri, Gori Municipality, Georgian Dream:** “I am not an Armenophobe, but it is beyond any logic. This [video about an Armenian Churchkhela] is a typical example of what kind of predators they are. Feel free to draw your own conclusions.”⁴⁸
- **Azer Suleimanov, National Movement’s majoritarian candidate in Marneuli and Gardabani constituency:** “Over the past 30 years, the territory of Azerbaijan remains occupied by our terrible neighbor, Armenia and Armenian terrorist groups.”⁴⁹

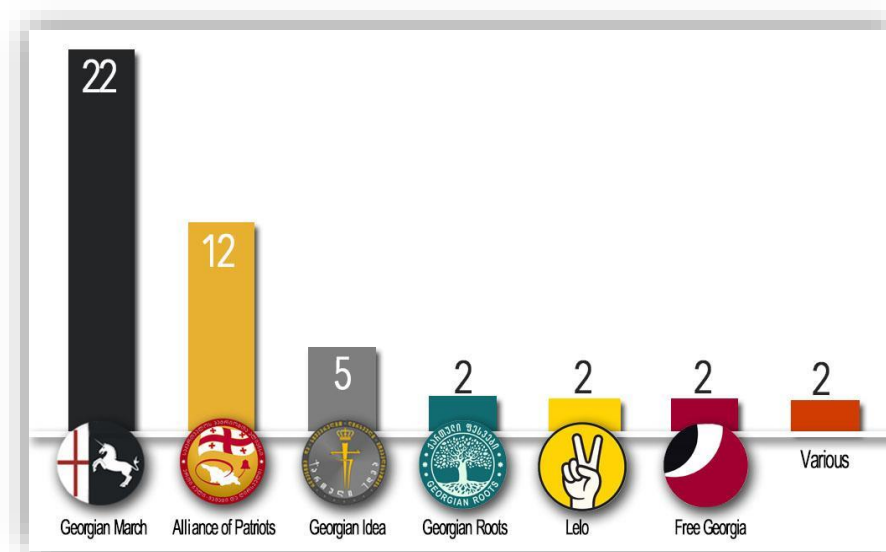
2.3. Homophobia

The majority of homophobic comments were made by Georgian March (22), followed by Alliance of Patriots (12) and Georgian Idea (5); two comments were made by each Georgian Roots, Lelo for Georgia and Free Georgia.

⁴⁸ Personal Facebook page, September 24, https://www.facebook.com/shmagi.khubuluri/posts/3192255534217170?_tn=-R

⁴⁹ Facebook account, September 27, <https://www.facebook.com/azer.suleymanov.18/posts/3278071982299899>

Chart 6. Homophobia by political parties



During the election campaign, antiliberal parties dubbed their opponents as “gay revolutionaries,” “LGBT coalition” and “liberast infidels,” focusing on the fact that Georgian people had to make a choice between gay revolutionaries and national forces.

- **A choice should be made between gay revolutionaries and nationally-minded forces**

Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: “We represent the Georgian people and the people should gather and go to elections to ensure that Georgia is no longer oppressed. **Otherwise, we all will die out and this country will be left to gay revolutionaries.**⁵⁰”

Giorgi Gigauri, journalist of Asaval-Dasavali, Georgian March: “We can say without exaggeration that this opposition union is a usual **LGBT coalition!**.. If a miracle happens and the National-Republican coalition comes to power, the first thing they will do is to cover entire Georgia with this LGBT flag, whereas men in dresses will be sent to schools and kindergartens to teach our children! Damn it!⁵¹”

Sandro Bregadze, Georgian March: “A real struggle will take place not between Georgian Dream and National Movement, but between nationally-minded people and liberast-infidels. Either the morality, traditions, belief and Georgian mindset will win, or the country will further stick in the mud of blasphemy, depravity, homosexuality and drug addiction!!!⁵²”

⁵⁰ Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia, August 14, https://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=3958913

⁵¹ Asaval-Dasavali, September 21-27

⁵² News Front, August 5, <https://bit.ly/324QXET>

Gedevan Popkhadze, Our Georgia – Solidarity Alliance: “If they want stoned Georgia along with same-sex marriage, let them vote for Zurab Japaridze.⁵³”

Calls for banning homosexuality by law and restrict LGBT community’s freedom of expression were also voiced:

<i>Homosexuals should be restricted by law</i>	Malkhaz Topuria, Alliance of Patriots, Mtatsminda majoritarian candidate: “I think, the Parliament should adopt the law, which will ban me too as a heterosexual from holding any manifestations and rallies on sexual grounds... as soon as legal restrictions are imposed, these grants designed for those people, which actually are nothing but illegally gained profits, will no longer be allocated. ⁵⁴ ”
<i>Homosexuals' freedom of expression should be restricted</i>	Ramini Abesade, Georgian Dream, Kutaisi majoritarian candidate: “Any person can do whatever he/she wants in his/her lair, but when it comes to my nation, my city, my homeland, personally I will not allow anybody to come out and fly an LGBT flag, to preach depravity to my sister, my brother, my children, whenever I have them, to preach the rule of immoral life and declare it as a normal and Sodomy for which people had been punished as we know from the Bible. ⁵⁵ ”
<i>Homosexuality is an illness</i>	Besik Chubinidze, Georgian Roots, Rustavi majoritarian candidate: “...You are sick because you are a man, you are called a man and you want to have a relationship with a man. ⁵⁶ ”
<i>Liberalism = depravity, loss of identity</i>	Giorgi Meladze, Lelo for Georgia, Shida Kartli majoritarian candidate: “People, who are covertly making money under the cover of liberalism and are imposing “freedom” on us, are the enemies of Georgian identity, spirit and traditions. But the freedom brought by them means depravity, disregard of our identity, rejection of all those pillars that have brought us to the present day ⁵⁷ .”

⁵³ Rezonansi, August 19, http://www.resonancedaily.com/index.php?id_rub=2&id_artc=102567

⁵⁴ Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia, September 9, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3965346>

⁵⁵ Mega TV, Mtavari, October 23, https://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=3978943

⁵⁶ Political Taxi, October 14, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3977446>

⁵⁷ Personal Facebook page, August 2 <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=311843796892872&set=a.122535509157036&type=3&theater>

III. PRE-ELECTION DISCREDITING CAMPAIGNS

Against the opposition

Three notable examples of anti-opposition discrediting campaigns were revealed during the pre-election period with the majority related to the National Movement's rule and only one linked to the recent criminal incident, when the pro-government Facebook accounts linked the Zugdidi bank attack to the UNM party due to the hostage's party affiliation. These campaigns are:

1. **Gareji is Georgia!** Previous government sold David Gareji monastery to Azerbaijan
2. **Georgia launched the war**
3. The bank robbery in Zugdidi has been **provoked by the United National Movement**

1. Davit Gareji issue . The most influential discrediting campaign unleashed by the government against the opposition ahead of the parliamentary elections was related to David Gareji Monastery Complex located on the disputed section of the Georgian-Azerbaijani state border with demarcation works still ongoing⁵⁸. The campaign promoted the narrative that opponents are selling churches and homeland, while the government is neutralizing the threats. The campaign created a fruitful ground for ultranationalist and pro-Russian forces to discuss Azerbaijan along with Russia in the context of threats and occupation.

On October 7, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia detained⁵⁹ two former Border Demarcation Commission members Iveri Melashvili and Natalia Ilychova, regarding the criminal investigation launched on August 17⁶⁰ into ceding lands to Azerbaijan. Local civil society organizations slammed the decision to initiate the investigation ahead of elections as "politically motivated."⁶¹ The case was notable for the following factors:

- **Time of launch of investigation and an accompanying narrative.** The case was initiated ahead of the parliamentary elections and it was accompanied by the ruling party's statements accusing the previous government of selling the historic monument to Azerbaijan and claiming that the ruling party is now trying to reclaim the lost territories.
- **Russia's interference.** Georgian businessman Davit Khidasheli with close ties to Russian intelligence services provided the Georgian Defense Ministry with topographic maps. In an interview with the Georgian media, Khidasheli said it was Bidzina Ivanishvili, leader of the ruling Georgian Dream party, who personally asked him for this favor⁶². According to media reports, Khidasheli obtained the documents with the help of Russian foreign intelligence officer Oleg Mubarashkin⁶³. In addition, Irma Inashvili, leader of pro-Russian Alliance of Patriots party, also called for an investigation into the David Gareji case⁶⁴.

⁵⁸ <https://civil.ge/archives/374990>

⁵⁹ <http://pog.gov.ge/en/news/saqarTvelo-1>

⁶⁰ <http://pog.gov.ge/en/news/saqarTvelos-1>

⁶¹ http://mdfgeorgia.ge/geo/view_statements/654

⁶² <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/30891633.html>

⁶³ <http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/179735-ra-vicit-pirze-vinc-ambobs-rom-davit-garejis-rukebi-saxelmtsifos-gadasca>

⁶⁴ <https://bit.ly/38mCbXh>

Currently Khidasheli is the President of the Board of Directors of a Greek telecommunications equipment manufacturer INTRACOM S.A. TELECOM SOLUTIONS⁶⁵. Previously, in 2007-2014 Khidasheli held various positions at Sistema JSFC⁶⁶ including Executive Vice President, Vice President and Director of Innovations. Notably, Vladimir Chirakhov⁶⁷, a graduate of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) Academy, is currently the Executive Director of Sistema. According to the document of the annual meeting of Sistema shareholders in 2015, the Board of Directors approved the new composition of the company's Board of Directors, which also included Levan Vasadze⁶⁸, affiliated with the World Congress of Families (WCG)⁶⁹. His position is set by the Vice President of the Investment Department

Messages. The legal proceedings were accompanied by the statements made by Georgian Dream's political leaders, according to which the previous government had sold the historic monument that was promoting the rhetoric by antiliberal and ultra-nationalist groups, mostly focusing on the territories occupied by Azerbaijan:

Mamuka Mdinardze, Georgian Dream: "Luckily, they [the National Movement] failed to legalize their goal. They created all necessary conditions for transferring this territory, Georgian territory and one of the serious cultural monuments of Georgian identity to another country."⁷⁰

Irakli Garibashvili, Defense Minister: "I think, such political organizations would have been closed in a normal, strong state. These people and their political leadership would have faced life imprisonment in case of proven treason against their homeland and people."⁷¹

Irma Inashvili, Alliance of Patriots: "If we follow this logic, it appears that Russia assists us in solving this issue in our favor."⁷²

Sandro Bregadze, Georgian March: "Abkhazia is occupied, Tskhinvali region is also occupied and **David Gareji is also occupied right now.** We should liberate all these regions from occupation."⁷³

⁶⁵ <http://www.intracom-telecom.com/en/company/profile/management.htm>

⁶⁶ <https://sistema.ru/upload/iblock/0cc/0cc9e8e2737233639561a998b3ec4de8.pdf>

⁶⁷ <https://bit.ly/2JRVkqt>

⁶⁸ <https://bit.ly/3l8287c>

⁶⁹ <http://mythdetector.ge/ka/myth/ojakhebis-msoplio-kongresis-rusuli-kavshirebi>

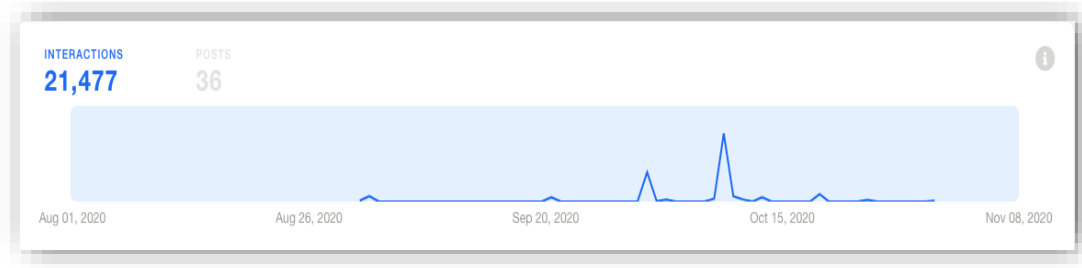
⁷⁰ Pirveli news agency, October 7, <https://bit.ly/36eAl9r>

⁷¹ Pirveli news agency, October 16, <https://bit.ly/3eFH1Ha>

⁷² Formula TV, October 9, <https://bit.ly/32nq27e>

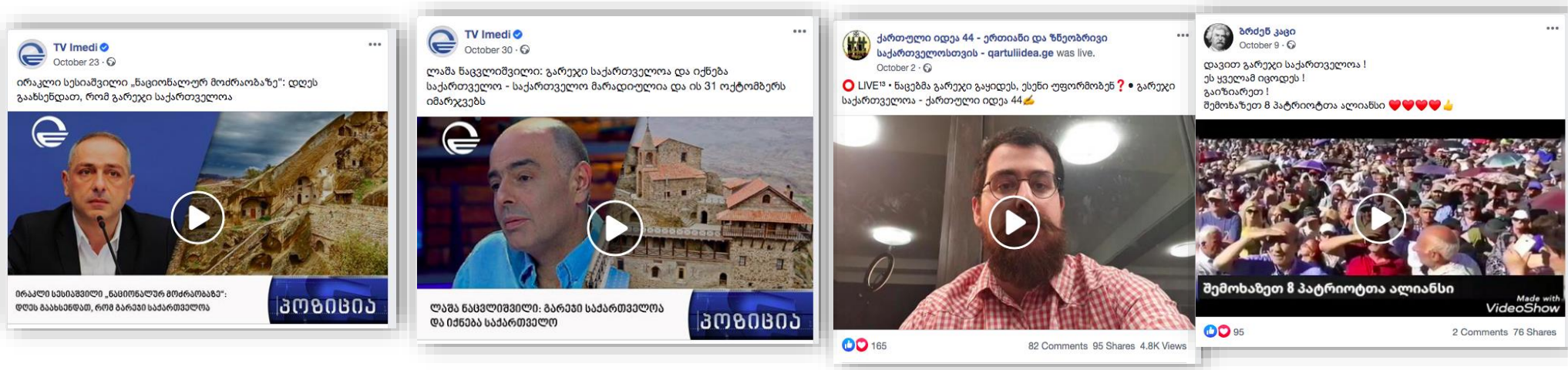
⁷³ Marshalpress, October 9, <https://mpn.ge/archives/34462>

Raising the issue of David Gareji on social media was followed by 36 posts and 21,477 interactions



Not only the ruling party⁷⁴, but also Alliance of Patriots⁷⁵, Georgian March and Georgian Idea⁷⁶ used the topic for consolidating voters:

Nana Devdariani, Alliance of Patriots: “They [voters] should support the Alliance of Patriots only because... if it were not the Alliance of Patriots that showed everyone that we should never tolerate it, because David Gareji is Georgia, the current investigation would not have been launched.”⁷⁷



The statements made by political parties were followed by identical rhetoric from clerics and religious Facebook pages:

Shalva Kekelia, head of Vake Transfiguration Cathedral: “People say that ‘we do not want to damage relations with Azerbaijan and are ready to cede these territories.’ For me, **any country misappropriating my country is the enemy of our country**, especially as David Gareji, the place where 6,000 monks were martyred, is the vital territory for us. Therefore, any person or television saying that ‘we do not want to tense

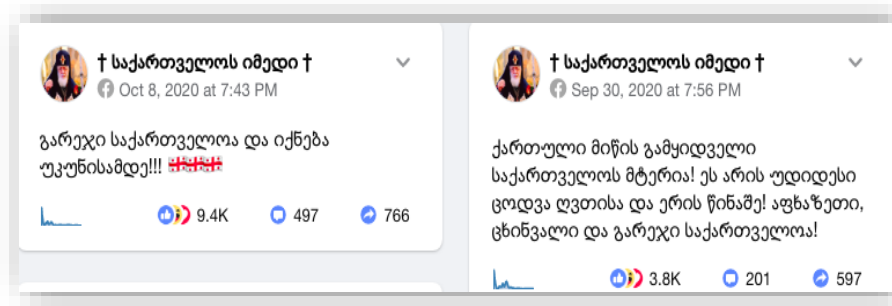
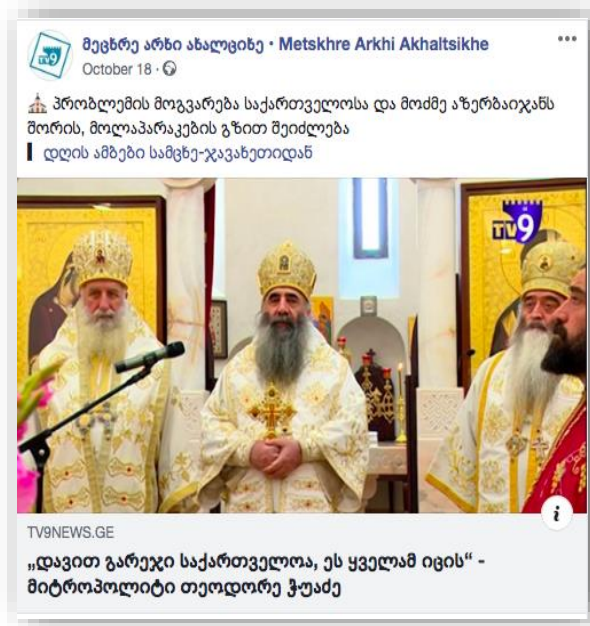
⁷⁴ <https://bit.ly/3k8fy1H>

⁷⁵ <https://bit.ly/3kbCqWO>

⁷⁶ <https://bit.ly/3laltDP>

⁷⁷ October 1, <https://bit.ly/3eGsPqI>

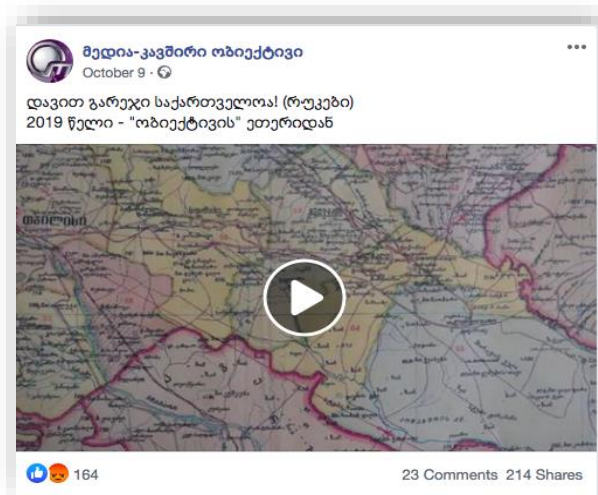
the situation’ – for me personally, even if the relations become tense over the lands, if Russia is an enemy, any country taking our lands away is an enemy for me.⁷⁸



Pro-government Imedi TV went on air on the election day with a slogan “Gareji is Georgia!” which was removed the next day. Media Union Obieqtivi affiliated with the Alliance of Patriots party also shared the content with an identical slogan⁷⁹.

⁷⁸ On.ge, October 14, <https://bit.ly/3p6vbKO>

⁷⁹ <https://bit.ly/3eE6DDY>



2. Georgia launched the war. On the 12th anniversary of the 2008 Georgian-Russian war, openly pro-Russian, Kremlin-affiliated actors and antiliberal groups were still actively spreading the Russian government's message accusing Georgia of unleashing the war in Georgian media and social networks. The same message has long been promoted by pro-Kremlin propaganda in Georgian society and internationally.

The ruling Georgian Dream party accused both Russia and previous Georgian government of launching the war, claiming that the previous government admitted its guilt for launching the war that is confirmed⁸⁰ by international documents (the 2008 CoE resolution on the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia⁸¹)

Irakli Kobakhidze, Georgian Dream: "This occupation has two co-authors: one is Putin, the Russian Federation and the other – Mikheil Saakashvili.⁸²"

Irakli Kobakhidze, Georgian Dream: "There are some facts, which clearly prove the guilt of the previous government. The National Movement pursued Russia's interests when it marked the borders of the Autonomous District of South Ossetia in 2006 that paved the way for occupation and later illegal borderization.⁸³"

Pro-Russian Alliance of Patriots also accused the previous government of launching the war. Simultaneously, the party promoted an old thesis according to which the use of a term "occupier" in respect of Russia is inexpedient and that Georgia should try to settle the conflict without the involvement of Western partners, through direct dialogue with Moscow:

⁸⁰ <http://mythdetector.ge/ka/myth/vin-da-rogor-amtkitsebs-rom-omi-sakartvelom-daicqo>

⁸¹ <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17681>

⁸² <https://bit.ly/36hJNyi>

⁸³ Pirveli news agency, October 8, <https://bit.ly/3ldXxR4>

Victor Tsaava, majoritarian candidate of the Alliance of Patriots in Martvili, Abasha, Chkhorotsku, Tsalenjikha constituency: “Saakashvili and his government ceded Akhagori to adversaries without even knowing where the border lies. Today, members of Saakashvili’s National Movement claim that the so called “creeping occupation” is underway in Georgia, but nobody says anything about what document Saakashvili has signed and where the border lies. Nobody investigates this issue.”⁸⁴

Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: “We should not use the terms “occupied territories” and “an occupier.” It will bring nothing but harm. Abkhazia and Tskhinvali will no longer be Georgia’s autonomies. These territories will be separated or part of Abkhazia will become independent and part will be returned to Georgia, or there will be some other forms that I do not know right now.”⁸⁵

Victor Tsaava, majoritarian candidate of the Alliance of Patriots in Martvili, Abasha, Chkhorotsku, Tsalenjikha constituency: “If we want the problem of territorial integrity to be solved, we should find a common language with Russia; it has no alternative. The fact is that the interests of several big states are intercrossed on our territory. As for the involvement of the United States and Europe in conflict resolution issues, I believe that Georgia has a potential to negotiate with Russia and protect its own interests without the United States and the European Union. We have an experience of centuries-old relations with Russia.”⁸⁶

3. The bank robbery in Zugdidi has been provoked by the United National Movement. Myth Detector has identified 14 Facebook accounts, as well as four pro-government media outlets, trying to link the Zugdidi incident⁸⁷ to the National Movement citing that one of the hostages was a member of the National Movement⁸⁸. Moreover, four antiliberal and pro-Russian accounts were identified, which spread identical messages. These pages published a total of 13 sponsored posts.

Anti-opposition and pro-government pages launched a Facebook campaign amid ongoing police operation to link the robbery to the National Movement, claiming that the incident aimed at destabilizing the situation in the country. The narrative was accompanied by Irakli Kvaratskhelia’s photos with the National Movement members, including ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili, as well as footage from the latter’s video address, where he says that Bidzina Ivanishvili, leader of the ruling Georgian Dream party, should expect a surprise from him.

⁸⁴ Georgia and World, October 13, <https://bit.ly/358dYJ4>

⁸⁵ Mtavari Arkhi, Post Factum, October 11, <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3975011>

⁸⁶ Georgia and World, October 20, <https://bit.ly/36eD0W8>

⁸⁷ On October 21, 2020, a gunman broke into the Bank of Georgia building in Zugdidi and took bank employees and customers hostage, demanding a ransom <https://civil.ge/archives/376522>

⁸⁸ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/how-much-does-facebook-campaign-linking-bank-robbery-national-movement-cost>



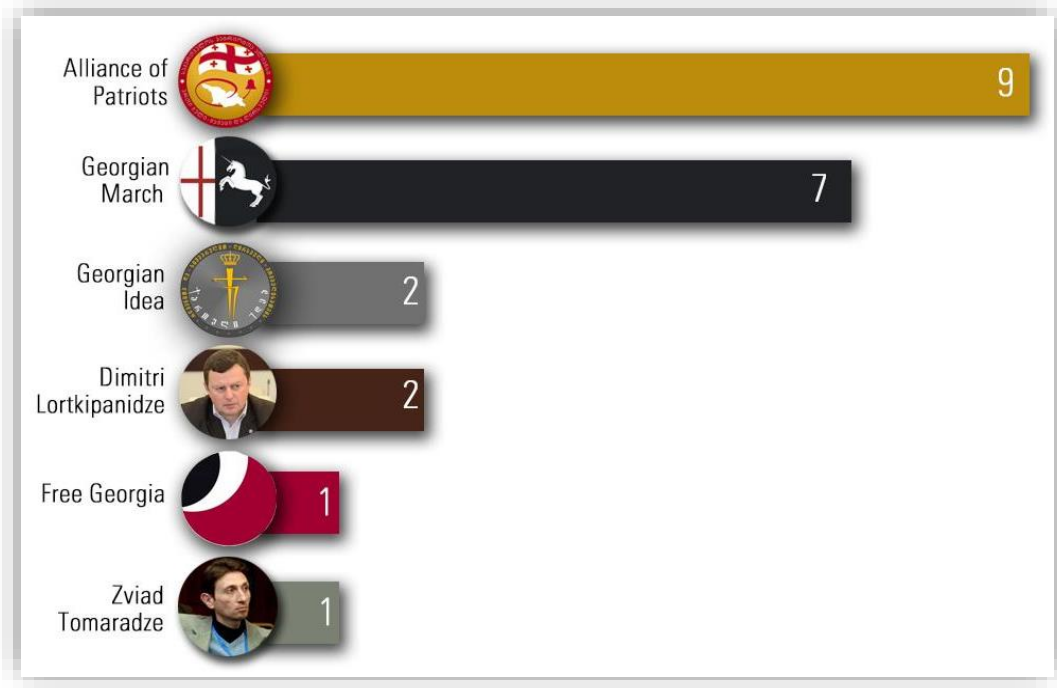
It is worth noting that two pro-opposition pages (Ekvtime Bidzinashvili and HAHA News) were identified, accusing Bidzina Ivanishvili of being behind the incident.

Facebook accounts discrediting the opposition	Antiliberal/pro-Russian accounts	Pro-government/other media outlets	Accounts affiliated with the National Movement
<p>პოლიტიკური მოთვალთვალები (Political Spy), მიხეილ უკრაინოლოგი (Mikheil Ukrainologi), ტერენტინ გლდანელი (Terentin Gldaneli), შუბლის ძარღვ განწყვეტილები (Shameless People), ნაცია -ადამიანი?! (Is a Natsi a human?!), სირცხვილის კორიდორი (Shame Corridor), ამხილე (Disclose), სექტა (Sect), ერთიანი პროვოკაციული მოძრაობა (United Provocative Movement), ნაცების დასაცინი ოფიციალური სააგენტო (Official Agency Mocking at National Movement), ნაცი კლავს (Natsi Kills), პოლიტიკური სარკაზმი (Political Sarcasm), საზოგადოება (Society) and მეხუთე რეიხი (Fifth Reich).</p>	<p>Anti-Paradox Stalin Kardhu Politicano</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POSTV -News • Reportiori.ge • Media Holding Parallel • Rezonansi 	<p>HAHA News - ჰაჰა ნიუსი Ekvtime Bidzinashvili</p>

IV. DISINFORMATION SPREAD BY POLITICIANS

During the reporting period, Myth Detector verified 22 pieces of disinformation and manipulative content spread by politicians and election stakeholders. The largest share of disinformation was spread by Alliance of Patriots (9), followed by Georgian March (7), Georgian Idea (2) and Head of the Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center, Dimitri Lortkipanidze, who ran as a majoritarian candidate in the Didube-Chugureti constituency (2). Kakha Kukava, leader of Free Georgia (1) and Zviad Tomaradze, who ran in the Gldani constituency on behalf of Political Movement of Armed Veterans and Patriots, came next.

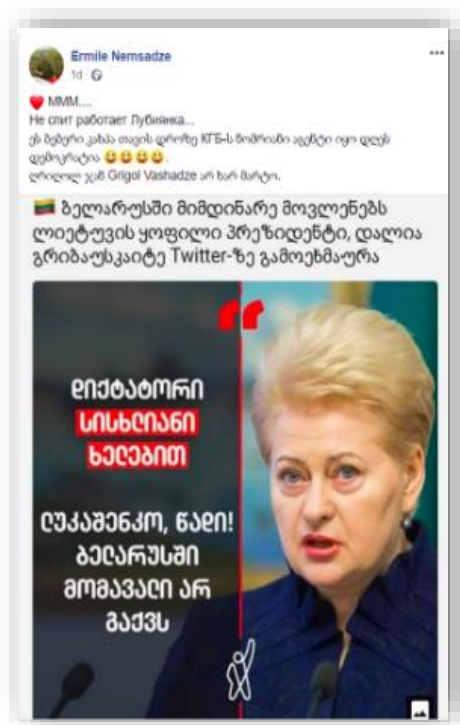
Chart 7. Sources of disinformation by political parties



As shown in the table below, most frequently, **the Alliance of Patriots** was manipulating history, using this issue for fomenting Turkophobic sentiments (the Treaty of Kars, a threat to territorial integrity); economic issues were mainly related to the threats of selling lands and forests to foreign nationals and similarly to history manipulation, they created a xenophobic context.

Besides focusing on the threats of identity loss (sexual, gender, religious), **the Georgian March** was echoing Kremlin’s disinformation messages regarding the Baltic States. Members of this ultranationalist party spread three fake news stories with a clearly discrediting nature against Estonia’s incumbent (see anti-Western messages) and Lithuania’s former Presidents, as well as against the U.S. Ambassador to Georgia. It is worth noting that

identical fake news about ex-Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė allegedly being a KGB agent was spread back in 2015-2019 by pro-Kremlin propaganda platforms Sputnik, [Ria Novosti](#), [lenta.ru](#) and other media outlets⁸⁹.



Some members of the **Georgian Idea** party and the local head of the Primakov Center provided manipulative interpretations about the Code on the Rights of the Child, using juvenile legislation in the context of “juvenile fascism”⁹⁰ and echoing the Russian narrative.

Representatives of the Alliance of Patriots and Georgian Idea parties, as well as Zviad Tomaradze of the Political Movement of Armed Veterans and Patriots spread three pieces of disinformation regarding the coronavirus pandemic and vaccination. All of them were mainly related to false claims that the coronavirus actually does not exist and that vaccines are dangerous.

⁸⁹ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/node/3324>

⁹⁰ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/myths-juvenile-legislation-directed-against-institution-family-are-groundless>

	Source	Message	Topic	Type of violation
Alliance of Patriots	Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi	Turkey has violated the provisions of the Treaty of Kars	History/Turkophobia	Disinformation, manipulation of history
	Irma Inashvili ⁹¹	Batumi and Adjara are parts of Turkey on the Turkish map	History/Turkophobia	Photo manipulation
	Irma Inashvili	Counter accusations: the information published by the Dossier Center about the party's links to Russia is not reliable, because anybody can create a website and post any desirable information.	Politics/links with Russia	Satire, fake page
	Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi	The Iranians have bought the largest part of Georgian lands	Economy/sale of land	Disinformation
	Nana Devdariani	Chinese citizens own forests in Georgia	Economy/sale of forests to the Chinese	Disinformation
	Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi	The world has admitted that the coronavirus does not exist and Europe has lifted restrictions.	Healthcare/pandemic	Disinformation
	Guram Nikolaishvili	Javelins supplied by the United States are useless	Defense/USA	Disinformation
	Davit Tarkhan Mouravi	NDI and IRI suspended their polls for one year after the Alliance of Patriots exposed the deceptions spread by the two U.S. organizations	Public opinion polls	Disinformation
	Vazha Otarashvili	School resource officers first appeared in Europe during the rule of the Nazi party and their appearance in Georgia aims at "turning future generations stupid"	Education	Disinformation
Georgian March	Sandro Bregadze	Head of Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service is a representative of the LGBT community	Identity/homophobia	Photo manipulation/disinformation
	Sandro Bregadze	Soros has allocated USD 4 million on fighting against Orthodoxy	Identity/religion	Disinformation
	Sandro Bregadze Irakli Shikhiashvili	The Public Defender's Office is a public institution and financing it by the Soros Foundation is equal to " bribing. "	Institutional independence/Soros	Manipulation
	Ermile Nemsadze	Ex-Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė is a KGB agent	Politics	Disinformation
	Enri Oniani	Women's rights activist is talking about punishing the people with prostate problems in the video , which is accompanied by a caption: "An idea by an ultra-radical feminist-liberast. Are they striving towards development?"	Legislation/criminalization of abortion	Video manipulation
	Ermile Nemsadze	Kelly Degnan, the U.S. Ambassador to Georgia, demanded an impeachment of U.S. President Donald Trump	Politics	Disinformation

⁹¹ A pre-election video of the Alliance of Patriots <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=930110434162566>

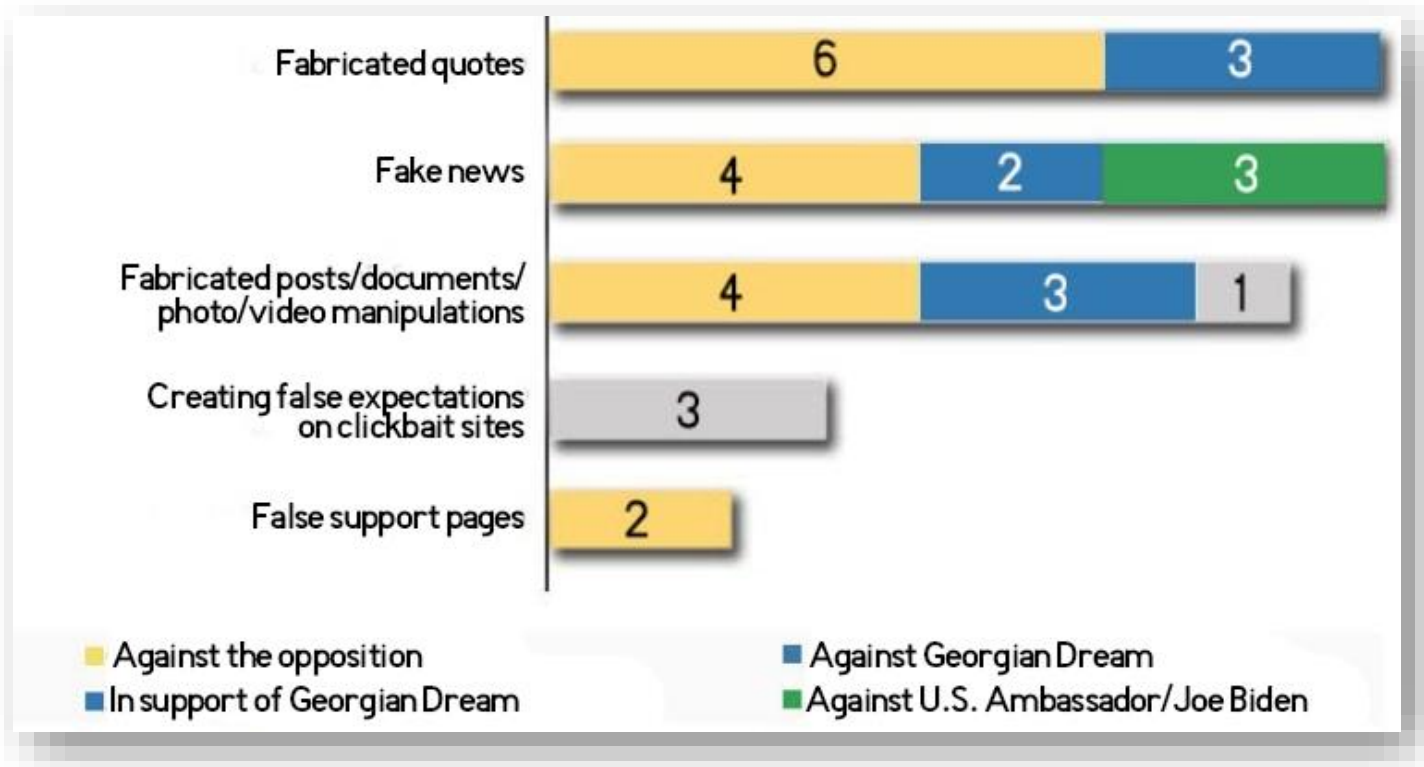
Independent candidate	Dimitri Lortkipanidze, independent majoritarian candidate in Didube-Chugureti constituency, Primakov Center	Based on the Code on the Rights of the Child, a child will be separated from parents without any reason	Legislation/family institution	Manipulation
	Dimitri Lortkipanidze	The United States has not made direct investments in Georgia	Economy	Disinformation
Georgian Idea	Levan Chachua	UNICEF compels us to carry out mandatory vaccination	Healthcare/pandemic	Disinformation
	Levan Chachua	Separation of a three-year-old child from a family is juvenile fascism directed against family institution	Legislation/family institution	Manipulation
Free Georgia	Kakha Kukava	Prior to Beria's appointment, Georgians represented the minority in Georgia	History/migration	Disinformation
Political Movement of Armed Veterans and Patriots	Zviad Tomaradze	COVID-19 numbers are inflated	Healthcare/pandemic	Disinformation

V. DISINFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA AGAINST POLITICAL AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

During the monitoring period, Myth Detector identified and verified 31 pieces of disinformation against electoral subjects and persons affiliated with them, as well as the U.S. Ambassador and U.S. presidential candidate, Joe Biden. These subjects are: opposition with the largest share accounting for the National Movement and other subjects affiliated with it (16) and Georgian Dream (8). In four cases, disinformation as well as manipulative content was spread in support of the ruling Georgian Dream party. One pro-government and one pro-opposition trolls were identified in the process of verifying fake news. Two pieces of disinformation targeted the U.S. Ambassador and one disinformation was spread by Georgian pro-Trump page against Joe Biden.

As shown in the table below, the most widespread form was falsification of quotes (9) and fake news (9), as well as spread of fabricated posts/documents and photo/video manipulations (8). The monitoring also revealed three cases of creating false expectations in favor of the ruling party on clickbait sites and two cases of creating false support pages targeting the opposition.

Chart 8. Typology of disinformation and its addressees



56 accounts were identified that were spreading fake news against the opposition and were mainly affiliated with the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party; moreover, 30 accounts were spreading fake news against the ruling party and were affiliated with the opposition United National Movement (UNM). Number of accounts affiliated with the pro-Russian Alliance of Patriots party (9), as well as ultranationalist/antiliberal (4) social media accounts was relatively small. However, representatives of these groups are dominating in the component of fake news spread by politicians, where all 22 disinformation comments were made by pro-Russian and ultranationalist electoral subjects.

Facebook accounts/media outlets	Against the opposition/affiliated with GD	Against the government/affiliated with the UNM	Pro-Russian/affiliated with the Alliance of Patriots	Ultranationalist/antiliberal
FB pages	13	13	4	3
FB groups	23	13	2	
Personal FB accounts	6	4		1
Online media/FB pages	14		3	
Total	56	30	9	4

The largest share of disinformation covered internal political confrontation; in two cases, disinformation both against the opposition and the government was echoing Kremlin's propaganda agenda and was coming from pro-Kremlin actors.

It is worth noting that after Myth Detector labeled fake news on Facebook as disinformation that became possible through Facebook's Third-Party Fact-Checking Program,⁹² Facebook accounts reacted to 17 debunking articles and removed posts labeled by Myth Detector as false.

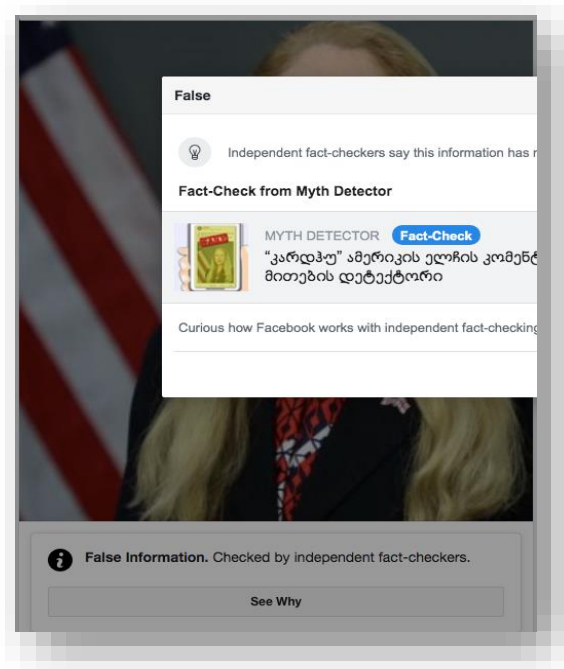
5.1. Target - U.S. Ambassador to Georgia

Two pieces of disinformation were spread targeting the U.S. Ambassador to Georgia during the pre-election period: the first one was related to the assessment of the election day. Antiliberal Facebook page „კარდუჰე“ (Kardhu) falsified the quotes by Ambassador Kelly Degnan⁹³, who allegedly stated that the parliamentary elections were held in a democratic manner and all parties should recognize its results. After Myth Detector marked the post as false, Kardhu removed it from its page. It is worth noting that this is not the first time Kardhu falsified the quotes related to the parliamentary elections. Earlier, it fabricated the quotes by U.S. Congressman Adam Kinzinger⁹⁴: “Nobody will like the results of the October elections, but that will be democracy.” An identical fake post about Kinzinger was also spread by pro-Kremlin Facebook page Politicano. Both fake quotes were echoing the narrative that has long been promoting the opinion that the United States is interfering in the electoral process, that democracy is a fiction and the fate of elections predetermined.

⁹² <https://www.facebook.com/journalismproject/programs/third-party-fact-checking>

⁹³ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/kardhu-fakes-quote-us-ambassador>

⁹⁴ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/updated-how-kardhu-and-politicano-fabricated-congressman-kinzingers-quote>



Ermile Nemsadze, majoritarian candidate of the ultranationalist Georgian March party in the Kutaisi constituency, was the source of the second piece of disinformation⁹⁵ targeting the U.S. Ambassador. Nemsadze spread a fake post according to which Kelly Degnan was among those 17 diplomats who demanded an impeachment of U.S. President Donald Trump. The disinformation echoes the message promoting a thesis of two America and forming an opinion that President Trump's opponents are representing the U.S. interests in Georgia. One of the leaders of the Alliance of Patriots portrayed Georgia's parliamentary elections in the context of Biden's interests linking the party's failure in the elections to Biden's line, U.S. law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Ambassador's activities:

Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: "It is absolutely impossible for the party of this scale to have only 3% [of votes]... To put it bluntly, American law enforcement agencies representing Biden's line and many other people participated in it... The U.S. Ambassador who stayed at the Central Election Commission (CEC) until 03:00 that day... What does the U.S. Ambassador need at CEC? The EU Ambassador is not present there. What does the U.S. Ambassador has to do there?"⁹⁶

A pro-Trump Georgian Facebook page "ჩვენ ვართ" (We Are) uniting pro-government experts and ultranationalist activists published disinformation about Joe Biden allegedly talking about the voter fraud organization. The information was torn out of context⁹⁷.

5.2. Target - opposition

Myth Detector verified 16 pieces of disinformation against the opposition with 12 targeting the National Movement and other electoral subjects united in the UN-led election bloc, 2 – subjects affiliated with the National Movement, 1 – Lelo for Georgia and 1 – opposition rally.

⁹⁵ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/georgian-march-member-disseminates-disinformation-about-us-ambassador>

⁹⁶ Obieqtivi, Gamis Studia, Kvelas Gasagonad, November 3 <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3983000>

⁹⁷ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/facebook-page-we-are-manipulatively-spreads-joe-bidens-video>

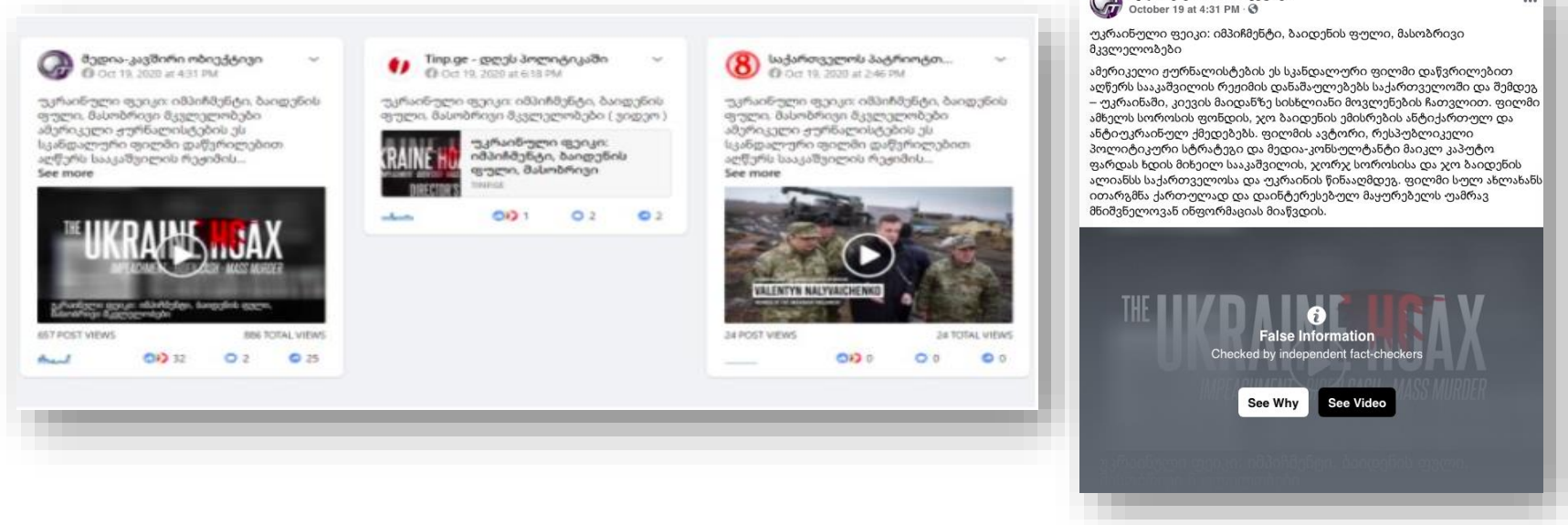
Fake quotes - 6	Target	Message/type of violation	Source	Note
Video manipulation	Mikheil Saakashvili, UNM	The doctored video has changed the context of Saakashvili's words creating a perception that he called Georgian people "nobody, non-Georgians, non-humans."	FB page: Vai Bidziko, FB groups: 1.000.000 Georgians, Positive, Georgia. Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, Bidzina Ivanishvili's friends on Facebook, Supporters of Georgian Dream	After labeling the information on Facebook as false, the post was removed
Video manipulation	Nika Melia, UNM	According to the doctored video, Nika Melia allegedly stated that Abkhazia and Samachablo are both sovereign states and should be completely under the influence of Russia.	FB page: Fu** your opposition	Removed
Video manipulation	Grigol Vashadze, UNM	The doctored video has changed Grigol Vashadze's words suggesting that he disregards the opinions of the opposition, NGOs and citizens.	FB page: Fu** your opposition FB groups: Live Show რჩეული და „სიმართლის გზა“.	Removed
Quotes with changed context	Gubaz Sanikidze, United opposition	The quote has been torn out of context, suggesting that Gubaz Sanikidze has allegedly called on people for the coup.	Online outlets: alia.ge , resonancedaily.com, primetime.ge, Metronome.ge , progressnews.press. FB page: Shame Corridor	
Fabrication of quotes	Salome Samadashvili, UNM	The quote by Salome Samadashvili allegedly calling the Patriarch and the Church the biggest problems in the country is a fabrication.	Personal FB account: Tamar Ujmajuridze, FB pages: ფაქტები (Facts), ტერენტი გლდანელი (Terenti Gldaneli), დედაქალაქი (Capital)	
Fabrication of quotes	Grigol Gegelia, Lelo for Georgia	The quote as if Grigol Gegelia calls on Georgian people to accept same-sex marriage is a fabrication and does not belong to the member of Lelo for Georgia.	FB page: მევახშეთა ლიგა (Usurer League) FB groups: „პროტესტი! Protest! Протест!“, „სიმართლის გზა“ (Road to Truth), რუსთავი 21 Δ RUSTAVI 21.	Removed
Fake news - 4	Target	Message/type of violation	Source	Note

	Mikheil Saakashvili, UNM, Joe Biden, George Soros	The Maidan developments in Ukraine have been provoked by Saakashvili and Georgian snipers upon the instructions from the West.	FB pages: Obieqtivi TV, Tinp.ge – Today in Politics, Majoritarian MPs of the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia	Tinp.ge - today was removed by facebook
	Nika Melia, UNM	Nika Melia's campaign headquarters has been closed due to COVID-19.	Online outlets: xnews.ge , geotimes.com.ge , Personal FB account: : Nino Jgarkava	
	Nika Melia, UNM	Nika Melia who took off his monitoring bracelet as a sign of protest put it back after the rally.	Online media outlets: Marshalpress, exclusivenews.ge, reportiori.ge and clickbait site www.ge. FB page: სირცხვილის კორიდორი (Shame Corridor) FB groups: პროტესტი! Protest! Протест!; მოქალაქე არასამთავრობო ორგანიზაცია; ქართველთა მსოფლიო ცენტრი Georgians World Center Всемирный центр грузин Gürc, დაარეკლამე რაც გინდა, Georgia • საქართველო ✓ , საქართველო და მსოფლიო, Tbilisi ♦ თბილისი; ჩემი მხარდაჭერა გახარიას“	Part is removed
	Former UNM ruling party representatives	During the August war, 24 government officials fled the country.	Personal FB account: Tata Murachashvili	Removed
Fake FB post/photo-video manipulation - 4	Target	Message/type of violation	Source	Note
Screenshot of a fabricated post	Buba Kikabidze, UNM	The post by Russian State Duma MP Sergei Gavrilo as if he hailed Buba Kikabidze on Facebook for singing in Russian is a fabrication.	FB page: აქ საქართველოა (Here is Georgia) FB groups: წინ საქართველო უკეთესი მომავლისაკენ !!! (Go Ahead for Better Future of Georgia), პროტესტი! Protest! Протест!, კახა კალაძე თბილისის მერი (Kakha Kaladaze Tbilisi Mayor)	Removed except for the group “Kakha Kaladze Tbilisi Mayor”

Photo manipulation	United opposition, protest rally	The photo with a caption “Youth wing of the united opposition” depicts the representatives of Georgian LGBT community participating in the New York gay pride in 2016 and they are not members of the opposition. The post is manipulative and it tries to link the protests related to ballot rigging to the issue of LGBT community.	Personal FB account: : Ilia Kobaidze FB page: ფაქტები (Facts)	
Photo fabrication	“Mtavari Channel” affiliated with UNM	According to Travel Georgia, Mtavari Arkhi provides exaggerated data on crime rates. In particular, the story about crime situation in Gurjaani uses the footage of robbery that took place in Oklahoma. The screenshot attached to the post is a photo fabrication because Mtavari Arkhi has not aired such footage. The TV channel reports about the robbery in Dmanisi, not in Gurjaani.	FB pages: Travel Georgia, ტერენტი გლდანელი (Terenti Gldaneli), მიხეილ უკრაინოლოგი (Mikheil Ukrainologi). FB group: “წინ საქართველოს უკეთესი მომავლისკენ!” (Go Ahead for Better Future of Georgia)	Removed
Video manipulation	Mikheil Saakashvili, Nika Melia, UNM	Videos leave the impression that politicians join in with users who use hate speech and refer to them with aggressive comments.	FB pages: შუბლის ძარღვ განწყვეტილები (Shameless People), ტერენტი გლდანელი (Terenti Gldaneli)	
Fake support pages - 2	Target	Message/type of violation	Source	Note
Come back Misha	Mikheil Saakashvili, UNM	Come Back Misha, a false support page, called on supporters for sacrifice to change the government through a revolutionary scenario.	Come back Misha	Removed

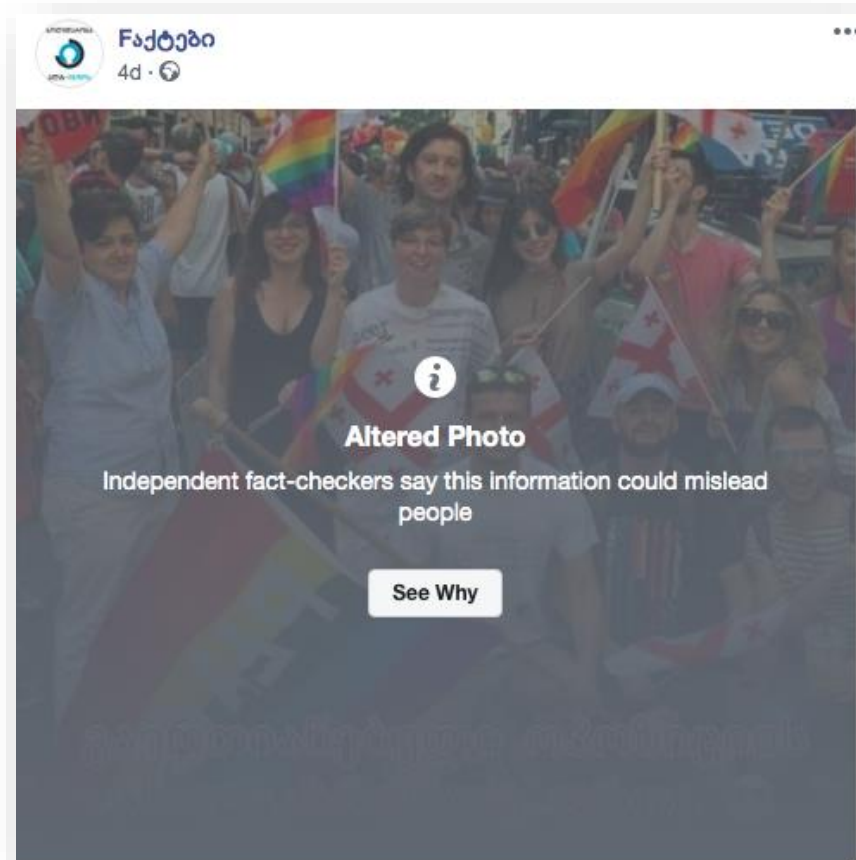
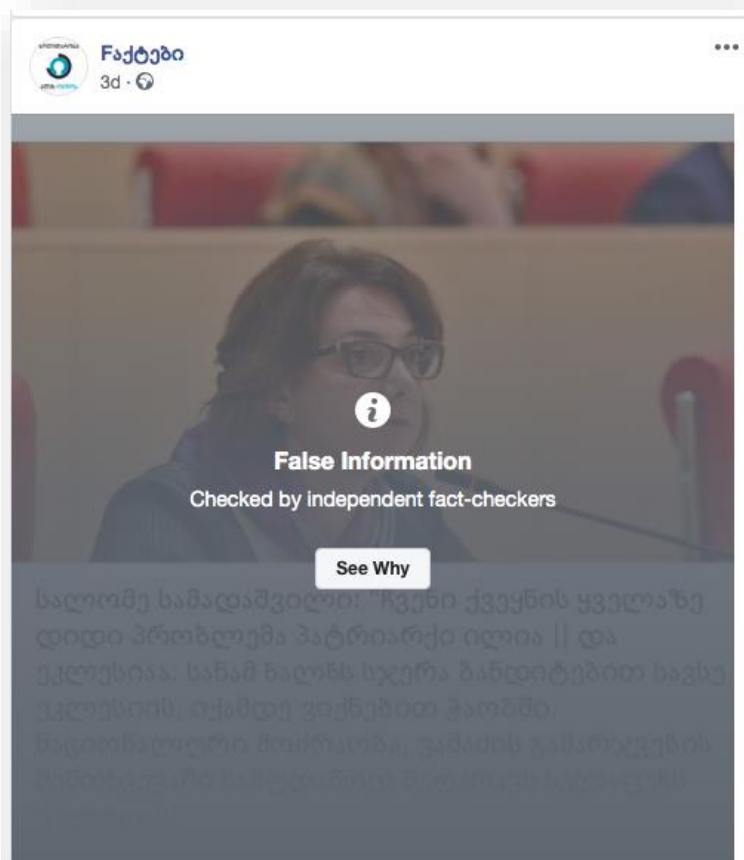
Rurua is a Hero	Giorgi Rurua, UNM supporter	A fake page Rurua is a Hero created to discredit one of the shareholders of pro-opposition Mtavari Arkhi TV spreads a fake post, where Rurua is compared to national hero, Merab Kostava and which claims that Rurua will be released from jail following the elections.	FB pages: რურუა გმირია (Rurua is a hero), სირცხვილის კორიდორი (Shame Corridor), შუბლის ძარღვ გაწყვეტილები (Shameless People), მამული, ენა, სარწმუნოება, სექტა (Homeland, Language, Religion, Sect); FB groups: პროტესტი! Protest! Протест!, პოლიტიკა, გასამართლდეს ნაციონალური მოძრაობა! (Bring the National Movement to Justice), ქვეყნის მტრების წინააღმდეგ (Against the enemies of the country), კახი კალაძე ქალაქის მერი (Kakha Kaladze Tbilisi Mayor), ყველაფერი ქალებისთვის (Everything for Women). Online media outlets: Marshalpress, Prime Time, Exclusivenews, Progressnews, Alia	Removed
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Obieqtivi TV affiliated with the pro-Kremlin Alliance of Patriots party and tinp.ge – Today in Politics spread a film promoting Kremlin’s popular conspiracy theory⁹⁸ about Georgian snipers’ participation in the Maidan developments in Ukraine and accusing Georgia’s ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili of involvement in the process, along with the West. The Alliance of Patriots also shared the film to its party page.



⁹⁸ https://euvsdisinfo.eu/disinformation-cases/?text=snipers&date=&per_page=

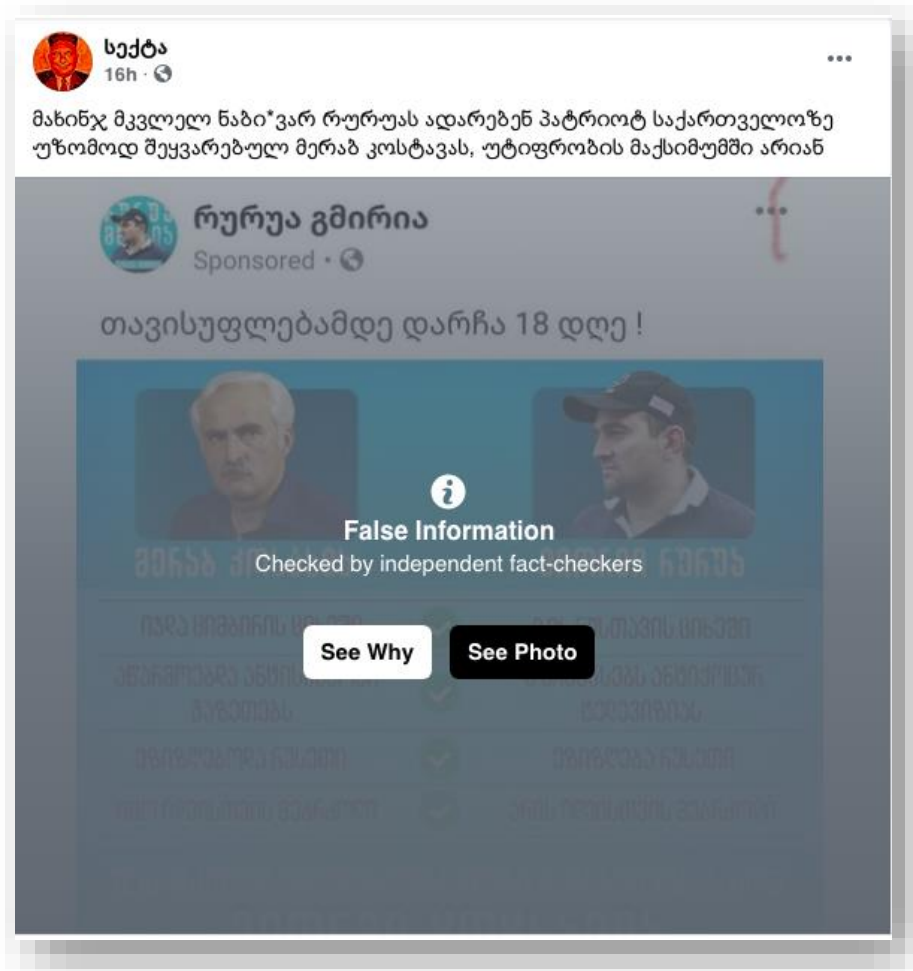
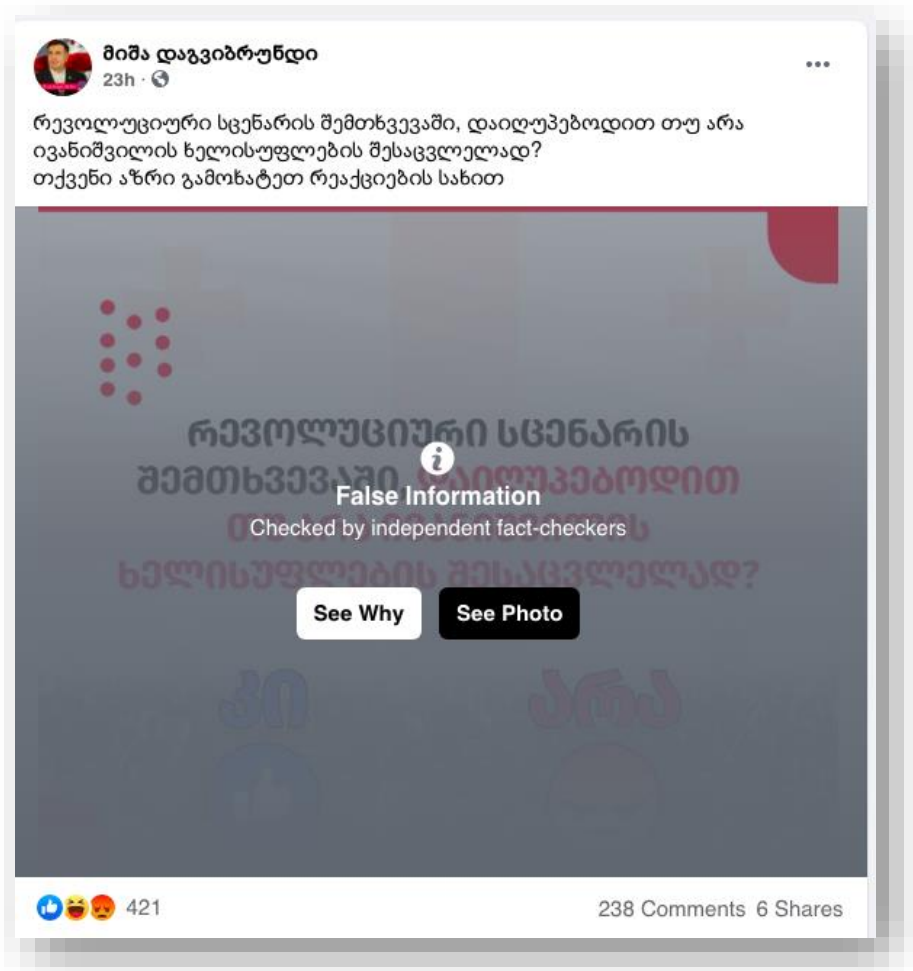
Other fake news targeting the opposition mainly covered internal political issues; however, in certain cases, similar to Kremlin propaganda, manipulations with the threats of losing religious and sexual identity were also revealed. For example, after a pro-government media outlet Imedi TV spread a covert audio recording featuring Salome Samadashvili, her fake quotes were spread on Facebook⁹⁹, where she allegedly names the Patriarch and the Church as the biggest problems in the country. The post aimed at portraying the opposition party as a fighter against the Georgian Orthodox Church. In another instance, a photo manipulation linked the LGBT community to the united opposition's youth wing that aimed at shifting the focus from the opposition protests to LGBT community¹⁰⁰.



⁹⁹ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/opposition-mps-fake-quotes-about-georgian-patriarchate-spread-facebook>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/node/3615>

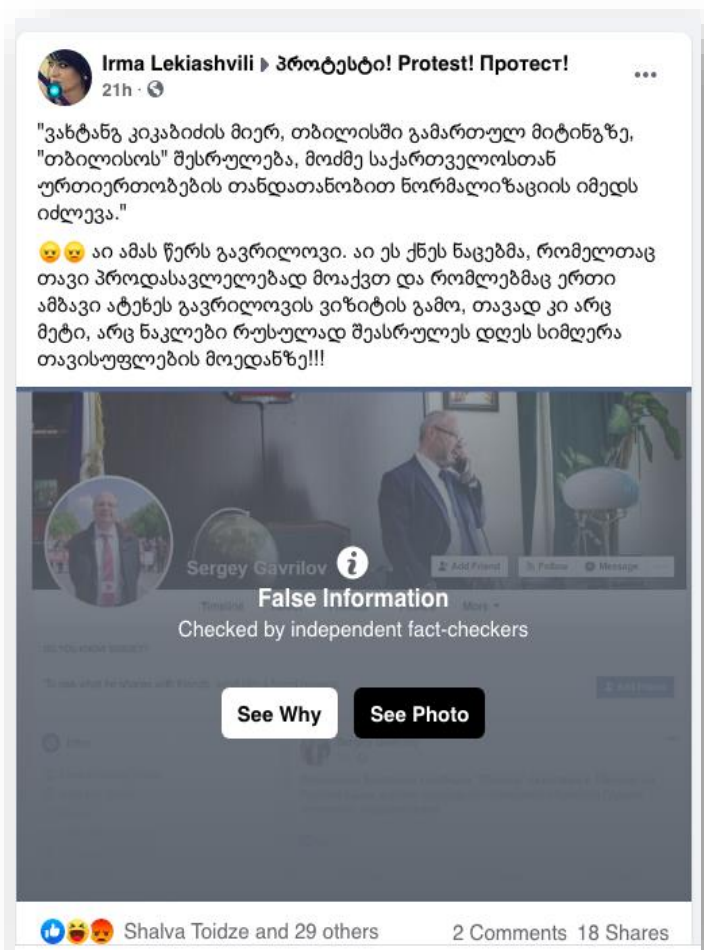
In two instances the UNM-affiliated false support pages (“Come back Misha”¹⁰¹ – Mikheil Saakashvili and “Rurua is a Hero”¹⁰² – Giorgi Rurua) and the posts were created to cause negative reactions. In one instance, Saakashvili allegedly called on supporters for sacrifice to change the government through a revolutionary scenario. In another instance, Giorgi Rurua, one of the shareholders of pro-opposition Mtavari Arkhi TV, compared himself to national hero Merab Kostava, saying that he would leave jail following the elections. After labeling the stories on facebook as false, both accounts were deleted.



¹⁰¹ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/what-goal-come-back-misha-fake-support-page>

¹⁰² <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/pro-government-pages-share-fake-account-using-ruruas-name-coordinated-manner>

In one instance, a fake post by Russian State Duma MP Sergei Gavrilov was created¹⁰³ where he allegedly hailed Buba Kikabidze, number one on the National Movement's party list, for singing in Russian at a campaign meeting. Among others, a pro-government troll using the profile picture of the troll identified in 2019¹⁰⁴ also shared the fake post. In turn, both trolls were stealing the photo of Svetlana living in Astrakhan.



¹⁰³ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/did-gavrilov-respond-buba-kikabidzes-russian-song-facebook>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/node/3583>

5.3. Target - Georgian Dream

Myth Detector verified 8 pieces of disinformation spread against the ruling Georgian Dream party with one of them related to the article¹⁰⁵ published by the Kremlin-affiliated online outlet, News Front Georgia, which spread disinformation about repatriation of the deported Meskhetians through various Facebook pages and groups affiliated with the Kremlin. In seven other instances, fake content was spread by the UNM-affiliated pages.

Fabricated quotes -3	Target	Message/type of violation	Source	Note
Changed quotes	Salome Zurabishvili, President	When expressing gratitude to Bidzina Ivanishvili, President Salome Zurabishvili allegedly used the word “uterus” that is a manipulation.	FB pages: ყოველდღიური მოვლენები (Everyday developments), “ქვეყნის არაფორმალური მმართველი” (Informal ruler of the country), Annual events ყოველწლიური მოვლენები, ლურჯი ვირი (Blue donkey), What the fuck is that, თავისუფალი აზრი (Free opinion).	Removed
Fabricated quotes	Salome Zurabishvili, President	The quote as if Salome Zurabishvili hates poor Georgians is fabricated.	Personal FB accounts: Sofo Kemularia, troll Alli Babaa, FB groups: Live Georgia, ხატია დეკანოიძე-ისნის მაჟორიტარად (Khatia Dekanoidze as a majoritarian candidate in Isani Constituency, Danmark-Georgien დანია-საქართველო Denmark-Georgia Дания-Грузия, მიხეილ სააკაშვილის შტაბი (Mikheil Saakashvili's headquarters), Сухуми и сухумцы! ВСЕ КТО СЕБЯ СЧИТАЕТ ТАКОВЫМИ..., თეთრი და შავი (White and Black).	Removed in two groups: Mikheil Saakashvili's headquarters, Сухуми и сухумцы! ВСЕ КТО СЕБЯ СЧИТАЕТ ТАКОВЫМИ...
Video fabrication	Bidzina Ivanishvili Georgian Dream	The published post is a video montage. In fact, Bidzina Ivanishvili didn't refer to people from Adjara but TV shows as dimwits.	FB pages: ქოცების დასაცინი ოფიციალური სააგენტო (Official agency mocking at Georgian Dream), სვაგი (Griffon), საქართველოსთვის (For Georgia), News Blog	Removed from the group “Official agency mocking at Georgian Dream”
Fabricated document/photo manipulation - 3	Target	Message/type of violation	Source	Note

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/did-erdogan-and-gakharia-agree-repatriation-100000-deported-meskhetians>

Fabricated document	Bidzina Ivanishvili Georgian Dream	The document about Ivanishvili's health condition is false, as the status and the coat of arms of the country indicated in the document was not used in 1991 anymore, whereas the text itself contains grammatical errors.	FB pages: ექვთიმე ბიძინაშვილი (Ekvtime Bidzinashvili), ლურჯი ვირი (Blue Donkey); personal FB account: Avto Ivanidze; FB ჯგუფები: ერთად სახლში (Together at home), მიშას ფანები (Misha's fans), ლიდერები მიხეილ სააკაშვილთან ალიანსში / Leaders with Mikheil Saakashvili in Alliance, მიშა პრემიერად (Misha as Prime Minister).	Removed
Photo manipulation	Georgian Dream	The photo shows how the flags of Georgian Dream were burned during the protest rally in Tbilisi in 2019, not in Chiatura in 2020.	FB pages: ყოველდღიური მოვლენები (Everyday developments), დუშეთი.ძალა ერთობაშია (Strength in Unity), FB group: ერთიანი ნაციონალური მოძრაობის - მხარდამჭერთა ჯგუფი (Group supporting the United National Movement)	Removed
Photo manipulation	Georgian Dream	Out of 10 spread photos allegedly illustrating low-quality construction works financed by Georgian Dream, only three depict the Georgian reality.	FB page: stop ოლიგარქია (stop oligarchy)	Irrelevant photos removed
Fake news - 2	Target	Message/type of violation	Source	Note
Disinformation accompanied by a manipulative photo	Giorgi Gakharia , Georgian government	Repatriation of 100,000 deported Meskhetians is planned to Georgia at the request of Turkey.	Online media: News Front Georgia, tvalsaisi.ge, FB page: “სტალინი” (Stalin) FB groups: “საქართველო და რუსეთი/Грузия и Россия”, (Georgia and Russia), “ევრაზია - საინფორმაციო სააგენტო / Eurasia - Information Agency”, კოტე ჩიკვილაძის და გულბაათ რცხილაძის თანამოაზრეების ჯგუფი: Россия и Грузия (Group of followers of Kote Chikviladze and Gulbaat Rtskhiladze: Russia and Georgia)	Removed
	Georgian Dream	The information as if the election results from the polling stations opened in Afghanistan are already known and the National Movement has won the elections is not true.	FB persona account: Pharnaoz Chkadua; FB page: გადამწყვეტი ბრძოლა საქართველოს გადასარჩენად (Decisive fight for saving Georgia), FB groups: მიხეილ სააკაშვილთან ერთად (Together with Mikheil Saakashvili), მთავარი არხის მხარდამჭერი ჯგუფი (Group supporting Mtavari Arkhi), ხატია დეკანოიძე-ისნის მაჟორიტარად (Khatia Dekanoidze as a majoritarian candidate in Isani constituency), საქართველოში უნდა გათენდეს (It should be down in Georgia).	

Two cases aimed at discrediting the Georgian President through fabrication of her quotes. In one instance, the post was shared by the UNM-affiliated troll Alli Babaa¹⁰⁶ who indicated Nigeria as the place of residence.



In case of Bidzina Ivanishvili, founder of the Georgian Dream party, the quotes were fabricated through video fabrication that left an impression that Ivanishvili called people from Adjara dimwits¹⁰⁷. In another case, the document about Ivanishvili's health condition was fabricated¹⁰⁸.



¹⁰⁶ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/alli-babaa-nigeria-and-others-disseminate-salome-zurabishvilis-fake-quotation>

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/who-did-ivanishvili-refer-dimwits>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/who-disseminated-fake-documents-about-ivanishvili>

Two more cases of photo manipulation were targeting the Georgian Dream. In one case, the photo taken in 2019 and depicting how the flags of Georgian Dream were burned during the protest rally in Tbilisi in 2019, was portrayed as the pre-election protests in Chiatura¹⁰⁹. In another instance, strange constructions in various countries were used to illustrate Georgian Dream's incapability¹¹⁰.



5.4. In support of the Georgian Dream party

During the monitoring period, four manipulative materials supporting the Georgian Dream were identified: one fake photo and three misleading headlines by clickbait websites.

1. **Fake photo:** Facebook user Tea Pirtskhalava published a photo of Condoleezza Rice, former U.S. Secretary of State, wearing a shirt that displays Georgian Dream number 41, while the caption reads “It’s My Team. Georgian Dream”. In the authentic photo, Rice’s shirt displays number 16 in support of Cleveland Browns¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/when-were-georgian-dream-flags-burned-prior-elections-or-gavrilovs-night>

¹¹⁰ <http://www.mythdetector.ge/ka/myth/romeli-kvegnebis-ukhariskho-msheneblobebs-asakhavs-stop-oligarkiis-potoebi>

¹¹¹ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/16-or-41-which-one-condoleezza-rices-dream-team>

FAKE



REAL



2. **Fake promises by clickbait websites.** The clickbait websites 24news.com.ge and www.ge disseminated old news about covering the debts by the ruling party with a new date and misleading titles¹¹², creating false promises in the run-up to the elections. One more clickbait website, an ABC News clone, abcnews.com.ge also published an identical material with misleading headline, reiterating old misleading information about Ivanishvili's plans to allocate billions for healthcare system¹¹³.

¹¹² <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/pre-election-clickbaits-turn-old-news-new-promises>

¹¹³ <https://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/abc-news-clone-promises-billions-people-ivanishvilis-name>