

# ANTI-WESTERN PROPAGANDA



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2018



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# INTRODUCTION |

Media Development Foundation, MDF, has been studying anti-Western propaganda issues in Georgian media since 2014. This report is the analysis of the results of a-year-long monitoring conducted by the Media Development Foundation (MDF) throughout 2018. The monitoring is aimed at studying the typology of anti-Western messages, fake news and their sources in the Georgian media. The subjects of monitoring were media outlets as well as other sources – politicians, clergy, civil organizations and representatives of society.

This report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2018. The introductory part of the report provides key findings of the study and methodology; the first part – the aggregate quantitative data, while the second part covers anti-Western messages and their sources. The third part overviews propaganda strategies and methods, as well as the cases detected within the scope of the Myth Detector project. The final chapter provides profiles of most active sources in terms of spreading anti-Western messages.

The MDF conducted similar studies in 2014–2017 too. The study has been carried out in partnership with UN Association of Georgia within the framework of USAID’s Promoting Integration, Tolerance and Awareness Program.

# METHODOLOGY

As an earlier study conducted by the MDF shows,<sup>1</sup> in 2018, the indicator of access to Russian channels was the higher in the regions densely populated by ethnic minorities than among Georgian language media consumers. Therefore, Georgian-language media outlets were selected as the monitoring subjects for this study.

The subjects of monitoring were selected both from mainstream and tabloid media. In total, 18 media outlets were monitored. During the year, several monitored programs were taken off the air on a number of TV channels and replaced with programs of analogous format. The monitored subjects were:

- **Daily prime-time news bulletins 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 (News<sup>2</sup>).
- **Talk-shows on seven TV channels:** Georgian Public Broadcaster (Kviris Interviu, Debates<sup>3</sup>) Rustavi 2 (Archevani); Imedi (Pirispir); Obieqtivi (Ghamis Studia; Okros Kveta); Kavkasia (Barieri; Spektri); Iberia (Tavisufali Sivtse<sup>4</sup>), Maestro (Media Rentgeni<sup>5</sup>).
- **Seven online media outlets:** Sakinformi, Netgazeti, Interpressnews, Georgia and the World, PIA, Kviris Palitra, Marshalpress.
- **Four newspapers:** Rezonansi, Prime-Time, Asaval-Dasavali, Alia.

<sup>1</sup> MDF (2019), “Informing Ethnic Minorities on Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic Integration”.  
<http://mdfgeorgia.ge/geo/view-library/107>

<sup>2</sup> From 1 April 2018, the list of monitoring subjects was extended to include the news program on Obieqtivi TV.

<sup>3</sup> The election Debates was produced on the Public Broadcaster from 4 October to 28 November 2018, providing platform to presidential candidates.

<sup>4</sup> The program Tavisufali Sivtse was monitored until 16 October 2018. On 16 October the Iberia TV company stopped broadcast.

<sup>5</sup> The program Media Rentgeni was monitored on Maestro TV from May through June 2018.

The third part of the report provides examples of misinformation revealed by the fact checker platform Myth Detector; examples, apart from above listed media outlets, were also taken from other media that was selected randomly.

The monitoring report contains both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative part provides the data on anti-Western comments by topics while the qualitative part discusses the typology of these messages.

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# OVERVIEW OF MEDIA ENVIRONMENT AND KEY FINDINGS

Earlier studies of MDF<sup>6</sup> and results of public opinion polls conducted by the National Democratic Institute in 2018<sup>7</sup> show that due to heavier dependence of ethnic minority regions on Russian sources, the direct Russian propaganda is more conspicuous in these regions than among the Georgian audience. Therefore, we separate direct Russian propaganda and indirect, i.e. anti-Western propaganda which is carried out through various Georgian-speaking actors. Harmony of messages of these actors with openly pro-Kremlin sources, their regularity and intention, also, direct or indirect links of some of these actors with the Kremlin, prove that the difference is only in channels and forms of communication, determined according to the specifics of audience.

Regular spread of homogenous messages in the past few years (2015–2018) provides the ground to think that this process is centralized. Furthermore, for misinformation to go viral, new online platforms are established time and again, which can be multiplied through social networks; this complicates regular monitoring and measurement of their influence. The audience, however, is not always able to link Georgian-language content to information influence activities of the foreign state, which makes it difficult to identify and perceive the problem.

This study, which overviews only anti-Western messages and misinformation spread by various sources, revealed the following trends:

- The Kremlin's information influence activities to shape public opinion against the West employ both negative, i.e. destructive strategies and oblique-destructive strategies.
- The comparison with 2016–2017 data shows increase in anti-US messages, as well as in messages focusing on the threat of losing identity in 2018. An upward trend was also observed in regard to NATO, the West and Great Britain.

<sup>6</sup> MDF (2019), Informing Ethnic Minorities on Georgia's Euro-Atlantic Integration. <http://mdfgeorgia.ge/geo/view-library/107>

MDF (2018), Anti-Western Propaganda 2017. <http://mdfgeorgia.ge/geo/view-library/89>

MDF (2017), Anti-Western Propaganda 2016". <http://mdfgeorgia.ge/geo/view-library/65>

<sup>7</sup> NDI, CRRC, March, 2018. Public Attitudes in Georgia.

[https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI\\_March\\_2018\\_Public%20Presentation\\_Georgian\\_final%20%281%29.pdf](https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI_March_2018_Public%20Presentation_Georgian_final%20%281%29.pdf)

- The number of messages against nongovernmental organizations and the philanthropist George Soros was almost identical to that in the previous year and significantly higher than in 2016.
- A negative destructive strategy has been enhancing against all other subjects with the only exception of the EU; negative messages against the EU decreased in 2018, as compared to 2017, which may be seen as tangible positive results of the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU and the visa liberalization.
- In parallel to demonizing the West, a positive, i.e. constructive strategy portrays Russia as the alternative to the West; this strategy has become more vivid in the past few years and progresses gradually.
- In parallel to polarization on foreign policy issues, the oblique destructive strategy downplays the threat of Russia and through forming a new narrative, tries to promote the opinion that the conflict is not between Russia and Georgia but between the two superpowers to the detriment of interests of Georgia.
- Oblique destructive strategy aimed at distraction of attention from key issues and ignore real problems, was neglecting Russia's responsibility ("we are sacrificing interests of our country to the interests of the USA/the West", "The Kremlin do not want the 2008 war to be repeated") in conflict, as well as responsibility of Georgia ("Why does it concern us?" "Why should we fight?").
- Denial of the state sovereignty (if Moscow controlled us in the past now Washington/Brussel control us) and autocephaly (USA meddles in the affairs of Patriarchate, independence of Ukrainian Church is a fiction), as well as democracy (Western democracy is selective) was observed as well.
- Much like in previous years, negative destructive strategy exploited four threats. These are: threats of war, loss of territories, bio-subversion and assimilation, i.e. loss of identity.
- Positive constructive strategy cultivated the myth of invincibility of Russia and focused on common religion and common memory (Soviet past).
- Like in previous years, anti-Western messages were mainly spread by five media outlets: the newspaper and online edition Georgia and the World whose publisher was awarded by President Putin with special order; TV Obiqtivi affiliated with pro-Kremlin political party Alliance of Patriots; newspapers Asaval-Dasavali and Alia adhering hateful and discriminative editorial policies; and Sakinformi having institutional and content based affiliation with Georgia and the World.
- Like in previous years, the Alliance of Patriots and the United Democratic Movement were the two political parties that most frequently spread anti-Western messages. Furthermore, individual representatives of the ruling Georgian Dream party continued to make statements that conflicted with the declared position of the government.
- The media monitoring identified 24 civil organizations and movements spreading anti-Western messages. Many of them fall within the Agreement of National Powers which unites both openly pro-Russian and ultra-national groups, including the Primakov Center, Georgian March, Eurasian Institute and others.
- From 18 religious servants five made anti-Western comments most frequently mainly spreading messages about the threat of losing identity and accusations of US special services creating a rift within the Orthodox Christian world. Out of five priests only one does not represent the Georgian Patriarchate, because he was defrocked.
- Two foreign journalists (American and Bulgarian) were identified, whose publications are linked to Russia and who were often used by the Russian official media as respondents to support conspiracy theories about bio-subversion in relation to Lugar Lab. Release of confidential and official correspondence on this

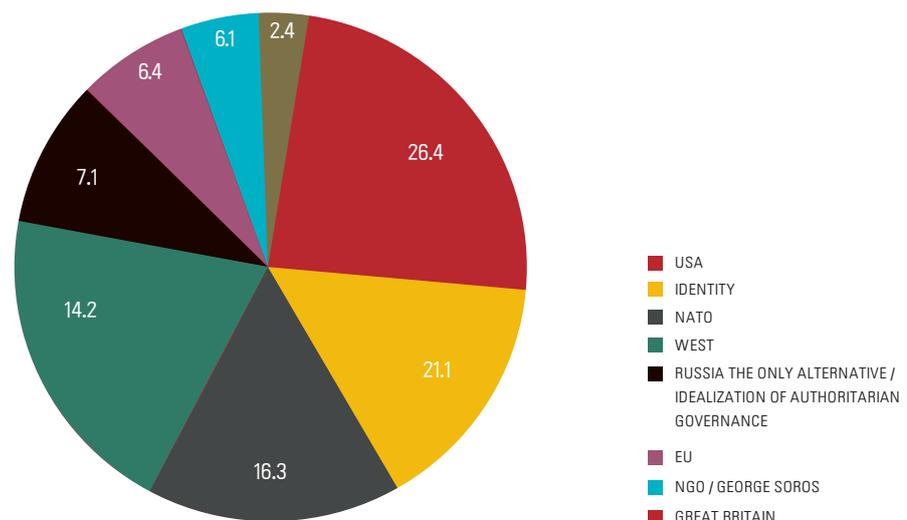
topic by the Bulgarian journalist revealed a leak of documents from the Health Ministry and investigation was launched into this fact.

- Misinformation or manipulative content accounted for the highest share in fake news released in 2018, which was followed by conspiracy theories, fabrication of history, statistics, and interviews. The majority of video manipulations concerned migrants and were released mainly via ultra-nationalist Facebook pages, while photo manipulations along with the topic of migrations exploited foreign policy issues too.
- Like in 2017, the tendency of presenting invented stories by satirical editions as well as fragments of literary works as real facts continued in 2018.
- Materials identical to the fake news reported by Georgian media were often published in Russian media too; this may indicate the avoidance of source, i.e. a deflective source model.

# 1. TOTAL DATA |

In 2018, the total of 2,392 anti-Western comments were detected in 18 monitored media outlets, up by 21.6% as compared to a corresponding indicator of the previous year (1,967). Much like in 2017, anti-Americanism remained a dominant topic with anti-US messages showing increase in 2018 (26.4%). The second anti-Western message by the frequency of use concerned the threat of losing identity (21.1%), followed by comments against NATO (16.3%) and in general, the West (14.2%)<sup>8</sup>. Less frequent were comments portraying Russia as an alternative to the West and idealizing authoritarian governance (7.1%) as well as comments against the EU (6.4%). Messages against nongovernmental organizations and the philanthropist George Soros were heard almost as frequently as in the previous year (6.1%); the share of messages against Great Britain was smaller compared to others, but it showed increase (2.4%).

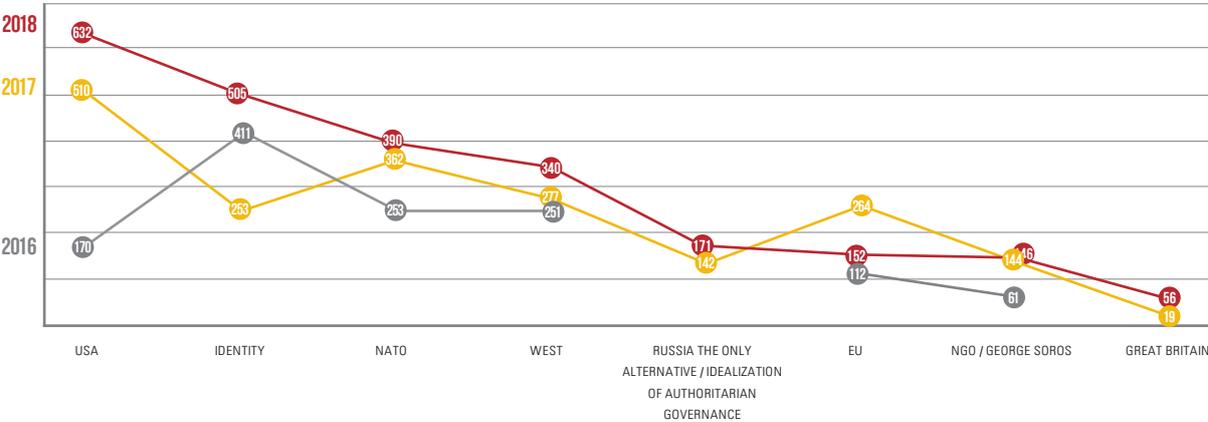
FIGURE 1. TOPICS OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES



<sup>8</sup> This category includes messages simultaneously concerning the USA, the EU and international institutions; also, cases where the West is discussed as an entire geopolitical space with common values.

The comparison with 2016–2017 data shows increase in anti-US messages (2018 – 632; 2017 – 510; 2016 – 170), as well as in messages focusing on the threat of losing identity (2018 – 505; 2017 – 253; 2016 – 411). An upward trend was also observed in regard to NATO (2018 – 390; 2017 – 362; 2016 – 253), the West (2018 – 340; 2017 – 277; 2016 – 251) and Great Britain (2018 – 56; 2017 – 19). The trend of portraying Russia as an alternative to the West and idealizing authoritarian governance has become more apparent in the past two years (2018 – 171; 2017 – 142). A notable decrease was observed in anti-EU messages (2018 – 152; 2017 – 264), which may be a result of the enforcement of visa-free travel regime. The number of messages against nongovernmental organizations and the philanthropist George Soros was almost identical to that in the previous year (2018 – 146; 2017 – 144) and significantly higher than in 2016 (61).

FIGURE 2. TOPICS OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES IN 2016-2018

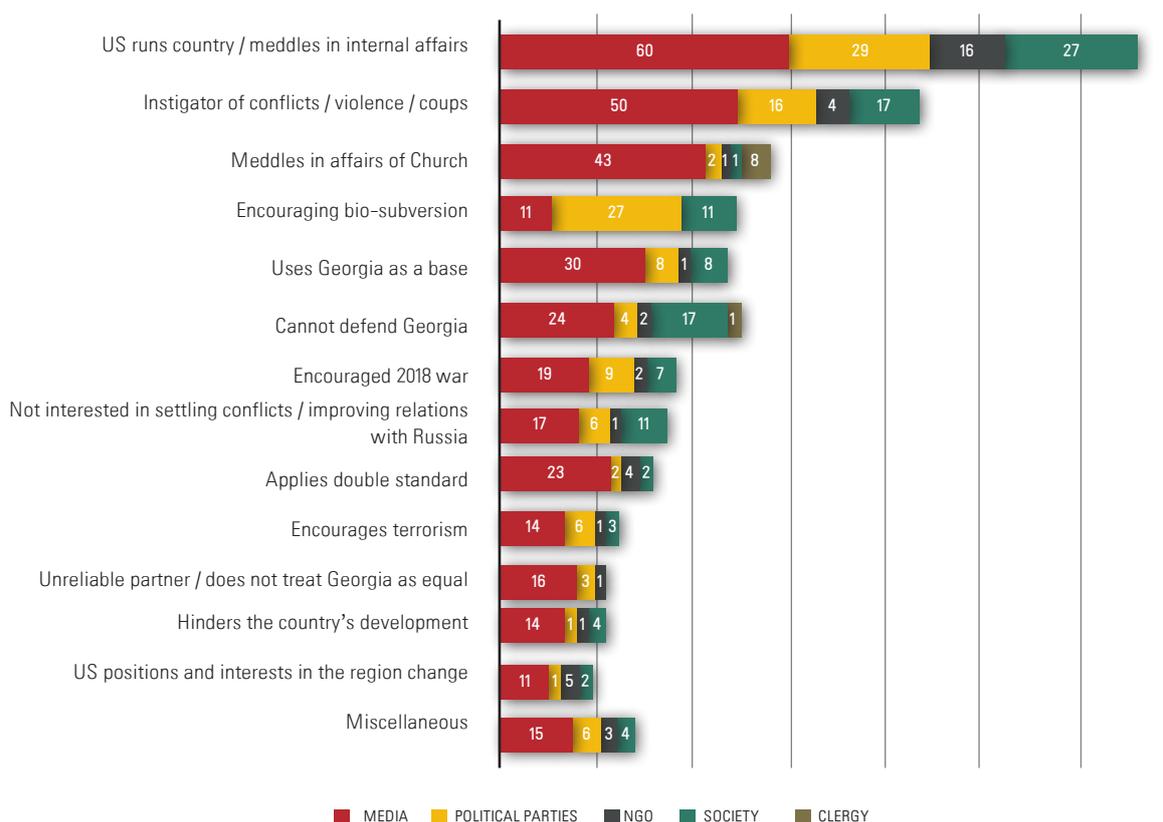


TOPICS	2018	2017	2016
USA	632	510	170
Identity	505	253	411
NATO	390	362	253
West	340	277	251
Russia the only alternative / idealization of authoritarian governance	171	142	112
EU	152	264	112
NGO / George Soros	146	144	61
Great Britain	56	19	19

**THE USA.** Much like in previous years, a dominating allegation in 2018 was that the USA infringes on the sovereignty of Georgia, meddles in decision-making process and actually runs the country (132). A primary target of criticism was the former US Ambassador to Georgia Ian Kelly, however, from the mid-monitoring period, this rhetoric was replaced by the narrative about the US having lost its interest in Georgia as well as its position in the region (19), citing the procrastination of a new ambassador’s appointment to Georgia by the US

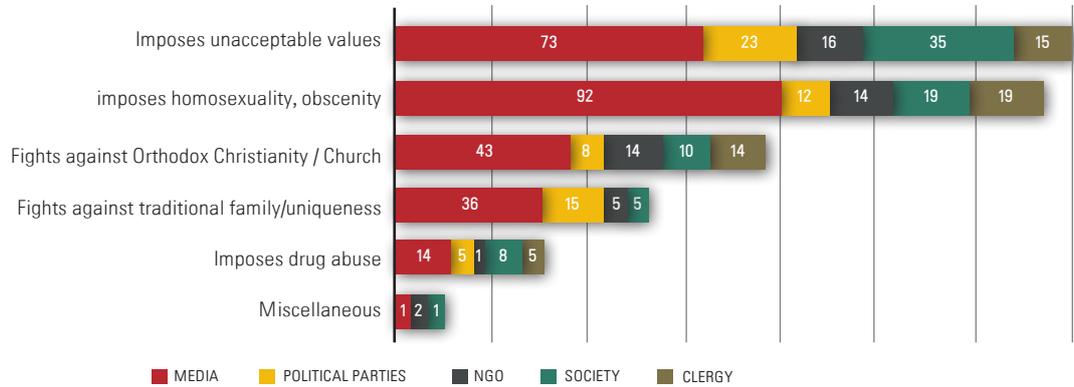
administration as an argument supporting this theory. The USA was portrayed as an instigator of conflicts, coups (87), encouraging bio-subversion (49) and terrorism (24). Messages about the US meddling in internal affairs of the Church (55) mainly concerned visits of Georgian clergy to Washington and their statements in support of Euro-Atlantic integration; also, the initiative to recognize the autocephaly of Ukraine's Church, which was presented as a US project and its attempt to create the rift within the Orthodox world. The narrative that the USA uses Georgia as a base against Russia (47) was aimed at spreading a theory that Georgia, in reality, is a victim of US-Russia opposition and that parties to the conflict are not Georgia and Russia but the large empires competing with each other over the spheres of influence. The same narrative complemented older messages alleging that in 2008, the former government of Georgia was encouraged by the USA to start the war with Russia (37), that the USA is not interested in settling conflicts and does not approve of a direct dialogue of the Georgian government with Russia (35). Attempts were undertaken to instill skepticism that the USA is not able to defend Georgia from threats (48), that the US democracy is a fiction, applying double standard and political expediency (30).

FIGURE 3. MESSAGES CONCERNING THE USA



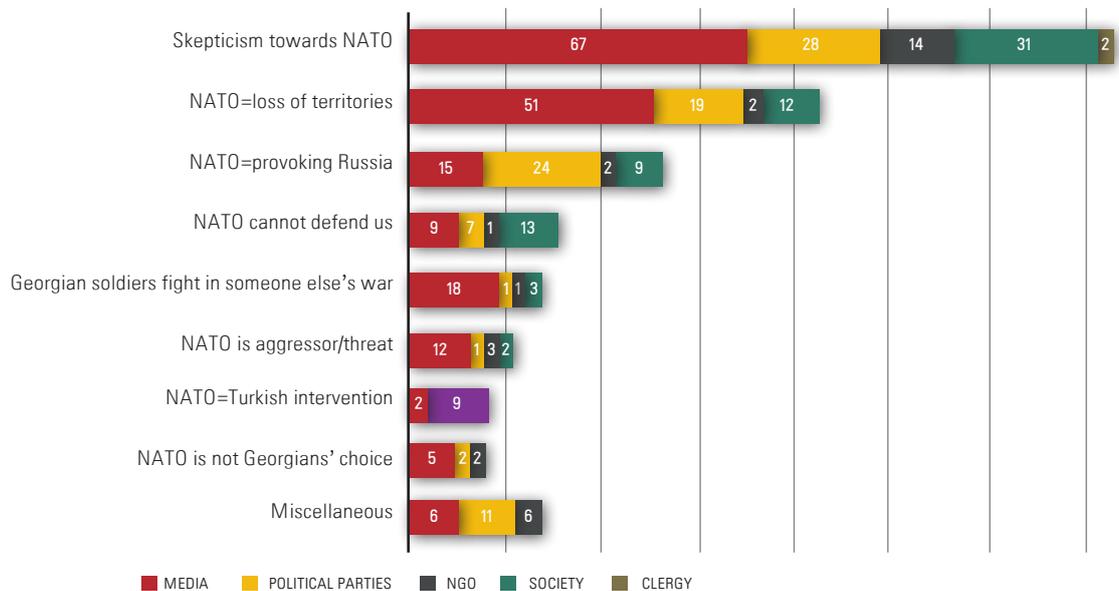
**IDENTITY/VALUES.** Messages concerning the threat of losing identity were dominated by allegations that the West imposes unacceptable values (162), homosexuality, pedophilia, obscenity (156), and fights against Orthodox Christianity (89), traditional family/uniqueness (61). Furthermore, a discussion initiated regarding the liberalization of drug policy was interpreted as something aimed at degrading the Georgian identity and an attempt of the West to impose drug abuse (33).

FIGURE 4. MESSAGES REGARDING IDENTITY



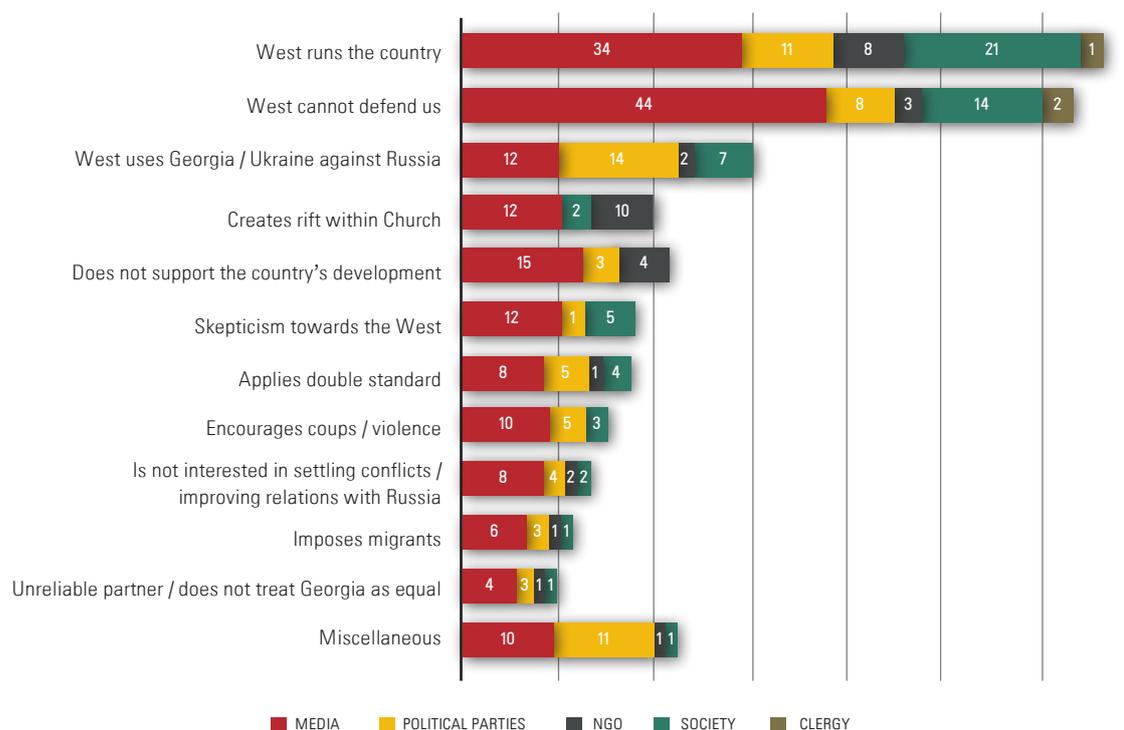
**NATO.** Similar to 2017, attempts were undertaken to instill skepticism that Georgia’s accession to North-Atlantic Alliance was far from reality (142), that the NATO membership would cost Georgia its territories that are occupied by Russia (84), which were largely referred to a report by Luke Coffey, a foreign policy researcher of the Heritage Foundation, whose opinion on fast-tracking Georgia’s NATO integration was wrongly interpreted by pro-Kremlin media outlets and pro-Russian actors. In particular, the author of the report, Luke Coffey, recommended to temporarily exclude the Russian-occupied Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia from Article 5 protection until Georgia’s full, internationally recognized territory is re-established. This opinion was interpreted as an official position of the US administration whereby NATO membership for Georgia was possible at the price of ceding its territories. Furthermore, NATO-Georgia cooperation was presented as something provoking Russia and a possibility of escalating military conflict (50); among other promoted theories were: NATO is not able to defend Georgia and deal with security challenges posed to it (30); participation of Georgian military personnel in NATO-led peacekeeping missions is a sacrifice made for other countries rather than a contribution to the collective security (23); NATO is an aggressive bloc and a threat (18); Georgia’s integration into NATO will cause the intervention of Turkish forces in the country (11); and NATO is not a choice of Georgian people (9).

FIGURE 5. MESSAGES CONCERNING NATO



**THE WEST.** The meddling of the West in Georgia’s sovereign affairs to run the country (75) was a dominant topic as well as a theory that the West is unable to defend Georgia (71). Attempts were made to promote the opinions that the West uses Georgia and Ukraine against Russia (35), the West is not interested in settling conflicts and improving relations with Russia (16), the West does not support the development of the country (22). Along with fomenting skepticism towards Western institutions (18), the West was portrayed as an instigator of coups and violence (18) while the Western democracy was evaluated as a fiction applying double standard (18). The narrative about the West imposing migrants (11) largely concerned the signing of UN compact for migration by the Georgian government.<sup>9</sup>

**FIGURE 6. MESSAGES CONCERNING THE WEST**



**RUSSIA AS THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE / IDEALIZATION OF AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNANCE.** A key message conveyed the idea that Georgia needs to change foreign policy course and instead of the West, cooperate with powerful Russia (39), which was supported by the narrative about the necessity to negotiate and engage in direct dialogue with the Northern neighbor as the only alternative (27). The pro-Kremlin actors promoted the idea that the Russian propaganda is a fiction whereas the Western propaganda is real (23); cultivated a myth about the might of Russian military force (20) and advantage of Russian market (6). Attempts to justify authoritarian regimes involved idealization of dictators such as Stalin, Gaddafi and Assad as well as assertions that Bashar al-Assad did not use chemical weapon in Syria and that claims of the Western coalition against the Syrian government were unfounded (28). Furthermore, there were attempts to kindle nostalgia for the Soviet Union (14).

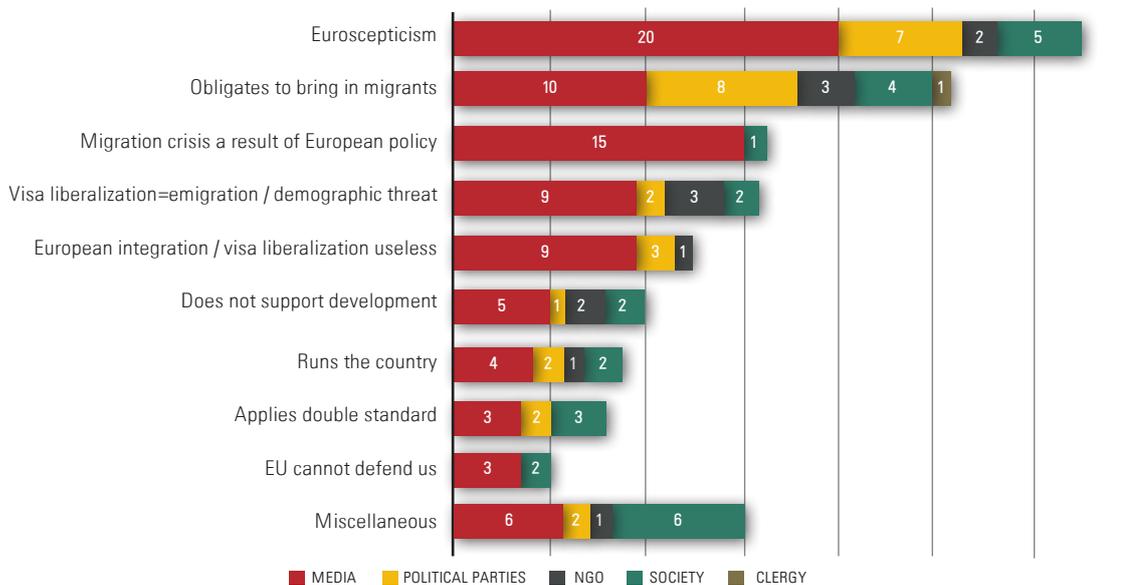
<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/disinformation-if-un-compact-obligates-georgia-accept-migrants>

FIGURE 7. MESSAGES CONCERNING RUSSIA, SOVIET SYSTEM



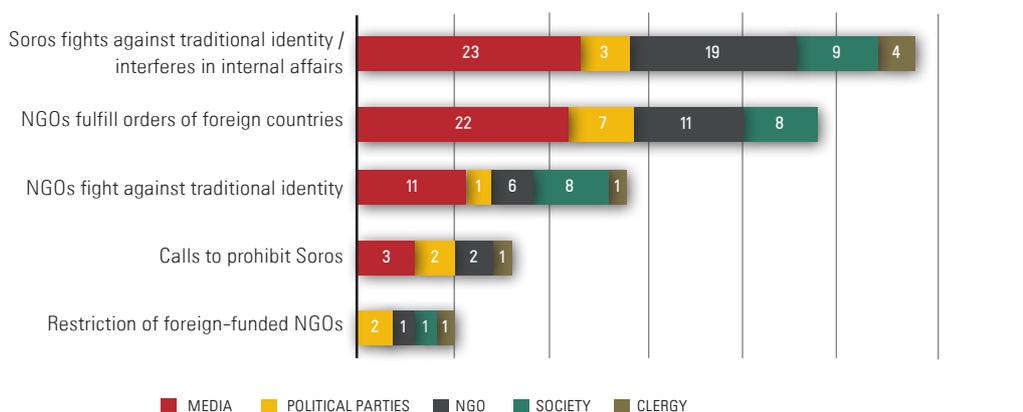
**EUROPE/EU.** After Euroscepticism (34) the most frequently conveyed messages concerned the obligation to bring in migrants as a price of European integration (26). The migration crisis was described as a result of European policy (16), while a visa-free travel to the EU was explained as a factor provoking migration and causing demographic problems (16). A message that the European integration and visa liberalization was useless for Georgia rested on opinions that visa liberalization does not allow Georgian citizens to work in Europe and that the EU applies double standard towards Georgian migrants (13). Attempts were made to promote theories that the EU does not support the development of Georgia (10), meddles in sovereign affairs of the country and runs processes in the country (9), applies double standard (8) and is unable to defend Georgia (5).

FIGURE 8. MESSAGES CONCERNING THE EU



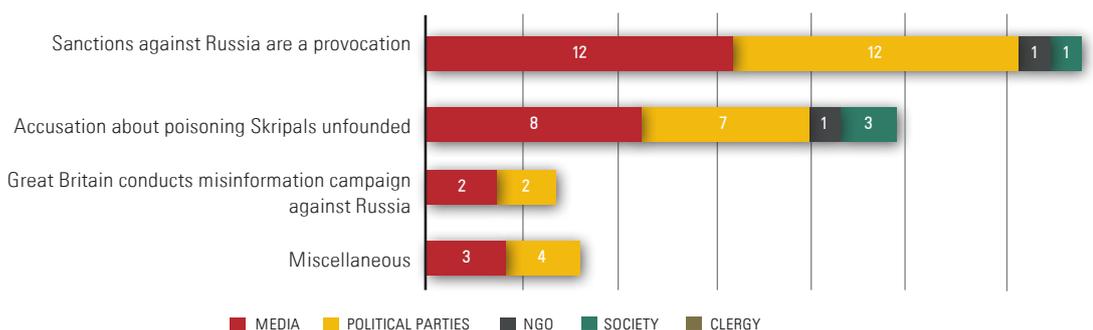
**NGO, GEORGE SOROS.** Comments against the US philanthropist and founder of Open Society Foundation, George Soros, largely portrayed Soros as a fighter against traditional identity and promoted the theory that Soros, through cadres trained by him, interferes in internal affairs of the country (58); this, among other issues, was linked to drug liberalization policy too, which was interpreted as the popularization of drug abuse. Along with calls for the prohibition of the activity of the Foundation in Georgia (8), one could also hear the calls to prohibit NGOs receiving foreign funding (5). NGOs were portrayed as spies fulfilling orders of foreign countries (48) and fighting against traditional identity (27).

FIGURE 9. MESSAGES CONCERNING NGOS, SOROS



**GREAT BRITAIN.** The most negative messages against Great Britain concerned the case of poisoning Sergey Skripal and his daughter, describing sanctions against Russia and Georgia’s support of these sanctions as a provocation (26) while the fact of Skripal poisoning by Russia unfounded (19). The fight of Great Britain with hybrid challenges was interpreted as a misinformation campaign against Russia (4).

FIGURE 10. MESSAGES CONCERNING GREAT BRITAIN

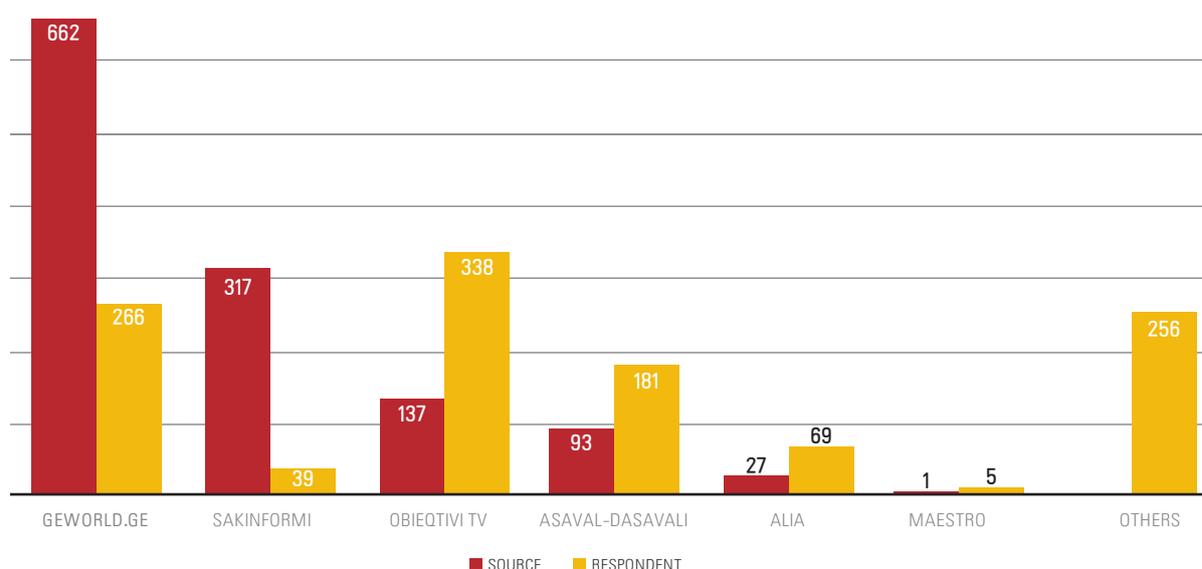


## 2. SOURCES OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES

### 2.1 MEDIA

Like in previous years, anti-Western messages were mainly spread by five media outlets. The leader among these five sources was the online edition Georgia and World (Geworld.ge) with the highest number of negative comments (662) including 226 comments of respondents published. This was followed by news agency Sakinformi (337 editorial and 39 respondent comments), Obieqtivi TV (137 editorial and 338 respondent comments), newspapers Asaval-Dasavali (93 editorial and 181 respondent comments) and Alia (27 editorial and 69 respondent comments). It is worth noting that the respondents' anti-Western comments were three times as many as (338) those of journalists in case of Obieqtivi TV and twice as many (181) in case of Asaval-Dasavali. Such a selection of respondents speaks about the editorial policy of these media outlets, mainly favoring anti-Western content, spreading similar opinions and leaving no room for alternative views.

FIGURE 11. SOURCES OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES BY MEDIA OUTLETS AND THEIR RESPONDENTS

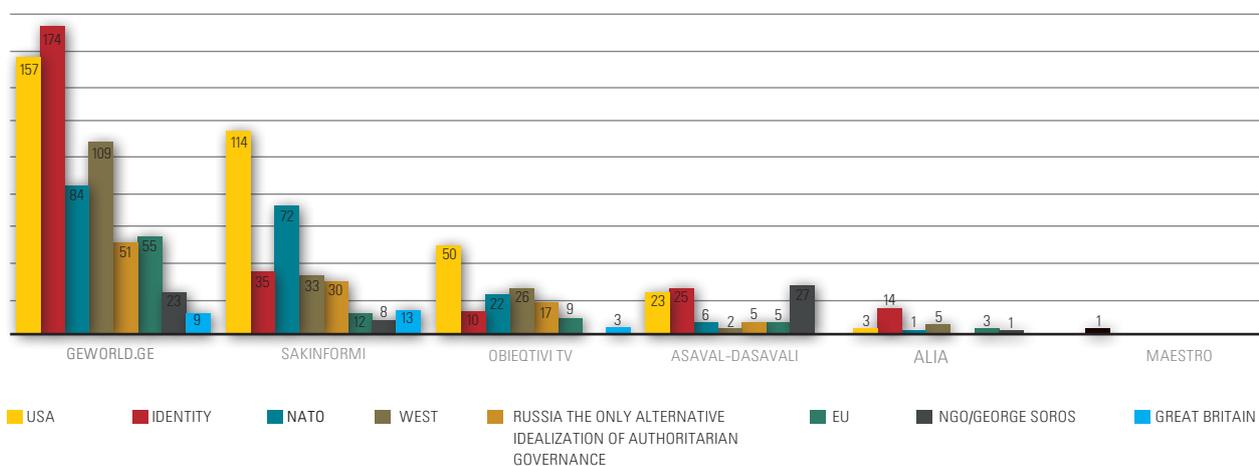


The category “Others” includes those media outlets which reported anti-Western comments of various respondents. The leader among such sources was Marshalpress (50), followed by Kavkasia TV (40), news agency IPN (30), First Channel of the Georgian Public Broadcaster (30) and Rezonansi newspaper (24).

MEDIA OUTLET	RESPONDENT
Marshalpress	50
Kavkasia	40
IPN	30
First Channel of Public Broadcaster	30
Rezonansi	24
Rustavi 2	17
Iberia	17
PIA	12
Kviris Palitra	11
Imedi	9
Prime Time	8
Netgazeti	8

The leader by the number of anti-US comments was the online edition Georgia and World (157). Anti-US messages were most frequent among anti-Western messages spread by Sakinformi (114) and Obieqtivi TV (50). Georgia and the World was also in the lead by the number of comments on the threat of losing identity (174). This topic dominated anti-Western messages published by Asaval-Dasavali (25) and Alia (14). The highest number of anti-NATO comments were made by Georgia and the World (84), followed by Sakinformi (74) and Obieqtivi TV (22). Georgian and the World was in the lead by anti-EU messages (55), Asaval-Dasavali by messages against NGOs and George Soros (27) and Sakinformi by messages against Great Britain (13). Portrayal of Russia as an alternative to the West and idealization of authoritative governance were most frequent in three media outlets: Georgia and the World (51), Sakinformi (30) and Obieqtivi TV (17).

FIGURE 12. TYPOLOGY OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES BY MEDIA OUTLETS



A message whereby the USA uses Georgia as a base against Russia and the conflict between Russia and Georgia in reality is the result of opposition between these powerful states, which damages the interests of Georgia, intensified in 2018. Putting the strategic partner country and the occupant country on an equal footing pursued the aim of absolving Russia from the responsibility and obscuring the real threat.

## THE USA USES GEORGIA AS A BASE AGAINST RUSSIA

- **Giorgi Gigauri, journalist:** “... and the third, Russia has been fighting against us so many years because we made the USA our strategic partner, or in other words, turned our country into its colony, and have performed the role of anti-Russian base!”<sup>10</sup>
- **Nika Korinteli, journalist:** “The Georgian government which claims to be a ‘strategic partner’ of the USA fails to understand that the only reason Uncle Sam needs Georgia is to oppose Russia.”<sup>11</sup>
- **Bondo Mdzinarishvili, presenter:** “The opposition between the powerful states will turn Georgian territory into something like Syrian territory... we will become a base for those states which do not care at all how many Georgians will live in the territory of Georgia.”<sup>12</sup>
- **Beso Barbakadze, journalist:** “We have a serious doubt that Georgia is viewed as one of participants in the US militaristic preparations... It has been repeatedly proved that the USA does not care in the slightest as to soldiers from which country fall victim to the fight against Russia.”<sup>13</sup>

Mistrust towards the USA was further fueled by messages alleging, on the one hand, that the US is not interested in settling conflicts and on the other hand, neglecting the role of the USA in overcoming threats:

## NOT INTERESTED IN SETTLING CONFLICTS

- **Arno Khidirbegishvili, Sakinformi editor-in-chief:** “A dialogue needs to be launched... but the US Embassy forbade the government [of Georgia] to use the potential of dialogue because this may lead to reconciliation with Russians, Ossetians and Abkhaz, which does not fit in with the strategic objective of the USA.”<sup>14</sup>

## THE WAR WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE USA

- **Bondo Mdzinarishvili, presenter:** “Russians establish the border exactly along the border of the former autonomous region of South Ossetia, which was restored by Saakashvili... He was encouraged to do so by those individual US senators and hawks who nudged Georgia towards the demise and as a result, two Georgian territories were recognized as independent states by Russia.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 14-20 May.

<sup>11</sup> Georgia and World, 17 May. <https://bit.ly/2s4KXcx>

<sup>12</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 28 March. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3557638>

<sup>13</sup> Georgia and World, 2 February. <http://bit.ly/2seJFPi>

<sup>14</sup> Sakinformi, 19 March. <https://bit.ly/2wkHCs6>

<sup>15</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 11 January. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3495563>

- **Giorgi Gigauri, journalist:** “Let alone the betrayal by the US of Bush junior administration, which made Saakashvili ‘drag’ the entire Georgia into the August 2008 war.”<sup>16</sup>

### CANNOT DEFEND US

- **Editorial:** “... Georgia’s No1 strategic partner – the world’s richest superpower with the largest army traditionally limits itself to only noting that it is ‘deeply concerned,’ because it is afraid of Russia and, traditionally, is not able to do anything else; had it not been so, ‘South Ossetia’ would not have been ‘occupied’ today!”<sup>17</sup>

### ENCOURAGES TERRORISM WHILE RUSSIA FIGHTS AGAINST TERRORISM

- **Valeri Kvaratskhelia, presenter:** “Russia achieved victory in Syria and defeated a terrorist state which was created, organized, financed, armed and encouraged by the USA.”<sup>18</sup>

### ENCOURAGES BIO-SUBVERSION

- **Valeri Kvaratskhelia, presenter:** “It was said that vaccines are produced there [Lugar laboratory] and sent somewhere by drones and these vaccines have military purpose.”<sup>19</sup>

### THE USA ENCOURAGES COUPS

- **Giorgi Gigauri, journalist:** “Those who agreed to be indebted to the USA were brought to power through violent coups!”<sup>20</sup>
- **Davit Mkheidze, author:** “Not only it staged the coup but a pro-American government of Kyiv also started the war in Donbas-Luhansk and threatened Crimea.”<sup>21</sup>
- **Arno Khidirbegishvili, Sakinformi editor-in-chief:** “The USA staged yellow vests protest in France to punish President Macron who was brought to power by the group of Hillary Clinton’s bankrollers and who, together with Chancellor Merkel, intends to turn away from NATO and create the European military force.”<sup>22</sup>

In contrast to previous years, a new narrative was developed about the USA interfering in the affairs of the Church, citing visits of Orthodox Church clergy to Washington as well as the issue of autocephaly of Ukraine’s Church to support this allegation.

<sup>16</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 14-20 May.

<sup>17</sup> Sakinformi, 1 March. <https://bit.ly/2VZLFJE>

<sup>18</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Okros Kveta, 15 January. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3499025>

<sup>19</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Okros Kveta, 15 January. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3675867>

<sup>20</sup> Saval-Dasavali, 20 July-5 August.

<sup>21</sup> Georgia and World, 4 April. <https://bit.ly/2lu3eX7>

<sup>22</sup> Sakinformi, 7 December. <https://bit.ly/2Et3G8B>

## THE USA INTERFERING IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH

- **Dito Chubinidze, journalist:** “Attempts to seize the patriarchal throne of Mtskheta with the help of Pentagon military forces, NATO headquarters, US State Department and the Kremlin may cause an irreparable political harm and lead to disintegration of the Georgian Church like it happened with the Greek Church which disintegrated into at least seven independent synods and parishes!”<sup>23</sup>
- **Nino Ratishvili, presenter:** “Is there a plan to appoint the patriarch from the USA?! I already have this suspicion.”<sup>24</sup>
- **Editorial:** “Poroshenko was encouraged by Americans to start war against Orthodox Christianity... It is worth to note that the USA promised Poroshenko the interference in the religious conflict of Ukraine.”<sup>25</sup>

Much like in previous years, it was alleged that the USA meddles not only in the affairs of the Church but also in the affairs of the sovereign country, actually, runs the Georgian government and imposes its values on us.

## THE USA RUNS THE COUNTRY

- **Incognito source:** “It was leaked from his inner circle that the US special services blackmail Ivanishvili.”<sup>26</sup>
- **Bondo Mdzinarishvili, presenter:** “The US Ambassador to Georgia is the director of the President of Georgia as well as the director of Prime Minister of Georgia and unfortunately, it does not matter what is the name and surname of this ambassador.”<sup>27</sup>

## IMPOSES UNACCEPTABLE VALUES:

- **Jaba Khubua, journalist:** “During the tenure of Ambassador Ian Kelly in Georgia the propaganda of anti-national, liberast, homosexual ideology and pro-drug abuse movement reached unimaginable scales, pursuing the ultimate aim of moral and physical genocide of the Georgian nation!”<sup>28</sup>

Apart from fueling skepticism about Georgia’s integration into the North Atlantic Alliance, there were allegations that NATO membership meant a threat of losing territories and provoking Russia. Furthermore, it was alleged that Georgian soldiers sacrificed their lives not for a collective security but the security of someone else.

## NATO = LOSS OF TERRITORIES

- **Beso Barbakadze, journalist:** “If you join NATO you will have to forget about Abkhazia and Samachablo.”<sup>29</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 19-25 February.

<sup>24</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 19 February. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3528372&rc=1>

<sup>25</sup> Georgia and World, 19 September. <https://bit.ly/2piT11w>

<sup>26</sup> Alia, 12-18 February.

<sup>27</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 19 September. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3541720>

<sup>28</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 26 February-4 March.

<sup>29</sup> Georgia and World, 1 March. <http://bit.ly/2Fg5eEz>

## NATO = PROVOKING RUSSIA

- **Bakur Svanidze, journalist:** “We, Georgians, have heard phrases about ‘unprecedented closeness’ to NATO at least 20 years now... In reality, Georgia has a function of a stick to prod Russia!”<sup>30</sup>

## GEORGIAN SOLDIERS DIE FOR THE SECURITY OF SOMEONE ELSE

- **Nino Ratishvili, presenter:** “We provide our boys [to NATO] as cannon fodder... How does that benefit Georgia?”<sup>31</sup>
- **Arno Khidirbegishvili, Sakinformi:** “Had our best military personnel served Georgia in Georgia instead of going to NATO missions as contractors, Otkhozoria and Tatumashvili would not have been murdered!”<sup>32</sup>

Messages about messianic mission of the Orthodox Russia and Eurasian nations were mainly published in Georgia and the World while messages about Russia’s military might as well as the necessity to negotiate with Russia were found in various media outlets save the Alia newspaper.

## A MESSIANIC MISSION OF THE ORTHODOX RUSSIA/EURASIAN NATIONS

- **Davit Mkheidze, author:** “The entire liberast West fights against the Orthodox Russia – Russia that is invincible because the defeat of Orthodox Russia in war means the victory of Satanists over the God which will the Almighty will not allow.”<sup>33</sup>
- **Alexandre Chachia, founder of Georgia and the World:** “Our culture was created within the Russian Empire on the basis of two very similar religions – Orthodox Christianity and Islam... New generations of Eurasian nations will soon be assigned the greatest mission of saving the humankind.”<sup>34</sup>

## SUPERIORITY OF RUSSIA’S MILITARY MIGHT

- **Arno Khidirbegishvili, Sakinformi editor-in-chief:** “Kvirikashvili and Ilia II have come to understand that Russia does not give a damn to Georgia’s allies – the USA and NATO, because it possesses a new strategic weapon that is unattainable to them and may destroy any aggressor within few minutes.”<sup>35</sup>

## THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO A DIALOGUE WITH RUSSIA

- **Givi Somkhashvili, author:** “Restoring the territorial integrity and improving relations with co-religious Russia into friendship is the prerequisite for Georgia’s success.”<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Georgia and World, 26 July. <https://bit.ly/2vbWxnF>

<sup>31</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 30 April. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3581454>

<sup>32</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 19–25 March.

<sup>33</sup> Georgia and World, 13 December. <https://bit.ly/2BjufdN>

<sup>34</sup> Rustavi 2, P.S., 9 September. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3666282>

<sup>35</sup> Sakinformi, 19 March. <https://bit.ly/2wkHCs6>

<sup>36</sup> Georgia and World, 11 October. <https://bit.ly/20luleo>

## NOSTALGY FOR THE SOVIET UNION

- **Valeri Kvaratskhelia, presenter:** “The Soviet socialist system was the system which provided Georgia and not only Georgia but all the republics within the Soviet Union, first, with full social protection, second, with total security and third, with fair way of life.”<sup>37</sup>

## JUSTIFICATION OF DICTATORIAL REGIMES

- **Nino Ratishvili, presenter:** “Sorry, but is not it the USA to be blamed for the created situation?!... People in those countries [Libya, Syria, Iraq] live well by their understanding and when you tell them that they do not live well and lack freedom of speech and democracy, you should ask those people whether they want freedom of speech and democracy!”<sup>38</sup>
- **Giorgi Gigauri, journalist:** “Lukashenko defended his country against ‘color revolutions’ and saved his homeland from unruly behavior of liberasts!”<sup>39</sup>

Messages about the EU mainly concerned the threat of losing identity, also the threat of both emigration of Georgians from and immigration of foreigners into Georgia.

## THE EU FIGHTS AGAINST ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

- **Nika Korinteli, journalist:** “All this – the fight against Orthodox Christianity and everything Georgian is imposed by the West in exchange for so-called visa liberalization.”<sup>40</sup>

## THE EU IMPOSES HOMOSEXUALITY

- **Giorgi Gigauri, journalist:** “This poor child will go to kindergarten or school alongside our children and our children will, from the very little age, learn about ‘European values’ according to which a child may have a male ‘mother’ and the child may not yet realize what is his/her gender – male or female...”<sup>41</sup>

## EUROPE IS THE HOSTAGE OF ITS OWN TOLERANCE

- **Luka Maisuradze, journalist:** “Europeans who forgot postulates of Christian faith and started to vehemently defend ‘minority rights’ have found themselves unprotected against nationally and religiously consolidated migrants who aggressively impose their way of life on Europe.”<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Okros Kveta, 7 July. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3630665>

<sup>38</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 16 April. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3572009>

<sup>39</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 26 March–1 April.

<sup>40</sup> Georgia and World, 4 May. <https://bit.ly/2I8oFx2>

<sup>41</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 12 March–18 March.

<sup>42</sup> Georgia and World, 19 April. <https://bit.ly/2HxVRB7>

## THE EU = MIGRATION OF GEORGIANS

- **Nino Ratishvili, presenter:** “When Ms. Merkel said that they need qualified workforce... if the qualified workforce officially flows out of Georgia because of hardships, this means that the middle class will never emerge here and how can we talk about any economy? Moreover, when we are told that Iranians are tourists, it is not true – Iranians are not tourists.”<sup>43</sup>

Messages against the founder of Open Society Foundation, George Soros, and NGOs are mainly found in Asaval-Dasavali newspaper and the online edition Georgia and World. In addition to be accused of fighting against national identity and fulfilling orders of foreign countries, NGOs are also accused of imposing drug abuse because of their support of liberalization of drug policy.

## NGOs/SOROS FIGHT AGAINST CHURCH, TRADITIONAL FAMILY

- **Giorgi Gigauri, journalist:** “Let Soros witches and liberasts not offend our Church and let them be afraid of God!”<sup>44</sup>
- **Jaba Khubua, journalist:** “Aggressive propaganda campaign against ‘domestic violence’ in Georgia, conducted by NGOs fed with y grants from a neoliberal syndicate, is in reality the campaign against the institution of family and serves the aim of dismantling this institution. Georgia already has the so-called juvenile justice which allows so-called social workers, who received training in a liberast office, to take children away from their parents.”<sup>45</sup>

## SOROS IMPOSES DRUG ADDICTION

- **Giorgi Gigauri, journalist:** “By legalizing cannabis the financing of the supply of cannabis, i.e. drug cartel, has been actually legalized too!.. That’s how the dream of international drug lord [George] Soros came true in Georgia!”<sup>46</sup>

## NGOs FULFILL ORDERS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES

- **Alexandre Chachia, founder of Georgia and the World:** “Soros NGOs, created under the aegis of US Central Intelligence Agency, train cadres for all these political groups... Where do these Americans find these physically and morally ugly people and what they need them for?”<sup>47</sup>

Britain’s accusation of Russia in the Skripals case was assessed as unfounded while Georgia’s support of sanctions on Russia – as a provocation.

<sup>43</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 24 August. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3657615>

<sup>44</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 17-23 December.

<sup>45</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 24-30 September.

<sup>46</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 6-12 August.

<sup>47</sup> Georgia and World, 8 November. <https://bit.ly/2FmzZch>

## ACCUSATION OF RUSSIA FOR POISONING SKRIPALS IS UNFOUNDED

- **Givi Somkhishvili, author:** “Just recently, when British Prime Minister Theresa May raised the alarm about Russia poisoning their spy, Skripal, and his daughter, EU countries supported her and expelled employees from Russian embassies; however, the Skripals feel well; was it not a false alarm?”<sup>48</sup>

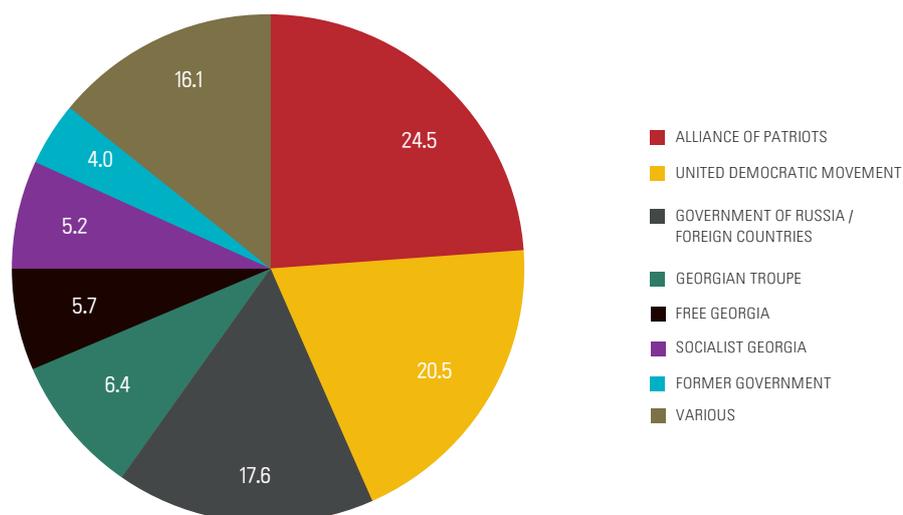
## SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA ARE PROVOCATION

- **Nino Ratishvili, presenter:** “When you know that this step [expulsion of Russian diplomats] may entail terrible discomfort for numerous of my compatriots and you do not give a damn about the fate of those people... Why would you do that? How will the expulsion benefit you? Only to prove that you are good and Putin is bad. Then what?”<sup>49</sup>

## 2.2. POLITICAL PARTIES / POLITICANS

Like in previous years, the Alliance of Patriots and the United Democratic Movement were the two political parties that most frequently spread anti-Western messages, though in contrast to 2016–2017 years, in 2018, the Alliance of Patriots outstripped (103) the United Democratic Movement (86). Representatives of Russian government and other foreign countries also quite frequently made anti-Western comments (74); these were followed by the Georgian Troupe (27), Free Georgia (24), Socialist Georgia (22) and other individual representatives of the former government (27). It is worth noting that the leader of Socialist Georgia, Valeri Kvaratskhelia, is a presenter on Obieqtivi TV and is also quoted in the media section of this report.

FIGURE 13. ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES BY POLITICIANS

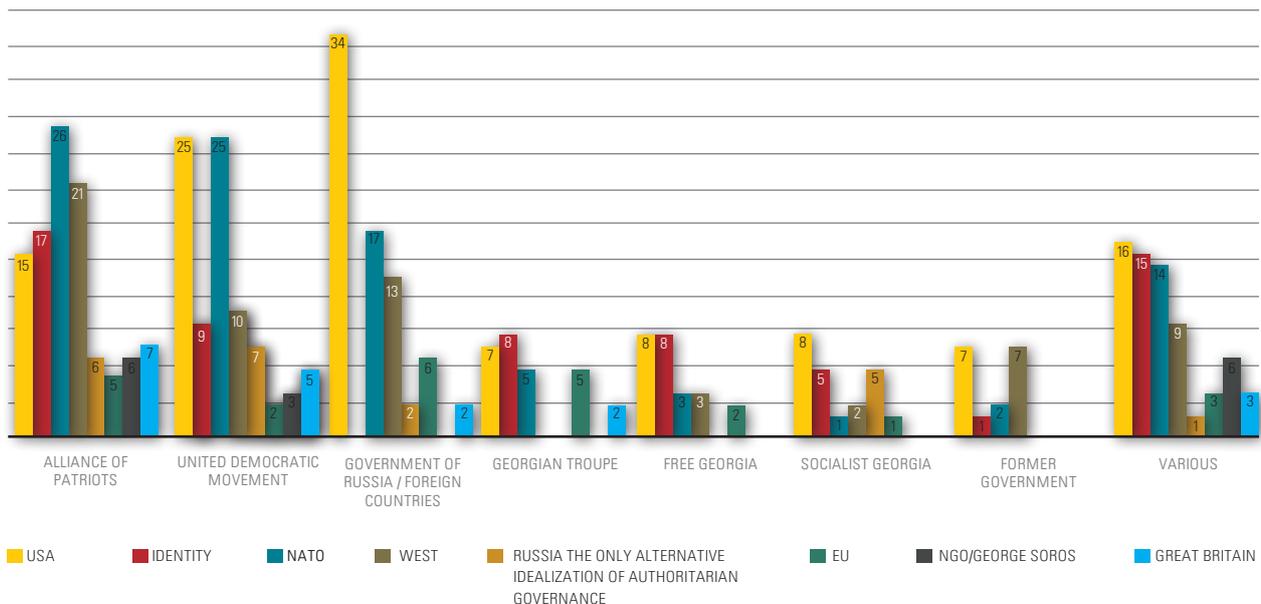


<sup>48</sup> Georgia and World, 26 July. <https://bit.ly/2OuVo3l>

<sup>49</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 3 April. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3566817>

Both the Alliance of Patriots (26) and the United Democratic Movement (25) were the leaders by the frequency of anti-NATO messages; the highest number of anti-US messages were spread by representatives of the Russian government (34) and the United Democratic Movement (25). The messages about the threat of losing identity (17) were made most frequently by the Alliance of Patriots; this political party was also the leader by the number of messages against Great Britain (7).

FIGURE 14. TYPOLOGY OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES BY POLITICIANS



2018 saw a sharp increase in allegations about the threat of bio-subversion at Russia's borders coming from the USA, which were mainly linked to Richard Lugar Public Health Laboratory in Tbilisi. The majority of such comments were made by representatives of the Russian government, the Alliance of Patriots and the former security minister of Georgia, Igor Giorgadze.

### THE USA ENCOURAGES BIO-SUBVERSION

- **Mariya Zakharova, official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation:** "Sovereign countries did not gain sovereignty and independence to see that children, near the Lugar Laboratory, are born with anomalies. The population asks for help!"<sup>50</sup>
- **Vladimir Yermakov, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation:** "Russia shall not allow the conduct of biological experiments by the USA at its borders."<sup>51</sup>
- **Igor Giorgadze, former Security Minister of Georgia:** "Such experiments [at the Lugar Lab] have claimed lives of hundreds of my compatriots."<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Obieqtivi TV, news program, 14 September. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3676020>

<sup>51</sup> Obieqtivi TV, news program, 25 September. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3678525>

<sup>52</sup> Sakinformi, 12 September. <https://bit.ly/2WzWAcF>

- **Giorgi Maghlakelidze, Alliance of Patriots:** “If it is true that it [the Lugar Lab] is financed by the US Defense Department, directly from the Pentagon... this suggests that toy weapons or dolls are not manufactured for children but serious researches are conducted there, because such labs are quite limited in the USA itself.”<sup>53</sup>

Furthermore, representatives of the Alliance of Patriots and the United Democratic Movement questioned charges brought by Great Britain against two Russian citizens of poisoning the former Russia spy Sergey Skripal and his daughter Yulia Skripal with a “novichok” nerve agent. Georgia’s joining of sanctions imposed on Russia and expelling diplomats were evaluated as an action provoking Russia and damaging Georgia.

### **SANCTIONS IMPOSED ON RUSSIA = PROVOCATION**

- **Nino Burjanadze, United Democratic Movement:** “The investigation has not been carried out yet and they claim that it was committed by Russia...”<sup>54</sup>
- **Irma Inashvili, Alliance of Patriots:** “The topic of Skripal and support to it means ceding your country’s interests and putting your country in the lion’s mouth!”<sup>55</sup>

Pro-Kremlin political parties as well as one member of the ruling party developed a new narrative that the conflict, in reality, is between Russia and the West, Russia and the USA and that the engagement of Georgia in this conflict is damaging for the country because the opposition between powerful states costs Georgia its interests and territories. Skepticism was also fueled that the USA and Western partners are unable to defend us. In this context, the cooperation with NATO was portrayed as an act provoking Russia while the neutral status of the country and trilateral format of Russia-Georgia-NATO cooperation were portrayed as the only way to deal with the challenges faced by the country.

### **OPPOSITION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND USA/WEST COSTS GEORGIA ITS INTERESTS**

- **Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots:** “If Russia and the West fight against each other in Syria or Ukraine, why should it be our concern? Every time we got engaged in such a fight, we found ourselves defeated and lost territories too.”<sup>56</sup>
- **Zaza Papuashvili, Georgian Dream:** “There are countries with stronger armament, finances, budget, economy and let them deal with Russia... Why am I obligated to jump beneath caterpillar track and kill myself; Must I be annihilated in order to enable other countries to say how badly Russia treats small Georgia? Is that my mission?”<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 19 October. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3698099>

<sup>54</sup> Kavkasia TV, Barieri, 2 April. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3561490>

<sup>55</sup> Public Broadcaster, Kviris Interview, 20 April. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3575461>

<sup>56</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 29 March. <http://marshalpress.ge/archives/168260>

<sup>57</sup> Marshalpress, 22 March. <http://marshalpress.ge/archives/168260>

- **Nino Burjanadze, United Democratic Movement:** “Marching of US troops at the parade to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence was responded with the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Syria. How long should we continue sacrificing interests of our country to the interests of the USA and the West and how long should we continue provoking Russia?”<sup>58</sup>

### THE WEST IS NOT ABLE TO DEFEND US

- **Tristan Tsitelashvili, Our Homeland:** “Russia has strong air defense systems. This country will not even bother itself to invade Georgia but merely carry out precision bombings from its territory and neither Javelins nor Stingers will save us... Javelins are not used in modern military technologies any longer.”<sup>59</sup>

### NATO = PROVOKING RUSSIA

- **Grigory Karasin, Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia:** “We will adequately respond to these exercises,<sup>60</sup> because they will be conducted at our borders... Presence of NATO units is an encouragement to irresponsible politicians; however, we do not want to see the repeat of the same events [i.e. the 2008 war]!”<sup>61</sup>
- **Giorgi Lomia, Alliance of Patriots:** “Why should I, the small state, be crushed?... If it [NATO] does not start war for me, let it at least not create a situation of war and not make a provocation that will push Russia to start war.”<sup>62</sup>

### NEUTRAL STATUS /NATO-GEORGIA-RUSSIA FORMAT

- **Nino Burjanadze, United Democratic Movement:** “I do not want to turn my country into a military base to be used by NATO against Russia... This [block-free] status is necessary in order to ensure that despite changes in government and opinions, Georgia is free from military bases of foreign countries and neutral in any conflict.”<sup>63</sup>
- **Irma Tskhoragauli, Alliance of Patriots:** “I want to have relations with Russia, or with that NATO, and this format [NATO-Russia-Georgia] established, for the very reason to have Russia convinced that it will be inviolable by NATO from my territories.”<sup>64</sup>

Allegations that the 2008 Russia-Georgia war was encouraged by the USA and that the USA is not interested in settling conflicts, also, assertions that there is no alternative to negotiations with Russia were quite intensively employed by politicians too. Furthermore, a representative of the ruling party advocated the use of culture as a means of diplomatic influence instead of banning Russian channels.

<sup>58</sup> Interpreenews, 30 May. <https://bit.ly/3101wqH>

<sup>59</sup> Georgia and World, 28 June. <https://bit.ly/2KfAxmc>

<sup>60</sup> Joint Georgia-NATO military exercise planned in 2019.

<sup>61</sup> News agency Pirveli, 11 August. <https://bit.ly/2yh80Vo>

<sup>62</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 1 February. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3516779>

<sup>63</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Okros Kveta, 14 July. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3643367>

<sup>64</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 24 March. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3557566>

## THE 2008 WAR WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE USA

- **Nino Burjanadze, United Democratic Movement:** “Saakashvili was encouraged by McCain and Republicans and thus destroyed Georgia...”<sup>65</sup>

## THE USA IS NOT INTERESTED IN SETTLING CONFLICTS

- **Irma Inashvili, Alliance of Patriots:** “... When [Saakashvili] returned [from Washington] to Tbilisi, his first comment was that it was a crime to speak to Russia, that Russia could not be trusted, and that Russia was an occupier. Let me ask: do we want to restore the territorial integrity of the country, or not?... They say one must not talk to enemy... But the territorial integrity cannot be restored by having drinks with a friend.”<sup>66</sup>

## DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH RUSSIA IS THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE

- **Vazha Otarashvili, Alliance of Patriots:** “The course chosen by Georgia’s Alliance of Patriots of establishing normal, diplomatic relations with Russia has no alternative!”<sup>67</sup>

## NECESSITY OF RUSSIAN CHANNELS AND CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

- **Nukri Kantaria, Georgian Dream:** “Some say that these [Russian channels] must be blocked. How should anything be blocked in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?... Georgian films, series are broadcast quite often on Russia Kultura (Culture), also on ORT, as well as nostalgic recollections... These are those threads that one should take hold of to start... Our culture is not used as a diplomatic means of emotional influence... We speak ill of those who go there and call them traitors and do not even think of sending them on a mission to build some bridges between the people.”<sup>68</sup>

A message that the USA encourages terrorism was spread mainly by representatives of the Russian government and the Alliance of Patriots.

## THE USA ENCOURAGES TERRORISM

- **Giorgi Maghlakelidze, Alliance of Patriots:** “Those terrorist groups [in Syria] were actually supported by the USA and developed countries.”<sup>69</sup>
- **Mariya Zakharova, official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation:** “It seems not everyone has yet extended gratitude to the USA for the invasion of Iraq, which resulted in the emergence of the Islamic State.”<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 13–19 August.

<sup>66</sup> Marshalpress, 14 March. <http://marshalpress.ge/archives/166610>

<sup>67</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 20 June. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3618533>

<sup>68</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 29 March, 2018. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3558507>

<sup>69</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 11 April. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3568417>

<sup>70</sup> Interpressnews, 12 April. <https://bit.ly/2ldXl1N>

Interference of the USA and the West in sovereign affairs of the state was equalized with the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union; there were instances of idealizing Soviet authoritarian rule.

### THE USA RUNS GEORGIA

- **Nino Burjanadze, United Democratic Movement:** “The government that obeys the US Ambassador to a greater extent than Georgia obeyed the viceroy of Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cannot make a breakthrough in Russian-Georgian relations.”<sup>71</sup>
- **Vazha Otarashvili, Alliance of Patriots:** “There is no difference whether Moscow gives me instructions or Washington.”<sup>72</sup>

### IDEALIZATION OF THE SOVIET UNION

- **Giorgi Lomaia, Alliance of Patriots:** “At those times when we were called slaves, we enjoyed the highest degree of freedom of all times.”<sup>73</sup>

Misinformative messages about an obligation to accept migrants were linked to the visit of German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Georgia, on the one hand, and on the other hand, to Georgia’s signing of the UN compact on migration.

### MIGRANTS ARE IMPOSED ON US

- **Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots:** “How our government dares to bring in Syrians and god knows what sort of people; who are these people?”<sup>74</sup>
- **Jondi Baghaturia, Kartuli Dasi:** “It is planned to change the ethnic balance in Georgia!... A mass resettlement of aliens is underway! The aim of Angela Merkel’s visit has become clear – 200 thousand migrants must be resettled to Georgia!”<sup>75</sup>

Representatives of pro-Kremlin as well as ruling party promoted an opinion that the West imposes unacceptable values.

### EUROPE/WEST IMPOSES UNACCEPTABLE VALUES

- **Oleg Iadze, Georgian Dream:** “Georgia is not Europe, Georgia is the Caucasus, period! No one interferes in the affairs of those scoundrel faggots or people of their ilk. But let them not march on Rustaveli Avenue, with their butts swaying and let them not impose their perversity on me!”<sup>76</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Iberia, Tavisupali Sivrcce, 23 March. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3553901>

<sup>72</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 26 May. [https://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=3600846](https://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=3600846)

<sup>73</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 7 June. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3608694>

<sup>74</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 20 December. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3726508>

<sup>75</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 10-16 September.

<sup>76</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 21-27 May.

- **Giorgi Akhvediani, United Democratic Movement:** “...We must speak about those millions of dollars spent annually on that propaganda that is directed against Orthodox Church.”<sup>77</sup>

Statements were made to restrict foreign-funded NGOs.

- **Vazha Otarashvili, Alliance of Patriots:** “Those organizations who are financed from abroad to carry out anti-Georgian activities and destroy Georgian state awareness shall be cut off these arteries.”<sup>78</sup>

## 2.3. CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS

The media monitoring identified 24 civil organizations and movements spreading anti-Western messages. We selected 10 most active organizations among them. They are: Public Assembly (31), Association of Defenders of Rights (29), Eurasian Institute (22), ultra-nationalist association Georgian March (21), Yevgeni Primakov Center (15), Demographic Society XXI (14), Stalinist (13), Strategic Institute of Management (12), Global Research Center (9) and Association of Child’s Rights (7). Public Assembly is an organization with links to the pro-Kremlin political party United Democratic Movement. Direct ties with Russia are observed in cases of Primakov Center, Eurasian Institute and Global Research Center.

#	CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS	ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES
1	Public Assembly	31
2	Association of Defenders of Rights	29
3	Eurasian Institute	22
4	Georgian March	21
5	Yevgeni Primakov Center of Georgian-Russian Society	15
6	Demographic Society XXI	14
7	Stalinist	13
8	Strategic Institute of Management	12
9	Global Research Center	9
10	Association of Child’s Rights	7

These organizations mainly focused on threats coming from visa liberalization, migrants, losing identity, George Soros as fighter against national identity.

### VISA LIBERALIZATION = DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS

- **Dimitri Lortkipanidze, Primakov Center:** “What benefit are we talking about when the country is crumbling down and people, especially after this visa liberalization, are poised to flee?!... Meanwhile, our compatriots

<sup>77</sup> Kavkasia TV, Barieri, 8 May. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3600922>

<sup>78</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 5 August. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3647790>

who emigrated abroad are replaced by Asian migrants who can enjoy quite a favorable legal ground that is created for them here.”<sup>79</sup>

### EUROPEAN INTEGRATION/VISA LIBERALIZATION IS USELESS

- **Gulbaat Rtskhlidze, Eurasian Institute:** “Rich European countries such as, for example, Germany, refuse to give jobs to even a limited number of Georgian citizens... The Chancellor who committed an ethnic genocide against Germans by opening up the door of Germany to millions of Arabs who receive a substantial social assistance from the German state, grudges even a ‘position’ of street sweeper for Georgians.”<sup>80</sup>

### THE WEST FIGHTS AGAINST ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

- **Dimitri Lortkipanidze, Primakov Center:** “Now a decisive ideological battle is underway for the establishment of liberalism and tyranny of anti-Orthodox forces in Georgia.”<sup>81</sup>

### THE WEST IMPOSES HOMOSEXUALITY

- **Guram Palavandishvili, Association of Child’s Rights:** “These lessons [of tolerance] are invented by Fascists.... In Georgia, they want to establish tolerance towards perversity, drug addiction, pot smoking... When lessons of tolerance are conducted, for example, in Germany, children are forced to imitate sexual minority and to put on pink tights.”<sup>82</sup>

### SOROS FIGHTS AGAINST GEORGIAN IDENTITY

- **Sandro Bregadze, Georgian March:** “The policy, which was established by George Soros and others some time ago, is being implemented and its main mission is to have Georgia without Georgians and in the event Georgians continue to live, make them become drug addicts or engage in prostitution, or altogether isolated from this world and to have this country taken over by absolutely different people.”<sup>83</sup>

## 2.4. CLERGY

From 18 religious servants five made anti-Western comments most frequently. They are: arch-priest of Ketevan Tsamebuli Church in Avchala, Giorgi Razmadze (24), a member of Orthodox Parents’ Union, Davit Isakadze (12), a defrocked priest Basil Mkalavishvili (9), Giorgi Pavlov (7), Episcopo of Skhalta eparchy, Spiridon Abuladze (9).

<sup>79</sup> Georgia and World, 4 October. <https://bit.ly/2DUfenq>

<sup>80</sup> Georgia and World, 17 October. <https://bit.ly/2pWw8ln>

<sup>81</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 2-8 April.

<sup>82</sup> Kavkasia, Barieri, 10 April. [https://www.myvideo.ge/?video\\_id=3569351](https://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=3569351)

<sup>83</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 22 January. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3504890>

#	RELIGIOUS SERVANTS	ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES
1	Giorgi Razmadze	24
2	Davit Isakadze	12
3	Basil Mkalavishvili	9
4	Giorgi Pavlov	7
5	Spiridon Abuladze	6

Religious servants mainly spread messages about the threat of losing identity and accusations of US special services creating a rift within the Orthodox Christian world. The latter message was spread in relation to autocephaly of the Ukrainian Church.

### AUTOCEPHALY OF THE UKRAINIAN CHURCH IS THE US SPECIAL SERVICES PROJECT

- **Giorgi Razmadze, religious servant:** “In reality they are concerned not about the 40-million-strong independent Ukraine having an independent Church, but rather about creating a rift within the Orthodox world... The World Patriarchate is bogged down into the quagmire of ecumenism. There are only a few bishops remaining there who reason clearly and maintain common sense, whereas the rest are under the control of the US special services.”<sup>84</sup>
- **Giorgi Pavlov, religious servant:** “The biggest sin is the rift within the church. First, the Satan turned the brotherly nations – Georgian and Russian nations into enemies of each other... now they turned blood brothers – Slavs into enemies of each other.”<sup>85</sup>

### SOROS IMPOSES UNACCEPTABLE VALUES

- **Basil Mkalavishvili, defrocked priest:** “The fact that in the country of Virgin Mary an LGBT activist, Giorgi Gabunia, dares to offend God on Rustavi 2 means the only thing that the ideology of Soros gained victory in Georgia if not for good, at least temporarily!”<sup>86</sup>

## 2.5. REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIETY

From among anti-Western comments (438) by representatives of society, we selected 10 respondents who were seen in media most frequently. The most active in this regard was the audience of Obieqtivi TV (48), making anti-Western comments mainly during phone-ins as well as frequent respondents of Obieqtivi TV: Tamar Kiknadze (28) who actively participates in events organized by the Primakov Center and in Georgian-Russian forums, and Hamlet Chipashvili (28) who was a member of Revival Union, the political party of the former head of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Aslan Abashidze. Among other selected respondents were: poet Rezo

<sup>84</sup> Georgia and World, 28 June. <https://bit.ly/2KzOpr0>

<sup>85</sup> Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 24 September. <http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3677099>

<sup>86</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 2-8 April.

Amashukeli (19) notorious for his hate speech against various groups, retired general Guram Nikolaishvili (17) and Veterans Today's journalist Jeffrey Silverman (11). The latter was often used by official Russian media as a source against Lugar Lab.

#	REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIETY	ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES
1	Audience of Obieqtivi TV	48
2	Tamar Kiknadze, politologist	28
3	Hamlet Chipashvili, politologist	28
4	Rezo Amashukeli, poet	18
5	Guram Nikolaishvili, general	17
6	Soso Tsintsadze, expert	15
7	Jeffrey Silverman, American journalist	11
8	Lazare Zakariadze, writer	10
9	Givi Gureshidze, politologist	8
10	Yuri Mechitov, photographer	7

### NATO IS NOT ABLE TO DEFEND US

- **Guram Nikolaishvili, general:** “Until the government is mainly focused on winning the heart of the West and until this shameful policy of deceiving oneself as if NATO is the only guarantor of our security continues, national interests of Georgia and the Georgian nation will always be put on the back burner. This, however, means that the policy of expansion of Turkey and other neighboring countries may further enhance in the foreseeable future.”<sup>87</sup>

### THE USA ENCOURAGES BIO-SUBVERSION

- **Jeffrey Silverman, American journalist:** “Experimental vaccines are tested on Georgians... Lugar Lab is the main facility but tests are not carried out in this laboratory alone.”<sup>88</sup>
- **Jeffrey Silverman, Veterans Today:** “Americans conducted an experiment in Philippines, poisoning population with gas.”<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Georgia and World, 6 September. <https://bit.ly/2CnEh1k>

<sup>88</sup> Obieqtivi TV, news program, 6 September. <https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3680818>

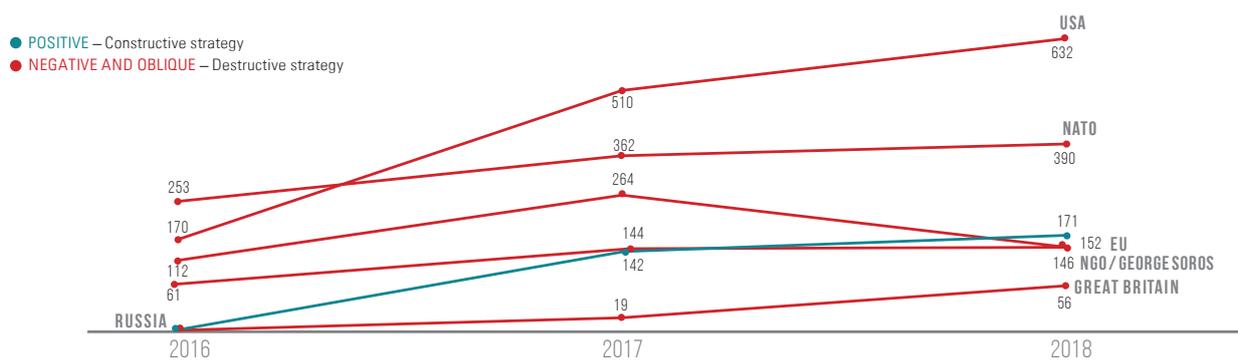
<sup>89</sup> Asaval-Dasavali, 22-28 January.

# 3. PROPAGANDA STRATEGY AND METHODS

## 3.1. KREMLIN STRATEGY AND STRUCTURE OF NARRATIVES

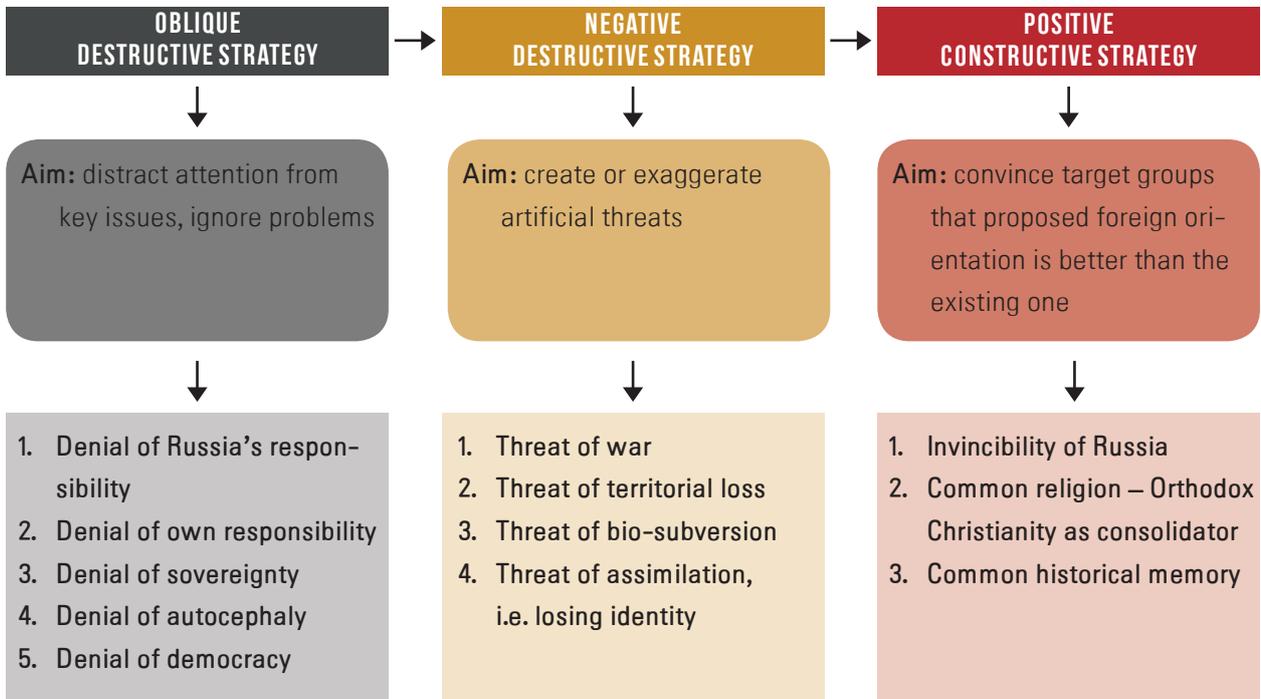
The Kremlin’s information influence activities<sup>90</sup> to shape public opinion against the West employ both negative, i.e. destructive strategies and oblique-destructive strategies. Oblique destructive strategy aims to distract attention from key issues and ignore real problems. In parallel to demonizing the West, a positive, i.e. constructive strategy portrays Russia as an alternative to the West; this strategy has become more vivid in the past few years and progresses gradually. A negative destructive strategy has been enhancing against all other subject with the only exception of the EU; negative messages against the EU decreased in 2018, as compared to 2017, which may be seen as tangible positive results of the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU and the visa liberalization.

FIGURE 15. INFORMATION INFLUENCE STRATEGY



<sup>90</sup> Information influence activities (informationspåverkan), also known as cognitive influence activities, are activities conducted by foreign powers to influence the perceptions, behaviour and decisions of target groups to the benefit of foreign powers. Information influence activities can be conducted as a single activity or as part of a larger information influence operation combining various and multiple activities. Lund University (2018). Countering Information Influence Activities. <https://www.msb.se/RibData/Filer/pdf/28697.pdf>

In parallel to polarization on foreign policy issues, the oblique destructive strategy downplays the threat of Russia and through forming a new narrative, tries to promote the opinion that the conflict is not between Russia and Georgia but between the two superpowers to the detriment of interests of Georgia.



- I. OBLIQUE DESTRUCTIVE STRATEGY** → 1. DENIAL OF RUSSIA'S RESPONSIBILITY →
- Conflict is between superpowers, not between Russia and Georgia
  - Russia-US / NATO / West opposition damages Georgia's interests
  - We provoke Russia

**Nino Burjanadze, United Democratic Movement:** "How long should we continue sacrificing interests of our country to the interests of the USA and the West and how long should we continue provoking Russia?"

**News agency PIA, title:** The Kremlin does not want the aggression to be repeated.

**Grigory Karasin, Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia:** "We will adequately respond to these large-scale [NATO] exercises... However, we do not want to see the repeat of the same events [i.e. the 2008 war]"

2. DENIAL OF OWN RESPONSIBILITY

Davit Tarkan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: “if Russia and the West fight against each other in Syria or Ukraine, why should it be our concern?”

Zaza Papuashvili, Georgian Dream: “Let them deal with Russia... Why I am obligated to jump beneath caterpillar track... is that my mission?”

3. DENIAL OF SOVEREIGNTY

- ● If Moscow controlled us in the past now Washington and Brussel control us

4. DENIAL OF AUTOCEPHALY

- ● USA meddles in the affairs of Patriarchate (Obieqtivi TV: “Is there a plan to appoint the patriarch from the USA?!”) ● Independence of Ukrainian Church is a fiction: (Giorgi Razmadze, a religious servant: “Does anyone believe that the Ukrainian Church is freer today than it was before?”)

5. DENIAL OF DEMOCRACY

- ● Western democracy is selective ● The West applies double standard

II. NEGATIVE DESTRUCTIVE STRATEGY

→ 1. THREAT OF WAR

- ● NATO integration = threat of war ● Russia will not allow testing of biological weapon at its borders

2. THREAT OF TERRITORIAL LOSS

- ● NATO integration = threat of losing territories

3. THREAT OF BIO-SUBVERSION

- ● Tests are conducted on people at the Lugar Lab and viruses are spread from there

4. THREAT OF ASSIMILATION, I.E. LOSING IDENTITY

- ● Threat of migrants ● Threat of losing ethnic, religious identity ● Threat of losing gender identity ● Threat of losing traditions

<b>III. POSITIVE CONSTRUCTIVE STRATEGIES</b>	→ 1. <b>INVINCIBILITY OF RUSSIA</b>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Russia truly fights against terrorism</li> <li>● Russian armament is superior to that of USA (US Javelines are useless)</li> </ul>
	2. <b>COMMON RELIGION – ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY AS A CONSOLIDATOR</b>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The West fights against Orthodox Christianity while Russia defends it (<b>Georgia and World</b>: “The only unsurmountable barrier in this war is the Orthodox Russia”)</li> </ul>
	3. <b>COMMON HISTORICAL MEMORY</b>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Soviet / authoritarian governance ensured defense from threats</li> <li>● Soviet system ensured social protection.</li> </ul>

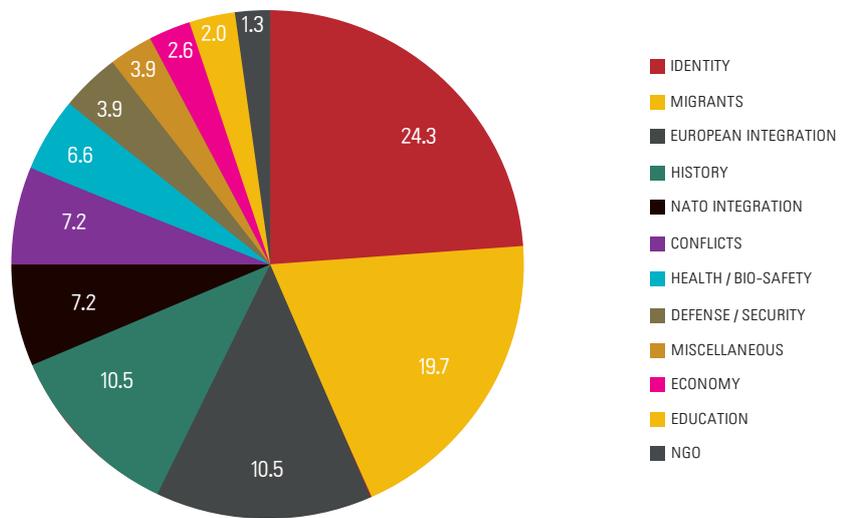
## 3.2. PROPAGANDA METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The Media Development Foundation (MDF) within the Myth Detector project revealed 177 cases of misinformation through a year-long media monitoring. In addition to monitored media outlets, discussed in the first part of this study, fake news items were revealed in other media /Facebook pages, which were selected randomly. In 2018, Myth Detector revealed the following types of misinformation:

TYPOLOGY OF MISINFORMATION	QUANTITY
Fake news / manipulation	82
Conspiracy theory	24
Fabrication of history	16
Fabrication of statistics	16
Fabrication of interview	12
Video manipulation	10
Photo manipulation	10
Presenting literary work / satirical publication as a real fact	7

The largest proportion of fake news or manipulative information concerned the threat of losing identity (24.3%), followed by migrants – 19.7% and European integration issues – 10.5%. The share of fake news concerning economy (2.6%), education (2%) and NGOs (1.3%) was small.

FIGURE 16. TOPICS OF MISINFORMATION



**CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND TECHNIQUE OF SIMULATIVE EVIDENCE.** The highest number of conspiracy theories was spread about the Richard Lugar Public Health Research Center operating in Tbilisi and the Hepatitis C Elimination Program which is implemented in Georgia with the assistance from the USA. In particular, various sources spread the following conspiracy theories:

- Asian bug was produced in a lab;<sup>91</sup>
- Two Filipinos died in the lab under suspicious circumstances<sup>92</sup>;
- Dangerous “cold room” operating in the Lugar laboratory<sup>93</sup>;
- Lugar laboratory trace found in Skripal poisoning case<sup>94</sup>;
- Americans are testing medication against Hepatitis C, Sovaldi, on Georgians<sup>95</sup>.

Simulative evidence technique was employed for spreading conspiracy theories about Lugar Lab.

**Simulative evidence technique: use of such authentic documents/facts that create an illusion of evidence, but, in reality, are irrelevant to the accusations they are used to illustrate.**

<sup>91</sup> Myth Detector, April 5, 2018. “Russian Conspiracies about Lugar laboratory: Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, Zika Virus and African Swine Fever”. <https://bit.ly/2GM3JPX>

<sup>92</sup> Myth Detector, February 1, 2018. “Disinformation about Filipino Workers and Bulgarian Journalist with Russian Links”. <https://bit.ly/2QRXlBL>

<sup>93</sup> Myth Detector, December 7, 2018. “Onishchenko Tries to Make Georgians Fear of Lugar’s “Cold Room”, Which Is Also a Common Practice in Russian Laboratories”. <https://bit.ly/2Z6JCRc>

<sup>94</sup> Myth Detector, April 20, 2018. “Sakinform and Zakharova Looking for “Georgian Trace” in Skripal Poisoning”. <https://bit.ly/2WQX5Pv>

<sup>95</sup> Myth Detector, October 22, 2018. “Putin calls as dangerous for Georgians the medication which is among the vital medications in Russia since 2016”. <https://bit.ly/2Z5M9LA>

Simulative evidence was used by Igor Giorgadze,<sup>96</sup> the former security minister of Georgia now living in Moscow, and Bulgarian journalist Dilyana Gaytandzhieva,<sup>97</sup> creating an illusion and impression that they obtained alarming documents. In case of Bulgarian journalist, a problem of leak of confidential and official documents from the Health Ministry of Georgia was seen. In particular, Gaytandzhieva obtained and released emails between the Health Minister Davit Sergeenko and employees of the Ministry, concerning official meetings as well as the correspondence between the US Embassy and the Health Ministry, concerning the exemption from taxes.



to this fact, the Interior Ministry launched an investigation into an illegal access to computer system, illegal acquisition and release of personal correspondence; however, the results of the investigation are yet unknown.

**FABRICATION OF HISTORY.** The following tendencies of fabrication of history were observed:

- **Idealization of authoritarian regimes/dictators:** Stalin brought back the national treasure taken by the government of the First Republic to the homeland;<sup>98</sup> Stalin added the territory of South Ossetia to Georgia.<sup>99</sup>
- **Justification/negation of crimes committed by authoritative regimes:** glorification of violent methods of Stalin, Lavrenti Beria, Muammar Gaddafi, Francisco Franco;<sup>100</sup> Blaming USA for the breakup of the peaceful rally by Soviet army on 9 April.<sup>101</sup>
- **Fueling nostalgia for Soviet Union:** Soviet Union was an oasis for the development of science and art.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Myth Detector, September 20, 2018. "Giorgadze's Claims about Hepatitis C Treatment Program Allegedly Causing Death are Groundless". <https://bit.ly/2xOegD8>

<sup>97</sup> Myth Detector, September 28, 2018. "How Kremlin Tries to Cover up Russian Trace in Skripal Case with Lugar Laboratory". <https://bit.ly/2QaUwAW>

<sup>98</sup> Myth Detector, June 7, 2018. "Obieqtivi TV Claims that First Republic's Government Plundered and Stalin Saved Georgian National Treasure". <https://bit.ly/2ZapWvJ>

<sup>99</sup> Myth Detector, June 8, 2018. "Falsifying History: Stalin Awarded the Territory of South Ossetia to Georgia". <https://bit.ly/2l0CuQE>

<sup>100</sup> Myth Detector, April 25, 2018. "Georgia and the World Idealizes Dictators", <https://bit.ly/2KH5eQr>

<sup>101</sup> Myth Detector, November 30, 2018. "Obieqtivi TV Blames U.S. for April 9 Tragedy". <https://bit.ly/2WQqRUQ>

<sup>102</sup> Myth Detector, June 5, 2018. "Literature and Films Banned in Soviet "Slavery"". <https://bit.ly/2QSsJad>

**FABRICATION OF STATISTICS.** The majority of cases of fabrication of statistics concerned the following topics:

- Migrants: 70% of apartments in Tbilisi are bought by Iranians.<sup>103</sup>
- European integration: visa free travel creates demographic problems to Georgia.<sup>104</sup>
- Economy: 67% of export accounts for Russia.<sup>105</sup>

**FABRICATION OF INTERVIEW AND CREATION OF TEMPORARY SOURCES.** Fabricated interviews mainly concerned security and defense issues:

- Assertion that the former chairman of foreign intelligence of Britain questioned the use of chemical weapons by Bashar al-Assad in Syria.<sup>106</sup>
- Information that US security advisor John Bolton threatened Georgia to sever partnership because of the transfer by Georgia of defense weapons to Russia.<sup>107</sup>

It is worth to note that the misinformation about John Bolton was related to his visit to Georgia and published on ReportBlogs.com which was created nine days earlier and is inaccessible now; this is a proof that sources are created for a short period to spread misinformation.



**PRESENTING SATIRICAL PUBLICATION/LITERARY WORK AS A REAL FACT.** The tendency of presenting fake stories invented by satirical editions as well as fragments of literary works as real facts continued in 2018. In such cases, Georgian-language media outlets did not identify the primary source or did not clearly explain what kind of content they spread, thereby deliberately misleading the audience.

<sup>103</sup> Myth Detector, July 24, 2018. "Claims about Iranians Allegedly Buying 70% of Apartments in Tbilisi are Groundless". <https://bit.ly/2luqjuz>

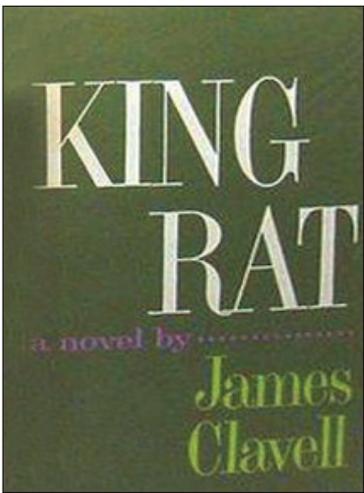
<sup>104</sup> Myth Detector, February 28, 2018. "Two Lies by Irma Inashvili about Visa Liberalization and Georgian Farmers". <https://bit.ly/31f7Cni>

<sup>105</sup> Myth Detector, February 7, 2018. "Dimitri Lortkipanidze's Disinformation that 67% of Export Falls on Russia". <https://bit.ly/2i0HwMH>

<sup>106</sup> Myth Detector, May 2, 2018. "Nino Burjanadze Fakes an Interview of a Former Chief of British Intelligence". <https://bit.ly/2HLVTpU>

<sup>107</sup> Myth Detector, November 1, 2018. "Disinformation: U.S. National Security Advisor Warns Georgia on Suspending Partnership". <https://bit.ly/2MBthTa>

SATIRICAL PRIMARY SOURCE	INVENTED STORY	REPORTED AS A REAL FACT
Huzlers	A man who raped crocodiles was arrested in USA <sup>108</sup>	pia.ge, break.ge, dainteredit.ge, siaxle.ru
panorama.pub	Children are taken away from homophobic parents In Netherlands <sup>109</sup>	Geworld.ge, nk.org.ua, conf.7ya.ru, 123ru.net, vesti.bb.lv.
TV11 section “April Fools’ Day Video“	Svaneti is the main target of America <sup>110</sup>	Facebook page წინააღმდეგობა / Resistance

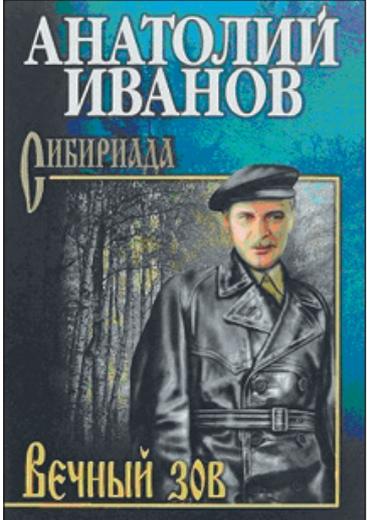
LITERARY WORK	INVENTED PLOT	REPORTED AS A REAL FACT
 <p>“King Rat” by James James Clavell</p>	Global powers tailored technology called “King Rat” specifically for the Orthodox people of the former Soviet Union, which aims to destroy the morality of a person <sup>111</sup> .	Geworld.ge, Nikolay Starikovs’s blog

<sup>108</sup> Myth Detector, July 25, 2018. “The Case of a Raped Alligator – Episode Two”. <https://bit.ly/2WurLXI>

<sup>109</sup> Myth Detector, November 26, 2018. “Geworld’s Disinformation on Children Allegedly Taken away from Homophobic Parents in Netherlands”. <https://bit.ly/2PXxS3z>

<sup>110</sup> Myth Detector, August 14, 2018. “TV11’s Entertainment Video about Svaneti has been Portrayed as Reality by a Nationalist Facebook Page”. <https://bit.ly/2QWVh2m>

<sup>111</sup> Myth Detector, May 31, 2018. “Russian Conspiracy by Geworld about the “King Rat” is a Plot of a Novel”. <https://bit.ly/2l1cB3p>

LITERARY WORK	INVENTED PLOT	REPORTED AS A REAL FACT
 <p>Anatoli Ivanov's "Eternal Call"</p>	<p>The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Allen Dulles, created a special plan for destroying Soviet society's moral values.<sup>112</sup></p>	<p>Geworld.ge, Akaki Gasviani, member of the Supreme Council of Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia</p>

**VISUAL (PHOTO/VIDEO) MANIPULATION.** The majority of video manipulations concerned migrants and were released mainly via ultra-nationalist Facebook pages. Manipulations were of the following nature:

<p><b>Incompliance of the authentic video with the description</b></p>	<p>FB "Kartuli Dzala" (Georgian Force)</p>	<p>According to Georgian Force, the video footage shows Muslim migrants attacking a Catholic church in France during a Mass service. In reality, the footage shows a rally outside the Diocese of Saint-Denis on March 18, 2018 to protest against the new bill concerning procedures for asylum seekers, initiated by the French government.<sup>113</sup></p> <hr/> <p>The video footage which, according to Georgian Force, shows an Afghan migrant kicking a German woman and rolling her down the stairs is in reality an incident that took place in the Berlin metro station on October 27, 2016, in which the attacker was not an Afghan migrant but a former convict, 27-year-old Svetoslav Stoyikov from Bulgaria.<sup>114</sup></p>
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<sup>112</sup> Myth Detector, May 29, 2018. "Geworld.ge Labels Quotes from Communist Party and Вечный зов as Dulles' Plan". <https://bit.ly/2WPeQ1F>, December 20, 2018. "Current members of Abkhazian Government and Former National Guard Representatives in Captivity of Allen Dulles' Conspiracy Theory". <https://bit.ly/2Wq3kdQ>

<sup>113</sup> Myth Detector, March 27, 2018. "Disinformation by Georgian Force about Muslim Migrants Allegedly Attacking Catholic Church in France". <https://bit.ly/2WwBdtt>

<sup>114</sup> Myth Detector, March 1, 2018. "Videomanipulation by "Georgian Force", as if Afghan Migrant is Pushing a German Woman Down a Staircase". <https://bit.ly/2ZdnrZS>

	FB Politicano	Russia Today's video with Politicano's comment "now it's time for migrants to ravage European countries," in reality concerns the abuse of force by police. The video is filmed in a Paris railway station on December 3, 2017, where people protested against the use of excessive force by the police on a Spaniard of Cameroonian origin. <sup>115</sup>
	FB Antiliberal Club	The video titled "African migrants riot the street in Madrid" in reality features the protest rallies taking place in Madrid, namely in Lavapiés in March 2008, in which far left and anti-establishment groups took part. Police arrested six Spanish citizens, not migrants, on charges of property damage. <sup>116</sup>
	FB "Iberiuli Ertoba" (Iberian Unity)	The video footage which, in reality, featured a rally held by Muslims against the terrorist organization "Islamic State" in London on October 1, 2017, is presented by Iberian Union as weaponless occupation of Europe by Muslims. <sup>117</sup>
<b>Fake context</b>	Election clip of Kakha Kukava, a presidential candidate, the leader of Free Georgia political party	The clip includes shots of slogan "Georgia without immigrants," shows noise in overcrowded underground train carriage and is manipulative, because it is impossible to identify the nationality of people featured in the video and the location where it was filmed. <sup>118</sup>

Apart from ultra-nationalist pages, photo manipulations were also used by Georgia and World, which along with the topic of migrations exploited foreign policy issues too.

<sup>115</sup> Myth Detector, January 8, 2018. "Videomanipulation by "Politicano" Pertaining Itself to Migrants is in Reality a Protest march in Paris". <https://bit.ly/2wIxQR4>

<sup>116</sup> Myth Detector, March 26, 2018. Anti-Liberal Club's Video Manipulation on Migrants. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/anti-liberal-clubs-video-manipulation-migrants-0>

<sup>117</sup> Myth Detector, June 6, 2018. "Iberian Union's Manipulation on a Peaceful Demonstration of Muslims". <https://bit.ly/2ERkztR>

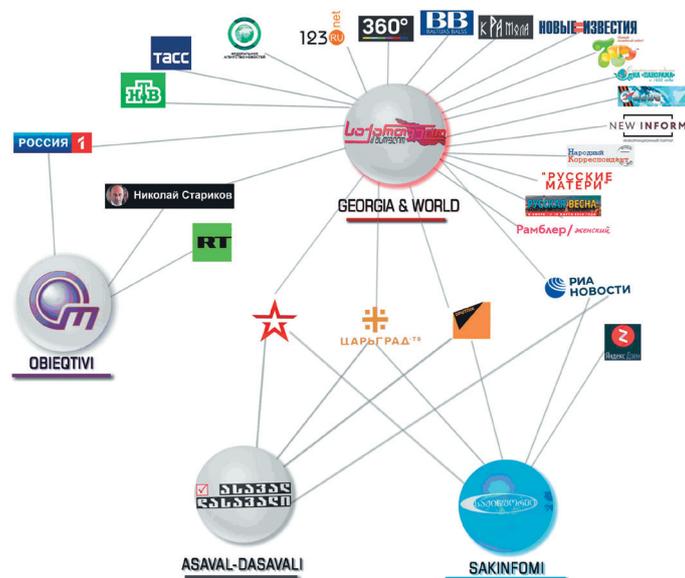
<sup>118</sup> Myth Detector, October 12, 2018. "A Manipulated Video About Migrants Used in Kukava's Pre-Election Video Clip". <https://bit.ly/2WmNnQC>

<b>Manipulated Photo</b>	Geworld.ge	According to the online edition, the photo captioned “Sorry, Mustafa!” showed a flash mob by European women asking offender migrants for forgiveness. Manipulative. The photo is manipulative, because an original photo depicts a Ukrainian woman holding a sign that says “Are you cold? Think about those who are in trenches.” Participants in the campaign were collecting warm clothes for Ukrainian soldiers during military actions in 2014. <sup>119</sup>
<b>Incompliance of the authentic photo with the description</b>	Geworld.ge	The online edition asserts that manifestations took place in Norway against NATO Exercise Trident Juncture in 2018, and illustrates it with a photo from 2016 manifestation in Poland, shows two people holding a banner. <sup>120</sup>

**SOURCES OF MISINFORMATION AND IDENTICAL RUSSIAN SOURCES.** Among media outlets, misinformation was most frequently published by Georgia and World (27) and Obieqtivi TV (16); among social media – the Facebook page Politicano (9); among political parties – the Alliance of Patriots (16) and among religious servants – Giorgi Razmadze (5).

Materials identical to the fake news reported by Georgian media were often published in Russian media too; this may indicate the avoidance of source, i.e. a defective model. The chart below shows Russian media outlets which reported misinformation identical to Georgian sources.

FIGURE 17. IDENTICAL RUSSIAN SOURCES OF MISINFORMATION



<sup>119</sup> Myth Detector, February 8, 2018. “Fake Russian Story about Women Allegedly Apologizing to Offender Migrants”. <https://bit.ly/2MA8xLL>

<sup>120</sup> Myth Detector, November 13, 2018. “Geworld.ge Uses a 2016 Photo of a Manifestation in Poland to Illustrate the Developments in Norway”. <https://bit.ly/2MzX4vz>

# 4. PROFILES |

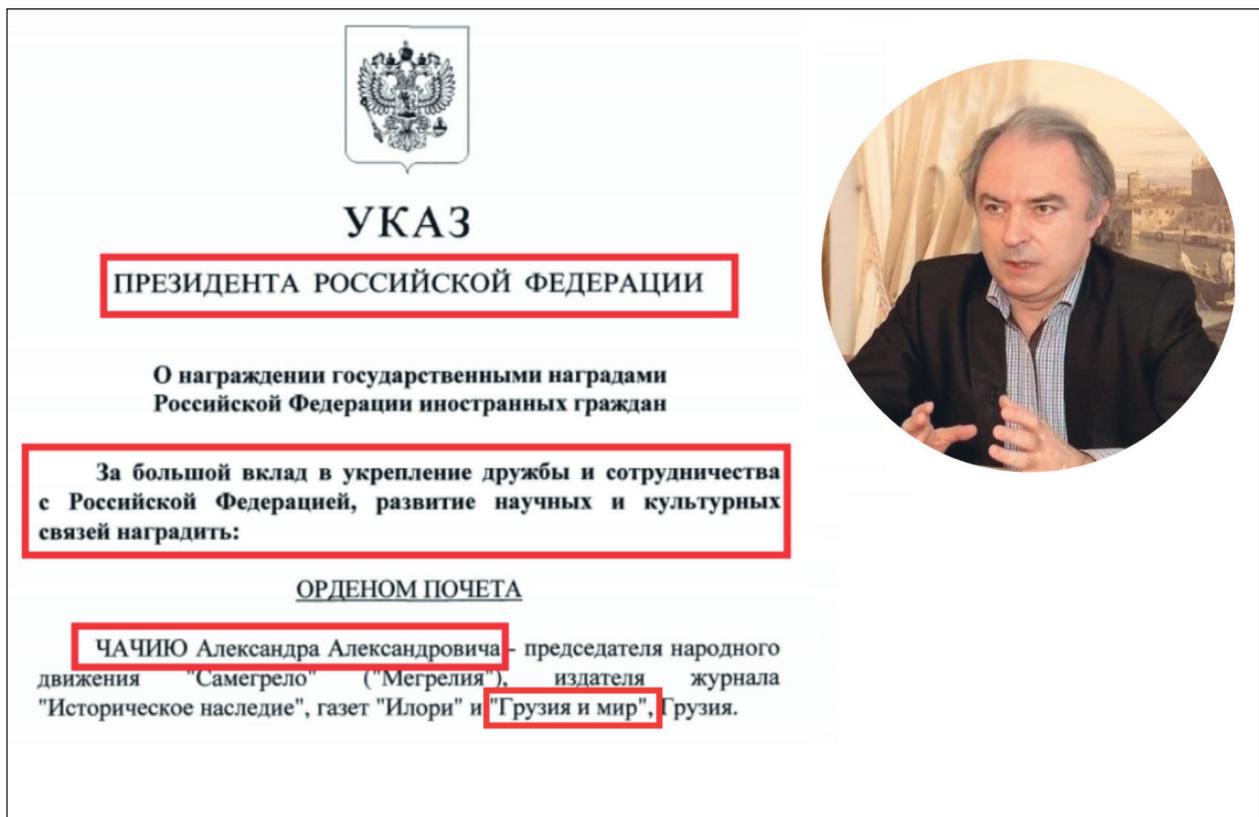
This chapter provides profiles of most active sources in terms of spreading anti-Western messages.

## 4.1 MEDIA

**ASAVAL-DASAVALI.** The weekly newspaper Asaval-Dasavali was established in 1992. The owner of 100 percent of the shares in the newspaper is Lasha Nadareishvili who also acts as the editor-in-chief. The newspaper is ill-famed for its hate speech towards various ethnic, religious and LGBT groups. There is no information available on its circulation, facebook page of Asaval-Dasavali has 132 969 followers. The most popular articles on facebook page are directed against United National Movement (UNM).

**MEDIA UNION "OBIEQTIVI".** Media Union Obieqtivi was established in 2010. A co-founder of the company is Irma Inashvili, the current Secretary General of Alliance of Patriots of Georgia (APG); however, since 2014, she is not listed among the management of the channel. Obieqtivi broadcasts not only via television frequency, but also via radio frequency and the Internet. TV Channel pursues Turkophobic, xenophobic and homophobic editorial policy. According TMI TV audience measuring company, Obieqtivi is ranked about 1,8% rating. It has 49 951 followers on facebook.

**GEORGIA AND THE WORLD.** The founder of the newspaper Georgia & World and its online-edition [www.geworld.ge](http://www.geworld.ge) is LTD Historical Heritage. The establishment of Historical Heritage in 2009 was publicly welcomed by the then President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev. One of the members of the public council of Historical Heritage is Aleksandre Chachia, a Moscow-based political analyst whom Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded the Order of Honor to Chachia for his great contribution to strengthening friendship and cooperation with the Russian Federation on February 13, 2014. In addition to anti-Western attitudes, the edition is notorious for its Turkophobia, racist and homophobic statements. The edition does not make its print run public, while its Facebook page has been liked by 22 840 users.



**SAKINFORMI.** The 100 percent shareholder in the news agency Sakinformi LLC is Arno Khidirbegishvili who is also the editor-in-chief of the edition since 2013. According to damoukidebloba.com, the domain of Sakinformi is registered on the name of Taras Gagnidze who is the leader of the pro-Russian organization Historical Heritage which also owns Georgia & World. Like Geworld.ge, Sakinformi is notorious for its hate speech. Sakinformi often re-publishes articles from Georgia and the World.

## 4.2. POLITICAL PARTIES

**DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT – UNITED GEORGIA.** Former Parliament Speaker of Georgia, Nino Burjanadze, left the United National Movement’s government in April, prior to the Parliamentary Elections scheduled on 21 May 2008. The Democratic Movement – United Georgia, was registered on 19 March 2008. Burjanadze’s electoral block became a qualified subject for the 2014 Local Self-Government Elections, however, it failed to clear the 5% hurdle in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections. Nino Burjanadze is the second Georgian politician, after ex-Prime Minister Zurab Nogaideli, who, after the 2008 Russian Georgian War, met with Vladimir Putin in 2010. For the 2016 elections, she put forward an initiative of block-free status which implied amending the constitution to reflect this status.

**ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS OF GEORGIA.** Alliance of Patriots of Georgia was founded on 19 December 2012. In 2014, for the first time ever, the political party gained seats in the city assembly (5.37%), while in 2016, having

received 5.01% of the votes, it gained seats in Parliament. The party claims to be of right-conservative ideology. On its English-language website, the party declares the desire to integrate into the European Union while expressing skepticism about prospects of Georgia's integrating into NATO. The political party has links with TV Obieqtivi and alike this media outlet, the Alliance of Patriots is notorious for its Turkophobia and homophobia. After gaining seats in 2016 parliamentary elections, party leadership frequently visits Moscow proposing NATO-Georgia-Russian new format.

### 4.3. PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

**ORGANIZATIONS FALLING WITHIN THE AGREEMENT OF NATIONAL POWERS.** Georgian ultra-nationalist and openly pro-Russian groups in Georgia, as a rule, positioned themselves differently and the only indicator of their unity was the similarity of narratives and actions. However, rallies stage by liberal groups to voice protest against a special operation carried out in several night clubs in Tbilisi on 13 May, proved to be a sort of catalyst for openly pro-Russian and ultra-nationalist groups to step onto the stage under the umbrella of Georgian March. They created the so-called Agreement of National Powers which aims to stop “unruly conduct of faggots and drug sellers.”.

From organizations revealed by the monitoring, the following joined the Agreement of National Powers:

**RIGHTS DEFENDER UNION.** Rights Defenders' Union was registered on August 2, 2012 in the Public Register. The Head of the union is Nikoloz Mzhavanadze who is well known for not only anti-Western, but Turkophobic statements.

**GEORGIAN MARCH.** Ultra-national group Georgian March first appeared in a summer of 2017 when they mobilized protest against migrants. One of the founder of Georgian March is Sandro Bregadze, former Georgian Dream deputy minister.

**PRIMAKOV GEORGIAN-RUSSIAN PUBLIC CENTRE.** The Centre was established in 2013 by the International Relations Institute by “Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Support Fund” which was launched by the order of the President of the Russian Federation and the Georgian Institute of International relations. The center provides free Russian languages courses and supports various events. Dimitri Lortkipanidze, former member of the Democratic Movement – United Georgia is a director of Primakov center since March of 2018.

**GEORGIAN DEMOGRAPHIC SOCIETY XXI** was registered in 2014. Among founders of the organization is businessman Levan Vasadze that accumulated his capital in Russia and affiliated with the World Congress of Families (WCF), an American-based Christian evangelical organization dedicated to halting the spread of LGBT rights.

**SOCIETY OF DEFENDERS OF CHILD'S RIGHTS** is registered in 2017. Chairperson of the board is Guram Palavandishvili who was detained for extremist actions several times: On December 4 in 2013 for damaging posters and

banners on the holiday of Hanukkah and on 8 March of 2018 for for throwing a raw eggs at the group of LGBTQ during transgender rally. Palavanidshvili ran parliamentary elections as a majoritarian candidate from Nino Burjanadze's Democratic Movement on several times.

**EURASIAN INSTITUTE** was founded on September 22, 2009 by Gulbaat Rtskhiladze and Giorgi Vekua. According to the research by damoukidebloba.com, one of the partners of the Eurasian Institute is a Russian organization, Lev Gumilev's Center, which was founded by Eurasian Center in Moscow in 2011. The center states that popularization of "Eurasianism" is the way of resolving ethnic conflicts.

### 4.3. CLERGY

Out of five priest making anti-Western comments most frequently, only Basil Mkalavishvili does not represent the Georgian Patriarchate, because he was defrocked in 1996. For his extremist actions manifested in attacking Jehovah's Witnesses and Baptists and demising their literature, Basil Mkalavishvili was arrested in 2004 and sentenced to six years in prison.

### 4.4. VARIOUS RESPONDENTS

**JEFFREY SILVERMAN** is one of the sources frequently referred to by Russian pro-governmental media outlets against the Lugar Laboratory. Presently, Silverman is Georgian Bureau Chief for Russia-affiliated Veterans Today. In 2013, Veterans Today established cooperation with Russian geopolitical journal New Eastern Outlook (NEO). The journal is released by the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In its articles, Veterans Today frequently refers to Strategic Culture Foundation as its source. The Strategic Culture Foundation is based in Moscow and it is led by Yuri Prokofiev, former head of the Moscow Communist Party and member of the Soviet Political Bureau. Moreover, the materials of a website South Front are frequently posted on Veterans Today. The website is managed from Russia and it voices the Kremlin's agenda.

**DILYANA GAYTANDZHEVA** is a Bulgarian journalist who released an investigative material titled "The Pentagon Bio-Weapons" on an English-language portal South Front on January 16, 2018. The portal is administered from Russia and it is registered on Russian domain, which frequently publishes conspiracy theories about military issues and intelligence. Before August 2017, Gaytandzhieva worked for a Bulgarian newspaper Труд, where she released an article on July 4, 2017 about the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry allegedly corresponding with the Azerbaijani Embassy to Bulgaria on supplying weapons to terrorists in Syria through diplomatic flights. The article and the accompanying images were released on behalf of Al Mayadeen TV, which is widely viewed as pro-Bashar al-Assad, Hezbollah and their allies.