

# Organized Campaign by Pro-Government and Anti-Liberal Facebook Pages against Protest Rally

69 Facebook pages and 50 sponsored posts against the protest rally



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# Organized Campaign by Pro-Government and Anti-Liberal Facebook Pages against Protest Rally

The Parliament's November 14 decision to vote down the constitutional amendment on transition to fully proportional electoral system from 2020 triggered large-scale protests outside the Parliament building on Rustaveli Avenue. On November 18, the Georgian government used riot police to disperse the peaceful protest rally. Protests resumed outside the Parliament building on November 25 and at dawn on November 26, police again dispersed the protesters using water cannons.

From November 14 through December 3, amid ongoing protests, the Media Development Foundation monitored the activities of Facebook pages and revealed an organized campaign, aimed at discrediting the peaceful rally on Rustaveli Avenue and the opposition, as well as justifying the government's actions, which was carried out in a form of sponsored posts.

## Key tendencies

The monitoring has revealed the following tendencies:

- 69 Facebook pages were involved in the campaign against protests with the majority (41) affiliated with the government, among them 27 pages targeting the government's opponents; four pages belonging to or supporting the ruling Georgian Dream party; 11 pages of media outlets with pro-government editorial policy, as well as the pages positioning themselves in social networks as media outlets.
- 21 anti-liberal, 3 anti-Western and 3 mixed content pages were involved in the campaign against the rally.
- 25 out of 69 identified pages were created in 2019 and 18 – in 2018.
- Two cases were revealed when a page operating as a media outlet was either administered by a party activist (G the TV), or in the past the page operated using the name of Georgian Dream (საინფორმაციო გვერდი / Information page).
- The monitoring has revealed that an open Facebook page “საინტერესო” (Interesting) is administered by anti-liberal page ““მომკვდები საქართველოსთვის” (I will die for Georgia); presently the group's co-admins are deleted troll profiles.
- The government-affiliated pages have a total of 295 admins; the majority of them (30) administer the Facebook page of Kvira.ge, a media outlet with pro-government editorial policy; anti-liberal and anti-Western pages have a total of 82 and 17 admins, respectively.
- One of 15 admins of anti-Western Facebook page “აზიმუტი” (Azimuth) administers the page from the Russian Federation.
- The monitoring has revealed five Facebook pages, which were spreading identical content at short intervals in order to discredit the rally. It means that these pages might be administered by one and the same people. Four of these pages are spreading anti-Liberal content (Pressტიტუცია/Presstitution, 3,14 ზღეც, Fაქტები and Revelation), and one – anti-Western (Blue Soviet Union / ლურჯი საბჭოთა კავშირი).
- Some cases were revealed when anti-liberal and anti-Western pages targeting the government's opponents were sharing one and the same content from each other.
- 50 sponsored posts were released against the protest rallies during the monitoring period.
- The following messages were spread as part of the organized campaign:
  - The protesters are representatives of LGBT community and they are imposing homosexuality on us;
  - The protesters are fighting against the church;
  - The rally on Rustaveli Avenue is illegal and represents an attempted revolution;
  - The demonstrators have been bribed by the opposition;
  - The proportional electoral system is anti-constitutional;
  - Sexist messages were spread against female opposition leaders;

- Nino Burjanadze's visit to Moscow was generalized to the entire opposition spectrum through using fake news and various visual manipulations.
- The dynamics of page activity increased in a period between November 14 and November 25, amid ongoing protests, further decreasing in December; it indicates that the pages intensified their efforts during the anti-government rallies.

### Pages involved in the campaign

The monitoring has revealed that 69 Facebook pages were actively involved in the campaign against protests; we have divided them into two groups:

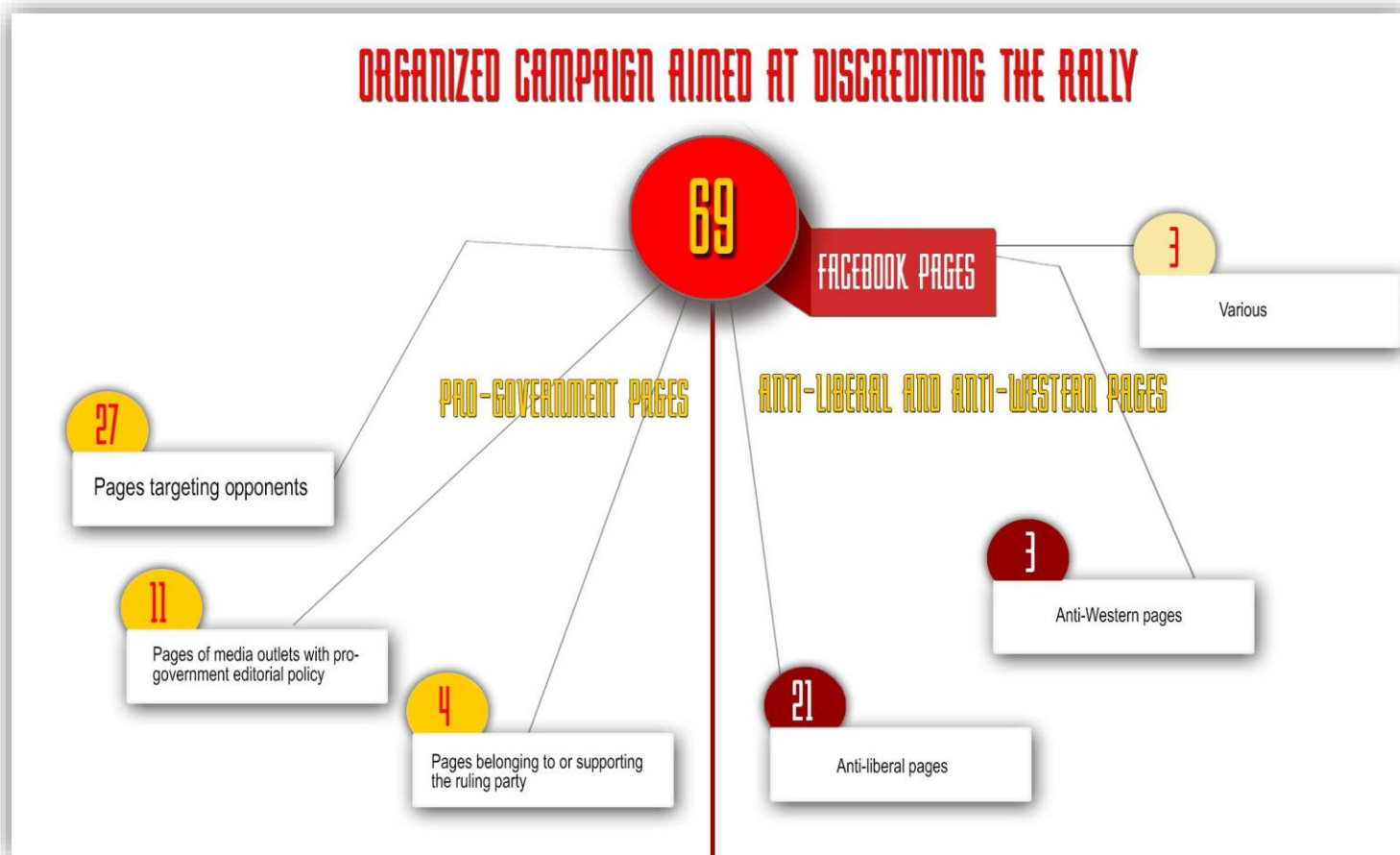
1. Pro-government pages (41)
2. Anti-liberal and anti-Western pages (24).

Pro-government and government-affiliated pages can, in turn, be divided into the following categories:

1. Pages targeting opponents (27)
2. Media outlets with pro-government editorial policy (11), involving both Facebook pages of traditional media outlets and those positioning in social networks as media outlets.
3. Pages belonging to or supporting Georgian Dream (4).

Besides the anti-liberal and anti-Western pages, we separated three pages without a clear-cut policy in the category "Various":

1. Anti-liberal (21)
2. Anti-Western (3)
3. Various pages with mixed content (3)





25 out of 69 identified pages were created in 2019 and 18 – in 2018.

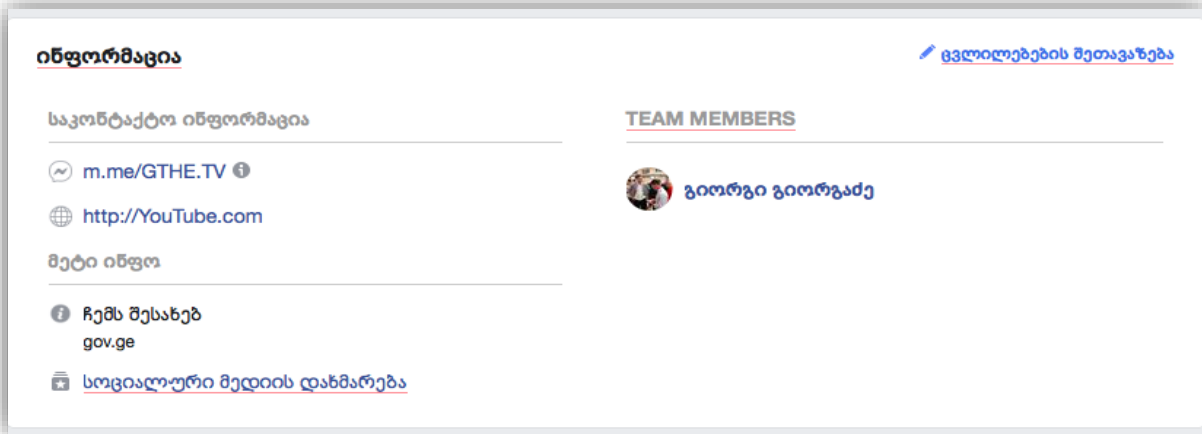
Pages targeting opponents - 27 Total number of admins - 162	Pages belonging to or supporting the ruling party – 4 Total number of admins - 37	Pages of media outlets with pro-government editorial policy – 11 Total number of admins - 96		Anti-liberal pages - 21 Total number of admins - 83	Anti-Western - 3 Total number of admins- 17	Various Total number of admins - 10
		Traditional media pages	Facebook media outlets			
<a href="#">Nika Kvirikashvili's Blog</a> 18.11.2019 Admin: Unidentified	<a href="#">ლიდერი</a> 41 20.02.2019 Admin: - 3	<a href="#">მედიკოლოდინგი "კვირა"</a> 01.07.2019 Admin: -30	<a href="#">"ინფორმაცია დღეს"</a> 16.08.2019 Admin :3	<a href="#">Pressტიტუცია/Presstituti on</a> 09.11.2019 Admin - Unidentified	<a href="#">Blue Soviet Union / ლურჯი საბჭოთა კავშირი</a> 09.11.2019 Admin: Unidentified	<a href="#">სიმართლე</a> 04.11.2018 Admin: - 3
<a href="#">დასასრული</a> 16.10.2019 Admin: - 6	<a href="#">ბიძინა ივანიშვილის მხარდამცერები</a> 22.05.2018 Admin: - 7	<a href="#">რეპორტიორი</a> 17.04.2013 Admin: - 8	<a href="#">Infomedia+</a> 12.01.2019 Admin: - 6	<a href="#">3,14 ზდეც</a> 11.11.2019 Admin: - Unidentified	<a href="#">აზიმუტი</a> 19.12.2017 Admin: - 15	<a href="#">ქართული გვერდი / Georgian Page</a> 28.12.2018 Admin: - 3
<a href="#">პოლიტიკური სააშკარაო</a> 14.01.2019 Admin: - 5	<a href="#">Bidzina Ivanishvili &amp; Media</a> 09.10.2011 Admin: - 19	<a href="#">მარშალ პრეს</a> 20.02.2015 Admin: - 7	<a href="#">Caucasus News Report</a> 17.07.2019 Admin: - 5	<a href="#">Fაქტები</a> 10.07.2019 Admin: - 3	<a href="#">კავკასიელს არასდროს ერქმევა ევროპელი</a> 09.02.2016 Admin: - 2	<a href="#">დედაქალაქი</a> 29.06.2016 Admin: - 4
<a href="#">მიმისტრი</a> 18.02.2019 Admin: - 5	<a href="#">ქართული ოცნება</a> 12.10.2011 Admin: - 8	<a href="#">For.ge - საინფორმაციო, ანალიტიკური პორტალი</a> 22.12.2010 Admin: - 8	<a href="#">ეროვნული მედია</a> 02.11.2018 Admin: - 6	<a href="#">Alt-Group • ალტ-ჯგუფი</a> 06.11.2019 Admin: Unidentified		
<a href="#">მეხუთე კოლონა</a> 03.04.2019 Admin: - 5			<a href="#">G the TV</a> 05.12.2018 Admin: - 1	<a href="#">საქართველო უპირველეს ყოვლისა</a> 23.02.2019 Admin: : 1		
<a href="#">პოლიტიკური სამრეცხაო</a> 25.04.2019 Admin: - 6			<a href="#">ტელე სკოპი</a> 25.08.2016 Admin: - 13	<a href="#">ქრისტიანებმა გაგზიაროთ</a> 18.06.2019 Admin: 5		
<a href="#">ქართული სახელმწიფო</a> 20.03.2019 Admin: - 3			<a href="#">საინფორმაციო გვერდი / Information Page</a> 04.02.2014 Admin: - 9	<a href="#">სულით ქართველი</a> 19.01.2019 Admin: 4		
<a href="#">ნაცების დასაცინი ოფიციალური სააგენტო</a> 14.05.2019 Admin: - 8				<a href="#">პატრიოტული გვერდი</a> 24.05.2019 Admin: - 2		
<a href="#">სირცხვილის კორიდორი</a> 21.05.2019 Admin: - 8				<a href="#">Antiliberal League - ანტილიბერალური ლიგა</a> 18.03.2019 Admin: - 4		

გიორგი ალაპიშვილის ბლოგი (after changing the name, it is called "Artificial Intelligence Blog") 22.07.2019 Admin: - 3				Beqa Vardosanidze • ბეკა ვარდოსანიძე 17.04.2018 Admin: - 5		
სექტა 16.11.2018 Admin: - 1				Anti-Paradox (Deleted)		
ორი გვამი უნდათ 15.11.2018 Admin: - 11				არა გენდერს და ლგბტ პროპაგანდას 29.08.2018 Admin: - 1		
გრიგოლ შტაბკვარწირა 20.07.2018 Admin: - 5				<u>Unofficial Conspiracies</u> 01.06.2018 Admin: - 4		
მახსოვს/Makhsovs 06.07.2018 Admin: - 3				ანტი-ლიბერალური გვერდი 22.06.2018 Admin: - 10		
პოლიტიკური სანაგვე 27.06.2018 Admin: - 12				<u>მოკვადები</u> <u>საქართველოსთვის</u> 15.06.2018 Admin: 11		
ნაციონალისტის გვერდი 23.08.2018 Admin: - 3				ნუ გამოლიბერალდები, იაზროვნე 27.05.2017 Admin: - 2		
ჩვენი დროის გმირი/Heroo 02.04.2018 Admin: - 7				<u>შენ ხარ საქართველო</u> 06.10.2017 Admin: 3		
იყავი და გაგაკეთებინა 02.03.2018 Admin: - 11				<u>დადუმებული</u> <u>ქართველობა</u> 10.01.2016 Admin: 5		
არ დაივიწყო წარსული 21.07.2017 Admin: - 8				ალტ-კლუბი (previously called Anti-Liberal Club) 15.11.2015 Admin: - 13		
ნაცია ადამიანი? 11.07.2017 Admin: - 5				<u>Revelation</u> 16.06.2014 Admin: 6		
ძაან უდუმაშვილი 27.06.2017 Admin: - 3				<u>წინაპართა</u> <u>ნაკვალევზე</u> 25.02.2013 Admin: 3		
ტერენტი გლდანელი 09.06.2016 Admin: - 1						
ერთიანი ცინიკური მოძრაობა 10.07.2014 Admin: - 5						
ერთიანი პროვოკაციული მოძრაობა 27.04.2013 Admin: - 16						
ნუ გეშინია მიშა 12.09.2012 Admin: - 11						
მიხეილ უკრაინოლოგი 15.08.2012 Admin: - 10						

## Affiliation of information pages with Georgian Dream

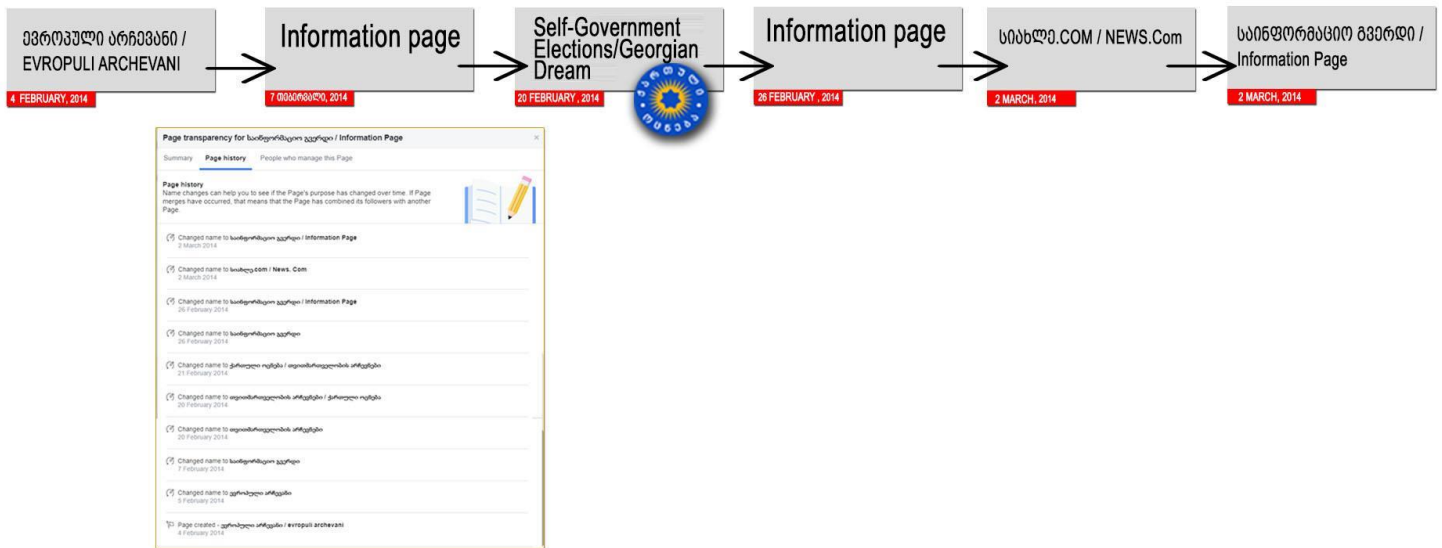
Two cases were revealed when a page operating as a media outlet was either administered by a party activist (G the TV), or in the past the page operated using the name of Georgian Dream (საინფორმაციო გვერდი / Information page).

The page G the TV positioning itself on Facebook as a media outlet names [გიორგი გიორგაძე](#) (Giorgi Giorgadze), member of the ruling Georgian Dream party, as its admin.



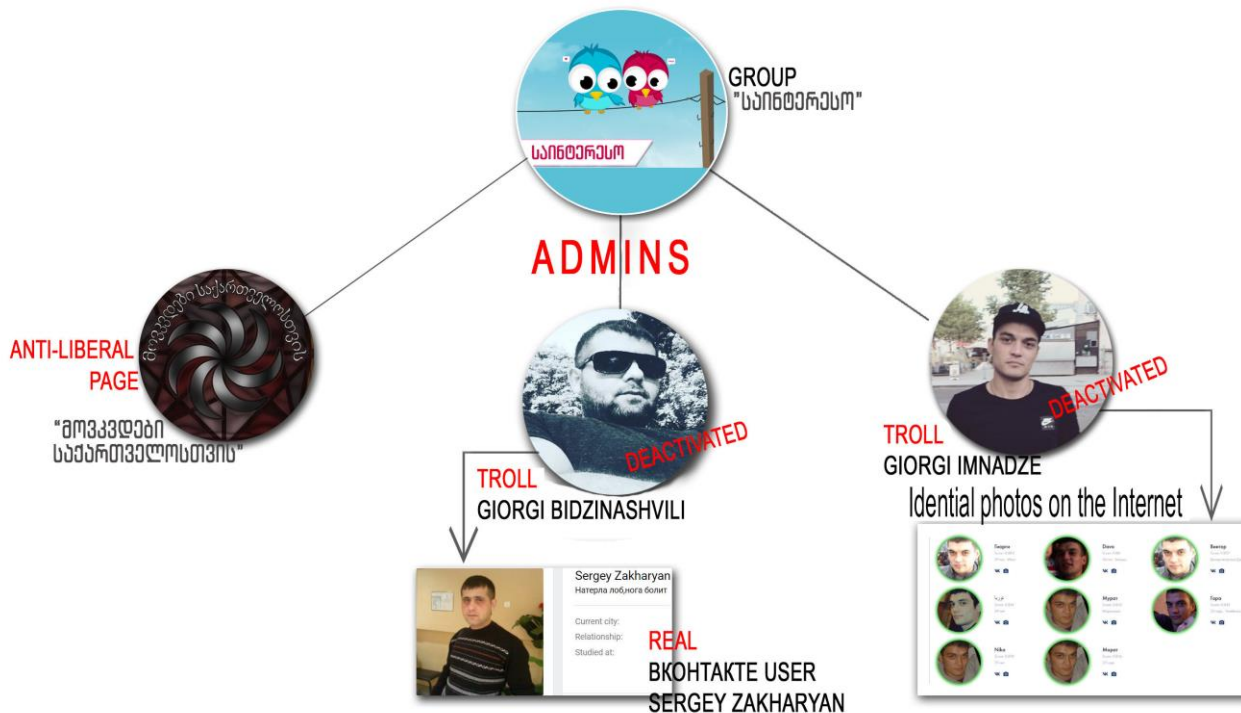
Like [G the TV](#), "საინფორმაციო გვერდი / Information page" is also positioning itself as an information media outlet; initially, the page was registered as "ევროპული არჩევანი / evropuli archevani" on February 4, 2014, but later on February 20, 2014, it was renamed to "თვითმართვებლობის არჩევნები / ქართული ოცნება" (Self-Government Elections/Georgian Dream). Presently, it is operating as Information Page. The page has changed its name nine times:

## FROM A PARTY PAGE TO INFORMATION PAGE



## Page management

The monitoring has revealed that an open Facebook group “საინტერესო” (Interesting) is administered by anti-liberal page ““მოვკვდები საქართველოსთვის” (I will die for Georgia). One of the group admins, a user named “Giorgi Imnadze” is a deleted profile, which, as a result of MDF’s examination, turned out to be a troll. Imnadze replaced a troll-admin “Giorgi Bidzinashvili,” who was spreading messages against the government’s opponents in the same group, stealing the identity of Вконтакте user Sergey Zakharyan; presently, Bidzinashvili’s profile is also deleted.





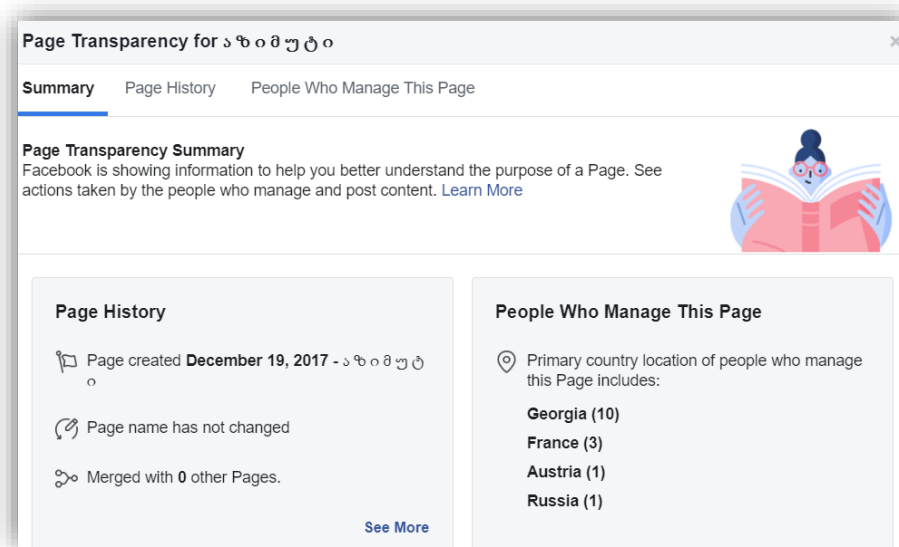
The government-affiliated pages have a total of 295 admins; among them, the pages targeting opponents - 162, the pages of media outlets with pro-government editorial policy – 96; pages belonging to and supporting Georgian Dream – 37. The majority of them – 30 admins – administer the Facebook page of Kvira.ge, a media outlet with pro-government editorial policy.

Pages targeting opponents Admin - 162	Pages belonging to and supporting the ruling party Admin - 37	Pages of media outlets with pro-government editorial policy Admin - 96	
		Pages of traditional media outlets Admin - 53	Facebook media Admin - 43

Anti-liberal and anti-Western pages have a total of 82 and 17 admins, respectively. A total of 10 admins administer the pages of various types.

Anti-liberal pages Admin - 82	Anti-Western Admin - 17	Various Admin -13
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It is worth noting that an anti-Western page Azimuth, which is involved in the organized campaign against protests and which is affiliated with the ultranationalist movement Georgian March, has 15 admins with one of them administering from the Russian Federation.



The monitoring has revealed five Facebook pages, which were spreading identical content at short intervals in order to discredit the rally. It means that these pages might be administered by one and the same people. Four of these pages are spreading anti-Liberal content (Pressტიტუცია/Presstitution, 3,14 ზღეც, Fაქტები and Revelation), and one – anti-Western (Blue Soviet Union / ლურჯი საბჭოთა კავშირი).

### Sponsored posts

50 sponsored posts were released against the protest rallies during the monitoring period. Most of these posts - 44 - were released on the government-affiliated pages and least of them – 6 – on anti-liberal pages.

Pages targeting opponents	Pages belonging to or supporting Georgian Dream	Pages of media outlets with pro-government editorial policy	Anti-liberal pages
36 Sponsored posts	5 Sponsored posts	3 Sponsored posts	6 Sponsored posts

Detailed information about sponsored posts is available on the slider:

<https://albumizr.com/skins/bandana/index.php?key=9Mxp>

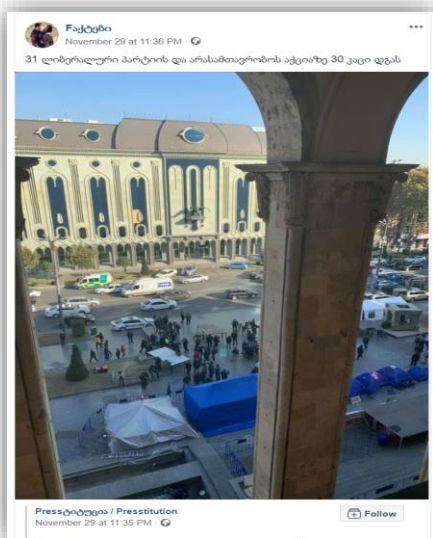
## Identical content

The monitoring has revealed five Facebook pages, which were spreading identical content at short intervals in order to discredit the rally. It means that these pages might be administered by one and the same people. Four of these pages are spreading anti-Liberal content (Pressტიტუცია/Presstitution, 3,14 ზედეც, ჩველები and Revelation), and one – anti-Western (Blue Soviet Union / ლურჯი საბჭოთა კავშირი). Identical content was spread according to the following scheme: initially the post was spread by the page Pressტიტუცია/Presstitution; then the same material was spread by other pages. For example, in one instance, the page Pressტიტუცია/Presstitution posted a photo of Shota Digmelashvili, one of the leaders of the protest rally, with a caption “Shotiko Digmelashvili, the leading anus of rapid reaction anuses. I demand this Cho I Lari<sup>1</sup> to change his name and instead choose the name, which does not contain the name of my district.” The photo with an identical caption was spread by the four above mentioned pages in a coordinated manner.



<sup>1</sup> an insulting term in Georgian

In another instance, the above mentioned pages virally spread the photo of the protest rally shot from the Parliament building depicting only few people outside the Parliament in an attempt to illustrate that the protests express the interests of a small group.



## Key messages and scheme of spreading

The following messages were spread to discredit the rally and justify the government's actions:

- The protesters are representatives of LGBT community and they are imposing homosexuality on us;
- The protesters are fighting against the church, Orthodoxy;
- The rally ongoing on Rustaveli Avenue is illegal and represents an attempted revolution;
- The demonstrators have been bribed by the opposition;
- The proportional electoral system is anti-constitutional.

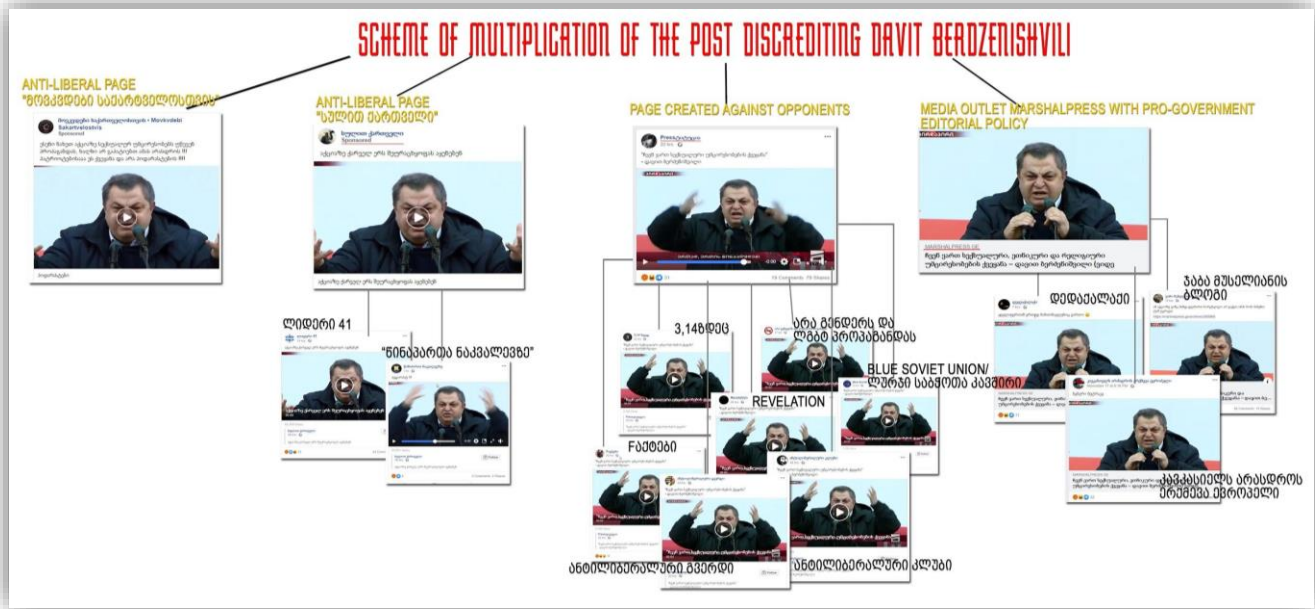
Several Facebook pages targeting Georgian Dream's opponents spread sexist messages against opposition leaders, Tina Bokuchava and Elene Khoshtaria. Moreover, the pro-government pages were generalizing Nino Burjanadze's visit to Moscow to the entire opposition spectrum.



## Linking the protest rally to LGBT groups

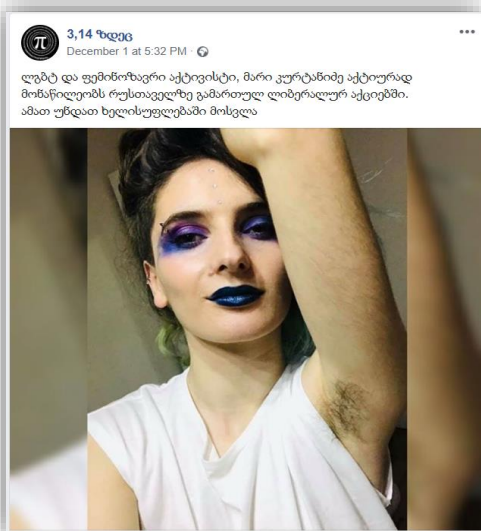
Like during the June protests, protesters were again associated with LGBT groups. For this purpose, the remarks made by Davit Berdzenishvili of the Republican Party at the rally regarding equality were torn out of the context and spread in a homophobic context, while Berdzenishvili himself was referred to in an insulting and homophobic manner.

On November 18, several Facebook pages simultaneously posted Berdzenishvili's video. The sponsored content was spread by anti-liberal pages - "სულით ქართველი" (Spiritually Georgian) and "მოვკვდები საქართველოსთვის" (I will die for Georgia). A fragment of Berdzenishvili's speech was torn out of the context and spread by anti-liberal page "Pressტიტუცია" and a pro-government media outlet Marshalpress. The material was shared by anti-liberal and anti-Western pages, as well as the pages targeting the ruling party's opponents and troll accounts.



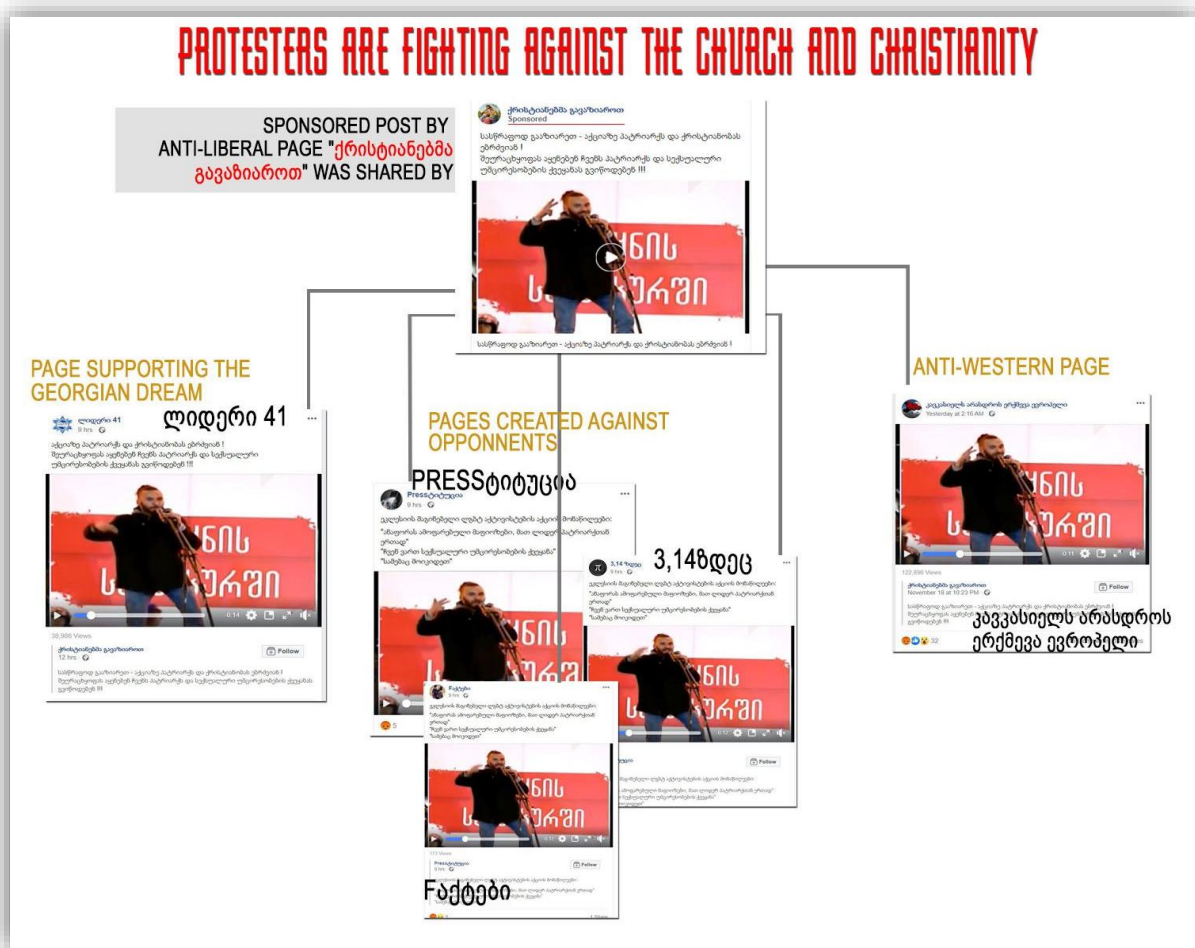
Posts with identical content were spread in an organized manner to discredit the rally, inculcating a threat of LGBT people's possible coming to power. For example, an anti-liberal page Pressტიტუცია/Presstitution spread a protester's photo, which was then spread by other anti-liberal pages and one anti-Western page with an interval of three minutes on December 1, from 5:30 to 5:33.





### Protesters are fighting against the church and Christianity

Pro-government, as well as anti-liberal and anti-Western Facebook pages shared virally and in an organized manner a fragment from one of the protester's speech, who referred to the clergy as Mafiosi wearing vestments. The speech was generalized to the entire rally, while protesters were portrayed as fighters against the church and Christianity. The Facebook page "ქრისტიანებმა გაგაზიაროთ" (Let's Christians share it) sponsored the post, while the pages supporting the Georgian Dream party, as well as anti-liberal and anti-Western pages shared the post.





**The rally is orchestrated by the National Movement; protesters are bribed by the opposition**

The Facebook pages targeting the opposition (“ნუ გეშინია მიშა” (Don’t be afraid Misha), “ორი გვამი უნდათ” (They need two corpses), “მახსოვს/Makhsovs” (I remember) and “სექტა” (Sect), as well as anti-liberal page “Anti-Paradox” were spreading the message as if the rally on Rustaveli Avenue was orchestrated by the National Movement.

**THE RALLY IS ORCHESTRATED BY THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT**

Pro-government Facebook pages, as well as anti-opposition and anti-liberal pages were spreading information in an organized manner as if people attending the rally were bribed by the opposition with money and marijuana.

**PROTESTERS ARE BRIBED BY THE OPPOSITION**

## Second Maidan

Pro-government Facebook pages described the rally as an attempt to trigger destabilization, violence, revolution, coup and even second Maidan. Such posts were sponsored in some cases. Anti-liberal pages and Facebook media outlets were involved in spreading this narrative and justifying the government's actions.

### THE RALLY ON AUSTAVELI AVENUE IS ILLEGAL

**PAGES CREATED AGAINST THE OPPONENTS**

**ორი გვამი უნდათ**  
Sponsored

**ქართული სახელმწიფო**  
Sponsored

**იყავი და გავკეთებინა**  
Sponsored

**ANTI-LIBERAL FACEBOOK PAGE**

**ანტილიბერალური კლუბი**

**MEDIA WITH A PRO-GOVERNMENT EDITORIAL POLICY**

**რეპორტიორი**

## Proportional electoral system is unconstitutional

Amid ongoing protests, the ruling party's official Facebook page "ქართული ოცნება" (Georgian Dream) and the pages supporting the ruling party, among them "ბიძინა ივანიშვილის მხარდამჭერები/Bidzina Ivanishvili" and "Bidzina Ivanishvili & Media", as well as pro-government Facebook media "Caucasus News Report" and "საინფორმაციო გვერდი" (Information Page, which was previously named "ქართული ოცნება/თვითმმართველობის არჩევნები" (Georgian Dream/Self-Government Elections)) were sharing one and the same video clips through sponsored posts, trying to convince the public that the proposed proportional electoral model contradicted the constitution of Georgia.

### PROPORTIONAL ELECTORAL SYSTEM IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

**THE RULING PARTY'S OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE**

**"ქართული ოცნება"**

**THE PAGES SUPPORTING THE RULING PARTY**

**"ბიძინა ივანიშვილის მხარდამჭერები"**

**"BIDZINA IVANISHVILI & MEDIA"**

**PRO-GOVERNMENT FACEBOOK MEDIA**

**"CAUCASUS NEWS REPORT"**

**"საინფორმაციო გვერდი"**



## Sexist messages

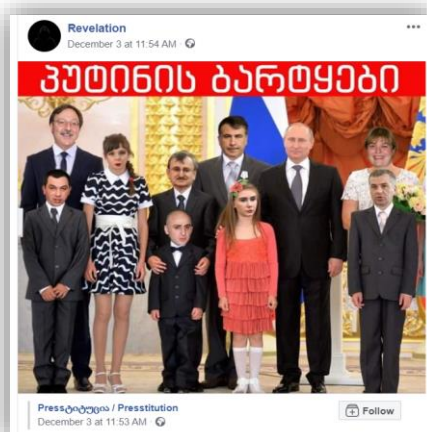
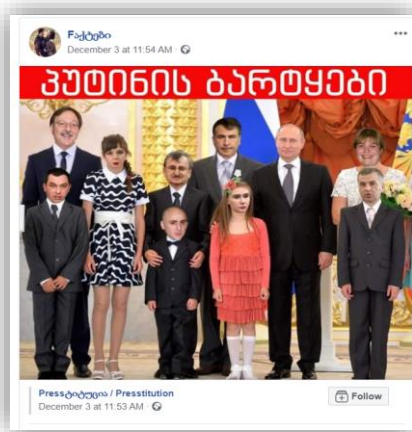
To discredit the opposition leaders, Facebook pages supporting the ruling party and targeting its opponents were spreading sexist messages against MPs and opposition leaders, Tina Bokuchava and Elene Khoshtaria. For example, “Leader 41:” “They say that stupid women are participating in the rallies;” Mikheil Ukrainologi: “If Bokuchava had justified her surname, she would have been Minetava.”



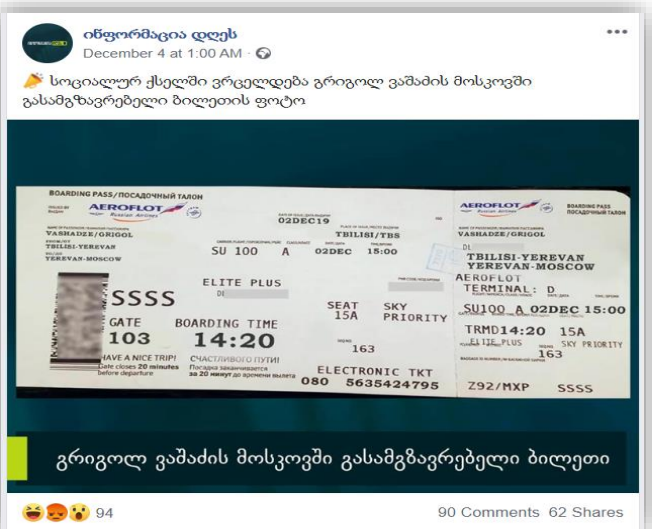
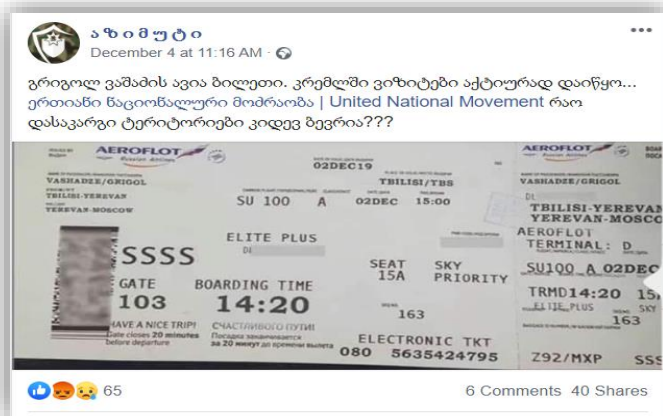
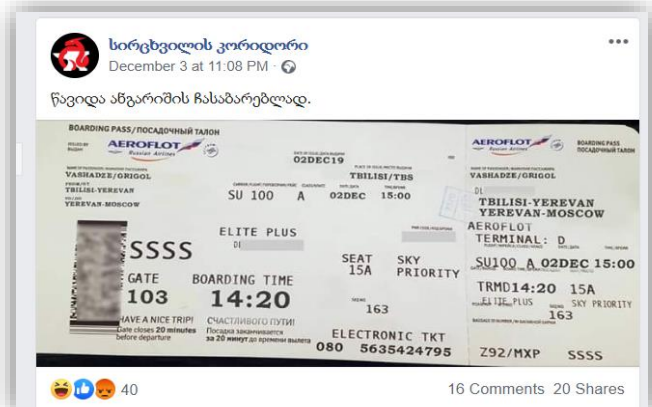
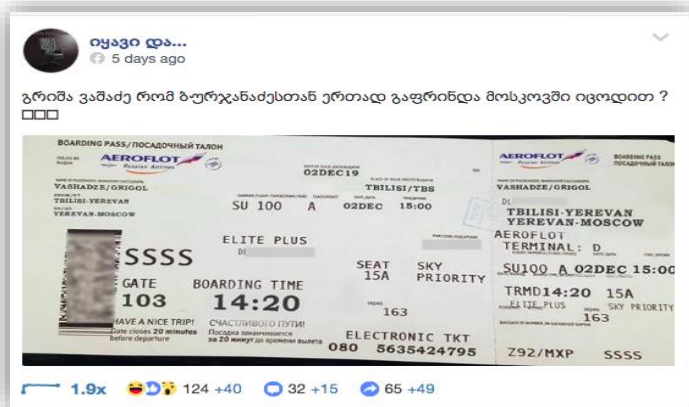
## Generalizing Burjanadze's Moscow visit to the entire opposition spectrum

On December 3, 2019, after Nino Burjanadze, leader of the Democratic Movement – United Georgia party, left for Moscow, the pages involved in the campaign discrediting the protest rallies tried to generalize her visit to the entire opposition spectrum. For example, the processed photo depicting Giga Bokeria, Tina Bokuchava, Davit Bakradze and other opposition leaders standing beside Russian President Vladimir Putin was shared by the page targeting the government's opponents ((ნაცების დასაციანი ოფიციალური საბგენტო), as well anti-liberal (Pressტიტუცია/Presstitution, 3,14 ზღვო, Fაქტები, Revelation) and anti-Western (Blue Soviet Union / ლურჯი საბჭოთა კავშირი) pages.





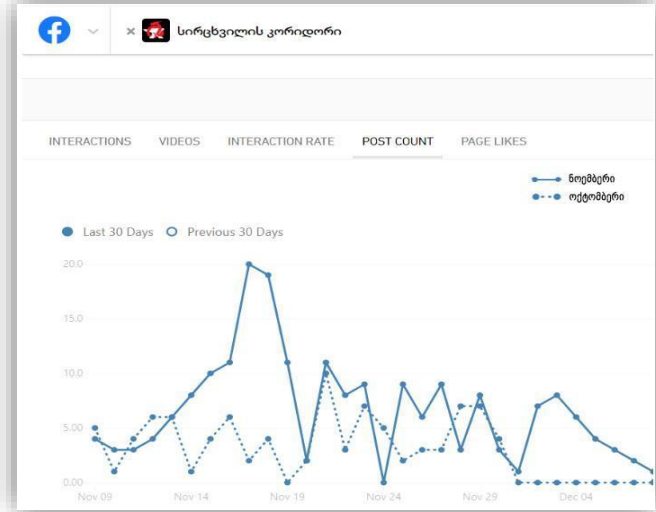
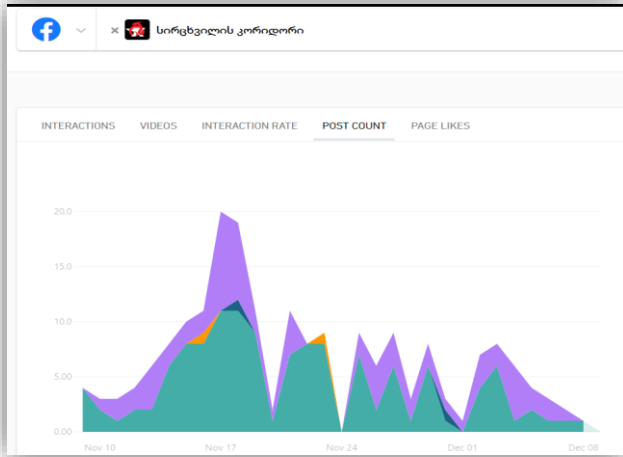
The pages targeting the government's opponents, among them “იყავი და გაგეკეთებინა” (You had been and should have done) and “სირცხვილის კორიდორი”, (Shame Corridor), as well as anti-Western page “Azimuth” were sharing Russian airline Aeroflot's fake Tbilisi-Yerevan-Moscow ticket in the name of Grigol Vashadze. The page “ინფორმაცია დღეს” (Information Today) created on August 16, 2019 was involved in spreading the fake air ticket. The only post released by the page is just related to Vashadze's fake ticket; moreover, the name of the page creates an impression that the source is an information page.



## Dynamics of activities of Facebook pages

The Myth Detector has analyzed the dynamics of activities of Facebook pages involved in discrediting the protest rallies from November 10 to December 10. The highest activity of Facebook pages was observed in a period between November 14 and November 25 that relatively decreased later.

The chart below provides a table of activity of the Facebook page “Shame Corridor,” showing that its activity reached a peak on November 14-17.



As shown on the chart comparing the November-December activities of “Shame Corridor,” in November, the page activity figures doubled compared to October proving that this pro-government page starts active communication in the situations, when the government faces a crisis.

In most cases, we have observed similar dynamics in the activities of other Facebook pages identified through the monitoring.

