

# HATE SPEECH





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Author:

TAMAR KINTSURASHVILI

Researcher:

TINA GOGOLADZE

Data processing:

MARIAM TSUTSKIRIDZE

Monitoring by

TAMAR GAGNIASHVILI, SOPHO GOGADZE, KHATIA LOMIDZE  
ROMAN BAINBURASHVILI, MARIAM GELASHVILI

Designed by

BESIK DANELIA, IBDESIGN

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The MDF conducted similar studies in 2016 and 2014–2015. The study was carried out in partnership with the UN Association of Georgia within USAID’s “Promoting Integration, Tolerance and Awareness Program.”

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# INTRODUCTION |

In partnership with the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG) and with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Media Development Foundation (MDF) participates in the implementation of the Promoting Integration, Tolerance and Awareness (PITA) Program. Within the framework of the program, Media Development Foundation (MDF) conducts media monitoring with the aim to reveal hate speech and its sources in media and public discourse.

The present report covers the period from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017. The subjects of monitoring were media outlets as well as other sources – politicians, clergy, civil organizations and representatives of society.

The first part of the report provides key findings and methodology of the study, overview of hate speech regulations. The second part of the report presents total quantitative data by types of hate speech, while the third part discusses sources of hate speech and messages. The final part provides profiles of main sources of hate speech.

# | METHODOLOGY

The subjects of monitoring were selected both from mainstream and tabloid media. In total, 17 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; Mtavari<sup>1</sup>); Rustavi 2 (Kurieri; P.S.); Imedi (Qronika; Imedis Kvira); Maestro (Mtavari Tema).
- **Talk-shows on five TV channels:** Georgian Public Broadcaster (Kviris Interviu<sup>2</sup>) Rustavi 2 (Archevani); Imedi (Amomrchevlis Pirispir;<sup>3</sup> Pirispi<sup>4</sup>); Obieqtivi (Ghamis Studia; Okros Kveta<sup>5</sup>); Kavkasia (Barieri; Spektri).
- **Seven online media outlets:** Sakinformi, Netgazeti, Interpressnews, Georgia and the World, PIA, Kviris Palitra, Marshalpress.
- **Four newspapers:** Rezonansi, Prime-Time, Asaval-Dasavali, Alia.

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

<sup>1</sup> The program was taken off the air in February 2017, upon the decision of the Board of Trustees of the Georgian Public Broadcaster.  
<sup>2</sup> Beginning on 10 November, the monitoring included a new talk show of the Public Broadcaster, Kviris Interviu.  
<sup>3</sup> From 5 September to 20 October, the monitoring included a pre-election program on Imedi TV, Amomrchevlis Pirispir.  
<sup>4</sup> Beginning on 31 October, the monitoring included a new talk show on Imedi TV, Pirispir.  
<sup>5</sup> Beginning on 1 April, the monitoring included a new talk show on TV Obieqtivi, Okros Kveta.

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# KEY FINDINGS |

Monitoring revealed following trends:

- The total of 1,926 discriminatory comments were detected during the monitoring period (1 January 2017 – 31 December 2017). The largest share of these comments accounted for xenophobia (49,1%), which was followed by homophobia (38%), discrimination on the ground of religion (7.3%), hate speech on various grounds (4.5%), racism (1%) and one instance of discrimination on the ground of geographic location (0.1%).
- Compared to the previous year, the increase was observed in almost all types of discrimination; however the sharpest increase was seen in xenophobic comments that was mainly caused by the rise of anti-migrant attitudes (275). Such comments are also reflected in the category of religious discrimination (35), which adds up to the total of 310 comments against migrants; this increase in 2017 may be attributed to the stepped up activity of ultra-nationalist groups and an anti-migrant campaign.
- Compared to the previous year, the increase was also observed in Turkophobic (2017 – 274; 2016 – 148) and Armenophobic comments (2017 – 58; 2016 – 26).
- Turkophobic comments (274) were dominated by the opinions that Turkey carries out its expansion in Georgia (121) and that Turkey is not a strategic partner but a historical enemy (46). In parallel, separate respondents maintained that Turkey, like Russia, should also be regarded as an occupant (29), therewith shifting the emphasis from modern occupation by Russia onto a historic occupation by Ottoman Empire and pursuing the aim of reopening wounds of historical trauma.
- Co-religious Russia was pitched against Muslim Turkey as a guarantor of Georgia's security (17). Instances were observed of a conspiracy theory about the Kars Treaty being entertained in this context (8).
- Almost 65% of the total 140 instances of religious discrimination accounted for Islamophobia (90), followed by Jehovah's Witnesses (29 comments) and other confessions. There was one anti-Semitic comment revealed during the monitoring.
- Out of 20 racist comments, the majority was made by media (9).
- In 2017 one instance of discrimination on the ground of geographic location was made.
- The highest number of hate speech comments were made by representatives of media (573) and society (559) and they were equally distinguished for intolerance. These were followed by politicians (472) who

lagged just a little behind the above mentioned two categories. Various civil organizations made a relatively less hate speech comments (279) perhaps because of their limited access to mainstream media. The lowest number of hate speech comments in the monitored media outlets were made by the clergy (44).

- The use of hate speech towards various groups was most frequently observed in six media outlets, among which Georgia and the World, a pro-Kremlin online outlet, was in the lead by the number of such comments (198). It was followed by ethno-nationalistic newspaper Asaval-Dasavali (141); TV Obieqtivi (74) which is closely linked to the Alliance of Patriots and pursues an ethno-nationalistic as well as pro-Kremlin editorial policy; a pro-Kremlin news agency Sakinformi (66); ethno-nationalistic newspaper Alia (46); and a pro-government online outlet Marshalpress (16).
- There were identified 10 political parties which most frequently used hate speech, namely: pro-Russian political parties – the Alliance of Patriots (132), United Democratic Movement (57), Free Georgia (26) and Georgian Troup (20), Tamaz Metchiauri for United Georgia (19), Leftist Alliance (11); Ethno-nationalist unions – Erovnulebi (Nationals) Movement (73), Our Motherland (18), and Georgian Idea (17). The list of ten also includes the ruling party Georgian Dream (45).
- Five civil organizations were identified which most frequently made hate speech comments in the monitored media outlets. These organizations were the Georgian March (111), the People's Assembly (28), the Union of Human Rights Defenders (24), the Society of Defenders of Child's Rights (18), the Center of Islamic Researches of the Caucasus (14).
- Society's messages were identical to those of media and politicians and most frequent were xenophobic. The highest number of hate speech comments was made by viewers of Obieqtivi TV (45) through phone-ins.

# 1. HATE SPEECH REGULATIONS AND SELF-REGULATION PRACTICE

**REGULATIONS.** According to the recommendation adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 1997, the term “hate speech” shall be understood as covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred on the ground of intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin.

Georgian legislation does not criminalize hate speech except for those cases, when it creates a threat of immediate, irreversible and apparent violence. Programme restrictions concerning hate speech are imposed only on broadcast media. According to Article 56.3 of the Law of Georgia on Broadcasting.

**“Broadcasting of programmes intended to abuse or discriminate against any person or group on the basis of disability, ethnic origin, religion, opinion, gender, sexual orientation or on the basis of any other feature or status, or which are intended to highlight this feature or status, are prohibited, except when this is necessary due to the content of a programme and when it is targeted to illustrate existing hatred”.**

Standards restricting hate speech are also set out in the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters, the Code of Conduct of the Georgian Public Broadcaster and the Charter of Journalistic Ethics. The Code of Conduct for Broadcasters has been adopted by the Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC) as a normative act. Pursuant to the code, self-regulatory mechanism (commission and an appeal body) has been created in the broadcasters since 2009 to deal with violations. According to the CoE report, the effectiveness of the self-regulatory mechanisms is hampered by the different definition of “affected party” among different broadcasters when NGOs and representative of the certain groups are deprived of the right to lodge a complaint.

## THE PRACTICE OF SELF-REGULATION

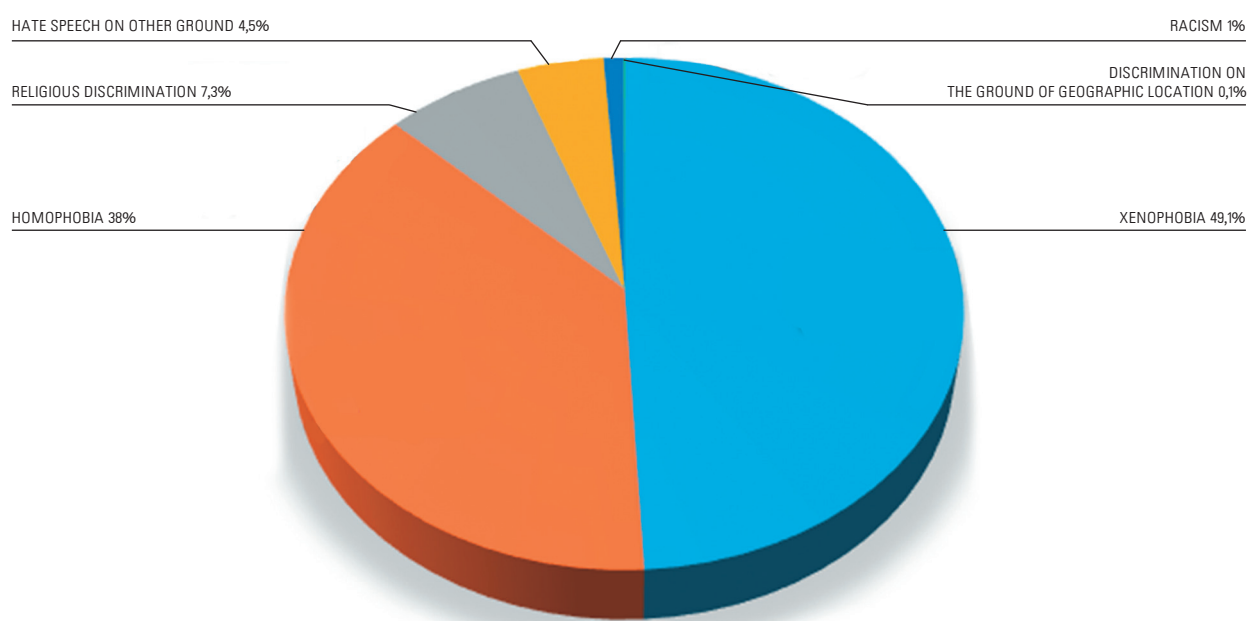
In 2017, the Media Development Foundation (MDF) and member organizations of the civic platform “No To Phobia!” filed three complaints with self-regulatory bodies. Two of the complaints concerned xenophobia while the remaining one complaint concerned homophobia.

TYPOLGY	MEDIA OUTLET	DISPUTED MATERIAL	DECISION
Xenophobia	News agency PIA	“Does Georgia face a threat of Iranization? – alarming statistics”	The Charter of Journalistic Ethics ruled that PIA violated Principle 1 (Accuracy) and Principle 7 (Non-discrimination).
Xenophobia	Rezonansi newspaper	“Arabs, Indians and Turks distribute Georgian lands among them”	The Charter of Journalistic Ethics ruled that Rezonansi violated Principle 1 (Accuracy), Principle 3 (Reliability of sources) and Principle 7 (Non-discrimination).
Homophobia	Maestro TV company	Homophobic comment of the presenter of the news program “Akhali Ambebi on Maestro”	The self-regulatory body of Maestro and the Georgian National Communications Commission did not qualify the complainants as “interested parties” and therefore, did not consider the complaint.

## 2. TOTAL QUANTITATIVE DATA |

The total of 1,926 discriminatory comments were detected during the monitoring period (1 January 2017 – 31 December 2017). The largest share of these comments accounted for xenophobia (49,1%), which was followed by homophobia (38%), discrimination on the ground of religion (7.3%), hate speech on various grounds (4.5%), racism (1%) and one instance of discrimination on the ground of geographic location (0.1%).

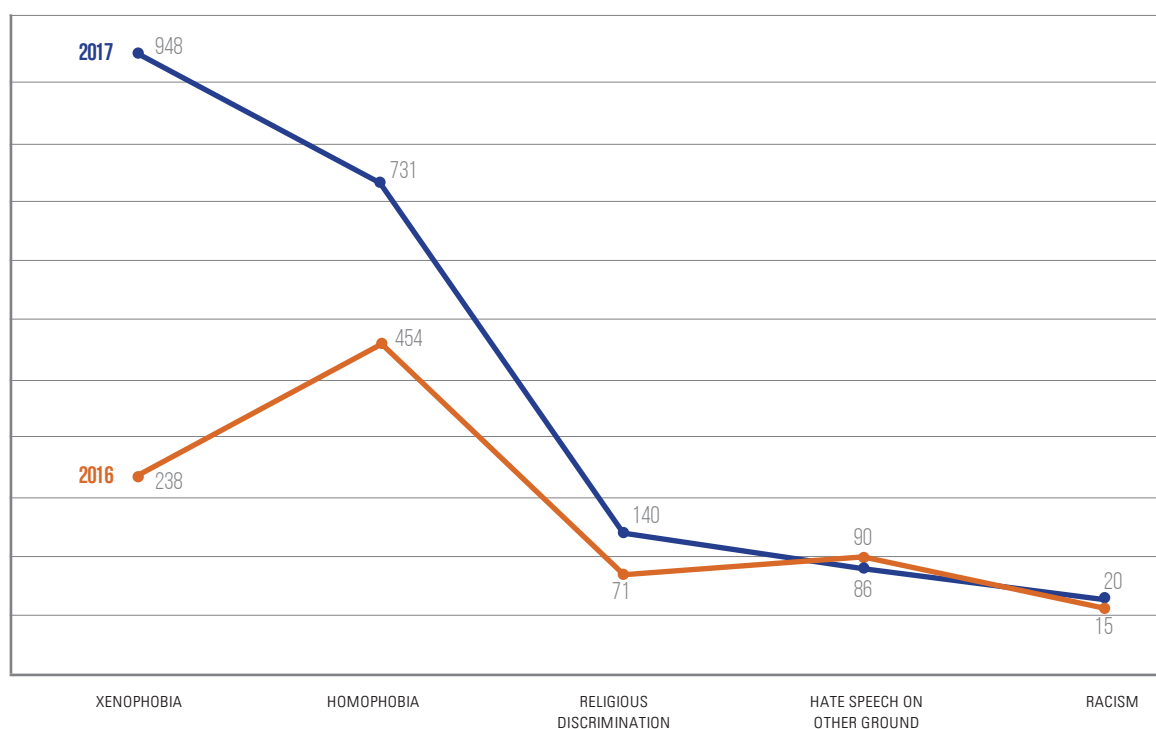
FIGURE 1. TYPOLOGY OF HATE SPEECH



	XENOPHOBIA	HOMOPHOBIA	RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION	HATE SPEECH ON OTHER GROUND	RACISM	DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUND OF GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION
Media	246	255	52	10	9	1
Politicians	268	153	21	24	5	
Society	303	172	38	42	4	
Civil organizations	122	127	18	10	2	
Clergy	9	24	11			
	948	731	140	86	20	1

As Figure 2 shows, compared to the previous year, the increase was observed in almost all types of discrimination; however the sharpest increase was seen in xenophobic and homophobic comments. The increase in xenophobic comments was mainly caused by the rise of anti-migrant attitudes (275). Such comments are also reflected in the category of religious discrimination (35), which adds up to the total of 310 comments against migrants; this increase in 2017 may be attributed to the stepped up activity of ultra-nationalist groups and an anti-migrant campaign.

FIGURE 2. TYPOLOGY OF HATE SPEECH IN 2016 AND 2017

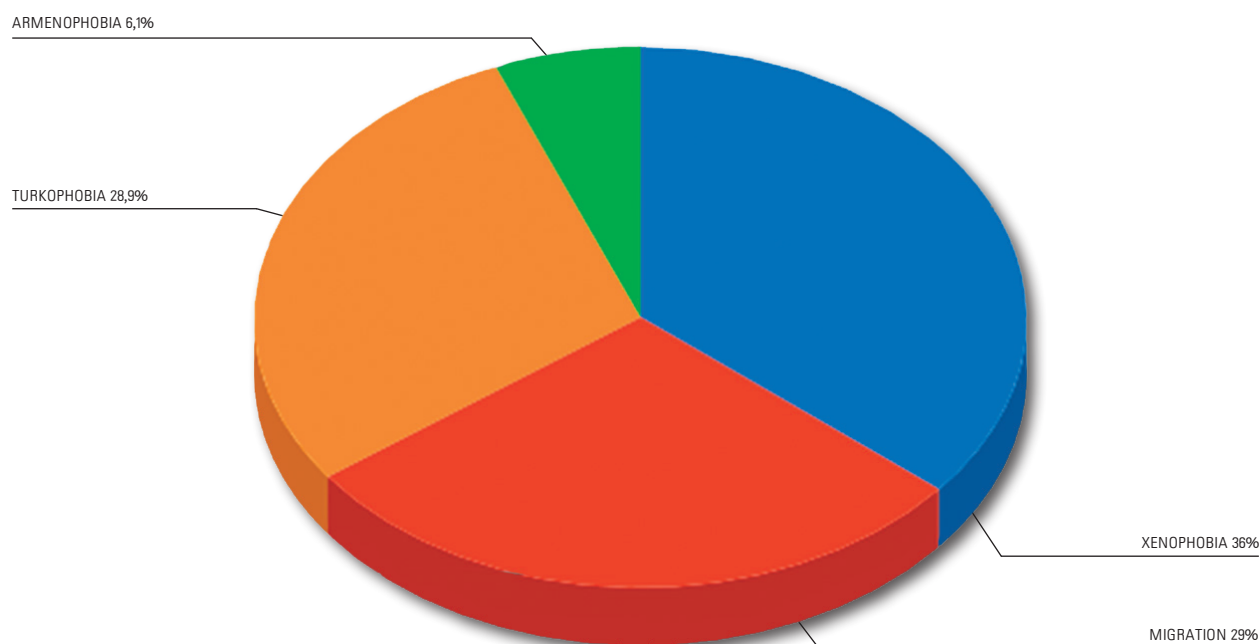


	2017	2016
Xenophobia	948	238
Homophobia	731	454
Religious discrimination	138	71
Hate speech on other grounds	86	90
Racism	20	15

## 2.1. XENOPHOBIA

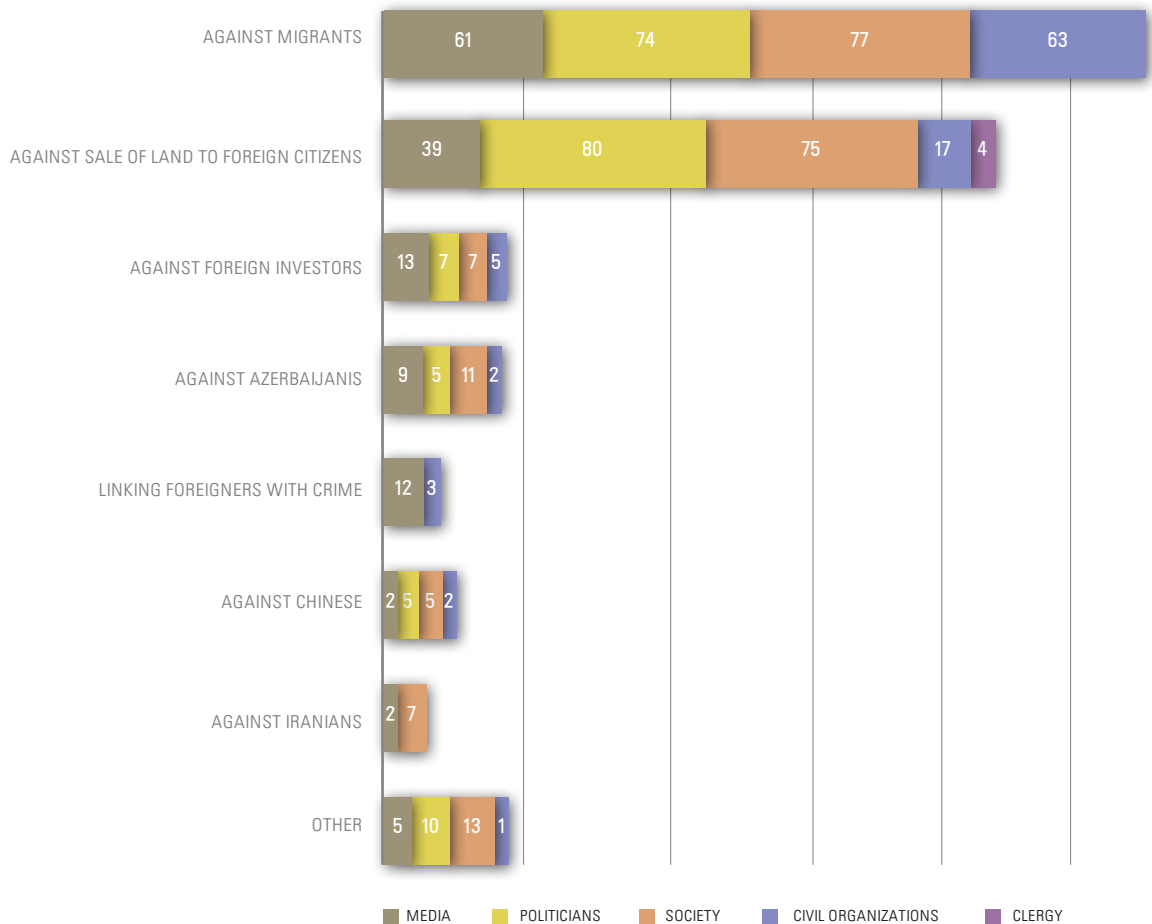
The largest share of xenophobic comments targeted ethnic and national groups (341); this was followed, in almost equal amounts, by anti-migrant (275) and anti-Turkish (274) comments. Compared to the previous year, the increase was also observed in Turkophobic (2017 – 274; 2016 – 148) and Armenophobic comments (2017 – 58; 2016 – 26).

FIGURE 3. TYPOLOGY OF XENOPHOBIA



Xenophobic comments against various groups were dominated by an allegation that migrants were a threat to the country (275). Attitudes against the sale of land to foreign citizens were also frequently expressed (215). These were followed by comments against foreign investors (32) and Azerbaijanis (27) as well as comments associating foreigners with crime (15) and comments against Chinese (14) and Iranians (9).

FIGURE 4. XENOPHOBIC MESSAGES

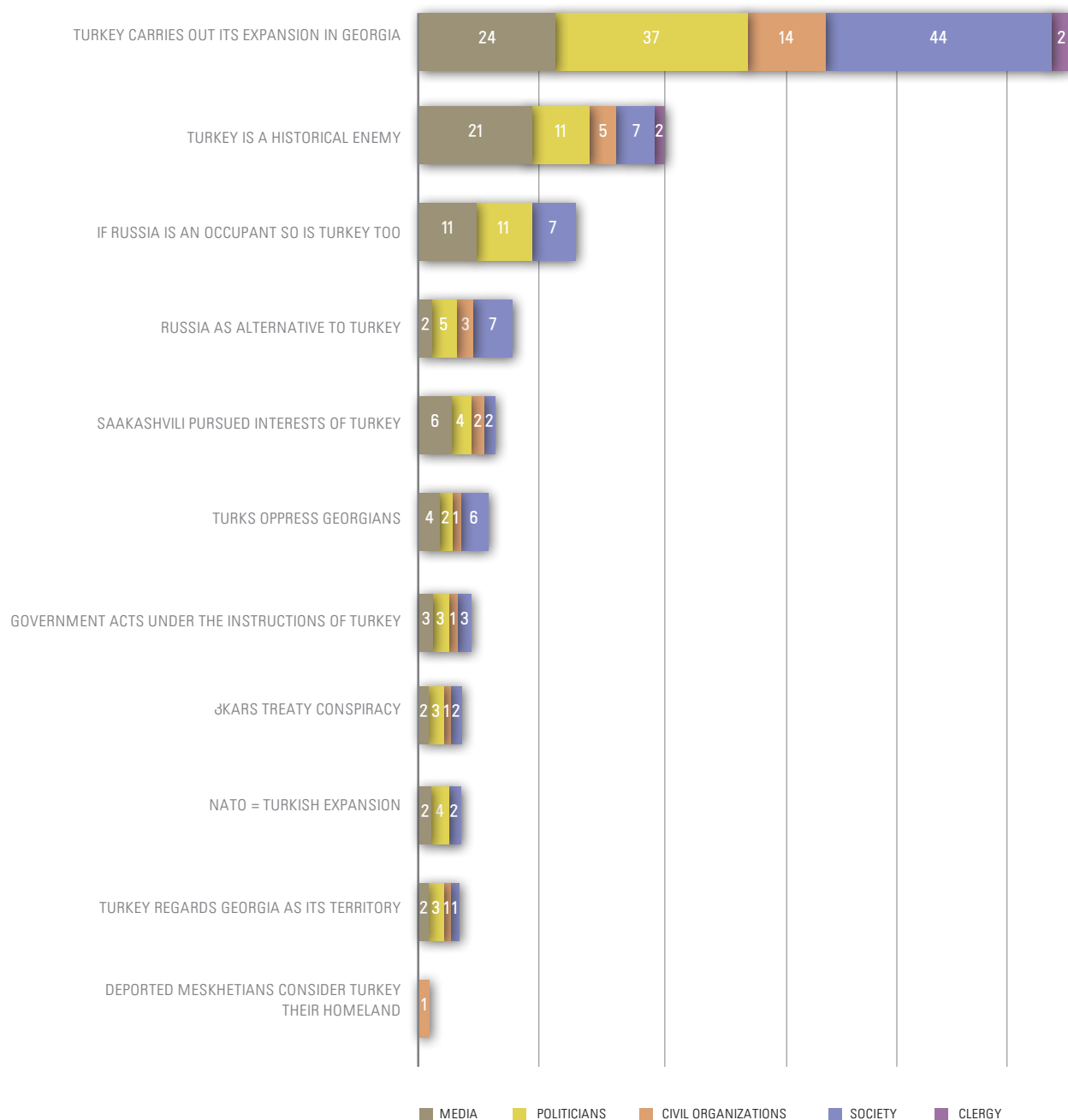


In the category of xenophobia, the second to the comments against migrants was Turkophobic comments (274) dominated by the opinions that Turkey carries out its expansion in Georgia (121) and that Turkey is not a strategic partner but a historical enemy (46). In parallel, separate respondents maintained that Turkey, like Russia, should also be regarded as an occupant (29), therewith shifting the emphasis from modern occupation by Russia onto a historic occupation by Ottoman Empire and pursuing the aim of reopening wounds of historical trauma. Co-religious Russia was pitched against Muslim Turkey as a guarantor of Georgia's security (17). Instances were observed of a conspiracy theory about the Kars Treaty being entertained in this context (8). According to this conspiracy, the Treaty of Kars expires in 2021<sup>6</sup> and thereafter Russia can no longer be a guarantor of Georgia's territorial integrity and Turkey will occupy Adjara. Statements were also made that the government of Mikheil Saakashvili pursued interests of Turkey (14) while the government of the Georgian Dream obeyed the instructions of Turkey (10).

<sup>6</sup> The Treaty of Kars was signed between Turkey, on one side, and Armenian, Azerbaijan and Georgian SSR, on the other, on 13 October 1921 in Kars. According to the treaty, Turkey transferred a part of Adjara, including Batumi, as well as Gyumri, to the Soviet Union, in exchange for Kars, Artvin and Ardahan.  
<http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/disinformation-alleged-opening-nato-military-base-poti-and-treaty-kars>



FIGURE 5. TURKOPHOBIC MESSAGES

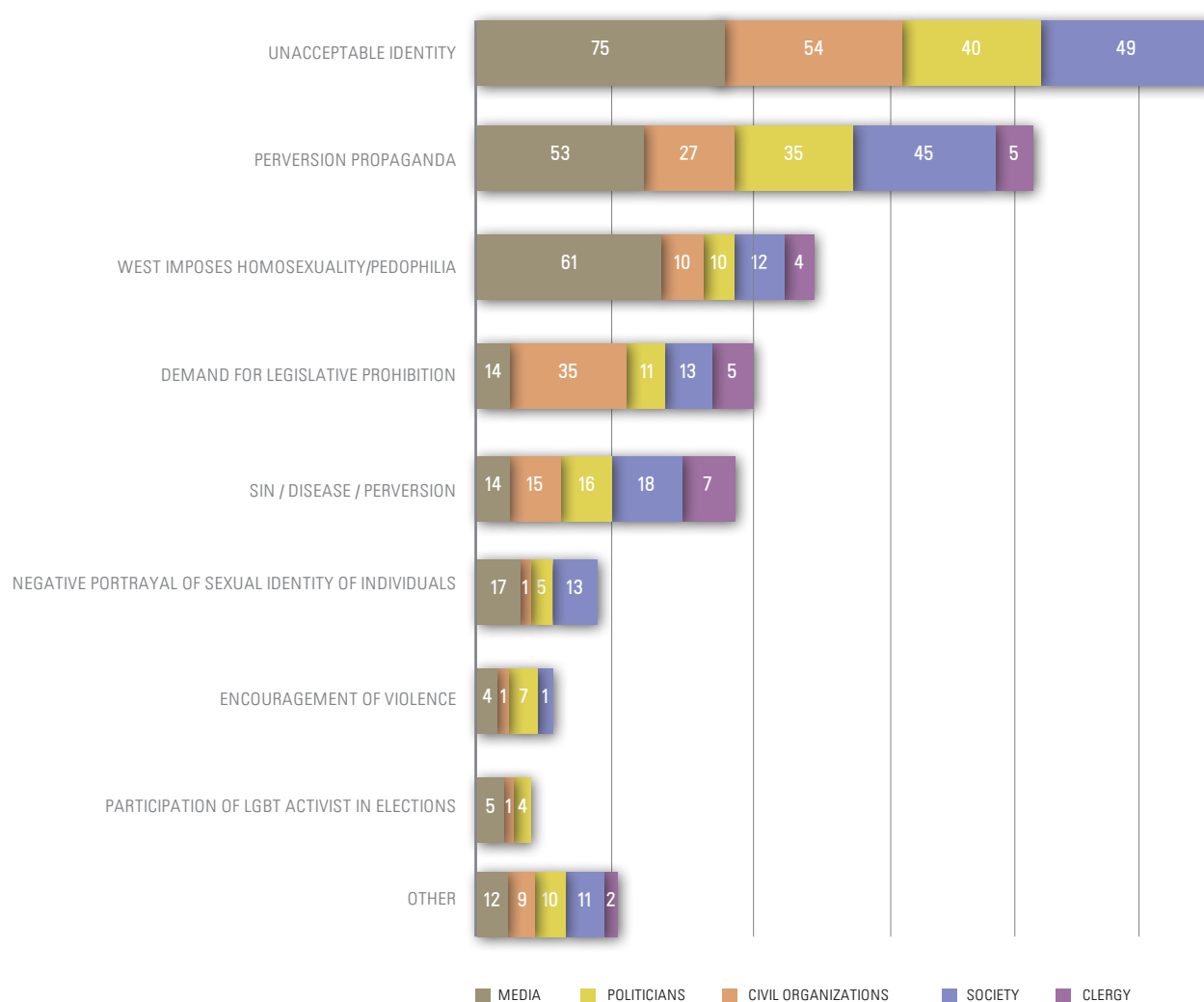


A large share of Armenophobic comments (58) involved referrals to Armenian identity in a negative context, including most frequently in relation to Georgia's former President Mikheil Saakashvili (calling him Saakov in order to have his surname sound Armenian). Other comments promoted an allegation that the neighboring country was driven by the idea of the revival of Greater Armenia and seizure of Georgian territories.

## 2.2. HOMOPHOBIA

A large share of total homophobic messages (731) accounted for unacceptability of LGBT identity (218). This was followed by comments portraying the freedom of expression of LGBT community or the advocacy for their rights as propaganda of propaganda (165). This category includes extremely negative evaluations of the solidarity act of Guram Kashia, the vice-captain of national football team of Georgia and a center-back for Vitesse Arnhem, when he wore an armband in support of LGBT community in a match against Heracles Almelo in October 2017. Dominating messages were: the West imposes homosexuality (97), homosexuality and same-sex marriage must be banned under the legislation (78), homosexual relations are sin, perversion and disease (70). Sexual identity of separate individuals (36) and the Republican Party's nomination of an LGBT representative as a candidate for local elections (10) were discussed in a negative context. The violence against LGBT community was encouraged in 13 instances.

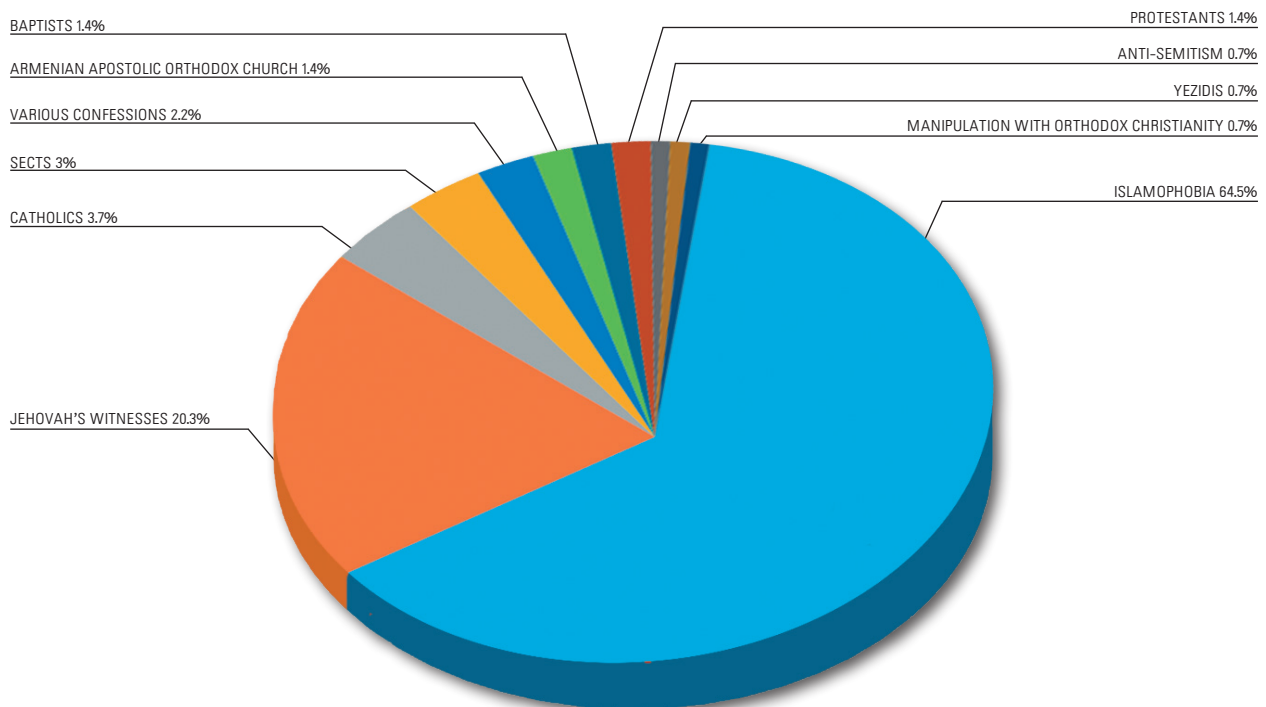
FIGURE 6. HOMOPHOBIC MESSAGES



### 2.3. DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUND OF RELIGION

Almost 65% of the total 140 instances of religious discrimination accounted for Islamophobia (90) which, as noted above, includes 35 comments against Muslim migrants. This is followed by Jehovah's Witnesses (29 comments), Catholics (5), sects, in general (5), various confessions (3), the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church (2), Baptists (2) and Protestants (2). There was one anti-Semitic comment, one comment against Yezidis and one instance of manipulating the Orthodox Christian religion.

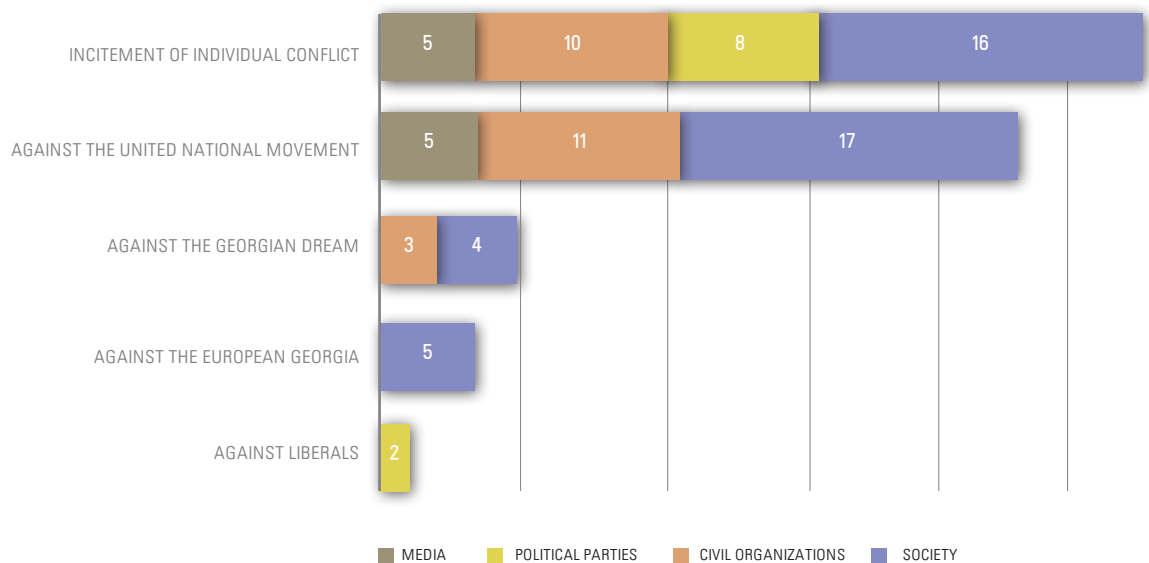
FIGURE 7. TYPOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION



### 2.4. HATE SPEECH ON VARIOUS GROUNDS

There were 86 comments containing hate speech on various grounds. The largest share of them accounted for comments inciting individual conflict and encouraging violence (39); this was followed by statements, containing hate speech and often calls for violence, against the United National Movement (33), against the Georgian Dream (7), against the European Georgia (5) and liberals (2).

FIGURE 8. HATE SPEECH ON VARIOUS GROUNDS



## 2.5. RACISM

Out of 20 racist comments, the majority was made by media (9), then by politicians (5), society (4) and civil organizations (2).

## 2.6. DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUND OF GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

One case of discrimination on the ground of geographic location concerned the geographic origin of Tbilisi Mayor, when the presenter of the Rustavi 2 program P.S. made the following statement:

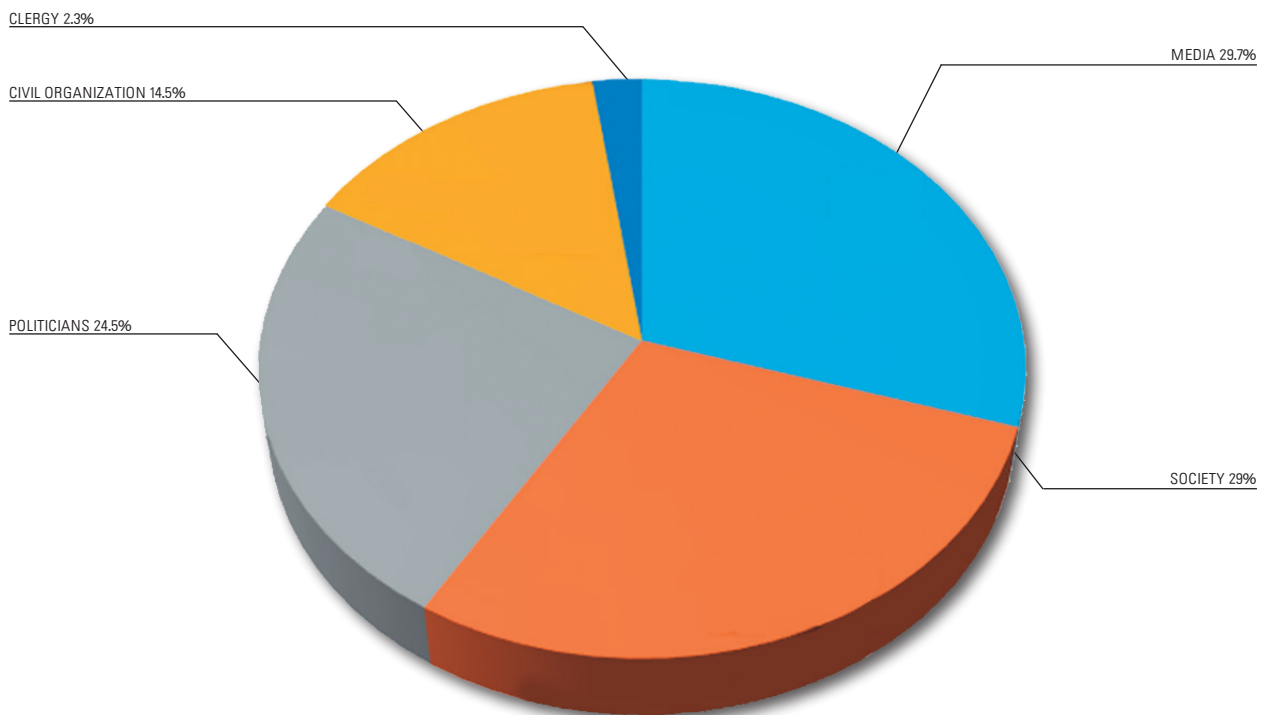
**GIORGIGABUNIA, PRESENTER:** “Perhaps, Davit Narmania forgot that he was elected as the mayor of the capital city and thinks that he is still somewhere in a village where pit latrines are arranged over a hole in the ground without a sewer system.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Statement of Media Development Foundation on P.S. Program, 13 February 2017. [http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view\\_statements/339/](http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view_statements/339/)

### 3. SOURCES AND TYPOLOGY OF HATE SPEECH

As Figure 9 shows, the highest number of hate speech comments were made by representatives of media (573) and society (559) and they were equally distinguished for intolerance. These were followed by politicians (472) who lagged just a little behind the abovementioned two categories. Various civil organizations made a relatively less hate speech comments (279) perhaps because of their limited access to mainstream media. The lowest number of hate speech comments in the monitored media outlets were made by the clergy (44).

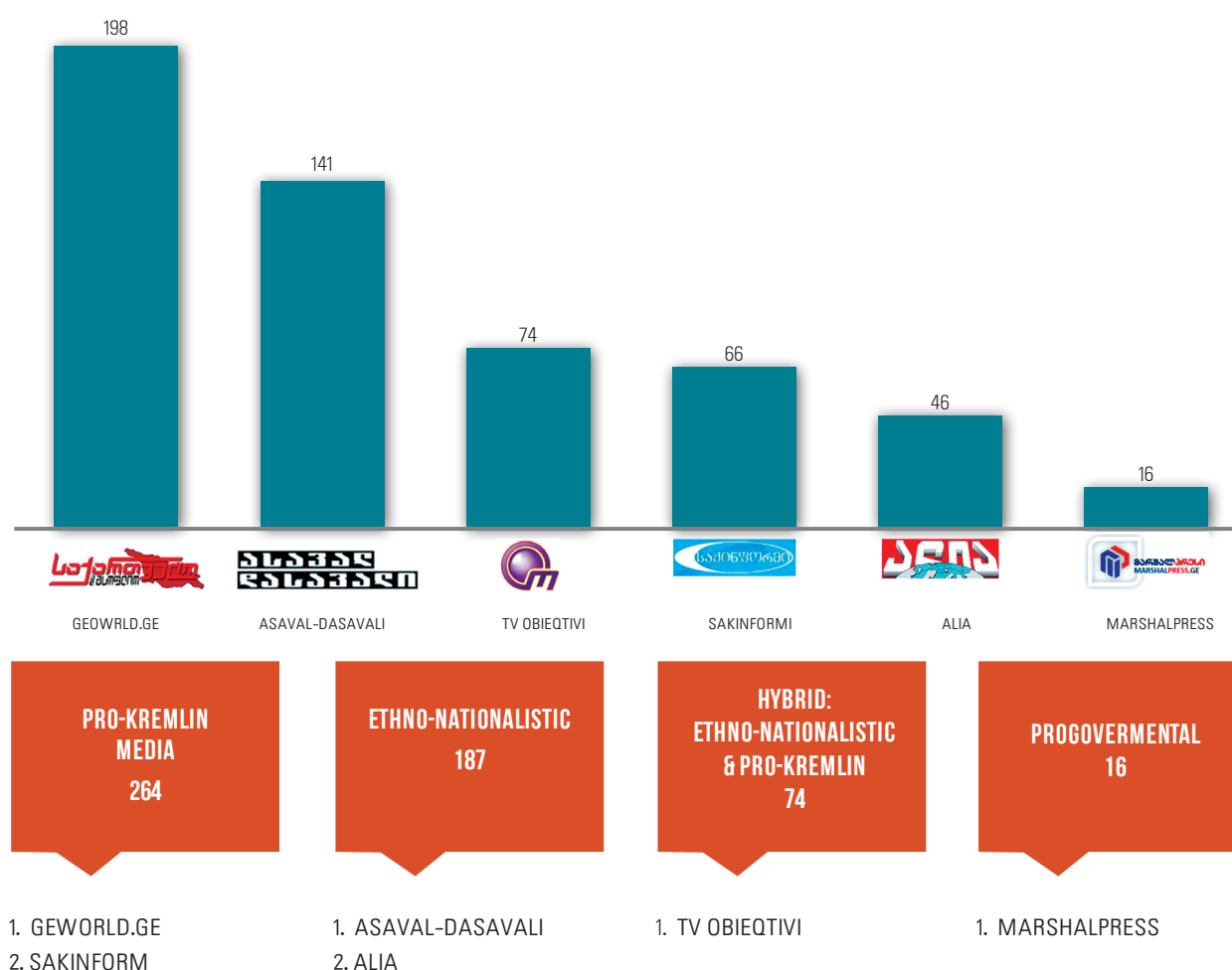
FIGURE 9. SOURCES OF HATE SPEECH.



### 3.1. MEDIA

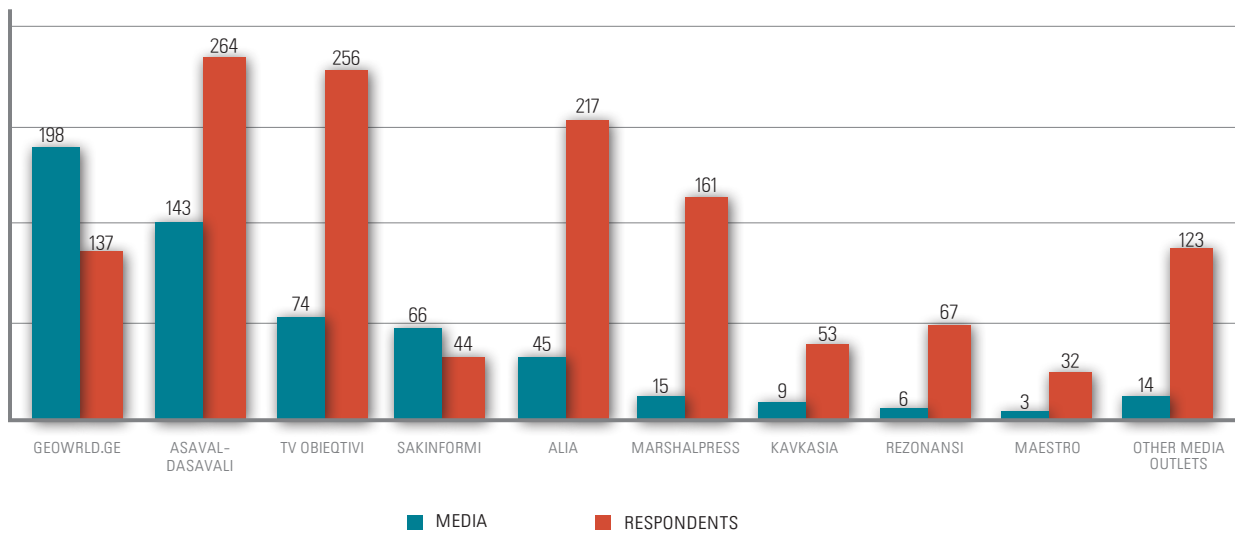
The use of hate speech towards various groups was most frequently observed in six media outlets, among which Georgia and the World, a pro-Kremlin online outlet, was in the lead by the number of such comments (198). It was followed by ethno-nationalistic newspaper Asaval-Dasavali (141); TV Obieqtivi (74) which is closely linked to the Alliance of Patriots and pursues an ethno-nationalistic as well as pro-Kremlin editorial policy; a pro-Kremlin news agency Sakinformi (66); ethno-nationalistic newspaper Alia (46); and a pro-government online outlet Marshalpress (16).

FIGURE 10. MEDIA SOURCES OF HATE SPEECH (SIX MEDIA OUTLETS)



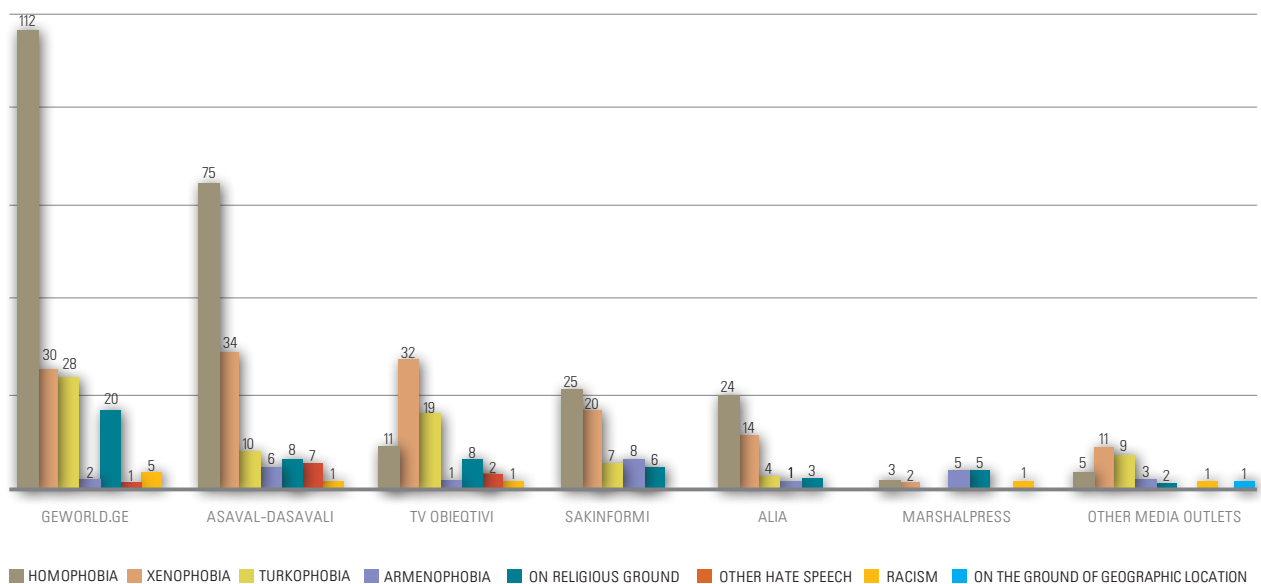
As the Figure 11 shows, separate media outlets, which distinguished themselves for the use of hate speech, selected such respondents who also used the same language. In some of these media outlets (Asaval-Dasavali newspaper – 264, TV Obieqtivi – 256, Alia newspaper – 217, news agency Marshalpress – 161), the number of hate speech comments made by respondents outnumbered similar editorial comments, which speaks about the editorial policy of these media outlets.

FIGURE 11. HATE SPEECH BY MEDIA OUTLETS AND THEIR RESPONDENTS



Hate speech used by media was dominated by homophobic comments (255), which was followed by xenophobic comments (246) which included Turkophobia (77) and Armenophobia (26). Religious discriminatory made by media (52) was dominated by Islamophobia (33). In 2017, nine racist comments were made by representatives of the monitored media outlets.

FIGURE 12. TYPOLOGY OF HATE SPEECH BY MEDIA OUTLETS



**HOMOPHOBIA.** Homophobia (255) prevailed in hate speech comments made by monitored media outlets. The leader in making such comments (112) was the online outlet Georgia and the World (Geworld.ge). This was followed by Asaval-Dasavali newspaper (75), online news agency Sakinformi (25), Alia newspaper (24) and TV Obieqtivi (11).

The highest share of the comments made by Georgia and the World accounted for allegations (46) about the West imposing homosexuality, perversion, and pedophilia. Such allegations were detected in other media outlets too:

**ARNO KHIDIRBEGISHVILI, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** “... NATO is not only a military alliance and M-240 machine guns which, last week, replaced Kalashnikov’s machine guns in the Georgian army, but also a ‘system of values’... which accepts that the wife of Luxembourg’s gay prime minister poses for photos with wives of leaders of NATO member states; ... Is this ‘system of values’ appropriate for us?! Does it correspond to traditions of the Caucasus, a Georgian system of values? No, it does not”... (Sakinformi, 5 June).

**NINO RATISHVILI, PRESENTER:** “Yes, it is over there [in Norway]. Unfortunately, there people should choose their sex themselves, not the God.” (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 3 March).

Georgia and the World hailed the Soviet system where a problem of homosexuality “did not exist” and demanded the criminalization of homosexuality, while Asaval-Dasavali newspaper praised Adolf Hitler for his actions against homosexuals and drug addicts, thereby encouraging violence:

**LUKA MAISURADZE, JOURNALIST:** “During 60 years of the Soviet Union’s existence, from 1922 to 1991, all were equal in the country, there were no beggars, everyone had jobs, and many never even heard about filth like homosexuality and other immorality... We do not have a law that envisages a criminal prosecution of pederasts. There is a need to issue a law that will impose a criminal liability for pederasty” (Georgia and the World, 9 March).

**DITO CHUBINIDZE, JOURNALIST:** “Absolutely all drug addicts were arrested and put on board a ship along with pederasts in the North German seas... absolutely all vessels with drug addicts, pederasts and lesbians on board were sunk. This is how the Führer cleaned Germany from the depraved people and drug addicts that enabled Hitler to create the strongest army from the Aryan race, which forced entire Europe to kneel down and which successfully struggled against the rest of the world during six years” (Asaval-Dasavali, June 19-25).

Neither the Georgian Public Broadcaster nor Rustavi 2 made any homophobic comments; however, a member of the Board of Trustees of the former and a presenter of the latter made homophobic comments in social media, which were reprinted by tabloid media:

**GIORGI IAKOBASHVILI, MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE GEORGIAN PUBLIC BROADCASTER:** “A 30-year-old man [Guram Kashia<sup>8</sup>] woke up one fine day and decided to wear an LGBT rainbow armband... Perhaps, someone else decided for him and threatened him with fine and disqualification [if he refuses to wear the armband]?... The fact is apparent – Kashia came under pressure from LGBT in Holland and from Sadgobelashvili and people of his ilk in Georgia... Watch the opening of 1936 Olympic Games and you will see how thousands of marching athletes and gazing at Fascists perform a Nazi salute” (Marshalpress, 2 November).

<sup>8</sup> The vice-captain of national football team of Georgia and a center-back for Vitesse Arnhem, Guram Kashia, wore an armband in support of LGBT community in a match against Heracles Almelo in October 2017; this gesture caused extremely negative reaction in Georgia.



**NANUKA ZHORZHOLIANI, JOURNALIST:** “I said that I would not be happy if my child were a gay.” (Alia, 30 October).

**XENOPHOBIA.** Much like homophobia, xenophobia also prevailed in the comments of media (246) with anti-migrant attitudes accounting for the highest share (61) amongst:

**GIORGI GIGAUURI, JOURNALIST:** “If even EU member states are against this destructive immigration policy, why are we grandstanding by opening our door wide to every dog and pig of any origin?!!” (Asaval-Dasavali, 11-17 September).

**TITLE:** “Nowadays Tbilisi, which they burned down six times, is a place where they can stroll leisurely without any need to ‘threaten’ us” – Nana Gagua (Marshallpress, 19 August).

Migrants were often associated with criminals:

**NINO SAMKHARADZE, JOURNALIST:** “It is a depressing reality that troublesome aliens freely roam around and hardly a day passes without learning that an Arab, Iranian or Turk raped an underage girl and even more so, they go after boys to abuse them too” (Alia, 3-9 July).

The share of statements against the sale of land to foreigners and against foreign investors was high in almost all media outlets:

**TITLE:** “Within several years, foreigners will become owners of Georgian lands!” (Rezonansi, 10 January);  
**Title:** “Arabs, Indians, Iranians and Turks are distributing Georgian lands among themselves” (Rezonansi, 17 May).

**GIVI SOMKIAHSVILI, AUTHOR:** “...those – selling Georgian land to them and giving them Georgian citizenship, settling them with families in Georgia forever – are traitors. Shah Abbas tried expulsion of Georgians from Georgia and insemination with the aliens (Geworld.ge, 23 June).

**BONDO MDZINARISHVILI, PRESENTER:** “Those people [members of the Georgian March] who have just marched along the Aghmashenebeli Avenue to voice their protest against those foreigners who claim to be investors and roam around in Georgia... They need to wear clean dress at least and now this dirty people walking in the streets, how can we call them investors?!” (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 26 July).

Apart from foreign migrants, xenophobic statements were also made against Georgian citizens of Azerbaijani origin:

**NINO RATISHVILI, PRESENTER:** “It is the shame when some call it fascism when I express discontent about the fact that the second most common surname in Georgia is Mamedov. I am not against Mamedovs, but I would be happy if the second common surname in Georgia were a Georgian surname” (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 14 July).

**TURKOPHOBIA.** Turkophobia was most frequently applied by Georgia and the World (28), Obieqtivi (19) and Asaval-Dasavali (10), placing the emphasis on historical animosity, Turkish expansion and pitching the historical occupation by the Ottoman Empire against the current occupation by Russia, thereby trying to reopen wounds of historical trauma. Moreover, on certain occasions, attempts were made to underline the superiority of co-religious Russia over the Muslim Turkey:

**DAVIT MKHEIDZE, AUTHOR:** “So Russia is an occupant and Turkey is a friend? Those whose ears can hear through history will hear the screams of the beautiful Georgian girls and boys driven to the slave market of Istanbul by Turkish Janissaries during three centuries. According to the recent researches of historians, for three centuries the number of Georgians who died on the battlefield was way fewer than of those sold to the Istanbul slave market. That’s why I cannot put a sign of equality between modern Turkey and Russia.” (Geworld.ge, 6 September).

**BONDO MDZINARASHVILI, ANCHOR:** “So after 100 years Russia will no longer be an occupant? Now it has been exactly 100 years since Turkey took away these territories.” (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 6 September).

Sakinformi was busy developing a conspiracy theory about the Treaty of Kars, thereby stirring up threat that without Russia Turkey would seize the territory of Adjara:

**ARNO KHIDIRBEGISHVILI:** “Russia will definitely refuse to be a guarantor of Georgia before Turkey as per Treaty of Kars which expires in 2021 and according to this treaty, Adjara will be handed over to Turkey.” (Sakinformi, 15 March).

**ARMENOPHOBIA.** Armenophobic materials were most frequently published in Asaval-Dasavali (9) and Sakinformi (8), where former president of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili was referred to as Saakov (an Armenian version of the surname) thereby using an Armenian identity in a negative context. In other cases, an emphasis was made on unacceptability of the identity and an intention of Armenians to seize Georgia:

**MAMUKA NATSVALADZE, AUTHOR:** “Is it doubtful to recognize the leadership of Georgians in the Georgian-Armenian state stemming from the Armenian ethno-psychology? An Armenian finds it difficult to tolerate the leadership of others, but here he agrees to take a very modest position” (Rezonansi, August 19).

**MAMUKA NATSVALADZE, AUTHOR:** “This [the idea of the revival of Greater Armenia] is nothing else but the idea of seizing Georgian territories and gaining the access to the sea.” (Rezonansi, 27 May).

**BONDO MDZINARISHVILI, PRESENTER:** “Are we going to allow Armenians to return to Abkhazia and reintegrate Abkhazia of Armenians into Georgia?” (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 18 October).

**HATE SPEECH ON VARIOUS GROUNDS.** Hate speech on political ground was mainly used by Asaval-Dasavali:

**GIORGI GIGAUURI, JOURNALIST:** “National [pejorative for United National Movement members/supporters] Georgian is a genetic trash! National Georgian cannot be a patriot (claiming they hate Russia because they are patriots of Georgia!) because persons who exultingly dance on corpses of children torn into pieces by terrorists are villains, rogues and animals and therefore, cannot be patriots!” (Asaval-Dasavali, 10–16 April).

**RACISM.** Racist statements were mainly made in Georgia and the World; separate cases were observed in other media outlets too:

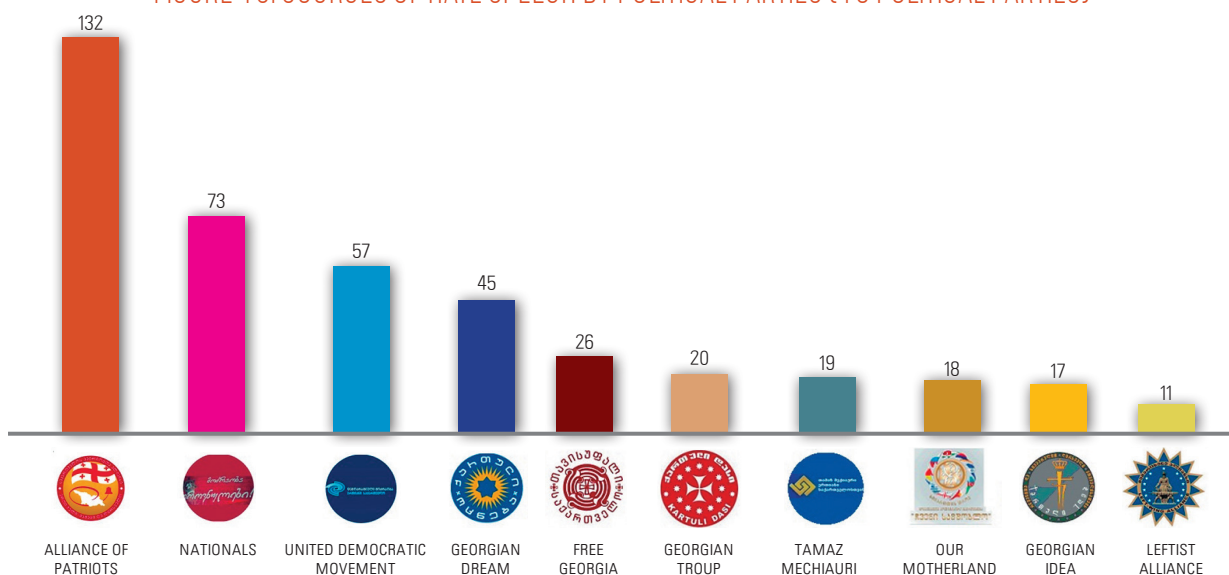
**ACCORDING TO ANDREY ALEKSEEV ARTICLE:** “There is no racial harmony... Despite the dictatorship of tolerance, discussions of the racial war becomes more and more active in Europe. It is not the case that Muslim culture is alien to us, but that we have not yet matured for mutual understanding... Germany is almost occupied by Turkey... The white race will be extinct soon” (Geworld.ge, 21 July).

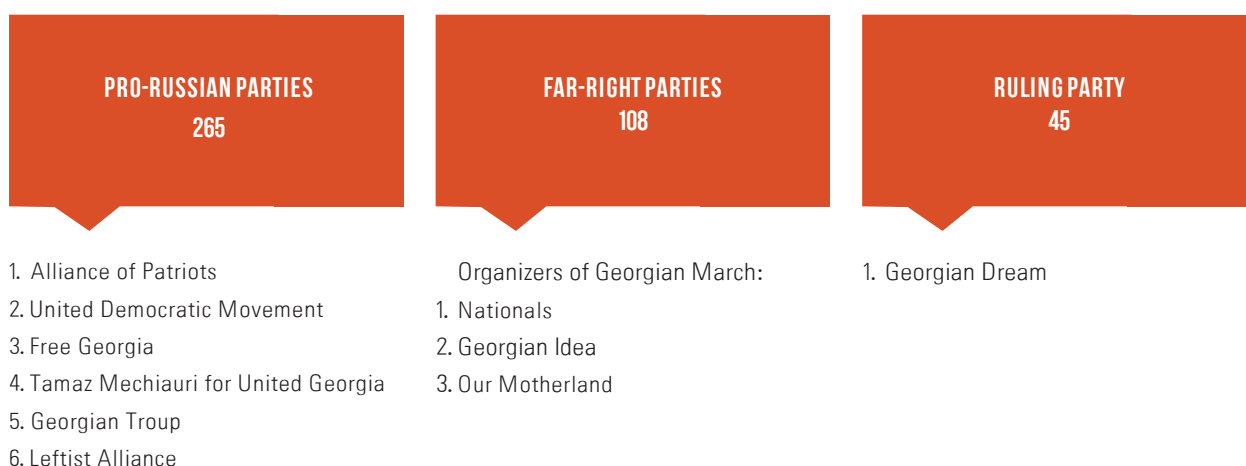
**BONDO MDZINARISHVILI, PRESENTER:** “There are foreigners all over and even more so, what type of foreigners – all black people, not Europeans!!” (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 25 October).

### 3.2. POLITICAL PARTIES

There were identified 10 political parties which most frequently used hate speech. This list was topped by the Alliance of Patriots (132) and followed by the Nationals (73) the leader of which cofounded a far-right movement the Georgian March and which, after the establishment of this movement, was referred to in this study as the Georgian March under the category of civic organizations; the same holds true for Gia Korkotashvili, a representative of the political party Our Motherland (18), who joined the Georgian March. The political party Georgian Idea (17) is also among organizers of the Georgian March. Apart from far-rights this list of 10 also includes pro-Russian political parties such as United Democratic Movement (57), Free Georgia (26) and Georgian Troup (20). The list of ten also includes the ruling party Georgian Dream (45).

FIGURE 13. SOURCES OF HATE SPEECH BY POLITICAL PARTIES (10 POLITICAL PARTIES)

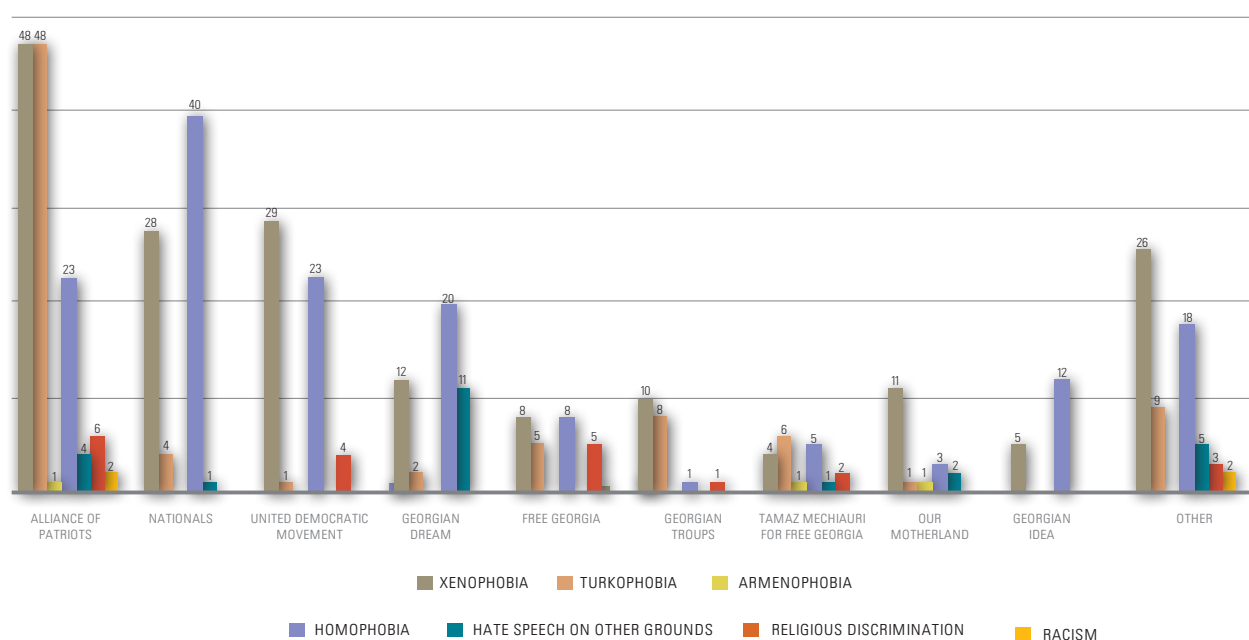




The categorization of political parties into pro-Russian and far right is related to their positioning in public discourse, though messages of their actors, both in terms of hate speech and anti-Western comments, are identical.

The highest number of xenophobic comments were made by politicians (268), including Turkophobic (84) and Armenophobic (3) comments. This was followed by homophobia (153), hate speech towards political opponents (24), religious intolerance (21) with Islamophobia amongst accounting for a large share (14). In 2017, politicians also made six racist statements.

FIGURE 14. TYPOLOGY OF HATE SPEECH BY POLITICAL PARTIES



**XENOPHOBIA.** A large share of xenophobic statements made by political parties concerned migrants and the sale of land to foreigners. In some instances the migration and the sale of land to foreigners were portrayed as a threat of occupation and terrorism and an obligation to accept migrants, which was imposed as a result of visa liberalization:

**IRMA INASHVILI, ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS:** “A very large number of citizens coming from Asian countries buy lands and build villages and the threat of terrorism is very high there.” (Rustavi 2, Kurieri, 15 June).

**ZAKARIA KUTSNASHVILI, GEORGIAN DREAM:** “What do we have to boast about? When 25% of the territory of Georgia is sold and occupied?!” (Marshalpress, 15 June).

**SANDRO BREGADZE, NATIONALS:** “If there are 1.5 million emigrants now, after visa liberalization enters into force there will be one million more, Africans and Arabs will settle in Georgia and worsen our demographic picture and at the end of the day, Georgians will turn into exotic aborigines.” (Kviris Palitra, 6–12 February).

**DIMITRI LORTKIPANIDZE, UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT:** “Why should aliens manufacture products they need on our land in Georgia?.. What is the benefit for Georgia?” (Kavkasia, Barieri, 30 January).

A representative of the ruling party made a xenophobic comment about Leila Mustafaeva, the wife of Azerbaijani journalist Afgan Mukhtarli who was kidnapped from Georgia:

**DITO SAMKHARADZE, GEORGIAN DREAM:** “Today, his wife [Leila Mustafaeva] demands the resignation of the Interior Minister of our country! Tomorrow relatives of his wife will demand the resignation of the Prime Minister and the day after tomorrow, her friends will demand the change of the name of our homeland.” (Marshalpress, 17 July).

**TURKOPHOBIA.** More than half of Turkophobic comments were made by the Alliance of Patriots (48) which succeeded in consolidating voters by means of Turkophobic narrative. This political party promoted the idea that Turkey was not a strategic partner but rather a historical enemy and if Russia was regarded as an occupant Turkey should also be regarded as such, therewith reopening wounds of historical trauma:

**DAVIT TARKHAN-MOURAVI, ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS:** “How it [Turkey] can be a historical friend when in the past 1,000 years turkey invaded Georgia at least 53 times. Do you know what that means?! Every 19 years during 1,000 years, statistically, on the average, once every 19 years, Turkey entered Georgia with war, fire... Over the past 450 years, Georgia’s borders were changed 25 times and today, Tukey has 33% of our territory.” (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 21 December).

**SAMUEL PETROSYAN, THE ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS:** “Russia has not annexed Abkhazia and Tskhinvali; it was Turkey that annexed Georgian lands. If we talk about territorial integrity, we should mention these lands too” (Rustavi 2, P.S., 22 October).

The Alliance of Patriots as well as other political parties, in separate instances, alleged that the cost of Georgia’s integration into NATO would be Turkey’s intervention into Georgia; they also promoted the conspiracy theory about the Treaty of Kars and emphasized an exceptional role of Russia in maintaining the territorial integrity of Georgia:

**GIORGI MAGHLAKELIDZE, ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS:** “NATO for us means the intervention of Turkey’s NATO into our territory; Belgians and Dutch will not be stationed here. This is what was discussed and we see what is going on today.” (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 12 October).

**TAMAZ MECHIAURI, TAMAZ MECHIAURI FOR UNITED GEORGIA:** “Why did not anybody think that Georgia’s accession to NATO will give the green light to Turkey to bring its troops into the country? If one day Turkey brings its troops into Adjara and says that ‘Batumi is our historical city’, how do you think, will either the United States or the European Union drive them out from there? Although it may seem surprising, only the Russian factor will protect us against the Turkish expansion in Adjara!” (Asaval-Dasavali, August 21-27).

**ARMENOPHOBIA.** The total of three Armenophobic statements were made by political parties; two of these statements portrayed Armenian identity in a negative context while the third comment concerned the intentions of Armenians to revive Greater Armenia by invading Georgia:

**GIA KORKOTASHVILI, OUR MOTHERLAND:** “Russia is an aggressor, occupant and beyond this one cannot see Greater Armenia and Ottoman Empire which, if given a chance, will drink our blood!” (Alia, 1-7 May).

**HOMOPHOBIA.** The leader in making homophobic comments was Nationals (40), followed by the Alliance of Patriots (23) and the United Democratic Movement (23). The majority of politicians demanded the prohibition of same sex marriage while a segment of them demanded the deletion from the anti-discrimination law of a provision concerning the discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation:

**SANDRO BREGADZE, NATIONALS:** “Tens of thousands of people will take to the street primarily to ensure that the same sex marriage is never legalized in Georgia.” (Alia, 3-9 April).

**DIMITRI LORTKIPANIDZE, UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT:** “I have been and always will be of the opinion that the terminology of discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientations must be taken out of this law, because it creates the possibility of very damaging interpretations” (Kavkasia, Barieri, 11 January).

Representatives of the ruling Georgian Dream as well as the parliamentary opposition faction of Alliance of Patriots assessed homosexuality as deviation, anomaly and disease:

**ZAZA PAPUASHVILI, GEORGIAN DREAM:** “This [Homosexuality] is an anomaly and deviation for me personally, but I repeat: it does not mean to harass someone, to persecute ....” (Geworld.ge, 15 November).

**DAVID TARKHAN-MOURAVI, ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS:** “Homosexuality and lesbianism is a disease, it is a psychological disorder. Often it represents genetic and psychological disorders in combination, but in any case it is a sickness. This is not a virtue! This is very bad and this affliction needs treatment!” (Obiektivi, Night Studio, 6 November).

The freedom of expression of LGBT community as well as a solidarity action of a footballer Guram Kashia wearing an armband in support of LGBT was assessed as propaganda of homosexuality:

**NINO BURJANADZE, UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT:** “It is the propaganda when a mother or a father of two children says that she/he is of different orientation and this is normal; and it is the propaganda when someone asserts that it is normal when a child has a mother and a mother or a father and a father... Let us abstain from the propaganda of something which is not normal or unacceptable for the society.” (Marshallpress, 31 October).

**ZAZA PAPUASHVILI, GEORGIAN DREAM:** “Should the country be thrown into disarray because of LGBT community? Money is spent on the propaganda of these topics... I don’t care about either a wearer of armband in support of LGBT or his supporters.” (Georgia and the World, 30 October).

**MARIMA JASHI, GEORGIAN DREAM:** “My position is no to violence and no to LGBT propaganda” (Sakinfromi, 8 November).

**RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION.** From the total of 21 cases of religious discrimination, islamophobia accounted for the largest share (14), which also included anti-migrant attitudes. There were separate instances of discrimination against Jehovah’s Witnesses, Catholics and other denominations:

**DAVID TARKHAN-MOURAVI, ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS:** “They [refugees] were followed by a lot of terrorists, like in Europe, and first of all, they are women, who wear hijabs and who purportedly are ordinary women, wearing chadors, but actually they belong to the Caliphate. They call themselves the Caliphate. Why? Because, let me remind the viewers that the Caliphate was the greatest empire in the world in the 19th century and they claim that we should restore the Caliphate and Georgia is declared as part of the Caliphate. Now, these people arrived in Georgia and plan similar acts here; so, we should be cautious” (Obiektivi, Night Studio, 27 December).

**VAZHA OTARASHVILI, ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS:** “The Catholicism of Europe and an unidentified belief of Americans can never be accepted by Georgians as we have never accepted the belief of our eternal enemies – Muslims. We cannot become liberals” (Georgia and the World, 30 March).

**JONDI BAGHATURIA, GEORGIAN TROUP:** “Who are the Jehovah’s Witnesses?! Peaceful believers or extremists who are engaged in covert activities!!!” (Alia, 27 March –2 April).

**HATE SPEECH ON VARIOUS GROUNDS.** In addition to hate speech on political ground, there were cases of triggering individual conflict and in separate instances, encouraging violence:

**ZAZA PAPUASHVILI, GEORGIAN DREAM:** “It is already impossible to look at them [the National Movement] acting like donkeys. We have an expression ‘this man should not be let into home.’ These people should not be either let into home or left in the country. They should be taken out and beaten with a carpet beater in order to beat their brains out of this dust and dirt” (Rustavi 2, Kurieri, 16 June).

**MEGI GOTSIRIDZE, UNITED NATIONAL MOVEMENT:** “If it were for me, I would reinstate the death penalty but would execute pro-Russian supporters of the Georgian Dream with a drill. Imagine, what they would look like.” (Marshallpress, 17 September).

**RACISM.** Racist comments were made by representatives of the Alliance of Patriots, the United Democratic movement, the Union of Traditionalists and the government of Zviad Gamsakhurdia:

**VAZHA OTARASHVILI, ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS:** “That black mass which occupied Plekhanov, first...” (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 9 December).

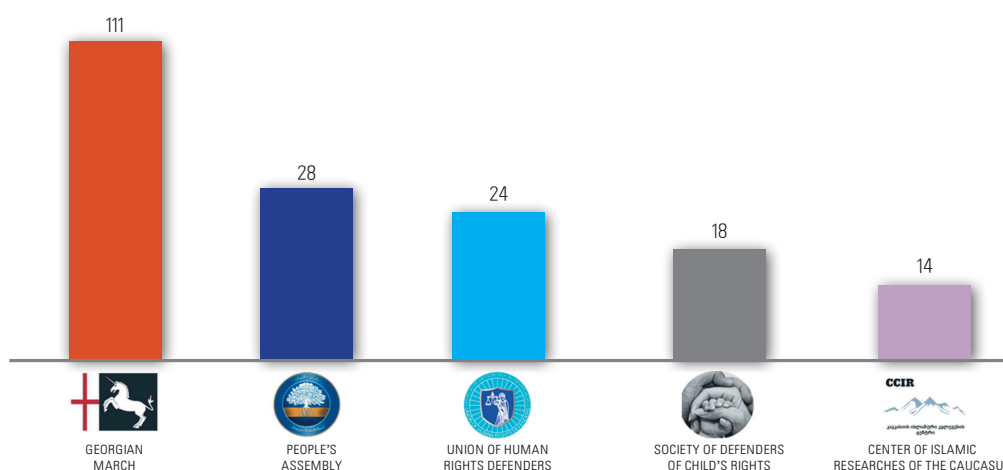
**SHALVA NATELASHVILI, LABOR PARTY:** “When a foreigner looks at Ivanishvili, what will he think, which race we belong to: African, yellow race, mixed Negroid or other race? It is impossible to distinguish his racial identity” (TV Pirveli, Reaktsia, 19 September).

### 3. CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS

Five civil organizations were identified which most frequently made hate speech comments in the monitored media outlets. These organizations were the Georgian March (111), the People’s Assembly (28), the Union of Human Rights Defenders (24), the Society of Defenders of Child’s Rights (18), the Center of Islamic Researches of the Caucasus (14).

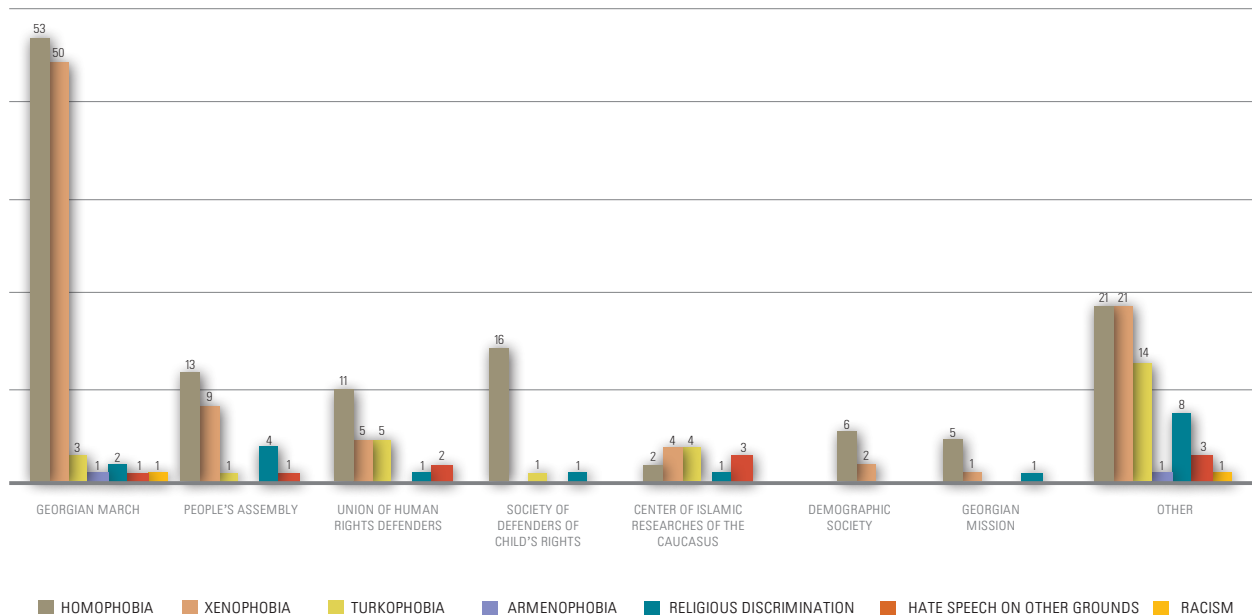
The Georgian March is a far-right movement while the People’s Council has close ties with the pro-Russian political party United Democratic Movement. A single-seat candidate for Tbilisi constituency of the mentioned party in the 2017 local elections was Guram Palavandishvili, the head of the Society of Defenders of Child’s Rights, who at the same time have close ties to ethno-nationalist Levan Vasadze. Apart from hate speech, representatives of the Union of Human Rights Defenders and the Center of Islamic Researches of the Caucasus openly expressed their pro-Russian positions too.

FIGURE 15. SOURCES OF HATE SPEECH BY CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS (FIVE ORGANIZATIONS)





The majority of comments by civil organizations were homophobic (127), followed by xenophobic comments in an almost equal amount (122). Relatively smaller shares accounted for religious discrimination (18), hate speech towards various groups (10) and racist statements (2).



**HOMOPHOBIA.** In terms of homophobic statements the most notorious were the Georgian March (53), the Society of Defenders of Child's Rights (16) and the People's Assembly (13). The highest number of negative statements made by the Georgian March concerned Guram Kashia's solidarity act of wearing an armband in support of LGBT; the Society of Defenders of Child's Rights asserted that the aim of introduction of new standards in kindergartens was the teaching of homosexuality.

**SANDRO BREGADZE, GEORGIAN MARCH:** "When I hold or wear a symbol of homosexuality on the arm I am a propagator of homosexuality. In our firm belief, it is uncomely for a Georgian athlete and man to be a propagator of homosexuality." (Imedi, Qronika, 31 October).

**GURAM PALAVANDISHVILI, CHILD'S RIGHTS DEFENDER SOCIETY:** "They [LGBT community] have the right to do everything, but they should not have the right to teach our children at schools, to serve in the army, to work in public agencies, Parliament... If a drug addict has no right to teach at school, why should a homosexual have the same right?" (Marshallpress, 17 May).

The People's Assembly asserted that there was no difference between homosexuality and zoophilia and demanded the punishment of homosexuality under the law.

**ELIZBAR JAVELIDZE, PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY:** "For me, homosexuality is analogous to zoophilia... I do want to live in such a Georgia where homosexuality is punishable under the law!" (Asaval\_dasavali, 6-12 November).

**XENOPHOBIA.** Xenophobia was dominated by statements against migrants made by the Georgian March (40). Asian and African migrants were linked to crime and sexual violence:

**SANDRO BREGADZE, GEORGIAN MARCH:** “Pedophiles and maniacs who are in the territory of Georgia, be it legally or illegally, have the impunity syndrome” (Rezonansi, 5 July).

**TURKOPHOBIA.** The Union of Human Rights Defenders used the conspiracy theory about the Treaty of Kars and named the military cooperation with Russia as an alternative for the protection from “Turkish threat:”

**NIKOLAZ MZHAVANADZE, CHAIRMAN OF THE RIGHTS DEFENDERS UNION:** “It is absolutely clear what the Turks have premeditated – to create their enclave in Batumi and Adjara, then to demand holding a plebiscite, and join Batumi and Adjara to Turkey! And what will stop it? It has only one answer – opening a joint Russian-Georgian anti-terrorist center in Batumi!” (Asaval-Dasavali, July 24–30).

**ARMENOPHOBIA.** A representative of the Georgian March portrayed Armenia as a threat and questioned its good-neighborly intentions:

**GIA KORKOTASHVILI, GEORGIAN MARCH:** “In Akhaltsikhe, Armenian separatists beat police officers when the latter were performing their official duties and the Interior Minister now apologizes saying that they will be released... Soon, our so called “kind” neighbors will grab our lands” (“Alia”, October 9–15).

**RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION.** A large share of religious discrimination accounted for Islamophobia (14) and mainly concerned migrants and the construction of a mosque in Batumi:

**SHOTA APKHAIDZE, CAUCASIAN CENTER OF ISLAMIC RESEARCH:** “We do not want Georgia to be the country of sex tourism, to have child pornography, pedophilia, prostitution and smuggling here; I do not want my country to turn into the nest of radical Muslims, i.e. terrorists” (Alia, July 24–30)

**GULBAAT RTSKHILADZE, EURASIAN INSTITUTE:** “If Batumi visitors want to pray in the mosque, let them do so. If one mosque is too small for them to accommodate... There is also one jolly Russian saying: feel at home but do not forget that you are a guest!” (Georgia and the World, 16 March).

**HATE SPEECH ON VARIOUS GROUNDS.** These comments were mainly attempts to trigger individual conflict and calls for violence, including against liberals:

**SHOTA APKHAIDZE, CAUCASIAN CENTER OF ISLAMIC RESEARCH:** “We offer you a game: ‘Greet a Liberal! According to the rules of the game, you need to approach any liberal coming from the opposition direction, smile and

punch him mercilessly in the jaw. It is desirable to punch in the jaw hard enough to break it. In this case, it will mean that you greeted him at full capacity. If the blow causes only a concussion or temporary loss of consciousness, it will mean that the greeting was incomplete and you will be given another chance for full greeting. Keep it up!” (Asaval-Dasavali, August 28 – September 3).

**RACISM.** Civil organizations made two racist comments against people with dark skin:

**MERAB SHATIRISHVILI, FOR NEW REALITY:** “I visited Guria quite recently and I would never think of seeing a Negro girl there... The country is moving towards disaster, isn’t it?” (Alia, June 12-18)

### 3.4. CLERGY

There were identified 4 religious servants who most frequently used hate speech in the monitored media outlets. Three of them represented the Georgian Patriarchate while the fourth, Basil Mkalavishvili, is a defrocked priest.

RELIGIOUS SERVANT	HATE SPEECH
Davit Kvlividze	11
Giorgi Razmadze	6
Davit Isakadze	4
Basil Mkalavishvili	4

**HOMOPHOBIA.** Religious servants most frequently made homophobic statements, branding homosexuality as a sin of Sodom and Gomorrah imposed by the West, impeding the process of reintegration of “traditional Abkhazia and Ossetia.” There were calls for the abolition of antidiscrimination law and violence against representatives of LGBT community:

**GRIGOL MEZVRISHVILI, RELIGIOUS SERVANT:** “How can the Orthodox Christian Georgia with its 16 centuries of Christianity and the country of Rustaveli, Aghmashenebeli, Father Tevdore, Ilia the Righteous have any shared values with the hotspot of Sodom and Gomorrah, the EU, which was created by the Satan.” (Asaval-Dasavali, 28 August – 3 September).

**DAVID KVLIVIDZE, CLERIC:** “I am asking the government representatives: how do you think, will the Abkhazs and Ossetians want to live together with Georgia that is drowning in the sin of Sodom-Gomorrah?! I repeat, supporters of this filth are enemies of the country’s territorial integrity, they support disintegration of the country” (Geworld.ge, March 29).

**MEKISEDEK DIAKONIDZE, EPISCOP:** “People must revolt, take to the street not with slogans but to beat severely everyone who supports this gay propaganda. However, the worst thing is that the fear turned people into chickens. We have been left with a coward society.”

**RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION.** Much like in case of other sources, religious discrimination by religious servants mainly targeted Muslims, though Jehovah's Witnesses and sectarians were also referred to in a negative context:

**DAVIT KVLIVIDZE, BISHOP:** "That Turkey demands more mosques and in fact, declared Batumi its own territory seems to be nothing but the main problem seems to be a 'Russian landing force' in the Church... what 'landing force' and Russian power are they talking about? One cannot freely go out as it is difficult to understand whether Aghmashenebeli [Avenue] is Tbilisi, Turkey or Iran." (Georgia and the World, 16 August).

**BASIL MKALAVISHVILI, CLERIC:** "Members of the Jehovan sect have invaded Georgia and use various insidious means to plant immorality and filth in the people, and lead them towards Europe thus "prepared" (Geworld.ge, March 1).

**XENOPHOBIA/TURKOPHOBIA.** Xenophobic comments were largely focused on the sale of land to foreigners and reopening of historical wounds. The clergy reopened wounds of historical trauma towards Turkey too:

**GIORGI RAZMADZE, CLERIC:** "How can a person, who legalized the sale of lands to foreigners and sold the best agricultural lands to Arabs and Turks at a symbolic price, be a believer?" I ask the question: How can an Orthodox Georgian sell native lands to Arabs? Our ancestors are probably turning in their graves. It is terrible and sooner or later, they will be held accountable for it" (Geworld.ge, August 10).

**DAVIT KVLIVIDZE, CLERIC:** "About a hundred years ago, the Turkish shifted their border deeper to Ozurgeti. Similar developments are still underway. Some people claim today that the Turkish are our historical friends and allies. They were drinking out blood, in the full sense of the word. What friendship are they talking about? How long should these shameful talks continue?" (Geworld.ge, April 28).

### 3.5 SOCIETY

Society's messages were identical to those of media and politicians. Most frequent were xenophobic statements which also included Turkophobic (81) and Armenophobic (27) messages. This was followed by homophobia (172), hate speech on various grounds (42), religious discrimination (38) and racism (4).

The highest number of hate speech comments was made by viewers of Obieqtivi TV (45) through phone-ins and the poet Rezo Amashukeli (28). Amashukeli especially distinguished himself for homophobic comments. This were followed by Mikheil Tsagareli (15) who, since 2017, is a commentator for Sputnik-Georgia, a media outlet established by the Russian government, and in 2017 distinguished himself for his anti-Western comments too; an expert Mamuka Areshidze and a member of supervisory board of the university of Patriarchate, Giorgi Andriadze.

SOURCE	HATE SPEECH
Obieqtivi TV viewers	45
Rezo Amashukeli	28
Mikheil Tsagareli	15
Mamuka Areshidze	12
Giorgi Andriadze	11

**XENOPHOBIA.** The society was largely against migrants and the sale of land to foreigners. The Obieqtivi TV even aired its viewers' calls for violence against migrants and messages linking migrants with the crime:

**VIEWER:** "I get angry when I see those women wearing hijabs. I can hardly refrain from committing a hooligan act and beating them. I address the government – do not lead us to such condition; otherwise, bloodshed will be unavoidable... People are dying and should we fill the country with Arabs and Indians? These Indians – it was shown on TV last year – are in the lead worldwide by depravity and raping. Do we lack Arabs and Turks?" (Obieqtivi, Night Studio, July 8).

There was one case of anti-Semitic comment in Asaval-Dasavali newspaper:

**DENIZ SUMBADZE, PROFESSOR:** "This is an attempt of Jews to entirely replace Georgian people on the Georgian territory. Jews proclaim themselves as Iberians. They take blood tests and declare that Georgians and Jews are closest relatives by blood in the world. What Jews are doing is a political vampirism, in other words, the entering of other's body and an attempt to seize a spiritual mission of the Georgian nation." (Asaval-Dasavali, 10-16 July).

**HOMOPHOBIA.** Representatives of society portrayed homosexual relations as a crime, demanded the prohibition of homosexuality and hailed Putin's methods against LGBT community:

**KONSTANTINE KOPALIANI, LAWYER:** "This may be an ordinary zoophilia, incest or even a group marriage and therefore, we must not attribute the collapse of this institution to a same sex marriage alone." (Obieqtivi TV, Ghamis Studia, 11 June).

**GIORGI PRUIDZE, JOURNALIST:** "People must not be persecuted and discriminated because of sexual orientation, but a strict ban must be imposed on their propagandistic actions and promotion because it is unacceptable to use the protection of interests of one group as a ground for the violation of interests and rights of another group." (Marshallpress, 30 November).

**VIEWER:** "Sorry but these gays and people of their ilk have been very active and what they are doing with children – they drive children bananas! Drive them bananas! And they are the ones who go against Russian fascism? My great respect to Putin for saying that Soros and gays will not be in Russia." (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 22 July).

**HATE SPEECH ON VARIOUS GROUNDS.** The highest share of hate speech comments by the society was directed towards the United National Movement (17); there were instances of triggering individual conflicts and calls for violence (16).

**RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION.** Much like in other categories, the religious discrimination was dominated by Islamophobia (21) followed by intolerance towards Jehovah's Witnesses. There was one instance of antisemitism too:

**DENIZA ZUMBADZE, PHILOSOPHER:** "This Zionist movement is of course directed against Christianity, Orthodox Christianity and against everyone because what does so-called Zionism mean? Zionism is the ideology of one nation and the rest of world." (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 28 June).

**RACISM.** Out of total four racist comments two were made by viewers of Obieqtivi TV:

**VIEWER:** "An Imeretian family lived next to me; they sold their apartment and some negroes from Tanzania or Mozambique bought it; and when I prefer to have that Imeretian family as a neighbor does it mean that I am a Fascist and xenophobe?" (Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 15 July).

## 4. PROFILES |

### 4.1 MEDIA

#### ALIA

The newspaper Alia belongs to Alia Holding LLC established in 1966. The owner of 100 percent of shares in the holding is Giorgi Bregvadze. The newspaper pursues a xenophobic and homophobic editorial policy and fuel anti-Western attitudes.

#### ASAVAL-DASAVALI

The newspaper Asaval-Dasavali was established on 3 March 1992. It is a weekly paper published every Monday. The owner of 100 percent of the shares in the newspaper is Lasha Nadareishvili who also acts as the editor-in-chief. According to the report of Transparency International Georgia, Lasha Nadareishvili owns shares in several other companies all of which are connected with the publication of the newspaper. Nadareishvili is also the owner Georgian Telegraph Agency LLC and a member of the board of the Georgia Press Association.<sup>34</sup> The newspaper is ill-famed for its hate speech towards various ethnic, religious and LGBT groups, as well as towards groups with different worldview and political identity, more precisely, towards the United National Movement. Apart from openly declared xenophobic and homophobic content, the edition also stirs anti-Western sentiments. The newspaper's platform is more of an ethno-nationalist, however, as a research of the Media Development Fund reveals, the content is identical to the narrative of openly pro-Russian media outlets.

#### GEORGIA AND WORLD (GEWORLD.GE)

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 Cha-

chia, 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. The text of the order reads that Alexander Chachia is the chairman of people's movement Samegrelo and publishes a magazine Istoriuli Memkvidreoba (Historic Heritage), as well as newspapers Ilori and Georgia and the World.

Another pro-Russian NGO, Eurasian Institute, is also a partner of Historical Heritage. Along with anti-Western attitudes, the publication is notorious for its Turkophobic, racist and homophobic content.

### MARSHALPRESS

The news agency Marshalpress appeared in the Georgian media landscape on February 18, 2015. Marshalpress.ge is managed by private company Marshalpress Ltd, which, as of 6 May 2015, was wholly owned by Otar Stepanishvili, former journalist from Info 9. As a result of changes carried out on November 24, 2015, the shares were redistributed between Otar Stepanishvili (49%) and Luka Antidze (51%). The news agency pursues pro-governmental editorial policy.

### MEDIA UNION "OBJEKTIVI"

Media Union Obieqtivi was established in August 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. The political party office and television are in the same building. Obieqtivi broadcasts not only via television frequency, but also via radio frequency and the Internet. TV Channel pursues Turkophobic, xenophobic and homophobic editorial policy. In its fifth monitoring cycle report, the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), based on MDF's study, recommended Georgia that the authorities "review their contracts with media outlets and cancel or not renew them in cases where media are known to engage in racist or homo-transphobic hate speech." The report, among other outlets, referred to Obieqtivi TV.

### 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. In its Turkophobic statements, Sakinformi portrays Russia as the counterweight to Turkey and makes unfounded references to the Treaty of Kars.



## 4.2. POLITICAL PARTIES

### 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. In its vision and program, available on the English language webpage of the political party (unavailable in Georgian), the party defines patriotism as “thinking and pondering, speaking and discussing, acting and behaving in conformity with the national spirit, which in our case is the Georgian spirit”. According to the party’s vision, the tolerance of Georgian spirit implies readiness to adopt everything good from other nations, though, at the same time, giving preference to native Georgian. 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 Obiektivi 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.

### 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. MDF’s monitoring in 2016 showed that the political party stood out for its homophobic statements.

### FREE GEORGIA

Free Georgia was founded in 2010. Leader of political party is Kakha Kukava who visited Moscow in 2012 to negotiate with Russian politicians. Political party was a member of electoral bloc of “Alliance of Patriots” in 2016 parliamentary elections, while during 2017 local self-government elections was a part of Nino Burjanadze’s United Democrats electoral block.

### GEORGIAN DREAM

Georgian Dream was founded and financed by Georgian billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili in February 2012. In 2012, the Georgian Dream Coalition won the parliamentary elections with 54% of the votes, thus gaining the

parliamentary majority and setting a precedent of power change through elections. Before the 2016 parliamentary elections, the coalition which consisted of six subjects was downsized. The Georgian Dream gained the constitutional majority in the 2016 parliamentary elections. At present, alongside the Georgian Dream, the parliamentary majority still includes Industry Will Save Georgia, Conservative Party, Green Party, Social-Democratic Party and faction for Regional Development. Separate subjects within the coalition are known for their anti-western, homophobic and xenophobic statements.

## GEORGIAN IDEA

On 16 December 2014, at a news conference held in the international press center of RIA Novosti in Tbilisi, the establishment of a new political party, Georgian Idea, was announced by the chairman of the party Levan Chachua. Levan Chachua was a member of Orthodox Parents' Union and was arrested in 2010 for extremist behavior in Kavkasia TV company when he, alongside other members of Orthodox Parents' Union, burst into the studio during the live television broadcast and engaged in physical altercations. The newly elected parliament in 2012, released Levan Chachua with the status of political prisoner. In 2013, he stood in the presidential elections. The section "About Us" of the Facebook page of Georgian Idea names the launch of direct negotiations with Russia for de-occupation of the country as one of the aims of the political union Georgian Idea.

## GEORGIAN TROUP

Citizen's political union Georgian Troup is registered in 2008. Its leader Jondi Bagaturia has migrated from one political party to another unity over the last years.

## LEFTIST ALLIANCE

Registered on June 5, 2013 with chairmanship of former Labor Party members, Kakha Dzaganian and Ioseb Shatberashvili. For the 2016 Parliamentary Elections, the party presented an author of Geworld.ge (Georgia and World), Bakur Svanidze, as the majoritarian candidate in Vazisubani district, Tbilisi.

## MOVEMENT NATIONALS

"Movement Nationals" is registered on February 8, 2016. According to the statute, one of the goals of the movement is to protect and strengthen Orthodox Christian values. Alexander (Sandro) Bregadze, Kakhaber Migineishvili and Zurab Erukidze are the founders of the movement.

Sandro Bregadze was appointed as Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia; while on October 1, 2014, he became the Depu-

ty State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues. While holding a public political position, he was often making homophobic statements that resulted in a civic platform No to Phobia! to address the Prime Minister twice with request to dismiss him. In February 2016, Sandro Bregadze resigned, stating his stance towards legalizing same-sex marriage as the reason. In 2017 in collaboration with others he has launched ultra-nationalist movement Georgian March.

## OUR MOTHERLAND

According to the public registry, citizens political union Our Motherland is registered on 9 October 2015. Leader of the political party is Zviad Chitishvili. Hate speech was mainly expressed by party member Giorgi Korkotashvili who at the same time is one of the founder of Georgian March. Giorgi Korkotashvili was involved in the events organized by the Eurasian Institute and makes supportive statements concerning the normalization of relations with Russia.

## TAMAZ MECHIAURI FOR UNITED GEORGIA

Tamaz Mechiauri for United Georgia is registered on February 27, 1998, according to the Public Registry data. Tamaz Mechiauri is the Head of the party. Tamaz Mechiauri entered the parliament in 2012 through the list of Georgian Dream Coalition. In 2016 Parliamentary Elections, he participated independently, through his own party. According to his party's statute, its goals include uniting Georgian nation and strengthening and protecting national world-view and traditions. In 2017 Tamaz Metchiauri was elected as a Mayor of Tianeti municipality.

## 4.3. PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

### SOCIETY OF DEFENDERS OF CHILD'S RIGHTS

Society of Defenders of Child's Rights is registered in 2017. Chairperson of the board is Guram Palavandishvili who ran in the 2016 parliamentary elections as a majoritarian candidate from Nino Burjanadze's Democratic Movement. Palavandishvili was detained for extremist action several times: On December 4 in 2013 for damaging posters and banners on the holiday of Hanukkah and on 8 March of 2018 for throwing raw eggs at the group of LGBTQ during transgender rally.

## GEORGIAN MARCH

Ultra-national group Georgian March first appeared in a summer of 2017 when they mobilized protest against illegal foreigners. Under illegal foreigners, the organizers of the march meant representatives of concrete

nationalities – Iranians, Arabs, Africans and others and called on them to leave the territory of Georgia. Organizers of the march also demanded the toughening of immigration law. One of the founder of Georgian March is Sandro Bregadze, leader of movement Erovnulebi and former Georgian Dream deputy minister.

### PUBLIC ASSEMBLY

Public Assembly is a public organization connected with Nino Burjanadze's Democratic Movement – United Georgia. It was founded in 2006. The organization stands out with its anti-Western, xenophobic and homophobic rhetoric.

### RIGHT DEFENDER UNION

Rights Defenders' Union was registered on August 2, 2012 in the Public Register. The Head of the union is Nikoloz Mzhavanadze.



