



# Monitoring Editorial Policies of the TV news programs

1-16 October, 2015



**National Endowment  
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## Introduction

With the support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Media Development Foundation is implementing the project, the goal of which is to strengthen editorial independence of the media and improve professional standards of journalists. The project envisions the one-year monitoring of media content, aimed at depicting editorial policies of TV channels' news programs and creation of the database with the factual evidence necessary for further analysis.

This pilot report presents main observations of a two-week monitoring, conducted from 1 to 16 October 2015.

## Methodology

**Subjects of the monitoring:** Rustavi 2, Imedi, Public Broadcaster, Maestro, Tabula, GDS.

As the subjects of the monitoring have been selected the TV companies with leading positions in the [ratings](#) of TV audience measuring company TVMR, and with daily news programs. [Studies](#) on media ownership by Transparency International – Georgia regarding political and financial affiliations of the TV companies have also been taken into account during selection process since findings of the studies allow to make assumptions about difference in editorial policies. It must be noted that selected companies do not have the same scale of area covered by their broadcasting, nor that of human and financial resources, which affects diversity of their programs. The goal of this study, however, is demonstrating tendencies based on the content, rather than on qualitative data.

Study of the TV channels' news programs editorial policies is conducted through daily monitoring of their main prime time news programs, except of week-ends. These programs are: Kurieri, Rustavi 2 (21:00); Chronika, Imedi (20:00); Moambe, Public Broadcaster (20:00); Kontakti Rvaze, Maestro (20:00); Fokusi, Tabula (19:00); 20/30, GDS (20:30).

The study is conducted employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. The object of the monitoring are priority topics of the main news program, which are analyzed according to the choice of main issues for the first and second parts of the news programs, and the format (story, footage, placement in the program) of the topics of the public interests. In the case of the Public Broadcaster, where the news program (Moambe) is not divided into parts by commercials or otherwise, the division for the purposes of this study is made by timing (first 15-20 minutes). Assessment of editorial policy is also made by identifying the missing topics which are of high

interest to the public<sup>1</sup>. Through analysis, similarities and differences are identified, and media outlets with identical information policy are compared.

Comparison of the TV channels' news programs is conducted through their topic nets. Weather, international news (if not related to Georgia's foreign policy or Georgian issues), culture and sport (if not related to any political event in culture and sport, and if only the sport and culture issues are reported) are left out during the analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> "g) Public interest – the interest within society (and not a simple curiosity of individuals) to the events related to the exercise of public self-government in a democratic state; The law on the freedom of speech and expression.

## Main observations of the monitoring

Monitoring of evening news programs for 1-16 October revealed the following tendencies:

- In terms of reporting on priority topics, news programs of Rustavi 2 and Tabula were quite similar.
- Public Broadcaster, Maestro and GDS, as well as, partly, Imedi, left out similar topics from their news programs (see Table 2). For instance, investigation against the mother of the judge who presided over the Rustavi 2 case, launched two years after her alleged crime, which caused conflict of interest, was not reported by any TV channel except Rustavi 2 and Tabula. Conflict of interest in the case of the judge in 7 November case, which had caused controversy within the Judges Panel itself, was reported only by Imedi, Rustavi 2 and Tabula. Comments made by the President of Georgia about Rustavi 2 and media environment during his visit to U.S. were not reported by Public Broadcaster, Maestro, Tabula and GDS.
- On the day of arrest of Tabula editor-in-chief because of her pasting posters against Gazprom, Maestro prioritized such issues as political plans of Paata Burchuladze and Levan Vasadze's support for MP Soso Jachvliani against the anti-discrimination law.
- It has been found during the monitoring GDS 20/30 news program left out the issues representing high interest to the public, which on one hand could be related to the limited time allocated for the news format, but on the other hand expresses editorial policy. The least number of issues were left out in Rustavi 2 news programs. Issues left out by Tabula included some activities of the government.
- GDS stories are focused more on investigations of the cases from the National Movement's period in government, than on the current events and daily news. 20/30 often airs such issues as a first top stories, at the expense of leaving out the current affairs representing public interest. For instance, on the day when Rustavi 2, Imedi and Tabula reported on the conflict of interest in the case of one of the judges on 7 November case, 20/30 aired investigation of the *Magnat* case as its first story. On 5 October, when there was a protest rally in front of Bidzina Ivanishvili's house, they aired investigation of the so called "Kortebi" case and questioning of Irakli Pirtskhalava as their first story, while the protest rally did not get into 20/30 at all. On 8 October, unlike other channels, 20/30 did not air shooting in the center of Tbilisi and chose investigation of Imedi L company ownership issue as its first story.
- Similarly to GDS, there was also instances when Public Broadcaster aired as its first story not current news, but older issues. For example, on 5 October, when there was a rally in front of Bidzina Ivanishvili's house, Moambe started its evening news with two stories about father of Mariam Makhniashvili (who disappeared in Canada) returning to Georgia after having been freed from jail, and his future plans.

- While GDS editorial policy is focused on the cases connected to the previous government, Rustavi 2 and Tabula air more critical stories about the current government. Criticism of the government by the local NGOs were mainly aired in the prime time news of Rustavi 2, and, partly, Imedi. At the same time, Rustavi 2 also systematically reported various activities of the government, though prioritizing issues connected to criticism. Other channels either did not report, or lightly covered criticism by international experts and institutions regarding the domestic affairs in Georgia. Criticism by Rustavi 2 included such issues as the video depicting Bidzina Ivanishvili's relative illegally using special permits issues by MIA; suspicious circumstances regarding investigation of the death of Rustavi 2's former owner Erosi Kitsmarishvili; investigation against mother of judge Urtmelidze, launched two years after the alleged crime; the story about Akhmed Chataev, freed by Georgian court in 2012, being included into the U.S. terrorist list.
- Critical stories regarding specific individuals and institutions, about bonuses, corruption and property controversies were aired by Maestro and Imedi as well.

## Prioritized issues

### 1 October

*Seizure of the shares of TV Georgia, which owns 51% of Rustavi 2* and events concerning Rustavi 2 were covered by all channels in their evening news programs on 1 October, but were given different degrees of priority. Rustavi 2 itself dedicates the whole first part of its news program to this issue, while Maestro dedicates 3<sup>rd</sup> story of the first part; Tabula covered this in its 2<sup>nd</sup> story; Imedi – as 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> stories, while Public Broadcaster dedicated its 6<sup>th</sup> and GDS – its 4<sup>th</sup> stories to this issue. Imedi's Chronika prepared a separate story about numerous changes of ownership in Rustavi 2 in the past.

Public Broadcaster and Imedi aired *address of the Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili on the UN General Assembly* as their first story on 1 October. Other TV channels covered the Prime Minister's address with the following priority: GDS – as its 2<sup>nd</sup> story, Maestro – 8<sup>th</sup>, Rustavi 2 – 2<sup>nd</sup> story of the 2<sup>nd</sup> part. This address occurred after 19:00, Tbilisi time, and thus could not get into Tabula news program for 1 October, with Tabula covering the address and assessments of it the next day, on 2 October.

*Visit of the President of Georgia to the U.S.* was left out of 1 October news only by GDS and Tabula.

*The resolution adopted by PACE*, which included criticism of the events in Georgia regarding media, was left out only by Maestro news. GDS covered PACE resolution as its 1<sup>st</sup> story.

*Defend Liberty – campaign against the Russia propaganda*, which is the common initiative by Tabula TV and NGOs, was covered by the evening news of Tabula and Rustavi 2 only.

The issue of *the MIA permits*, so called "Narushilovka" illegally used by unauthorized individuals, was a Rustavi 2 investigation, followed by reactions from various agencies. The permit issue was covered on 1 October by Imedi, Public Broadcaster and Maestro. Imedi and Public Broadcaster stories included comments by a prosecutor, who denied that permits had been used. Other TV channels' news programs did not air these comments.

**Table 1.1.** Issues prioritized by 1 October news programs.

Issues	Rustavi 2 9 PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8PM	GDS 8:30PM	Tabula 7PM
Seizure of the shares of Rustavi 2	1;2;3;4;5;6	3, 4,5	6	1;2,3	4	2
Resolution of PACE regarding democratic processes in Georgia	II part, 5	7	3		1	3;4
Promises of the Georgian Dream and 3 years of being in rule	II part, 1	6	4	4;5	5	

Address of Prime Minister on the UN General Assembly	II part, 2	1,2	1	8	2	
Visit of the President of Georgia to the USA	II part, 4	II part, 5	2	9		
“Defend Liberty” – campaign against the Russian propaganda	II part, 6					1
The MIA permits		II part, 6 (Prosecutor’s comment)	8 (prosecutor’s comment)	7		
Violations in the nursing home, Public Defender’s report		II part, 8		II part, 2		6
Changes in the election code public discussions			9	10		
Staff changes in the City Hall				11	6	

## 2 October

On 2 October *the events surrounding Rustavi 2* (the court case, Parliament debates) were the main topic of every news program. Public Broadcaster, Imedi, Maestro and GDS highlighted the parliamentary debates on this issue, and the incident between Rustavi 2 supporters and parliamentary majority members that had occurred near the Parliament building.

*Comments made by the President of Georgia regarding Rustavi 2 during his visit to the U.S.* were covered on 2 October only by Rustavi 2 and Imedi, while all other channels, except Maestro, covered only *the meetings that took place during the President’s visit*.

20/30 program of GDS aired as its second story a separate issue regarding *the tendency of decrease in the number of cases filed from Georgia to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg* after the change of government in October 2012. The story was based on the respondents’ comments, instead of official statistics.

In the evening of 2 October Rustavi 2 aired the video depicting *the use of MIA permits by a relative of Bidzina Ivanishvili*. Kurieri also aired the story about *the questions regarding investigation of the death of the former Rustavi 2 owner Erosi Kitsmarishvili*.

*Discussion in Gori Sakrebulo about placing Stalin monument* was left out only in the Public Broadcaster and GDS evening news.

**Table 1.2.** Issues prioritized by 2 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9 PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestr o 8PM	GDS 8:30P M	Tabula 7PM
Events surrounding Rustavi 2	1	3; 5		3; 4		2; 3
Comments made by the President of Georgia during his visit to the USA	2	4				
President's and Prime Minister's visits to the USA	2 and 6	7 and 6	5 and 3		5	5
Parliament debates around Rustavi 2	3	1,2	1;2	1;2	1	1
The use of MIA permits and Bidzina Ivanishvili's relative	4					
The investigation of death of Erosi Kitsmarishvili	5					
Parliamentary minority demands creation of an investigative committee to work on the rumored cases				8		
Anticipated staff changes in the Tbilisi City Hall	7			7		
Discussion of the initiative of placing Stalin's monument in Gori	8	II part, 1		6		4
Decreased number of filed cases in Strasbourg					2	
Financial supplements at public services					3	
20 year-old Lari				12, 13	6	
Investigative report in Kobuleti on the journalist's case			8	5		
National Movements' office on sale		II part, 2				

## 5 October

*A protest rally in front of the house of the former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili*, took place late on 5 October, which was organized by the National Movement and concerned arrest of Rustavi 2 supporters in Kutaisi. The rally started at 19:00 and was over by 21:00. Thus, it was not covered in



the Tabula main news program (Focus is aired at 19:00). Other channels covered this issue with the following priority: Rustavi 2 – 1st, Imedi – 2<sup>nd</sup>, Public Broadcaster – 7<sup>th</sup>, Maestro – 10<sup>th</sup>. GDS news program 20/30 did not cover this topic at all.

That day, the main topic of the Public Broadcaster news program was not current events, but *Return to Georgia of the father of Mariam Makhniashvili, who had disappeared in Canada, his arrest in Canada and future plans*. Moambe covered this topic with its 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stories. The protest rally near Bidzina Ivanishvili's house was the 7<sup>th</sup> story, while the case of Rustavi 2 supporters in Kutaisi was the 6<sup>th</sup>.

GDS, which did not cover the rally near Bidzina Ivanishvili's house at all, aired as its 1<sup>st</sup> story *the court case of the suspects in the so called tennis courts case*. Rustavi 2 covered this issue as its 11<sup>th</sup> story. Other channels did not cover the issue at all.

The topic prioritized that day by Kurieri, Chronika, Tabula and 20/30 was *the highly publicized court in Kutaisi, where the process of Rustavi 2 supporters, who had attempted to enter the Parliament building, took place*. The court put them into pre-trial detention. Rustavi 2 dedicated five stories to this issue and media environment. Imedi covered the court as its 1<sup>st</sup> story.

*The soldier's death* was left out only by Imedi, GDS and Tabula evening news programs. *The issue of disrupted infrastructure* left out only by Public Broadcaster, Imedi and Tabula.

**Table 1.3.** Issues prioritized by 5 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9 PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8PM	GDS 8:30PM	Tabula 7PM
A protest rally in front the former Prime Minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili's house	1	2	7	10		
The court case of Rustavi 2 supporters in Kutaisi	2,3,4,5,6	1	6		2	1,2
Chairman of Kutaisi Sakrebulo has resigned	7		8			5
The reasons of the Soldier's death	8		5	1		
Budget discussions in Parliament	9	5	3	3	3	3
Tennis courts case	11				1	
Unsolved road problems and incomplete infrastructural projects	12			8, 9	4	
Investigation on the case of Khardziani				2		
The case of Mariam Makhniashvili's Father			1,2			

Reform of the election system – initiative of the opposition parties	10	3				4
“KazTransGas” may request its investments back		6				
Giving the Muslims the Mufti residence for use			10			

## 6 October

The most important difference in the choice of prioritized issues was noted on 6 October. Comments made by the former U.S. ambassador to NATO and Director of McCain institute *Kurt Walker in the Voice of America interview about Georgia’s NATO integration and internal democratic processes*, including political motivations of investigation against former Tbilisi Mayor Gigi Ugulava, were aired only by Rustavi 2, as the 2<sup>nd</sup> story. *The issue of conflict of interest in the case of one of the members of the Judges Panel presiding over the 7 November case* and the conflict between the judges because of this issue, were aired by Rustavi 2 as its 1<sup>st</sup> story, Tabula – 4<sup>th</sup>, Imedi – 11<sup>th</sup>. Public Broadcaster, Maestro and GDS omitted this topic in their evening news.

Only Rustavi 2 news covered *the NGOs’ critical address to the government*, regarding the court decision on Rustavi 2 supporters arrested in Kutaisi to selectively use heavy punishment.

*Complaints of the President of Georgia regarding the Georgian ambassador in U.S.*, which concerned violation of protocol (the ambassador did not meet the President during the latter’s visit to U.S.) and regarding which Giorgi Margvelashvili himself spoke in a Rustavi 2 talk show, were aired by every channel except GDS. Imedi and Public Broadcaster covered this conflict in their 1<sup>st</sup> stories.

The first story aired by GDS was *investigation of taking the property from Magnat*, related to assessment of legality of the national Movement government actions and announcing the launch of investigation. Only 20/30 program of GDS aired the story *about legality of spending the credit taken by the previous administration of the football federation*.

*The increased bonuses for deputy ministers* issue was aired by Maestro only, the story about increased budget for *Tbilisoba 2015* - by Rustavi 2 and Maestro, *corruption accusations against Deputy Minister of Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees* - only by Imedi, while *audit report on the violations in the Ministry of Corrections* – by Public Broadcaster.

**Table 1.4.** Issues prioritized by 6 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9 PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8PM	GDS 8:30PM	Tabula 7PM
The issue of conflict of interest of the Judge of the case of November 7	1	11				4
Kurt Walker's statement	2					
The NGOs' critical address to the government	3					
Demand for preterm elections	4	2,3	9	8	3	2
President's comment on the court case of Rustavi 2	5					
The conflict of the President and the Ambassador	6	1	1	6		3
Staff changes in the City Hall	7	4	7	1		1
Corruption accusations against Deputy Minister of Internally Displaced persons and Refugees		5				
Negotiations in Geneva			2			
Stoltenberg's statement on Russia's violation of Turkey's airspace		7	3			6
Crisis in Syria			4		6	
The visit of the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia to London			5			
"Tbilisoba 2015" - increased budget	8			2		
Increased bonuses for Deputy Ministers				3		
Pretensions of "KasTransGas"	9	12	6	4	2	5
Investigation on the case of Magnat					1	
Treatment of Tuberculosis			10		4	
Audit report on the violations taking place at the			8			

Ministry of Corrections of Georgia						
Legality of spending the credit taken by the previous administration of the Football Federation					5	

## 7 October

*Comments by the U.S. State Department representative* expressing concerns about pluralistic media environment on the eve of the parliamentary election, *in connection with the events surrounding Rustavi 2*, was the main story in Rustavi 2 and Tabula news programs. These comments were not covered by Imedi, Maestro and GDS, while Public Broadcaster aired them as its 7<sup>th</sup> story.

*The MEPs' (ALDE group) criticism of the media and pre-election environment, as well as regarding court* was not covered by Public Broadcaster, Maestro and GDS.

Imedi and Public Broadcaster covered *the NATO ministerial, where Georgian Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs participated*, as their 1<sup>st</sup> story. This topic was aired by Rustavi as its 6<sup>th</sup> and by Maestro as its 7<sup>th</sup> story.

The main GDS topic was related to *Tbilisi City Hall*, specifically to personnel changes, check of the City Hall by the national audit agency, and opposition's demand for the mayor to resign .

*MIA's response to the accusations by Givi Targamadze, according to which organized crime leaders were pressuring police in Adjara* was aired by Imedi as its 14<sup>th</sup> and by Tabula as its 5<sup>th</sup> story, while *the National Movement statement about the threats against former police officer Zurab Soselia* was covered only by Tabula news program as its 6<sup>th</sup> topic.

*Visit of the Speaker of Parliament to London* was covered by Imedi only.

**Table 1.5.** Issues prioritized by 7 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9 PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8PM	GDS 8:30P M	Tabula 7PM
Comments by the US State Department representative about Rustavi 2 and media environment	1 and 2		7			2

The MEP's (ALDE group) criticism of the democratic processes in Georgia	3	4				1
Staff changes in the Tbilisi City Hall. Opposition's demand for the mayor to resign	4	6, 7	4,5	1, 2, 4	1	4
Transparency International's inquiry about self-government	5					
NATO Ministerial	6	1	1	7	3	
Expectations regarding the Summit of Warsaw		2			3	
Jokia Bodokia's court testimony	8	8	6		1	
Visit of the Chairman of the parliament of Georgia to London		3				
MIA's response to the accusations of Givi Targamadze, according to which organized crime leaders were pressuring the police		14				5
National Movement's statement about the threats against former police officer Zurab Soselia						6
Public discussion of the changes in the Constitution		5				
Negotiations in Geneva			2			
The Silk Road Forum			3			
Statement of the Mayor – increased social supplement	10			3	2	
Budget of 2016 in the Parliament	11					3

### 8 October

On 8 October, due to a football match, Public Broadcaster did not air its main news program, which, therefore, did not become part of our monitoring.

*Criminal incident in the center of Tbilisi*, which occurred this day, when there was shooting at 13:00 near Radisson hotel, was covered by every TV channel except GDS. All channels covered natural disaster in Adjara.

*Questions from EU Commissioner Johannes Hahn regarding the court* were covered on 8 October by Rustavi 2 and Imedi only. *Legal aspects of confiscation of Imedi L company's property*, which occurred during the National Movement's period in government, was covered only by GDS as its 1<sup>st</sup> story. The 2<sup>nd</sup> story of 20/30 was *the Hague Court prosecutor's statement*, according to which there were instances of war crimes from both sides of the war of 2008.

Only maestro covered *the story about a pupil accusing a school guard of sexual violence* as its 2<sup>nd</sup> story, while only Imedi covered, as its 8<sup>th</sup> story, *business interests of Bidzina Ivanishvili in Abkhazia*.

*The statement by NGOs about election and media environment, election reform and abandonment of majoritarian electoral system* was covered only by Rustavi 2, Imedi and Tabula.

**Table 1.6.** Issues prioritized by 8 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9 PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8PM	GDS 8:30PM	Tabula 7PM
Criminal incident in the center of Tbilisi	1	1		1		5
Calamity in Ajara	2	2		3	7	6
Investigation of the August War, the Hague Court	3	7		4	2	
EU commissioner's meeting with the Foreign Minister of Georgia and his questions regarding the court	4	5				
Statement of the NGOs' regarding the election reform and media environment	5	3				2
NATO-Georgia	7	5,6		7	3	
The US Ambassador's meeting with the Head of Rustavi 2	10					
Violations in the municipal governments of Samgori and Gldani unveiled by the State Audit					4	
Pupil accusing a school guard of sexual violence				2		
Case of "Imedi L"					1	

National Movement's proposal to quit pressure on media	6	4		9		1
Public Defender on the court case of the supporters of Rustavi 2						3
Ivanishvili's business interests in Abkhazia		8				

### 9 October

On 9 October the main topic of Rustavi 2, Maestro, Tabula and GDS news programs was *the issue of launch of negotiations with the Russian Gazprom*. Minister of Energy made a comment about future import of Russian gas. Public Broadcaster covered this issue as its 4<sup>th</sup>, Imedi – as its 5<sup>th</sup> story.

Only Rustavi 2 covered *the issue of inclusion of the leader of one of the ISIS groups Akhmed Chataev into U.S. global terrorist list*. Chataev was arrested in Georgia during the Lapankuri special operation and later freed by court in 2012. Rustavi 2 linked this issue to the Ombudsman Ucha Nanuashvili, since during his work in the Human Rights Center NGO, it defended Chataev's interests and was demanding his freedom. The story included position of the NGO's current head. Later this story was followed by the accusations by the Ombudsman against Rustavi 2, claiming that the channel spread false information, and his special statement, which was not covered by either Rustavi 2 or other channels' evening news programs.

*Statement by the head of information service of Public Broadcaster*, concerning the criticism of his foreign policy views and his connection to the Gorchakov Foundation, was not covered by Imedi and GDS in their evening news.

GDS again focused in the issue of property confiscations during the National Movement period in government. On 9 October their 3<sup>rd</sup> story was devoted to *investigation of land confiscation*. Only 20/30 did not cover *reactions by international institutions on the processes in Georgia*, including those related to media environment. While covering *the issue of presidential pardon* 20/30 focused only on the fact that President had not freed Giorgi Gvichiani and Nika Chemia. These individuals had been prosecuted for the murder of the financial manager of AES Telasi.

*Transparency International – Georgia report about abuse of pre-trial detention in the cases of former high-level officials* was covered as a separate story only by Tabula, while in Imedi and Maestro evening news this report was mentioned in the story about the assessments of international institutions regarding Georgian justice.

**Table 1.7.** Issues prioritized by 9 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8 PM	GDS 8:30PM	Tabula 7PM
The issue of launching negotiations with Russian Gazprom	1	5	4	1	2	1
Akhmed Chataev in the U.S. global terrorist list	2					
Investigation of the August war of 2008 by the International Criminal Court	3	1 and 2	1		1	2
International institutions on Georgian justice	4	3	3	2		5
Negotiations in Brussels			2			
The statement by the Head of Information Service of the Georgian Public Broadcaster	8		7	5		6
Technological Institute	9	7	5	8	7	
Presidential pardon	10	4			4	
Investigation on land confiscation					3	
Transparency international- report on the abuse of pre-trial detention in the cases of former high-level officials						3



## 12 October

On 12 October Kurieri aired exclusive story about *the judge presiding over Rustavi2 ownership case*. The story speculated about pressure on Tamaz Urtmelidze by the government, based on the investigation launched against Urtmelidze's mother 2 years after her alleged crime. Obviously, since this information was Rustavi 2's exclusive, it was not covered by other channels on 12 October, but the next day, on 13 October, other channels except Rustavi 2 and Tabula still did not cover it.

On 12 October the main topic of Imedi, Public Broadcaster, Maestro and GDS news was *related to acceptance of the case about separation of the Supervisory Service from the National Bank by the Constitutional Court and suspension of the law*.

All channels covered *launch of negotiations with Gazprom* and the Prime Minister's statements. This issue was covered as its 11<sup>th</sup> story only by Maestro, while other channels aired it in the first part of their news programs.

*The issue of constitutionality of Sagarejo midterm election* was covered by Public Broadcaster and GDS only, while *the issue of bonuses for the head of the Service Agency of the Ministry of Finance* – by Maestro exclusively.

**Table 1.8.** Issues prioritized by 12 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8 PM	GDS 8:30PM	Tabula
The case of the Judge Urtmelidze's mother	1 და 2					
Irakli Okruashvili's Interest around Rustavi 2	3					4
Negotiations with Gazprom	4	2	2	11	5	2
Acceptance of the case about separation of the Supervisory Service from the National Bank by the Constitutional Court and suspension of the law	5	1	1, 10	2	1	3
NDI research on public opinion	6,7,8	3; 4,5	3	7	3	1
New advisor of the President	9	6,7	5			

The issue of bonuses for the Head of the Service Agency of the Ministry of Finance				1		
Mechiauri – increased number of pensioners				3		
The issue of constitutionality of Sagarejo midterm elections			4		2	
Budget project of 2016			7			
The case of the doctors accused of trafficking				5		

### 13 October

As noted in 12 October monitoring, *the case of judge Urtmelidze's mother* and suspicious circumstances of investigation launched 2 years after the incident was covered, besides Rustavi 2, by Tabula and was not covered by any other channel. Maestro, Imedi, Public Broadcaster and GDS evening news also did not include *statement of the Prosecutor General of Georgia on this issue*, which explained details of investigation against the judge's mother and considered Rustavi 2's story baseless.

*NATO Parliamentary Assembly resolution*, which calls on the Government of Georgia to fulfill its international obligations, was covered only by Rustavi 2 and Public Broadcaster, while *complaints of an Iranian businessman to the government about confiscation of property* was covered as an independent story by Imedi only and was aired as the 1<sup>st</sup> story. Maestro aired as its 3<sup>rd</sup> story *the issue of bonuses for the head of the Service Agency of the Ministry of Finance*, which it had covered the previous day. This issue of bonuses was not covered by other channels.

The issue of *the beating of a child under a priest's instructions in a religious school* was covered only by Rustavi 2, Imedi and Maestro.

**Tabula 1.9.** Issues prioritized by 13 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8 PM	GDS 8:30P M	Tabula 7PM
The case of Judge Urtmelidze's mother (statement of the Prosecutor's Office, assessments)	1,2,3					2
President's initiative on energy security issue and Prime Minister's refusal	4	3	1	1, 2	2	1
Constitutional Court regarding the National Bank	5	4	4	4,5	1	5
The law on general courts is being protested	6	2,6	5	6		
NATO Parliamentary Assembly resolution	7		8			
Situation at the occupational line	8	5	2,3	11	6	4
Budget of 2016	9					3
Iranian businessman to the government on the confiscation of his property		1				
The issue of bonuses for the Head of the Service Agency of the Ministry of Finance				3		
Tenders at the Penitentiary Department					3	
Violence against children under a priest's instruction	12	7		10		

### 14 October

On 14 October priority topic on all channels except Tabula was *the issue of the 2008 war investigation by the international court. Situation in the occupied territories* was covered only by Public Broadcaster and Maestro.

*Rejection by the government of the President's proposal of a meeting on the Gazprom issue* did not make it only into the Public Broadcaster and GDS news programs.

Another prioritized topic of the day was *the Constitutional Court case about the National Bank*. Imedi was an exception and did not cover this topic. *Initiative by the chairman of the parliament's Financial and Budget Committee Tamaz Metchiauri regarding temporary investigative commission for study of the National Bank activities* was covered only by Rustavi 2 and Tabula. Imedi focused on 14 October on international issues and aired *investigation of the Malaysian Boeing case* and *the terrorist threat to Moscow* as its 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> stories, while GDS covered jihadist threats to Russia as its 3<sup>rd</sup> story.

**Table 1.10.** Issues prioritized by 14 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8 PM	GDS 8:30P M	Tabula 7PM
The investigation of the August War of 2008	1	1 ;2;3	1	1	2	
The Constitutional Court case about the National Bank	2		9	2	1	2;3
Mechiari's initiative regarding temporary investigative commission for study of the National Bank activities	2					2
Rejection by the government of the President's proposal of a meeting on a Gazprom issue	3	6		4		1
The Case of Rustavi 2	4					
Situation on the occupied territory			2 ;3	12		
The case of Malaysian Boeing		4				
The terrorists' threat to Moscow, Jihad against the USA and Russia	5	5		9	3	
Who stay with and who leave Free Democrat Party			6	6		
The visit of the Chairman of the Parliament to China		10	5			
The Silk Road Forum	6	11				

## 15 October

On 15 October Rustavi had *the court case against the TV company* as its main topic which was discussed in the format of the parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition parties' meeting, and concerned opposition's initiative regarding adoption of a special resolution on Rustavi 2 by the Parliament. This issue was covered in the evening news only by Rustavi 2 and Tabula. *The Silk Road forum* was the main topic on all channels, but Public Broadcaster and Imedi dedicated most time to it. *International investigation of the 2008 war*, was among the main topics on all channels, and Maestro aired four stories about it. GDS dedicated its 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stories to the issue of legality of property confiscations during the National Movement government again and this time focused on *Caucasus Online and Lisi Lake property issues*. The 3<sup>rd</sup> GDS story was about *the property sold to Russian companies during the National Movement rule*.

*U.S. State Department report about freedom of religion in Georgia* was covered in the evening news programs only by Imedi and Public Broadcaster.

**Table 1.11.** Issues prioritized by 15 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8PM	GDS 8:30P M	Tabula 7PM
Case of Rustavi 2	1, 3					5
The meeting of parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition parties on the issues of media and elections	2					6
Investigation of the August War	4	3	3	1;2; 3;4;	4	1
Silk Road Forum	5	1;2;6	1;2;7	5;6	5	2
Request of "KasTransGaz"	6					
Reform of the Prosecutor's Office	7					4
The case of the supporters of Rustavi 2	8					
Budget discussions in Parliament	9		8			
The report of the U.S. Department on the freedom of religion in Georgia		4	4			

Visa regime between Russia and Georgia				7		
Tax exemptions for religious organizations		5				
The investigation on the case of “Caucasus Online”					1	
The case of the Lisi Lake property confiscation					2	
The properties sold to Russian companies during the rule of the National Movement					3	
Relations between Georgia and Kazakhstan		7		9		3

### 16 October

*Arrest of Tabula director Tamar Chergoleishvili and other Defend Liberty activists for pasting posters against Gazprom on a fence near the Opera building* was the first story of Rustavi 2 and Tabula, 5<sup>th</sup> on Imedi, 7<sup>th</sup> on Maestro and 8<sup>th</sup> on Public Broadcaster. GDS news program 20/30 did not cover this incident at all.

Maestro prioritized the following topics this day: 1) *Possible political partners of Paata Burchuladze* and 2) *Levan Vasadze’s support of Soso Jachvliani’s initiative against the anti-discrimination law*.

All channels except Maestro and Tabula covered *the parliamentary debates on Rustavi 2 legal case*, while Imedi aired live from Munich with Rustavi 2 ownership claimant Kibar Khalvashi.

*Questioning of Lado Bedukadze in court on Sergo Tetradze case* was covered only by Rustavi 2, Imedi, Public Broadcaster and GDS.

**Table 1.12.** Issues prioritized by 16 October news programs

Issues	Rustavi 2 9PM	Imedi 8PM	GPB 8PM	Maestro 8PM	GDS 8:30PM	Tabula 7PM
Arrest of Tabula’s director	1	5	8	7		1;2;3;
Parliamentary debates on Rustavi 2 legal case	2;3	3 , 4-7	10		1	

Investigation of the August War ICC Prosecutor in Tbilisi	4	1, 2	1	3;4;	2	
Major witness on Ugulava's case was questioned	10				3	
Paata Burchuladze's partners and plans				1		
Vasadze's support to Jachvliani				2		
The Silk Road Project	6	6	2;3;4	5		
U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense talked to the Minister of Defense of Georgia			7			
Questioning of Lado Bedukadze in court on Sergo Tetradze's case	7	8	9		4	
Alternative road passing Rikoti				8		

Table 2. Issues Dismissed

Only the current news of high public interest are indicated in the table of dismissed issues. Independent materials are left out

GDS	Tabula	Maestro	Imedi	GPB	Rustavi 2
X	X	X	President's comment on media environment during his visit in the USA	X	President's comment on media environment during his visit in the USA
X	Launched investigation on the case of judge Urtmelidze's mother with the two –year delay	X	X	X	Launched investigation on the case of judge Urtmelidze's mother with the two –year delay
X	X	Visit of the President of Georgia to the USA	Visit of the President of Georgia to the USA	Visit of the President of Georgia to the USA	Visit of the President of Georgia to the USA
X	“Defend Liberty” – campaign against Russian propaganda	X	X	X	“Defend Liberty” – campaign against Russian propaganda
X	X	The MIA permits	Reactions regarding the MIA permits	Reactions regarding the MIA permits	The MIA permits
Resolution of PACE regarding the democratic processes in Georgia	Resolution of PACE regarding the democratic processes in Georgia	X	Resolution of PACE regarding the democratic processes in Georgia	Resolution of PACE regarding the democratic processes in Georgia	Resolution of PACE regarding the democratic processes in Georgia



X	Discussion of the initiative of placing Stalin's momument in Gori	Discussion of the initiative of placing Stalin's momument in Gori	Discussion of the initiative of placing Stalin's momument in Gori	X	Discussion of the initiative of placing Stalin's momument in Gori
X	A protest rally in front the former prime minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili	A protest rally in front the former prime minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili	A protest rally in front the former prime minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili	A protest rally in front the former prime minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili	A protest rally in front the former prime minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili
The case of the condemned of the so called "tennis court case"	X	X	X	X	The case of the condemned of the so called "tennis court case"
X	X	The issue of death of the soldier	X	The issue of death of the soldier	The issue of death of the soldier
X	X	X	X	X	Kurt Walker's statement
X	The issue of conflict of interest of the Judge of the case of November 7	X	The issue of conflict of interest of the Judge of the case of November 7	X	The issue of conflict of interest of the Judge of the case of November 7
X	X	X	X	X	Statement of the NGOs' regarding the election reform and media environment
X	Statement of the NGOs' regarding the election reform and media environment (October 8)	X	Statement of the NGOs' regarding the election reform and media environment (October 8)	Was not aired on October 8	Statement of the NGOs' regarding the election reform and media environment (October 8)
X	The conflict between the President of Georgia and the U.S. Ambassador	The conflict between the President of Georgia and the U.S. Ambassador	The conflict between the President of Georgia and the U.S. Ambassador	The conflict between the President of Georgia and the U.S. Ambassador	The conflict between the President of Georgia and the U.S. Ambassador

X	X	X	X	X	President's comment on the case of Rustavi 2 (October 6)
X	The comment of the representative of the US State Department on the case of Rustavi 2	X	X	The comment of the representative of the US State Department on the case of Rustavi 2	The comment of the representative of the US State Department on the case of Rustavi 2
X	The MEP's (ALDE group) criticism of the democratic processes in Georgia	X	The MEP's (ALDE group) criticism of the democratic processes in Georgia	X	The MEP's (ALDE group) criticism of the democratic processes in Georgia
X	MIA's response to the accusations of Givi Targamadze, according to which organized crime leaders were pressuring police	X	MIA's response to the accusations of Givi Targamadze, according to which organized crime leaders were pressuring police	X	X
X	National Movement's statement about the threats against former police officer Zurab Soselia	X	X	X	X
X	Criminal incident in the center of Tbilisi (October 8)	Criminal incident in the center of Tbilisi (October 8)	Criminal incident in the center of Tbilisi (October 8)	Was not aired on October 8	Criminal incident in the center of Tbilisi (October 8)
X	X	X	X	X	Akhmed Chataev in the U.S. global terrorist list
The issue of constitutionality of Sagarejo midterm elections	X	X	X	The issue of constitutionality of Sagarejo midterm elections	X

X	X	The law on general courts is being protested	The law on general courts is being protested	The law on general courts is being protested	The law on general courts is being protested
X	X	X	X	NATO Parliamentary Assembly resolution	NATO Parliamentary Assembly resolution
X	X	Violence against children under a priest's instruction	Violence against children under a priest's instruction	X	Violence against children under a priest's instruction
X	The meeting of parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition parties on the issues of media and elections	X	X	X	The meeting of parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition parties on the issues of media and elections
X	X	X	The report of the U.S. Department on the freedom of religion in Georgia	The report of the U.S. Department on the freedom of religion in Georgia	X
X	Arrest of Tabula's director	Arrest of Tabula's director	Arrest of Tabula's director	Arrest of Tabula's director	Arrest of Tabula's director
Questioning of Lado Bedukadze in court on Sergo Tetradze's case	X	X	Questioning of Lado Bedukadze in court on Sergo Tetradze's case	Questioning of Lado Bedukadze in court on Sergo Tetradze's case	Questioning of Lado Bedukadze in court on Sergo Tetradze's case