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Media coverage of migrants, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups in Russia is mainly hostile and discriminatory. Sensational headlines like “Uzbeks raped a female pensioner” or “Illegal Tajik migrant killed his partner” are the most frequent way to manifest a xenophobic message.

'Anti-heroes' of the Russian press are the Chechens, people from Caucasus and Muslims, while the LGBT community and its issues are covered in an unfriendly way. One of the trends in print and electronic media in Russia is “softer” hate speech, but these “soft forms” are effectively conveying discriminatory messages. These are the findings of the study conducted by the Media Diversity Institute (MDI) in four Russian regions in second half of 2013.

[MDI Report on Russian Media](#)

“Another common feature in the regions observed is that there are almost no analytical writings on migrants and migration. A significant share of all news pieces on migrants in the media originates in police reports or in interviews with officials who mention ‘migrant’s adaptation’. As

Saratov's example shows, whenever there are social tensions, they are likely to be reported and seen through 'anti-migrant' (ie 'ethnic') terms and trigger a raft of allegations against 'migrants'. For example, the state-controlled media (especially TV channels) do not cover the abductions of civilians - sadly, this issue persists in Dagestan. What's more, migration-related issues and migrant rights are absent from the local media news agenda, though these issues are commonly acknowledged as topical. Given this context, it is very rare for the regional media to engage in coverage of wider diversity issues", states MDI report.

Gender related topics, as well as the issues concerning people with disabilities and LGBT community are mainly discussed in the federal press, while the minority groups stay without the voice in local and regional press.

One of the trends in Russian press is "softening" hate speech and using more implicit forms of it including all sorts of euphemisms, etc.

"On the one hand, this can be welcomed as a sign that the problem of hate speech and xenophobia is recognized. On the other, it can be legitimately criticized as an insufficient remedy", concludes the team of experts conducting the research for MDI.

"Lately the official media have been doing their best to avoid hate speech as such. There is a sensible call to have the regional community pacified, and unprovoked, and to keep quiet even at the level of media work", says Irina Przhilenskaya, one of the experts in Stavropol.

