



# ANTI-WESTERN PROPAGANDA



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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 |

This report is the analysis of the results of a-year-long monitoring conducted by the Media Development Foundation (MDF) throughout 2017. The monitoring aimed at studying the typology of anti-Western messages and fake news in the Georgian media. The subjects of monitoring were media outlets as well as other sources – politicians, clergy, civil organizations and representatives of society.

The MDF conducted similar studies in 2016 and 2014–2015 too. The study has been carried out in partnership with UN Association of Georgia within the framework of USAID’s Promoting Integration, Tolerance and Awareness Program (PITA).

This report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017. The introductory part of the report provides key findings of the study, the study methodology and the aggregate quantitative data by sources. The second part overviews propaganda strategy and methods. The final part of the report presents profiles of those sources that were most frequently spreading anti-western narratives.

# 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> Pirispir<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 anti-Western 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:

- As many as 1,967 anti-Western comments were detected in the 17 monitored media outlets in 2017.
- In contrast to 2016 and 2015, when negative messages targeted human identity and rights, in 2017, a dominant topic was the foreign policy with the messages aimed at increasing the polarization on the foreign policy orientation of the country. This change in the strategic communication of pro-Kremlin actors shows that “loss of identity” was a rather tactical message that prepared the ground, while the messaging aimed at demonizing Georgia’s strategic partners (USA, NATO, EU) is of strategic nature.
- The United States of America accounted for the highest share of negative comments (25.9%), up by almost three times as compared to the previous year, followed by NATO (18,4%) and the West (14,1%).
- Compared to 2016, messages against the European Union have almost doubled (13.4%) whereas the comments about the loss of identity and human rights in anti-Western context have almost halved (12.9%).
- Comments against nongovernmental organizations (NGO) and the US philanthropist George Soros have trebled, as compared to 2016, and comprised 7.3%; this increase can be explained by a stepped up activity of far-right groups and their campaign to smear Open Society Georgia Foundation.
- Yet another change as compared to the previous years were clearer messages showcasing Russia as an alternative to the West and idealizing the Soviet system (7.2%).
- Comments against Great Britain (0,8%) have been mainly detected in two pro-Kremlin online media outlets – Georgia and the World, and Sakinformi.
- Alike previous years, the main source of anti-Western messages was media (827), followed by politicians (463), society (411), civil organizations (230) and the clergy (37).
- The structure of the Kremlin narrative in the Georgian discourse consists of three stages and aims at: 1. Creating threats; 2. Sowing distrust towards partners and Western institutions; 3. Ingraining a belief that Russia is the only option in fighting against the threats and that authoritative/Soviet-style governance is necessary.
- Four major threats were emphasized by pro-Kremlin actors: threat of war; threat of loss of territories; threat of bio subversion; threat of loss of identity.

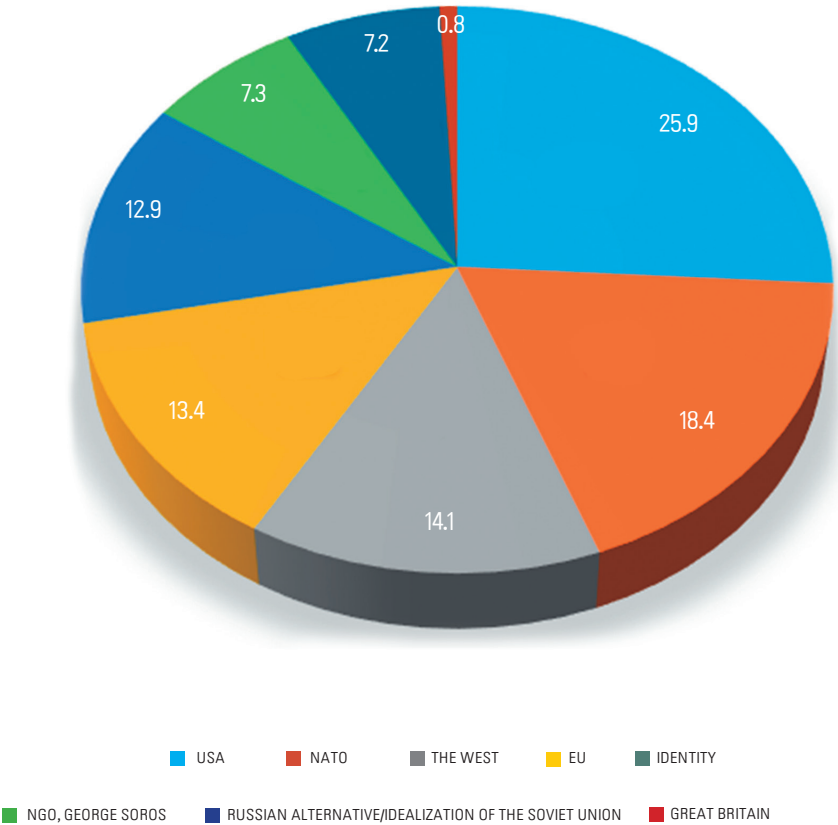


- The verification and double-checking of 144 fake news revealed that the pro-Kremlin media outlets often applied fake photos and videos, Social media as an unbalanced source of fake news, fabrication of history, presenting literary work/satirical-humorous publication as a real fact, conspiracies.
- The largest share in the fabrication of history accounts for distorting the Soviet past and stirring a feeling of nostalgia towards the Soviet order.
- Deflective source model was actively applied, where a propagandist, to legitimize a message or fake news, creates a deflective source which becomes the apparent source and the receiver perceives that it comes from an outer source (deflective source) and not the propagandist.
- The monitoring outlined four media outlets (Georgia and the World, Sakinformi, Obiektivi TV, Asaval-Dasavali) as main sources of anti-Western messages.
- Alike 2016, the United Democratic Movement was the leader among political parties by the number of anti-Western statements (130); it was followed by the Alliance of Patriots (91), Kartuli Dasi (Georgian Troup) (44) and Socialist Georgia (40).
- The media monitoring detected anti-Western messages from 33 civil organizations with six amongst being most frequently quoted by media: An ultra-right association Georgian March, People's Assembly linked to political party United Democratic Movement, Eurasian Institute, Union of Human Rights Defenders, the Global Research Center and Stalin.
- Though processing of pro-Kremlin messaging is done in a systematic and centralized way, channels of dissemination are fragmented (as new online platforms, NGOs emerge continuously) which makes it difficult to conduct their systematic monitoring and to measure their impact in a new media ecosystem.

# 1. TOTAL DATA |

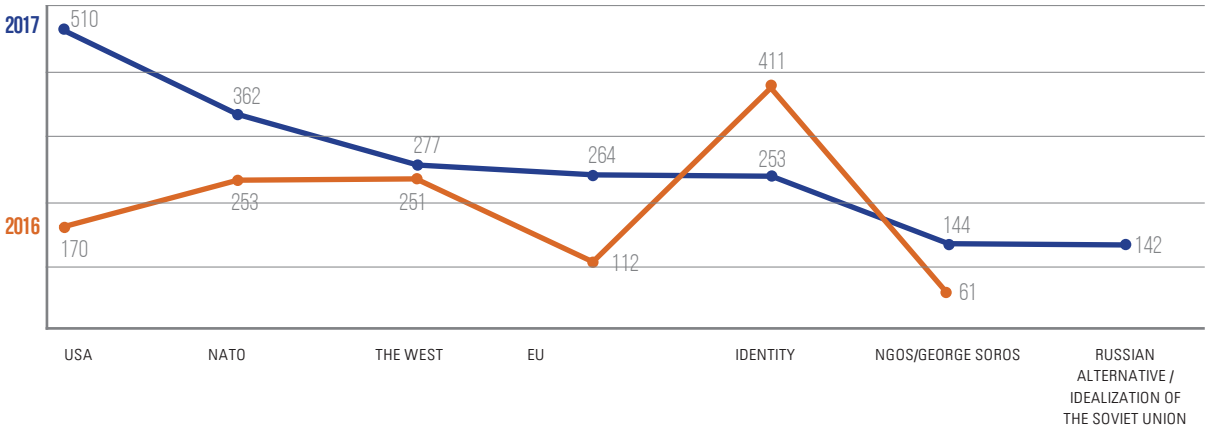
As many as 1,967 anti-Western comments were detected in the 17 monitored media outlets in 2017. In contrast to 2016 and 2015, when negative messages targeted human identity and rights, in 2017, a dominant topic was the foreign policy with the messages aimed at increasing the polarization on the foreign policy orientation of the country.

FIGURE 1. TOPICS OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES



As Figure 1 shows, the United States of America accounted for the highest share of negative comments (25.9%), up by almost three times as compared to the previous year (see Figure 2). The USA was followed by NATO (18.4%) and the West (14.1%). Compared to 2016,<sup>6</sup> messages against the European Union have almost doubled (13.4%) whereas the comments about the loss of identity and human rights in anti-Western context have almost halved (12.9%). Comments against nongovernmental organizations (NGO) and the US philanthropist George Soros have trebled, as compared to 2016, and comprised 7.3%; this increase can be explained by a stepped up activity of far-right groups and their campaign to smear Open Society Georgia Foundation. Yet another change as compared to the previous years were clearer messages showcasing Russia as an alternative to the West and idealizing the Soviet Union (7.2%). Comments against Great Britain (0.8%) have been mainly detected in two pro-Kremlin online media outlets – Georgia and the World, and Sakinformi.

FIGURE 2. TOPICS OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES IN 2016-2017



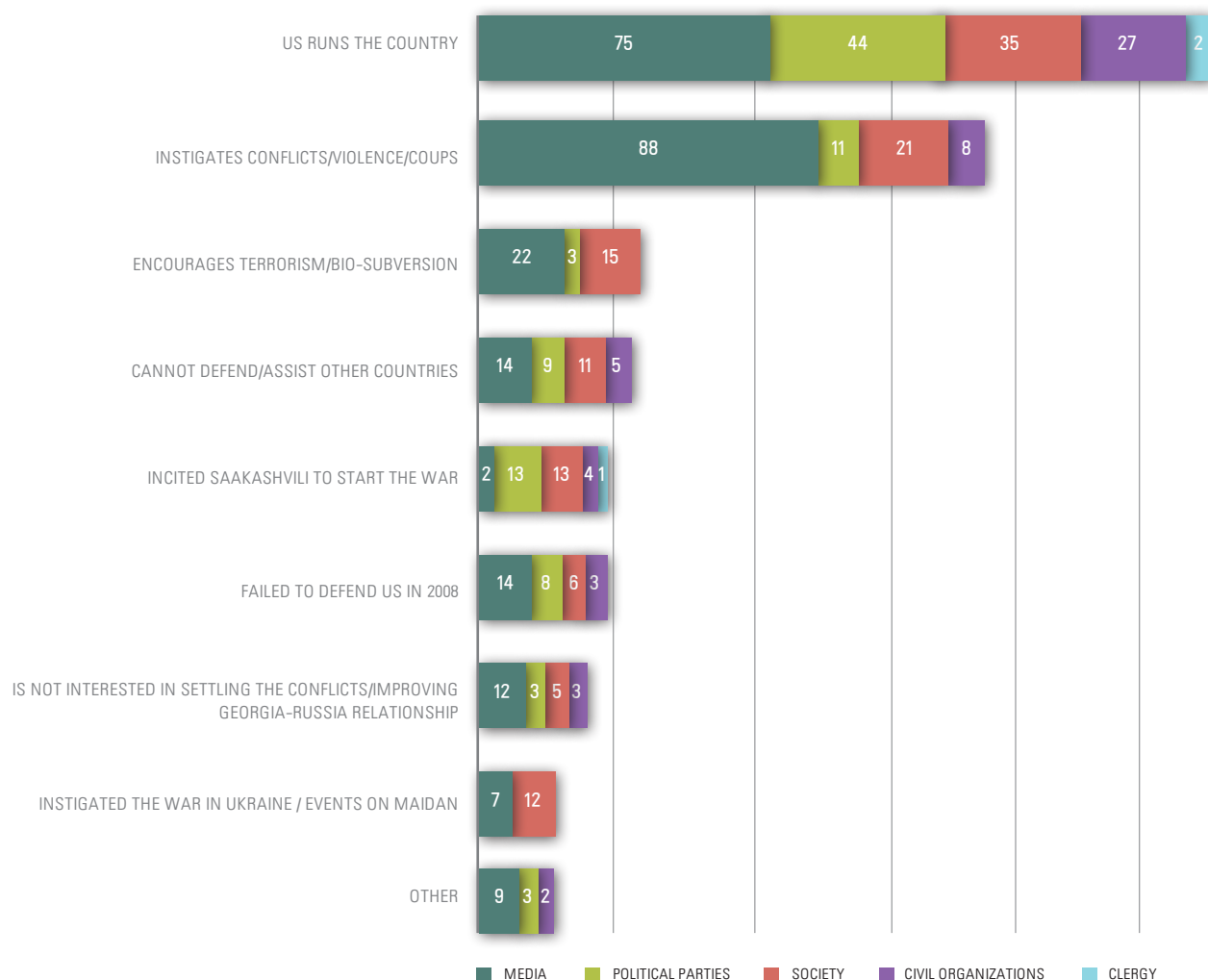
TOPICS	2017	2016
USA	510	170
NATO	362	253
The West	277	251
EU	264	112
Identity	253	411
Russian alternative/idealization of the Soviet system	144	61
NGOs/George Soros	142	

**THE USA.** With regard to the USA one could often hear allegations that the USA infringes on our sovereignty, meddles in a decision-making process and virtually runs the country (183). The USA was portrayed as an instigator of conflicts, violence, coup d'états (128), a country encouraging terrorism (40) and incapable of defending other countries, including Georgia (39). The USA was blamed for inciting President Mikheil

<sup>6</sup> Media Development Foundation; Anti-Western Propaganda, 2016. <http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/65/>

Saakashvili in 2008 to go into war with Russia (33), for failing, as a strategic partner, to defend Georgia in 2008 and providing only “water and diapers” as help (31). Some messages promoted the opinion that the USA was not interested in settling the conflicts and improving Georgia-Russia relationship (23). The USA was also blamed for instigating the war in Ukraine and events on the Maidan (19). Anti-US comments of various content (14) included several comments asserting that the US economic sanctions would rather harm the EU than Russia.

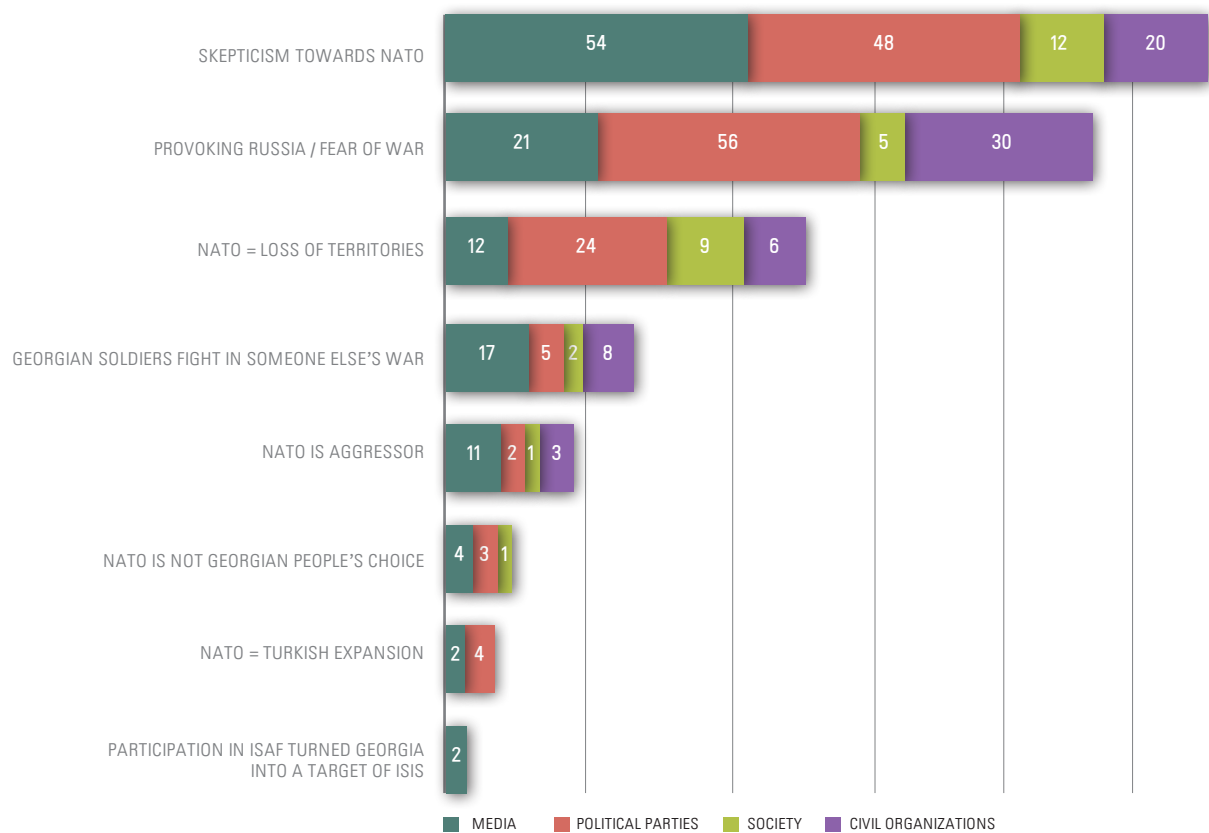
FIGURE 3. MESSAGES CONCERNING THE USA



**NATO.** Sowing skepticism about prospects of Georgia’s NATO membership was a dominant trend in this topic (134): one could often hear opinions that Georgia’s NATO membership was unrealistic; that Alliance was in crisis itself and required reformation; that defining the Euro-Atlantic integration as a foreign policy priority of the country in Georgia’s Constitution left the government very little room to maneuver. The cooperation with NATO, including the joint military training conducted in Georgia, was portrayed as a move which could provoke Russia and lead to military escalation (112), meanwhile inducing the fear of war and stressing that the integration into NATO was not a guarantee of Georgia’s security. An allegation that the loss of territories and disintegration of the country would be the price paid by Georgia for the integration into NATO (51) was mainly

based on the argument that Abkhazians and Ossetians living on the occupied territories were against the integration into the Alliance and that Article 5 of the NATO treaty required that the country cede the occupied territories in lieu for the membership. The participation of Georgian soldiers in international peacekeeping missions was portrayed as a sacrifice for others than the contribution to a collective security (32), while in two cases, it was stressed that the participation in ISAF mission turned Georgia into a target of ISIS. NATO was portrayed as an aggressor (17) while the NATO integration as a threat of intervention of Turkish army into Georgia (6). The 2008 plebiscite on NATO membership and the consensus on the integration into the Alliance was questioned on a number of occasions (8); the aim of these messages was to sow doubts about the results of the plebiscite that showed that NATO integration was a choice of Georgian people.

FIGURE 4. MESSAGES CONCERNING NATO

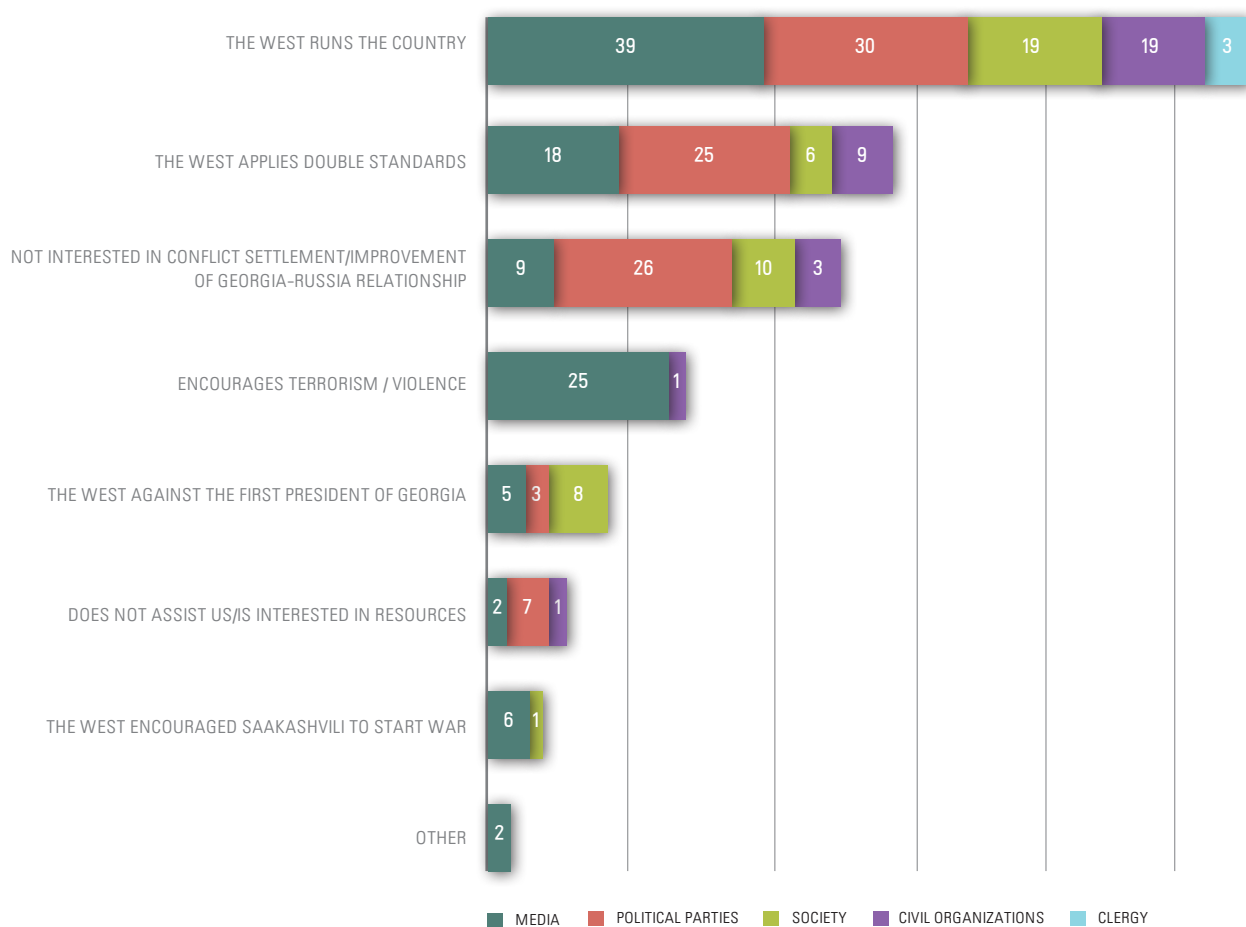


**THE WEST.** With regard to the West, as in the case of the USA, a dominating trend was to ingrain the opinion that western countries, like the Soviet Union, meddle in sovereign affairs of Georgia and virtually run the country (110). An allegation that the western democracy was a mere declaration and it applied double standards (58) was mainly heard in comments criticizing the decision of the European Court on the Rustavi 2 case,<sup>7</sup> comments evaluating the positions of western institutions concerning the violation of the rights

<sup>7</sup> On 2 March 2017, the European Court of Human Rights temporarily suspended the enforcement of the decision of the Supreme Court of Georgia on the change of the ownership of Rustavi 2 TV company. <http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=29904&search=>

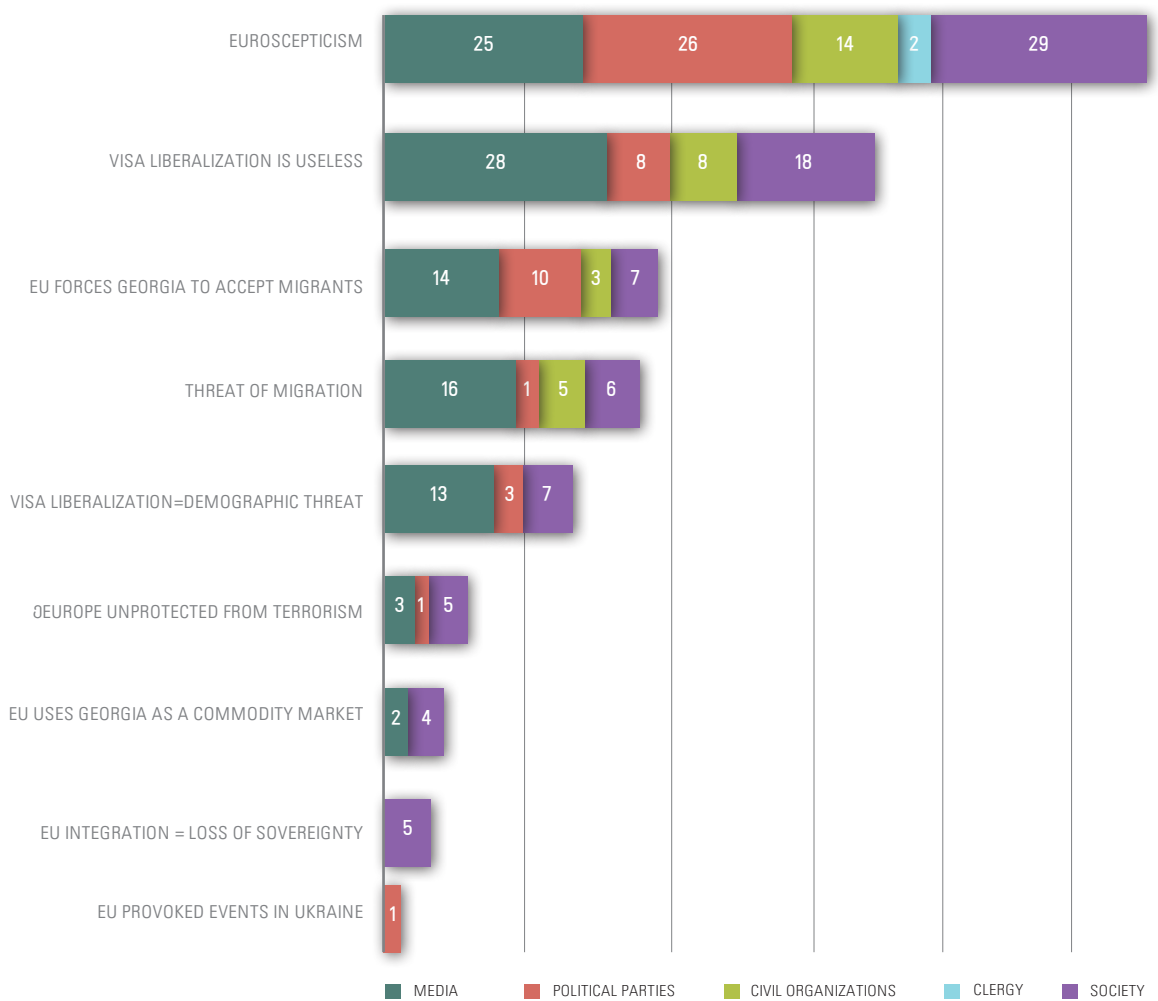
of former government representatives, and also in comments related to other foreign policy issues. Other comments included allegations that the West was not interested in the settlement of the conflicts and improvement of Georgia–Russia relationship (48), and the West encouraged terrorism and violence (26). The first president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was portrayed as a victim of western countries, including the USA (16), while the interest of the West towards Georgia was explained as the intention to use the country’s resources (10). The 2008 Russia–Georgia war was blamed on President Saakashvili who acted upon the encouragement of western countries (7).

FIGURE 5. MESSAGES CONCERNING THE WEST



**THE EU.** The dominant trend in this topic was Euroscepticism (96) placing an emphasis, on the one hand, on the absence of prospect of Georgia’s EU integration and, on the other hand, the Brexit crisis and the inevitability of EU breakup. Attempts were made to downplay the importance of visa liberalization granted to Georgia by the EU, asserting that the visa liberalization was actually useless for Georgian citizens (62). Allegations were disseminated that the EU forces Georgia to accept migrants (34), that the threat posed by migrants to Europe would extend to Georgia too (28), that the visa liberalization would endanger the demography of Georgia (23). Various sources portrayed Europe as a space unprotected from terrorism (9), Georgia as a commodity market for Europe (6), and the EU integration as the infringement on the country’s sovereignty (5). The EU was blamed for the events in Ukraine only by one respondent.

FIGURE 6. MESSAGES CONCERNING THE EU

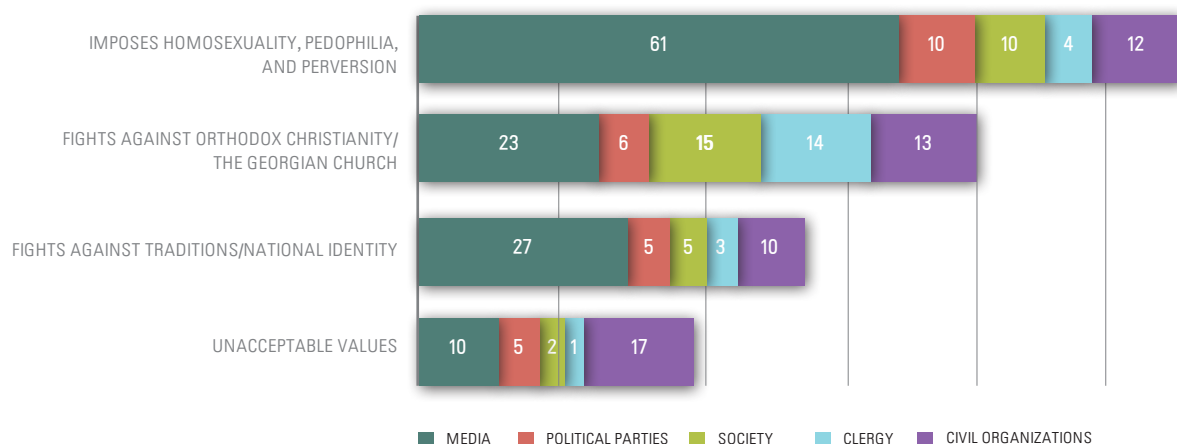


**IDENTITY/VALUES.** The topic of identity was dominated by allegations that the West imposed homosexuality, pedophilia, and perversion on Georgia (97). This indicator has shown a significant decrease<sup>8</sup> against a corresponding 2016 indicator, however, as the 2017 monitoring of hate speech shows, homophobia accounts for more than 50% of hate speech (731 homophobic comments). Consequently, the decrease of this indicator in anti-Western context does not mean that a general homophobic stance has been neutralized. Another frequently heard message was that the West fought against Orthodox Christianity and the Georgian Church (71), in which the blame for so-called cyanide case<sup>9</sup> as well as the “enticement” of religious servants visiting the USA, was placed on the USA while the blame for controlling the World Patriarchate was placed on Turkey and US special services. A special role of Russia in defending the Orthodox Christian identity was emphasized as an alternative to the West. The West was also accused of fighting against national identity, traditions and family (50); it was asserted that the Western values were unacceptable for Georgia (35).

<sup>8</sup> In 2016, the total of 411 comments fell within the category of identity, of which 232 were of homophobic content.

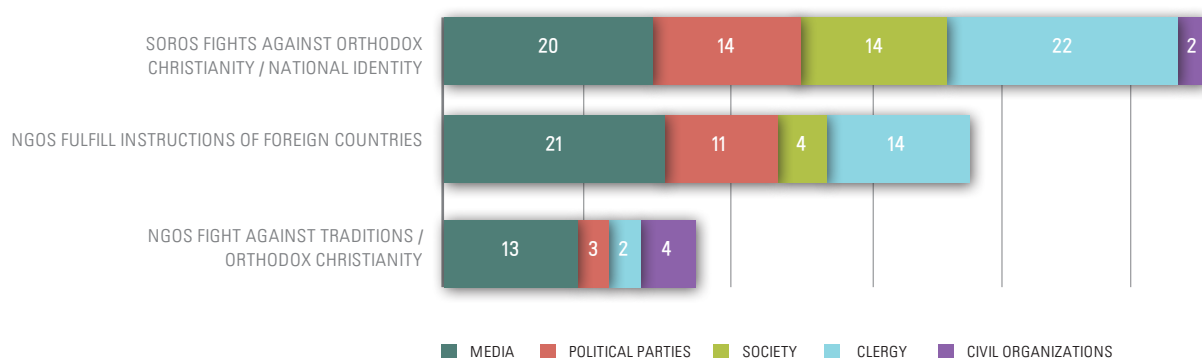
<sup>9</sup> On 5 September 2017, The Tbilisi City Court found Archpriest Giorgi Mamaladze guilty of plotting the murder of Shorena Tetrashvili, the Patriarch’s assistant, as well as of purchase and storage of firearms, and sentenced him to nine years in prison. <http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=30420&search=>

FIGURE 7. MESSAGES CONCERNING IDENTITY



**NGOS, GEORGE SOROS.** An increase was seen in comments against George Soros, American philanthropist and the founder of Open Society Foundation (72), which can be explained by stepped up activity of far-right groups. It was alleged that NGOs fulfilled instructions of foreign countries (50) and fought against Orthodox Christianity and national identity under the instructions of foreign powers (22). Calls were made for banning foreign country financed NGOs as well as Open Society Georgia Foundation. With regard to the latter, the Hungarian government, planning to ban the Soros Foundation, was cited as an example.

FIGURE 8. MESSAGES CONCERNING NGOS, GEORGE SOROS



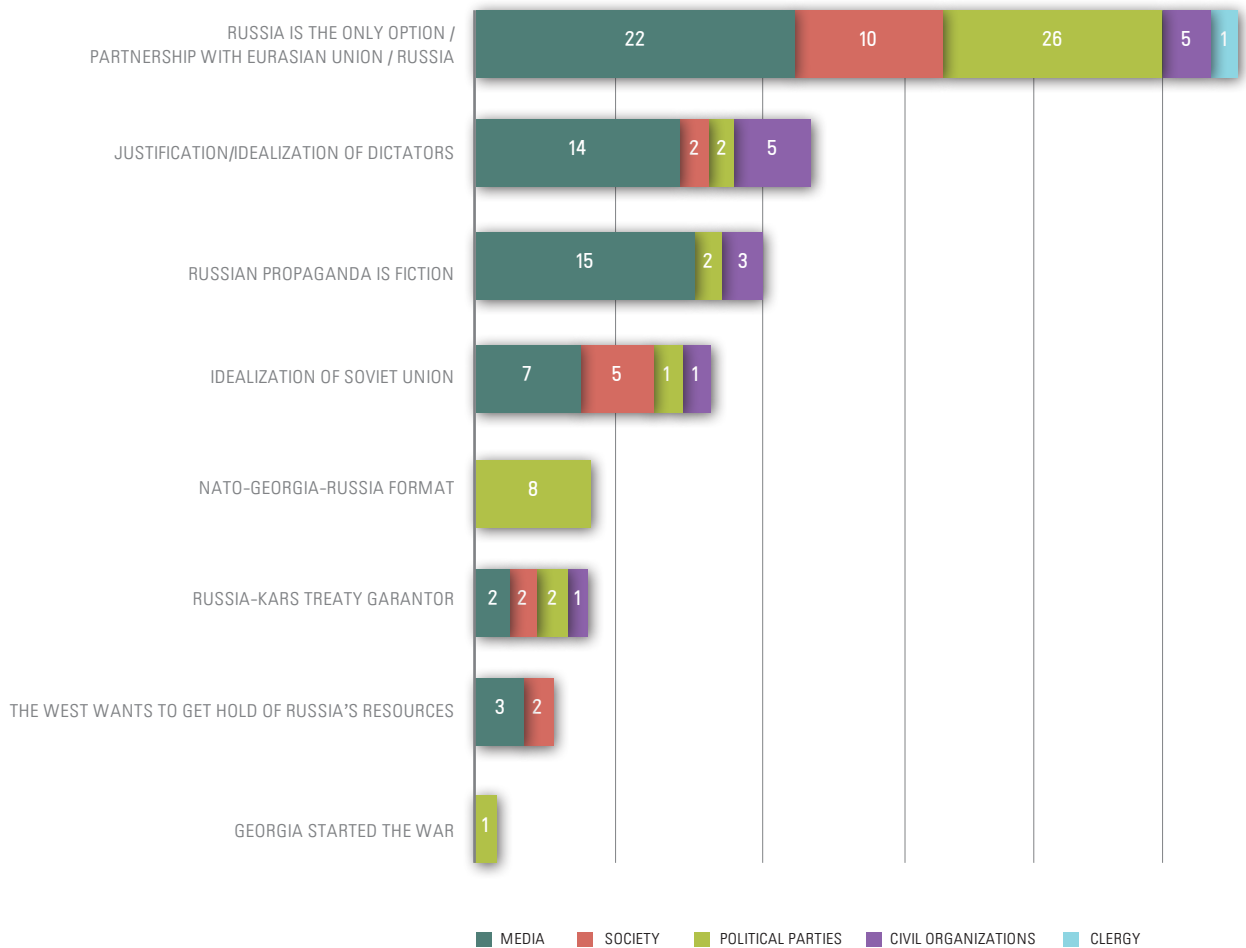
**RUSSIAN ALTERNATIVE/IDEALIZATION OF SOVIET UNION.** The change in foreign policy course and a strategic partnership with Russia were named by various sources as the only solution to problems faced by Georgia (64), thus fitting into the narrative that the West and the USA are unable to assist Georgia and are not interested in Georgia to mend its relationship with Russia. At the same time, the emphasis was placed on a vital necessity of cooperation with the Eurasian Union and Russia. Dictators such as Stalin, Gaddafi and Assad were idealized and justified (23). Several sources even asserted that the claims of the US and Western coalition about Bashar Al-Assad using chemical weapons in Syria were unfounded, which, as previous study of MDF shows,<sup>10</sup> fits into a Russian media narrative. Some sources asserted that the threat of Russian

<sup>10</sup> MDF, Coverage of Muslims Related issues in Georgian, Russian, Azeri and Turkish Media, 2017. <http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/79/>



propaganda was a sheer fiction whereas the Western propaganda was a real challenge (20). The Soviet Union and the Soviet system were idealized and nostalgia towards them kindled (14); an initiative of a new NATO-Georgia-Russia format (8) came from only one parliamentary subject – the Alliance of Patriots, which was proposed by the political party representatives after their visit to Moscow. A conspiracy theory that the Treaty of Kars expires in 2021<sup>11</sup> and thereafter Russia can no longer be a guarantor of Georgia’s territorial integrity and Turkey will occupy Adjara was disseminated by seven media sources with the aim to emphasize the importance of Russia in protecting the country from a “Turkish threat.” Several sources tried to ingrain the idea that the West wanted to get hold of Russia’s natural resources; a representative of the ruling party said that Georgia, not Russia, was responsible for the start of the 2008 war.

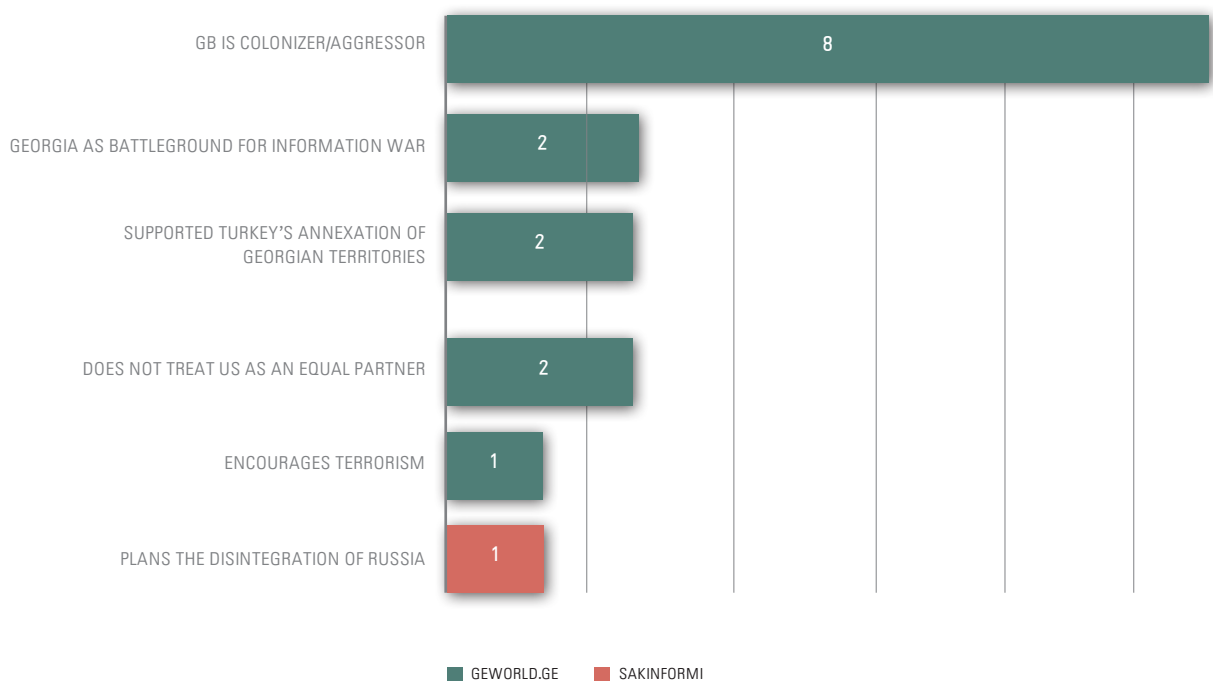
FIGURE 9. MESSAGES CONCERNING RUSSIA, SOVIET SYSTEM



<sup>11</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>

**GREAT BRITAIN.** Negative messages about Great Britain were disseminated mainly by two media outlets with ties to the Kremlin: Georgia and the World, and Sakinformi. One could hear allegations that Great Britain, based on its past experience, again tried to “colonize” other countries, including Georgia (8), and viewed Georgia and other countries as a battleground for information war (2). To support these allegations, references were made to the information security policy of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) document of the UK government. Historical facts were distorted to prove that western countries did not consider interests of Georgia, alleging that in 1945, Great Britain facilitated the seizure of Georgian territories (2). It was alleged that Great Britain did not treat Georgia as an equal partner even today (2), that the UK Prime Minister staged a terrorist act himself to hush up the Brexit uproar (1) and that it planned the disintegration of Russia (1).

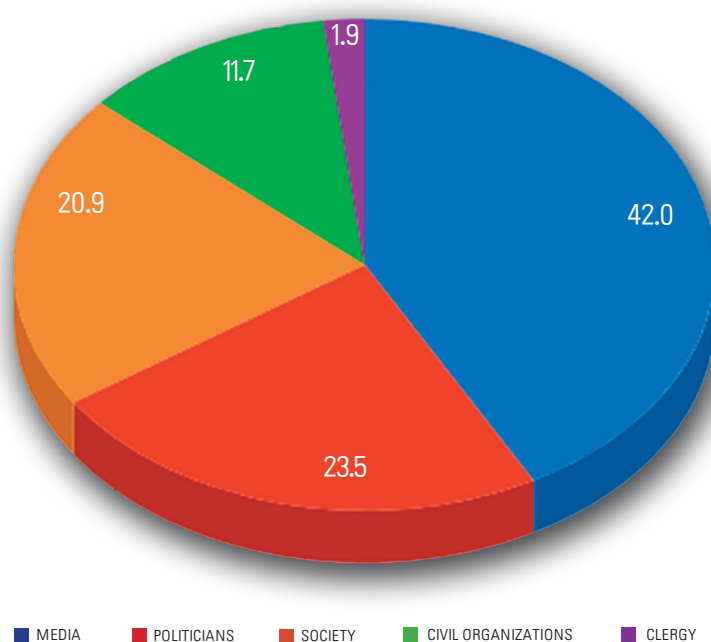
FIGURE 10. MESSAGES CONCERNING GREAT BRITAIN



## 2. ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES AND THEIR SOURCES

Alike previous years, the main source of anti-Western messages was media (827), followed by politicians (463), society (411), civil organizations (230) and the clergy (37).

FIGURE 11. SOURCES OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES.



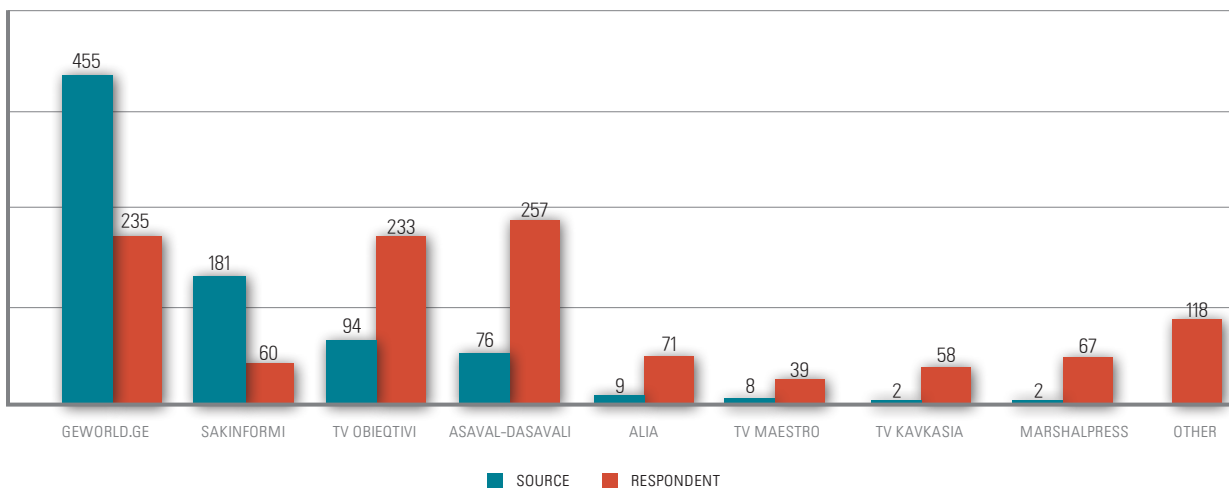
### 2.1. MEDIA

The monitoring outlined four media outlets as main sources of anti-Western messages. The leader among these four was the online news agency Georgia and the World ([geworld.ge](http://geworld.ge)) with its journalists and authors having made 455 anti-Western comments and published 235 identical comments of respondents. The next by the number of anti-Western messages was the online news agency Sakinformi (editorial comments – 181, re-

spondents' comments – 60), followed by TV Obieqtivi (94) and the newspaper Asaval-Dasavali (76). TV Obieqtivi (232) and the newspaper Asaval-Dasavali (257) were in the lead by the number of respondents' comments, which speaks about their editorial policy, especially taking into account that these outlets publish identical opinions and offer no room to alternative views.

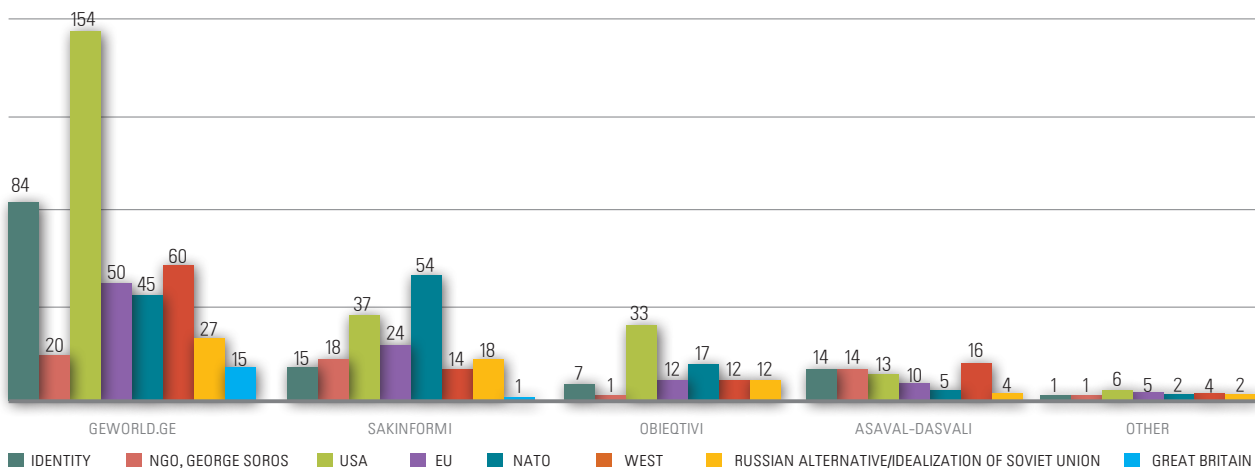
A relatively lower indicator of anti-Western editorial comments but a higher indicator of respondents' comment of similar content were seen in the newspaper Alia (nine and 71, respectively), TV Maestro (eight and 39, respectively), TV Kavkasia (two and 58, respectively), and Marshalpress (two and 67, respectively). As many as 118 anti-Western comments of respondents were published in 10 various media outlets.

FIGURE 12. SOURCES OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES BY MEDIA OUTLETS AND THEIR RESPONDENTS.



The Figure 13 shows the frequency of different types of comments in media outlets: the highest number of comments against the US was identified in Georgia and the World (154) and TV Obieqtivi (33); against NATO – in Sakinformi (54); negative editorial comments regarding the West (16), identity (14), NGOs (14) and the USA (13) were published with almost equal frequency in Asaval-Dasavali. A negative coverage of topics of identity (84), the West (60), the EU (50) and Great Britain (15) were the highest in Georgia and the World.

FIGURE 13. TYPOLOGY OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES BY MEDIA OUTLETS



Georgia and the World as well as TV Obieqtivi largely portrayed the USA as an aggressor, instigator of coups, inciter of terrorism, whereas Russia was portrayed as the country fighting against all this:

**VALERI KVARATSKHELIA, PRESENTER:** “The USA has recently created a terrorist state, the so-called Islamic State, and used it for strengthening its hegemony in the Middle East. It was primarily Russia that went against it because Russia believed that the existence of a terrorist state was unacceptable” (TV Obieqtivi, Okros Kveta, 2 December).

**IZA TAMAZASHVILI, AUTHOR:** “Have you seen what the West did to Ukraine? It made Ukrainians to forget Kievan Rus and turned two kindred nations into enemies” (Georgia and World, 21 July).

Both TV Obieqtivi and Asaval–Dasavali paper promoted the idea that the USA and the West were not interested in the conflict settlement and the establishment of direct Russia–Georgia dialogue:

**JABA KHUBUA, JOURNALIST:** “...the Georgian government, fearing Kelly [United States Ambassador to Georgia Ian Kelly], abstains from engaging in dialogue with Russia and discussing the de-occupation of the country in a principled and dignified manner, without saviors and ear-whisperers!” (Asaval–Dasavali, 4–10 September).

**BONDO MDZINARISHVILI, PRESENTER:** “Our friends, Western friends, tell us too that we should talk to Russia, but at the same time, they say that they should be involved in these talks” (TV Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 4 October).

The largest amount of material about a threat of possible biological subversions, coming from the US, was published by Georgia and World:

“According to the legend, military-biological labs are purportedly designed ‘to reduce biological threat’ in this or that state; in reality, however, this is a network controlled by Pentagon, which studies the impact of viruses and bacteria on a concrete genetic fund – be it of humans, animals or plants” (Georgia and World, 26 July).

Presenters of the TV Obieqtivi were engaged in promoting the opinion that NATO is incapable to protect and assist us and therefore it is necessary to talk to Russia:

**NINO RATISHVILI, PRESENTER:** “Don’t you see how incapable NATO member states are? Who is protected?! When one fine day, unexpectedly, three persons are killed at three different locations in the center...” (TV Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 5 June).

**BONDO MDZINARISHVILI, PRESENTER:** “They [NATO] do not give us weapons and in fact, we have been abandoned to our own fate. What one can do in such a situation but to talk to our neighbor [Russia] which fears us...” (TV Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 4 October).

Almost all monitored media outlets portrayed Europe as the space unprotected from terrorism and migrants and disseminated messages about an obligation to accept migrants as a condition of visa liberalization:

**ARNO KHIDIRBEGISHVILI, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** “Europeans have turned into the refugees in their own countries... The same will happen to Georgia which is already inundated by Arab, Indian, Chinese and African migrants” (Sakinformi, 6 July).

**NIKA KORINTELI, JOURNALIST:** “...Defenders of so-called western values, tolerance and multiculturalism want to have a similar situation here as it is in France which has a ‘mosque of Virgin Mary’, or Belgium, Germany or Denmark (Georgia and World, 6 October).

Issues of identity and human rights were also topical in all monitored media outlets, according to which, the West imposes homosexuality on us, fights against Orthodox Christianity and authenticity:

**JABA KHUBUA, JOURNALIST:** “The Georgian government, fearing Kelly [United States Ambassador to Georgia Ian Kelly], abstains from confronting an aggressive propaganda of homosexuality and other perversions imposed on Georgian population by treacherous media outlets!” (Asaval–Dasavali, 4–10 September).

**GIORGI GACHECHILADZE, JOURNALIST:** “Today, so-called western values are being imposed on Georgian population, which endanger the notion of family and national traditions, undermine Orthodox Christianity as the last pillar of authenticity” (Sakinformi, 6 November).

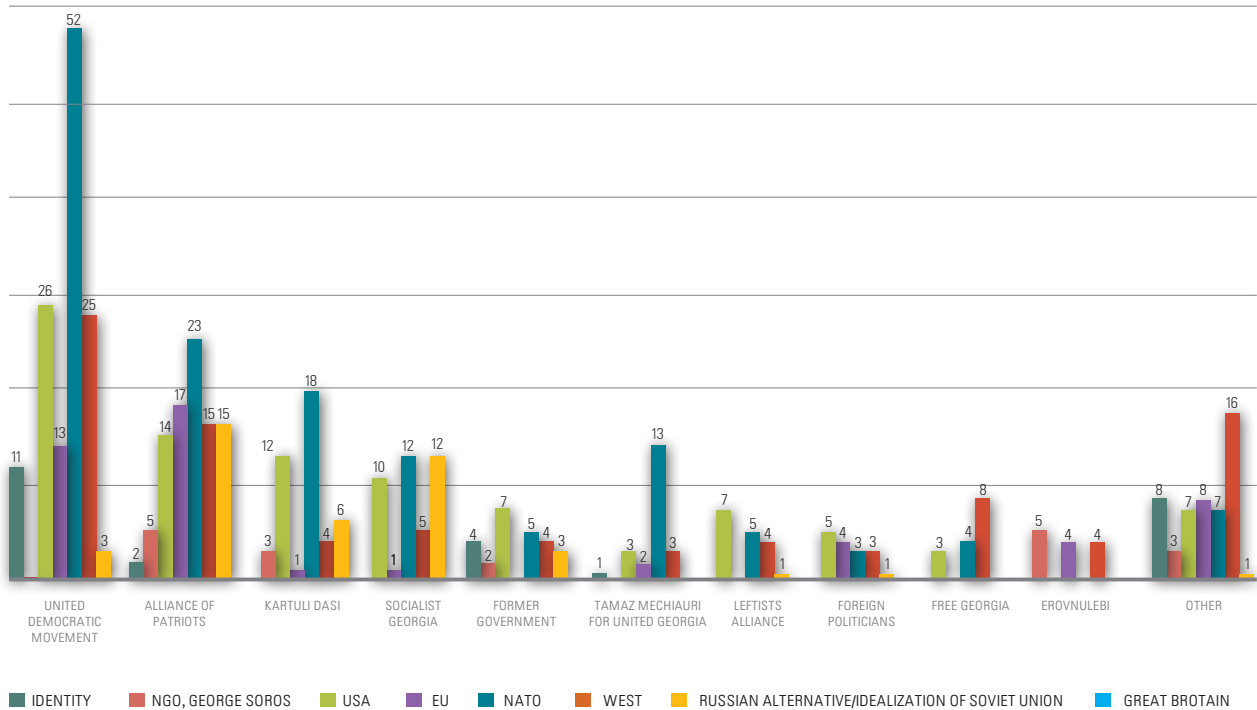
**DAVIT MKHEIDZE, AUTHOR:** “All the misfortunes on the planet Earth may largely be blamed on Western powers for their denial of ‘sovereign democracy’ established and implemented by Russian President Vladimir Putin... In other words, it is unacceptable, under the disguise of human rights protection, to force nations of not only Islamic culture but also Eastern European or other (mainly Orthodox) countries – even more so Georgia – with traditional patriarchal culture, mentality and moral values to live according to the rules of European and US democracy” (Georgia and World, 24 November).

## 2.2. POLITICAL PARTIES/POLITICIANS

Alike 2016, the United Democratic Movement was the leader among political parties by the number of anti-Western statements (130); it was followed by the Alliance of Patriots (91), Kartuli Dasi (Georgian Troup) (44) and Socialist Georgia (40). The leader of Socialist Georgia is simultaneously a presenter at TV Obieqtivi and consequently, he is quoted in the category of media too. The list is continued by separate representatives of the former authority (25), Tamaz Mechiauri for United Georgia (22), the Leftists Alliance (17), foreign, including Russian politicians (16), the Free Georgia (15), the Erovnulebi (13). The component “Other” include separate representatives of the ruling Georgian Dream party (6).

As the Figure 14 shows, statements against NATO dominated this segment while the comments on various topics followed in more or less equal amounts.

FIGURE 14. TYPOLOGY OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES BY POLITICAL PARTIES



The majority of political parties assessed the NATO joint military training in Georgia as a threat of provoking Russia and escalating military action; the same holds true for the integration into NATO which was assessed as the threat of Turkish intervention and loss of territorial integrity. A status of a neutral country and a joint NATO-Georgia-Russia format were proposed as an alternative to NATO by the United Democratic Movement and the Alliance of Patriots, respectively.

**NINO BURJANADZE, UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT:** “I think this conspicuous provocation [the NATO-military training] will cost us dear... I am afraid that this may have dire consequences for us” (Rustavi 2, Kurieri, 2 August).

**VALERI KVARATSKHELIA, SOCIALIST GEORGIA:** “Abkhazia and Tskhinvali will be followed by Samtskhe-Javakheti because Armenians living there will never agree to join NATO” (Asava\_dasavali, 7-13 August).

**TAMAZ MECHIAURI, TAMAZ MECHIAURI FOR UNITED GEORGIA:** “Even if we join [NATO], this will cost us the loss of not only Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, but Adjara too” (Sakinformi, 30 May).

**GIORGI MAGHLAKELIDZE, ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS:** “NATO for us means the intervention of Turkish NATO into our territory; Belgians and Dutch or Danish will not be stationed here” (TV Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 12 October).

Almost all political parties promoted the opinion that the US and the West were not interested in conflict settlement, that Saakashvili started the war with the encouragement of US and that western countries stifled a direct dialogue between Georgia and Russia.

**NINO BURJANADZE, UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT:** “... The United States made Saakashvili to start war in 2008” (Sakinformi, 2 August).

**JONDI BAGHATURIA, KARTULI DASI:** “The United States issued an instruction to not engage in any direct dialogue [with Russia], to conduct dialogue with Russians only under their supervision and the Geneva format is such a dialogue” (TV Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 19 May).

The security minister of Eduard Shevardnadze government, while fanning the skepticism towards NATO, talked about the Eurasian Union as the only possibility for Georgia:

**VALERI KHABURDZANIA, FORMER SECURITY MINISTER:** “A close ties with Russia and the Eurasian Union is a prerequisite for Georgia’s better future! I cannot see any other alternative for political and economic well-being of Georgia!... Time has proved that Georgia has no prospects of joining NATO and not because Russia is hindering it but because NATO itself does not need Georgia as an additional headache...” (Asaval-Dasavali, 21-27 August).

Specifying the Euro-Atlantic integration as a top priority in the Constitution was openly opposed by one representative of the ruling party, while a member of the Georgian Dream cabinet tried to shift the blame for starting the 2008 war with Russia from Russia onto Georgia:

**NUKRI KANTARIA, GEORGIA DREAM:** “I am against a provisional statement in the Constitution that Georgia’s foreign policy course is the integration into Euro-Atlantic structures” (Asaval-Dasavali, 12-18 June).

**DAVIT SERGEENKO, HEALTH CARE MINISTER:** “In describing Russia’s action, the term ‘creeping occupation’ is often applied, unfortunately, which is incorrect in its essence. It is neither creeping nor gradual. It is the delineation of those ‘borders’ which the then government, unfortunately, legitimized in 2008” (Rustavi 2, Kurieri, 3 July; Marshalpress, 3 August; Sakinformi, 7 August).

Separate political parties alleged that Georgia was to accept migrants as a condition of visa liberalization, which would inevitably pose a demographic threat:

**SANDRO BREGADZE, EROVNULEBI:** “If we now have half a million emigrants, after the entry into force of visa liberalization, we will have a million more; Africans and Arabs will settle in Georgia, which will further worsen our demography and at the end of the day, we, Georgians, will become exotic aborigines” (Kviris Palitra, 6-12 February).

The topic of the West fighting against Orthodox Christianity and imposing homosexuality was also part of discourse of almost every political party:

**VALERI KHABURDZANIA, FORMER SECURITY MINISTER:** “A western Orthodox Christianity is a sheer nonsense – it is Conchita i.e. a bearded woman. Those supporting this in Sinod today, fight against the Orthodox clergy.



If our Synod, like the Eurovision, votes for Conchita and deposes the Patriarch, this will be the end and our demise” (Marshalpress, 13 February).

**NUKRI KANTARIA, GEORGIAN DREAM:** “I have never concealed that a same sex marriage is unacceptable for me as an Orthodox Christian and compatriot. Let me respond to a journalist’s question: ‘there is a clip showing that there are countries where a teacher of a kindergarten asks children who have two fathers? And they clap hands. Then the teacher asks who have two mothers? And they clap hands again.’ I do not think that those children will develop a healthy psychic. We are a small nation, let us take care of our genetics and our future – is this an anti-Western statement of any form, running counter to the country’s foreign course?” (Marshalpress, 19 April).

### 2.3. CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS

The media monitoring detected anti-Western messages from 33 civil organizations with six amongst being most frequently quoted by media. An ultra-right association Georgian March was most aggressive against George Soros and NGOs financed by foreign countries (18); while People’s Assembly (13), Eurasian Institute (8) and Union of Human Rights Defenders (8) were against the USA; the Global Research Center was against NATO (12) and the EU (7). The People’s Assembly is an organization associated with a pro-Russian political party, United Democratic Movement. According to the research by damoukidebloba.com,<sup>12</sup> the Eurasian Institute and Global Research Center are directly linked to Russia. These organizations have ties with the International Eurasian Movement, the organization established by Alexander Dugin who is the ideologist of Russian aggressive expansion policy, as well as with Lev Gumilyov Center.

CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS	ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES
People’s Assembly	34
Union of Human Rights Defenders	38
Global Research Center	29
Georgian March	28
Eurasian Institute	24
Stalinist	11

### 2.4. THE CLERGY

The most active among religious servants were Basil Mkalavishvili and Giorgi Razmadze, the priest of Ketevan the Martyr Church in Avchala and member of Union of Orthodox Parents. Basil Mkalavishvili does not represent the Georgian Patriarchate, because he was defrocked in 1996. For his extremist actions manifested in attacking Jehovah’s Witnesses and Baptists and demising their literature, Basil Mkalavishvili was arrested in 2004 and sentenced to six years in prison.

<sup>12</sup> Damoukidebloba.com, Russian Influence on Georgian NGOs and Media, 2015. [http://damoukidebloba.com/c/news/rusuli\\_gavlana](http://damoukidebloba.com/c/news/rusuli_gavlana)

RELIGIOUS SERVANTS	ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES
Basil Mkalavishvili	10
Giorgi Razmadze	7
Davit Isakadze	4
Grigol Mezvrisvili	4

Apart from statements about the threat of losing identity in case of integration with the West, religious servants promoted an exceptional role of Russia as an Orthodox country and blamed the US for encouraging the previous government to start the 2008 war with Russia.

**BASIL MKALAVISHVILI, RELIGIOUS SERVANT:** “I, a Georgian orthodox priest, who realizes the threats faced by our country, urge President of powerful Russia, Vladimir Putin: Russia is the most powerful Orthodox country and antagonism between us plays into the hands of Masonic, anti-Christian forces!” (Asaval-Dasavali, 17-23 July).

**GRIGOL MEZVRISHVILI, RELIGIOUS SERVANT:** “The only power that emerged as the winner from the August war [in 2008] was the United States. By means of heinous operation, planned and implemented by the US, it planted two such time bombs at the border with Russia in the Caucasus that if set off they may not only destabilize Russia but also throw the entire Caucasus into the flames of war” (Asaval-Dasavali, 14-20 August).

## 2.5. REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIETY

The highest number of anti-Western comments by representatives of society accounted for Hamlet Chipashvili who was a member of the political party Revival Union of the former leader of Autonomous Republic of Adjara Aslan Abashidze and most frequently appeared on TV Obieqtivi. Anti-Western comments were most frequently made by representatives of society in phone-ins on TV Obieqtivi. Pro-Kremlin media outlets also often quoted a Moscow-based political scientist, Aleksandre Chachia who is a member of the public council of the Historic Heritage organization which established Georgia and the World. Yet another often quoted person with links to Russia was Tristan Tselashvili. He was found guilty of spying for Russia during the 2008 war but later, was released as a political prisoner by the Georgian Dream. Tristan Tselashvili was often quoted by Georgian and Russian sources to support the theory that Georgian snipers opened fire on demonstrators on the Maidan and that events in Ukraine were encouraged by the West<sup>13</sup>. Since 2017, an astrologer Mikheil Tsagareli has been a commentator on Sputnik-Georgia, a media outlet founded by the Russian government.

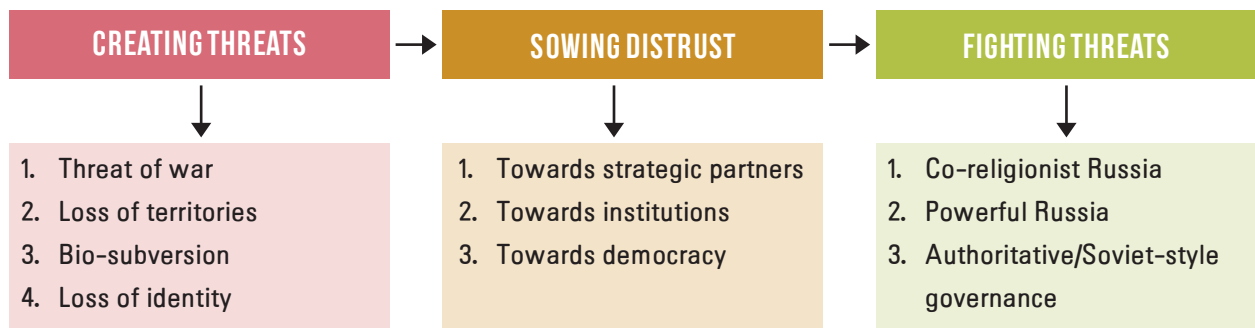
REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIETY	ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGE
Hamlet Chipashvili, political scientist	50
Viewers of Obieqtivi	38
Aleksander Chachia, political scientist	21
Rezo Amashukeli, poet	20
Soso Tsintsadze, political scientist	12
Tristan Tselashvili, person convicted for spying for Russia	11
Mikheil Tsagareli, astrologer, a commentator on Sputnik-Georgia	10

<sup>13</sup> Myth Detector. Tristan Tselashvili Underpins Fake Documentary on Georgian Snipers, 11 December 2017

# 3. PROPAGANDA STRATEGY AND METHODS

**STRUCTURE OF KREMLIN NARRATIVE.** The structure of the Kremlin narrative in the Georgian discourse consists of three stages and aims at:

1. Creating threats;
2. Sowing distrust towards partners and Western institutions;
3. Ingraining a belief that Russia is the only option in fighting against the threats and that authoritative/Soviet-style governance is necessary.



- I. THREATS** → **1. WAR** → ● The USA encouraged Saakashvili to start the war.  
● NATO = provoking Russia.
- 2. LOSS OF TERRITORIES** → ● NATO = loss of territories.  
● NATO = Turkish intervention.  
● Treaty of Kars expires in 2021 and Russia will not be able to defend Adjara from Turkey.
- 3. BIO-SUBVERSION** → ● Viruses of the Lugar laboratory kills Georgian gene / causes epidemics.

4. LOSS OF IDENTITY →
- Religious
  - Ethnic
  - Gender
  - Assimilation (with migrants)

- 
- II. SOWING DISTRUST** →
1. TOWARDS STRATEGIC PARTNERS →
- The USA failed to protect us during the 2008 war.
  - The US / NATO / the EU cannot protect Georgia.
  - The US/the EU are not interested in conflict settlement, improvement of the relationship with Russia.
2. TOWARDS INSTITUTIONS →
- Instead of the government elected by people, Georgia is run by the US and the West.
  - NGOs fulfill instructions of foreign countries.
3. TOWARDS DEMOCRACY →
- Western democracy is nominal and applies double standards.
  - Council of Europe, EU, ECHR are not democratic institutions.

- 
- III. FIGHTING THREATS** →
1. CO-RELIGIONIST RUSSIA →
- Defends Orthodox Christianity.
  - Fights against homosexuality.
2. POWERFUL RUSSIA →
- Actually fights against terrorism, the only space protected from terrorism.
  - Defends countries from aggressor NATO, the USA.
3. AUTHORITATIVE / SOVIET-STYLE GOVERNANCE →
- The Soviet system disintegrated by the West would protect us from current challenges.
  - Had Stalin been alive, he would have reintegrate Georgia's territories.
  - Libya, which was ruined by the West, was a socially protected state.

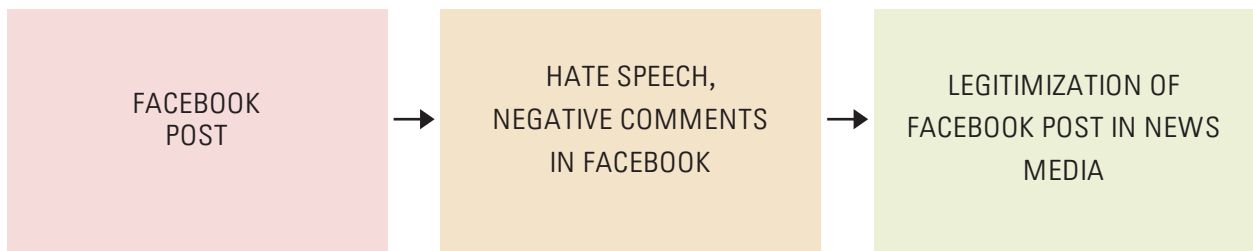
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**PROPAGANDA METHODS.** During a one-year-long monitoring, the Media Development Foundation, within the framework of Myth Detector project, detected 144 misinformation. These includes not only misinformation disseminated by the monitored media outlets, but also randomly selected fake news disseminated by other media outlets via social networks. The verification and double-checking of 144 fake news revealed that the following methods were applied in them:

- █ Fake photos (23);
- █ Fabrication of history (19);
- █ Social media as an unbalanced source of fake news (8);
- █ Conspiracy (6);
- █ Video manipulation (5);
- █ Presenting literary work/satirical-humorous publication as a real fact (4);
- █ In other cases, only fake and manipulative news was disseminated.

### 3.1. SOCIAL MEDIA AS A SOURCE OF MISINFORMATION

Social media is often used as a source for disseminating fake news. In such a case, social media offers information provided by one party and not double-checked with independent sources. Tabloid online or print news media uses this method to disseminate fake news, thus legitimizing unverified news released via social media.



Online agencies, without any double-checking, published a photo featuring a purported raid of an Orthodox church by supporters of schism in Ukraine, which was uploaded on the social network by the leader of Georgian Troupe, Jondi Baghaturia, with the aim of manipulating religious sentiments. In reality, however, the photo featured a scene of explosion in the Orthodox church of Zaporozhye, Ukraine, on 28 July 2010.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.2. FABRICATION OF HISTORY

The largest share in the fabrication of history accounts for distorting the Soviet past and stirring a feeling of nostalgia towards the Soviet order.

<sup>14</sup> Myth Detector. Baghaturia shares disinformative photos about alleged raids in Ukrainian Orthodox churches, 15 June 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/baghaturia-shares-disinformative-photos-about-alleged-raids-ukrainian-orthodox-churches>

Crimes committed by the Soviet Union were justified and historic facts were portrayed in a misleading manner; in particular, the Katyn tragedy,<sup>15</sup> Holodomor,<sup>16</sup> Holocaust in Ukraine,<sup>17</sup> Soviet occupation of Lithuania,<sup>18</sup> Stalin purges of 1937.<sup>19</sup>

The aim of stirring nostalgia towards the Soviet Union was pursued by the myths asserting that the rule of Stalin was democratic,<sup>20</sup> Lavrenty Beria supported Georgia's development,<sup>21</sup> the Soviet Union must be given credit for the electrification of Georgia,<sup>22</sup> the West was dreaming of subway system when the first underground station was opened in Soviet Georgia,<sup>23</sup> et cetera.

### 3.3. PRESENTING LITERARY WORK/SATIRICAL-HUMOROUS PUBLICATION AS A REAL FACT

One of propaganda methods, well-tested in the Georgian media, is the presentation of literary works and satirical-humorous news as real facts.

The literary work, a Soviet-time novel "Eternal Call" (Вечный зов) was presented as the so-called Dulles Doctrine<sup>24</sup> in Georgian media in 2015–2016 too; this happened twice in 2017. According to this conspiracy theory, the CIA chief Allen Dulles had developed a plan, during the Cold War, to destroy the Soviet Union by corrupting the cultural heritage and moral values of the Soviet nation.

Propaganda media platforms also used satirical-humorous webpages as a source and reprinted publications there as real facts. For example, a publication<sup>25</sup> which asserted that a night shift security guard of Smithsonian

<sup>15</sup> Myth Detector. Attempt to distort the Katyn massacre, 13 June 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/attempt-distort-katyn-massacre>

<sup>16</sup> Myth Detector. Three Lies about Holodomor in Ukraine, 23 June 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/three-lies-about-holodomor-ukraine>

<sup>17</sup> Myth Detector. Politicano Falsified a Material from Daily Mail, 28 June 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/politicano-falsified-material-daily-mail>

<sup>18</sup> Myth Detector. Politicano justifies the occupation of Lithuania by the Soviet Union, 17 October 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/politicano-justifies-occupation-lithuania-soviet-union>

<sup>19</sup> Myth Detector. Pro-Russian Media Justifies Repressions in 1937, 29 November 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/pro-russian-media-justifies-repressions-1937>

<sup>20</sup> Myth Detector. ОБКОМ ТВ and Obieqtivi claim that Stalin outran the world in the sphere of democracy, publication date 30 December 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/obkom-tv-and-obieqtivi-claim-stalin-outran-world-sphere-democracy>

<sup>21</sup> Myth Detector. Myths about Lavrenty Beria, 16 November 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/myths-about-lavrenty-beria>

<sup>22</sup> Myth Detector. Manipulation: Politicano ascribes the electrification of Georgian territory to the Soviet Union, 1 December 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/manipulation-politicano-ascribes-electrification-georgian-territory-soviet-union>

<sup>23</sup> Myth Detector. Assertion, that Western societies were dreaming of a metropolitan subway systems while the Soviet Union was undergoing a 'Reconstruction', is incorrect, 1 November 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/assertion-western-societies-were-dreaming-metropolitan-subway-systems-while-soviet-union-was-0>

<sup>24</sup> Myth Detector. Geworld.ge Links the Use of foul Language in Georgia with the Dulles Doctrine, 5 July, 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/geworldge-links-use-foul-language-georgia-dulles-doctrine>

<sup>25</sup> Myth Detector. Geworld's photo manipulations and disinformation about rape of mummy and a wax figurine, 27 April 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/geworlds-photo-manipulations-and-disinformation-about-rape-mummy-and-wax-figurine-0>

museum in Washington was arrested for raping 2,500 year-old mummy, pursued the aim of implanting an idea that necrophilia is a way of Western life.

### 3.4 AD NAUSEAM

Ad nauseam technique implies continuously repeating one and the same idea. This may be an idea, or a simple motto which is repeated so often that people come to believe it.

In 2017, much like in 2015–2016, various respondents repeatedly declared that during the 2008 war the US assisted Georgia only with “water and diapers,” thereby underlying that the United States cannot protect Georgia from the threat of war. In parallel, it was stressed that in future, in case of a similar threat, we should not pin hopes on the strategic ally.

<p><b>NINO BURJANADZE</b>, United Democratic Movement: “The US sent us nothing but <b>diapers and water</b> in 2008, the same is now”.</p>	<p><b>JONDI BAGHATURIA</b>, Kartuli Dasi: “We have the experience that Americans send nothing else but <b>diapers</b> in times of hardship, during the war.”</p>	<p><b>GIORGI MAGHLAKELIDZE</b>, Alliance of Patriots: “Let’s be frank, it means nothing in case of that aggression and hybrid warfare. At best, it may be <b>water and diapers</b> and various such food, humanitarian aid and we will still be left face to face with the enemy.”</p>	<p><b>GIORGI GIGAURI</b>, journalist: “Putin even reminded us how the entire West and especially out ‘strategic ally,’ the USA, ignored us, allowing Russian tanks freely drive across Georgia and then sending a large batch of <b>diapers and water</b> ‘to assist!’ That’s why <b>Putin hinders our integration into NATO!</b>”</p>
<p>KAVKASIA, BARIERI, 1 AUGUST</p>	<p>ALIA, 6-12 FEBRUARY</p>	<p>TV OBIEQTIVI, GHAMIS STUDIO, 12 OCTOBER</p>	<p>ASAVAL-DASAVALI, 29 MAY – 4 JUNE</p>

Editorial materials were reprinted, and various respondents commented, on the conspiracy regarding the Treaty of Kars, according to which the Treaty of Kars<sup>26</sup> expires in 2021 and after that Russia will not be able to be a guarantor of Georgia’s territorial integrity and Turkey will occupy Adjara.

Alike the previous years, 2017 also saw publication of conspiracies about Richard Lugar Public Health Research Center in Tbilisi, according to which the center was engaged in developing lethal viruses with the aim to destroy the Georgian gene.

<sup>26</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>

### 3.5 FALSE DILEMMA TECHNIQUE

The false dilemma, i.e. an “either/or” reasoning means claiming that there are only two options of a situation, and giving preference to either of the two, ignoring any additional option.

To demonstrate that the integration into NATO will come at a cost of losing the territories occupied by Russia, various sources applied the false dilemma method.

**Message:** NATO=loss of territories

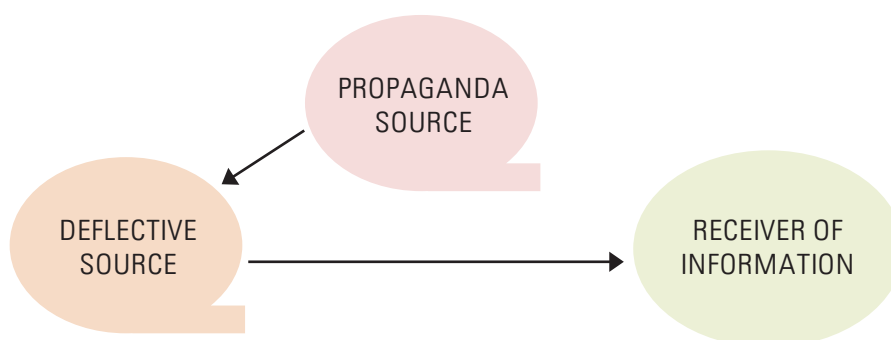
<p><b>ADA MARSHANIA</b>, Alliance of Patriots: "What is our goal? Is it joining NATO or entering Sokhumi?"</p> <p>IMEDI, QRONIKA, 24 SEPTEMBER</p>	<p><b>TEMUR MIRIANASHVILI</b>, former advisor to Eduard Shevardnadze: „We face a simple choice – either to head towards the West and lose territories for good, even more, to question out centuries-long traditions or join the Eurasian Union and reclaim Abkhazia, Samachablo!“</p> <p>ASAVAL-DASAVALI, 8-14 MAY</p>	<p><b>NINO RATISHVILI</b>, presenter: “If asked NATO or territories? Those persons will answer NATO, but the largest segment of society will answer our territories...”</p> <p>TV OBIEQTIVI, GHAMIS STUDIA, 17 JULY</p>
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**Message:** A possibility to achieve success in Russia is real whereas in the West is unreal

**SOSO SHATBERASHVILI, LEFTIST ALLIANCE:** “Georgians represent the elite in Russia which is branded as enemy, whereas enslaved servants in America which is called a friend! The same is in Greece, Germany, Italy or Spain! Let alone Turkey where Georgians are killed like chickens! Our government, however, refuses to negotiate with Russian leaders and threatens with NATO membership!” (Asaval-Dasavali, 29 May – 4 June).

### 3.6 DEFLECTIVE SOURCE MODEL

Deflective source model was actively applied, where a propagandist, to legitimize a message or fake news, creates a deflective source which becomes the apparent source and the receiver perceives that it comes from an outer source (deflective source) and not the propagandist.



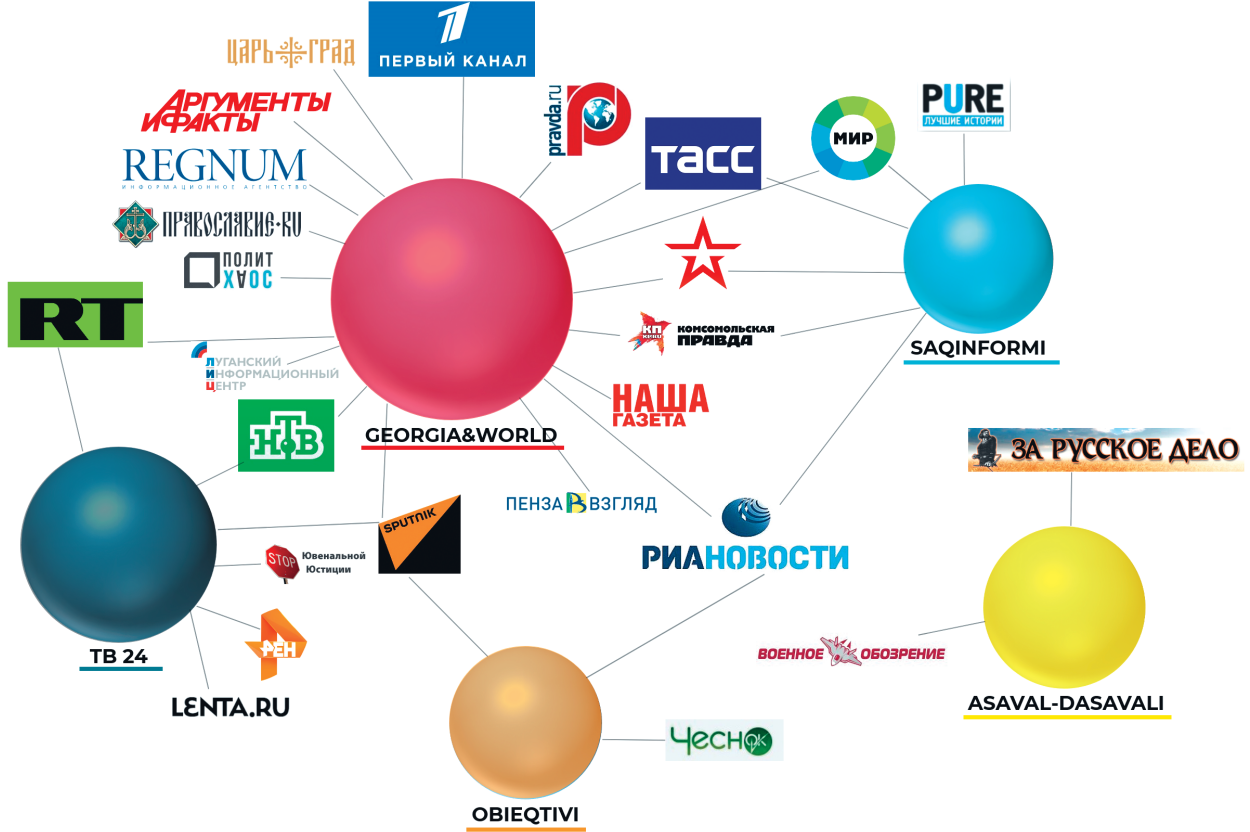


Often, propagandists use the names of popular media outlets such as Fox, Guardian, USA-radio as deflective sources. For example, fake news and photos as well as fake video alleging that Turks trade in body organs of Syrian children was disseminated by the Georgian web portal Foxnews.ge,<sup>27</sup> based on a Greek Hellasforce.com. This fabrication, which had a viral spread on social network, incited anti-Turkish sentiments, which is part of anti-Western discourse and aims at shifting the focus from Russia onto other threats.

A webpage, which was visually identical to the British edition The Guardian and its URL address differed from the British one with only one letter, namely “i” (www.theguardian.com), was set up for this very purpose. A fake interview with the former Chief of the British Secret Service Intelligence, published by the pseudo-Guardian, alleging that the United States and Great Britain planned to deploy military and intelligence bases in South Ossetia and involve radical Islamists to destabilize the situation in the Caucasus, was reprinted by Georgian media outlets.<sup>28</sup>

The Figure below shows those Russian media platforms which published fake news of Georgian media outlets while Georgian media did not identify to Russian media as sources.

FIGURE 15. DEFLECTIVE SOURCE MODEL



<sup>27</sup> Myth Detector. 18+ : a photo-manipulation by foxnews.ge on alleged children organ trade actually uses photos from Damascus, Indonesia and Abkhazia events, 16 May 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/18-photo-manipulation-foxnewsge-alleged-children-organ-trade-actually-uses-photos-damascus>  
 18+ : Foxnews.ge’s Videofabrication about the Trade of Syrian Children’s Organs, 18 May 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/18-foxnewsge-videofabrication-about-trade-syrian-childrens-organs>

<sup>28</sup> Myth Detector. Geworld.ge and Sakinform Post Fake Interview with Former MI6 Chief, 16 August 2017. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/geworldge-and-sakinform-post-fake-interview-former-mi6-chief>

## IDENTIFIED RUSSIAN SOURCES

As seen from the table below, in addition to the deflective source model, some media outlets, sometimes, openly referred to their Russian sources.

GEORGIAN MEDIA	IDENTIFIED RUSSIAN SOURCES
Georgia and the World	Fondsk.ru Русская Весна Комсомольская Правда Россия 24 1info.net Известия
Tbilisi 24	Lenta.ru ТАСС РИА Новости Facebook Group смеяться до слёз
Asaval-Dasavali	Комсомольская Правда
Sakinformi	Regnum.ru Eurasia Daily
Obiektivi	РОССИЯ 1 Россия 24 ЦАРЬГРАД ТВ Рен ТВ
Marshalpress	Radio "Sputnik" News agency Росбалт

# | 4. PROFILES

## 4.1 MEDIA

### 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. 34 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 Chachia, a Moscow-based political analyst whom Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded the Order of Honor to Chachia for his great contribution to strengthening friendship and cooperation with the Russian Federation on February 13, 2014. The text of the order reads that Alexander Chachia is the chairman of people's movement Samegrelo and publishes a magazine Istorili 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.

## 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 Obieqtivi and alike this media outlet, the Alliance of Patriots is notorious for its Turkophobia and homophobia. After gaining seats in 2016 parliamentary elections, party leadership frequently visits Moscow proposing NATO-Georgia-Russian new format.

## 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.

## 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 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 Dzagania 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 Eukidze 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.

### SOCIALIST GEORGIA

The party of a host of TV Obieqtivi, Valeri Kvaratskhelia, Neutral Georgia, was registered on February 29, 2008. In 2016, due to usage of Soviet symbols during the pre-election campaign, Valeri Kvaratskhelia's movement - Socialist Georgia, was warned by the State Security Service and was reminded of Freedom Charter that makes such actions illegal. In 2016 Parliamentary Elections, Valeri Kvaratskhelia participated from United Communist Party of Georgia, as his party's registration was cancelled due to insufficient documentation provided.

### 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

### EURASIAN INSTITUTE

The Eurasian Institute was founded on September 22, 2009 by Gulbaat Rtskhiladze and Giorgi Vekua. According to the research by damoukidebloba.com, one of the partners of the Eurasian Institute is a Russian organization, Lev Gumilev's Center, which was founded by Eurasian Center in Moscow in 2011. The center states that popularization of "Eurasianism" is the way of resolving ethnic conflicts. One of the members of the Eurasian Institute is Shota Apkhaidze, who was released from prison with a political prisoner's status. Apkhaidze was serving a sentence for intrusion to TV Caucasias together with members of Orthodox Parents' Union and National Orthodox Movement and conducting extremist acts there in 2010.

### 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. Orga-

nizers 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.

### GLOBAL RESEARCH CENTER

In 2013, together with Ioseb Archvadze and Maia Chubinashvili, Nana Devdariani founded the “Global research Center”. According to the report of the IDFI’s project [damoukidebloba.com](http://damoukidebloba.com), this organization encourages Anti-western sentiments and very often replicates the opinions and analysis of the pro-Russian NGO “Eurasian Institute”. In 2016 parliamentary elections, Nana Devdariani is named as the sixth member among top ten members of the election list of “Nino Burjanadze – Democratic movement”. Nana Devdariani was Public Defender of Georgia during 2000–2003 and the chairwoman of Central Election Commission during 2003 parliamentary elections before the 2003 Rose Revolution.

### 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.

### STALIN

Organization Stalin is registered in public registry in 2013. Its leader is Grisha Oniani.

