

The Great Facebook Purge

What was Removed and Why?



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On 20 December 2019, Facebook [removed](#) 418 Georgian assets (39 profiles, 344 pages, 13 groups and 22 Instagram accounts) on its core platform for engaging in **coordinated inauthentic behaviour**. In accordance with the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab, which cooperates with Facebook and provides information in regard to disinformation campaigns, these pages were spreading posts with a strong **anti-American** content. Based on Facebook's statement, although the people behind these assets attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, Facebook's investigation linked this activity to Panda, an advertising agency in Georgia, and the Georgian Dream-led government. These pages have spent nearly USD 316,000 for advertisements on Facebook and Instagram; that is, for sponsoring their posts.

What is Facebook's Policy in Regard to "Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour?"

Nathaniel Gleicher, Head of Security Policy at Facebook, gives the following [definition](#) of the aforementioned behaviour: "Coordinated inauthentic behaviour is when groups of pages or people work together to mislead others about who they are or what they are doing. According to Facebook's community [standards](#), considered as inauthentic behaviour and, therefore, **forbidden** are as follows:

- Use multiple Facebook accounts or share accounts between multiple people
- Misuse Facebook or Instagram reporting systems to harass others
- Conceal a page's purpose by misleading users about the ownership or control of that page

Engage in or claim to engage in inauthentic behaviour which is defined as the use of Facebook or Instagram assets (accounts, pages, groups, or events), to mislead people or Facebook:

- about the identity, purpose or origin of the entity that they represent
- about the popularity of Facebook or Instagram content or assets
- about the purpose of an audience or community
- about the source or origin of content
- to evade enforcement under our Community Standards
- Engage in, or claim to engage in coordinated inauthentic behaviour, defined as the use of multiple Facebook or Instagram assets, working in concert to engage in inauthentic behaviour (as defined above), where the use of fake accounts is central to the operation
- Engage in or claim to engage in foreign or government interference, which is coordinated inauthentic behaviour conducted on behalf of a foreign or government actor.

The reason for removing 418 assets in Georgia was because of the attempt of these assets to deliberately mislead people on Facebook which was carried out by a false posing of these assets – the pages used different methods to conceal themselves and posed themselves as news organisations and impersonated political parties, public figures and media entities whilst, in fact, all of these assets were linked with the Georgian Dream and the Panda advertising agency.



On 20 December 2019, Facebook removed assets in Vietnam and USA en masse for similar coordinated inauthentic behaviour. However, in these cases, Facebook [states](#) that the trail of the inauthentic behaviour leads not to the respective governments of those countries, but to BL, a US-based media company.

Facebook has **launched investigations on coordinated inauthentic behaviour from 2018**. Prior to the en masse removal of the Georgian accounts, Facebook revealed [five](#) similar, large-scale activities. Of these five cases, Facebook named entities behind these behaviours in two of them:

- **Russian Military Intelligence Service** - On 21 August 2018, pages which provided commentary upon political developments in Syria and Ukraine were [removed](#). Facebook stated that the aforementioned pages were associated with the Syria Media Centre which has been identified by the Atlantic Council and other organisations as a promoter of pro-Russian and pro-Assad information. According to Facebook's statement, those pages could be linked with the Russian military intelligence.
- Myanmar military – On 28 August 2018, Facebook [removed](#) 435 pages, 17 groups, 135 accounts and 15 Instagram accounts which were linked with the Myanmar military accused of the gross violation of human rights as a result of the investigation authorised by the UN's Human Rights Council. In the case of Myanmar, too, those pages were removed for their false and misleading posing and not because of the content they were posting. Removed pages posed themselves as information, entertainment, beauty and the so-called lifestyle pages whilst in fact they were linked with the Myanmar military and spread military propagandist messages.

Apart from Myanmar military, **thus far Facebook has not identified any other coordinated behaviour used by the authorities to mislead their citizens.**

What Pages Did Facebook Remove in Georgia?

The vast majority (344) of the assets removed by Facebook constitute Facebook pages. However, as part of this purge, 39 personal accounts, possibly owned by the individuals administering these pages, were also removed. Facebook has not published the list of the pages it removed. However, we present our readers part of those pages which **FactCheck** has identified as being involved in pro-government and anti-opposition campaigns and no longer can be found in the social network.

Page [Checkfact.ge](#) has disappeared from Facebook. This page was initially created in 2013 and attempted to mock **FactCheck**. It has used **FactCheck**'s name and logo, and was politically motivated in selecting and sharing **FactCheck**'s articles. In addition, the page was spreading other information and measured its accuracy posing as **FactCheck**. After [statements](#) from **FactCheck**'s editorial office and Georgia's Reform Associate exposing the page for being inauthentic, it was temporarily removed. However, since 2014, it has continued its activities with a changed logo and a changed name (checkfact.ge) and started to post certain of **FactCheck**'s articles without indicating a source and selected [in line with](#) their political agenda.

The page became active with the 20 June protests. On 31 July 2019, the page published a [post](#) aiming to discredit participants of the rally in front of the Parliament building (see photo).



Text on the photos in English:

Checkfact.ge

#SupportingNazisisShameful, #BeingwithNazisisShameful

Who is Standing at the Rally in front of the Parliament Building?, Mad at Gakharia:

Drug-dealers, Drug-addicts, LGBT, Misha Mshvildadze, Nazis, OpaNazis – EuroNazis

Criminals and their Family Members, Common Youth

The disseminated manipulative information was in line with the rhetoric of other fake pages and false media which tried to discredit the rallies by associating them with a specific political party – the United National Movement. In turn, this was completely in line with the statements of the ruling party representatives

[Gia Gachechiladze](#): “Can’t you see who is standing at the helm of the current events? They are the people who handed over the entire economy to Russia and at the OSCE summit in 2008 admitted that Georgia attacked Tskhinvali.”

[Sopo Kiladze](#): “It is the United National Movement at the rally which uses civic activism as a shield.”

[Gia Volski](#): “The rallies are run by those people who Gakharia stopped from storming the Parliament.”

[Irakli Kobakhidze](#): “Two hundred UNM members cannot block the Parliament’s work.”



Facebook has removed most of the pages which aimed to discredit the 20 June rallies. **FactCheck**'s article, published on 14 August 2019, includes pages seeking to delegitimise the rally. Similar to checkfact.ge's post, the messages on pages removed by Facebook tried to portray the rally in front of the Parliament as a narrow party event and, thereby, delegitimise their demands.

Example 1:



Text on the photos in English:

Photo 1: Political Dustbin

To be precise, he is the author of the “Misha is Cool” video

When Mshvildadze Calls

Photo 2: United Provocative Movement

Let us see how apolitical Misha Mshvildadze, who was put in charge of today’s rally, really is. He has always been Misha’s henchman and produced his image videos. The creator of “Misha is Cool” and the henchman of the UNM sect today preaches morals.”

Photo 3: Mikheil the Vagabond

*And they do not even take it back,
 What I Ordered What I Got*

Photo 4: Mikheil the Vagabond

This French-Beard-on-Dick has been trying for two days to get Nazis at the people’s rostrum whilst claiming to be apolitical. It was this prick who produced Misha’s famous “Misha is Cool” video

Source: on.ge

Of the 23 pages mentioned in **FactCheck's** article currently 15 pages have been removed.

Table 1

| | Name of Facebook Page | Date of Creation | Status |
|-----------|---|-------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> | They Cannot Return | 16 November 2018 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>2</u> | United Provocative Movement | 27 April 2013 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>3</u> | Political Dustbin | 27 June 2018 | Removed / Cannot be Found ¹ |
| <u>4</u> | Nationalist's Page | 23 April 2018 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>5</u> | Hero of Our Time/HEROO | 2 April 2018 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>6</u> | Georgian State | 20 March 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>7</u> | You Were in Power and Could Have Done | 2 March 2018 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>8</u> | Is a Nazi a Human?! | 11 July 2017 | Active |
| <u>9</u> | Information Page | 4 February 2014 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>10</u> | Expose | 16 May 2013 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>11</u> | I Remember | 6 July 2018 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>12</u> | Exposing Pseudo Liberals | 19 May 2018 | Active |
| <u>13</u> | Anti-Paradox | 18 May 2018 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>14</u> | National Media | 2 November 2018 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>15</u> | Georgian Press | 22 December 2014 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>16</u> | Brightening of Overia | 17 March 2013 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| <u>17</u> | Kardhu | 23 July 2017 | Active |
| <u>18</u> | Antiliberal League | 18 March 2019 | Active |
| <u>19</u> | Liberalism? Kill Yourself | 31 May 2018 | Active |
| <u>20</u> | Notorious Society | 28 December 2016 | Active |
| <u>21</u> | Antiliberal Channel 2 | 28 April 2018 | Active |
| <u>22</u> | Unofficial Conspiracies | 1 June 2018 | Active |
| <u>23</u> | Rhetoric | 12 March 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |

¹ As of 23 December 2019 at 12:00, this page was found although it is currently deactivated. A page with a similar name – Political Dustbin – can be found via Facebook's search engine. The original page was created on 27 June 2018 whilst its clone was created on 30 July 2019. Perhaps the page's administrator removed the page himself and, therefore, it did not end up in those assets removed by Facebook.

On 25 November 2019, **FactCheck** again published an [article](#) on the Facebook pages which aim to discredit the rally. The new wave of activism from these pages was linked with the renewal of demonstrations after the failure to move to a fully proportional election system. Of the 21 pages given below, 15 have been removed.

Table 2

| Facebook Page Name | Date of Creation | Status |
|---|------------------|--|
| Transitional Government | 15 November 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| Capital City | 29 June 2016 | Active |
| Corridor of Shame | 21 May 2019 | Active |
| United Provocative Movement | 27 April 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| You Were in Power and Could Have Done | 2 March 2018 | Removed / Cannot be Found ² |
| Infomedia+ | 12 January 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| Fifth Column | 3 April 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| Political Laundromat | 25 April 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| Don't Forget the Past | 21 July 2017 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| Political Spotlight | 14 January 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| Memester | 18 February 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| I Remember | 18 July 2018 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| Giorgi Aghapishvili's Blog | 22 July 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| NEWS-FRONT.INFO | 13 October 2019 | Active |
| CAUCASUS NEWS REPORT | 17 July 2019 | Removed / Cannot be Found |
| Is a Nazi a Human? | 11 July 2017 | Active |
| Unofficial Conspiracies | 1 June 2018 | Active |
| National Media | 2 November 2018 | Removed |
| Grigol the HQ | 20 July 2018 | Active |
| They Want Two Corpses | 15 November 2018 | Removed ³ |

² As of 23 December 2019, at 12:00, the page could be found. Currently, the page is deactivated although a page with a similar name, possibly a [clone](#), can be found via Facebook's search engine. The original page was created on 2 March 2018 whilst a cloned page was created on 30 July 2019. Presumably, the page was removed by the administrator himself and, therefore, did not end up among the pages removed by Facebook.

³ As of 23 December 2019, at 12:00, the page could be found. Currently, the page is deactivated although a page with a similar name – [They Want Two Corpses](#) – can be found via Facebook's search engine. The original page was



According to the above list, 26 pages in total cannot be found on Facebook.

Organizations Speaking about the Manipulation of Social Media in Georgia

Although government-linked Facebook pages intensified their campaign during the 2018 presidential election in Georgia, it is obvious that some of these pages were launched as early as 2013. However, these campaigns have become large-scale since 2018. The International Society for Free Elections and Democracy (ISFED) carried out social media [monitoring](#) during the 2018 presidential election. As part of the monitoring, fake news agency pages, which posed as media organisations and in fact were involved in pro-government and anti-opposition campaigns, were identified. Of important note is that after the removal of the Georgian assets, Facebook representatives [contacted](#) the Head of ISFED. As stated by Mikheil Benidze: “Facebook representatives stated that the removed pages were highly coordinated and there was a straightforward link with the ruling party. Facebook will continue to study inauthentic behaviour and probably after some time they will take similar measures in regard to other pages and coordinated networks.”

Prior to the removal of the Facebook pages which were administered by the Georgian Dream and the Panda advertising company, the international NGO Freedom House, in its annual [report](#) on world internet freedom, stated about Georgia that “trolls and bots, which are mostly linked with the Georgian authorities, have become especially active during the June 2018 anti-governmental protests and presidential election.” The report discusses the ISFED and the Media Development Foundation (MDF) research studies where pro-government Facebook pages and accounts are underlined.

The Oxford Internet [Institute](#) also speaks about the Georgian government’s use of disinformation in 2019. The Oxford University research centre [published](#) its *Global Disinformation Order 2019 Global Inventory of Organised Social Media Manipulation* report which says that the Government of Georgia is one of 70 countries where social media and computational propaganda is used to manipulate public opinion. According to the report, government institutions, private companies and public organisations are involved in such activities in Georgia.

created on 15 November 2018 whilst a cloned page was created on 29 July 2019. Presumably, the page was removed by the administrator himself and, therefore, did not end up among the pages removed by Facebook.



TABLE 1 - ORGANIZATIONAL FORM AND PREVALENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MANIPULATION

| Country | Government Agencies | Politicians and Parties | Private Contractors | Civil Society Organisations | Citizens and Influencers |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Angola | | | | | |
| Argentina | | | | | |
| Armenia | | | | | |
| Australia | | | | | |
| Austria | | | | | |
| Azerbaijan | | | | | |
| Bahrain | | | | | |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | | | | | |
| Brazil | | | | | |
| Cambodia | | | | | |
| China | | | | | |
| Colombia | | | | | |
| Croatia | | | | | |
| Cuba | | | | | |
| Czech Republic | | | | | |
| Ecuador | | | | | |
| Egypt | | | | | |
| Eritrea | | | | | |
| Ethiopia | | | | | |
| Georgia | | | | | |
| Germany | | | | | |
| Greece | | | | | |
| Malta | | | | | |
| Mexico | | | | | |
| Moldova | | | | | |
| Myanmar | | | | | |
| Netherlands | | | | | |
| Nigeria | | | | | |
| North Korea | | | | | |
| Pakistan | | | | | |
| Philippines | | | | | |
| Poland | | | | | |
| Qatar | | | | | |
| Russia | | | | | |
| Rwanda | | | | | |
| Saudi Arabia | | | | | |
| Serbia | | | | | |
| South Africa | | | | | |
| South Korea | | | | | |
| Spain | | | | | |
| Sri Lanka | | | | | |
| Sudan | | | | | |
| Sweden | | | | | |
| Svria | | | | | |

According to the report, these sources of manipulation are bots⁴ and fake accounts run by humans.

⁴ Bots are highly automated accounts designed to mimic profiles of real persons.



TABLE 2 - FAKE ACCOUNT TYPES

| Country | Bots | Human | Cyborg | Hacked or Stolen |
|----------------------|------|-------|--------|------------------|
| Angola | | | | |
| Argentina | | | | |
| Armenia | | | | |
| Australia | | | | |
| Austria | | | | |
| Azerbaijan | | | | |
| Bahrain | | | | |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | | | | |
| Brazil | | | | |
| Cambodia | | | | |
| China | | | | |
| Colombia | | | | |
| Croatia | | | | |
| Cuba | | | | |
| Czech Republic | | | | |
| Ecuador | | | | |
| Egypt | | | | |
| Eritrea | | | | |
| Ethiopia | | | | |
| Georgia | | | | |
| Germany | | | | |

| Country | Bots | Human | Cyborg | Hacked or Stolen |
|--------------|------|-------|--------|------------------|
| Malta | | | | |
| Mexico | | | | |
| Moldova | | | | |
| Myanmar | | | | |
| Netherlands | | | | |
| Nigeria | | | | |
| North Korea | | | | |
| Pakistan | | | | |
| Philippines | | | | |
| Poland | | | | |
| Qatar | | | | |
| Russia | | | | |
| Rwanda | | | | |
| Saudi Arabia | | | | |
| Serbia | | | | |
| South Africa | | | | |
| South Korea | | | | |
| Spain | | | | |
| Sri Lanka | | | | |
| Sudan | | | | |
| Sweden | | | | |
| Syria | | | | |

Communication strategy of fake accounts is creation of disinformation, trolling and amplifying content (mass spread of messages by using hashtags and other techniques).



TABLE 4 - COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

| Country | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
|----------------------|---------|----------------|------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Angola | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Argentina | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Armenia | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Australia | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Austria | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Azerbaijan | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Bahrain | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Brazil | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Cambodia | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| China | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Colombia | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Croatia | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Cuba | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Czech Republic | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Ecuador | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Egypt | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Eritrea | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Ethiopia | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Georgia | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Germany | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Malta | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Mexico | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Moldova | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Myanmar | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Netherlands | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Nigeria | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| North Korea | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Pakistan | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Philippines | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Poland | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Qatar | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Russia | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Rwanda | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Saudi Arabia | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Serbia | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| South Africa | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| South Korea | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Spain | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Sri Lanka | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Sudan | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Sweden | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |
| Syria | Disinfo | Mass Reporting | Data-Driven Strategies | Trolls | Amplifying Content |

What is an Appropriate Measure in Response to the Mass Manipulation Exposed by Facebook?

The aforementioned facts illustrate that Facebook’s investigation confirmed the suspicions voiced by local or international think-tanks and organisations in regard to the Georgian Dream’s malignant and manipulative use of social media.

Facebook’s statement gives more than enough ground to launch an investigation. Transparency International Georgia [states](#) that the exposed actions reveal signs of a number of crimes in the Criminal Code of Georgia and if Georgia had independent investigative authorities, the investigation should have been launched on the following offences: Criminal Code, Article 194 – Legalization of Illegal Income; Criminal Code, Article 182 – Appropriation or Embezzlement by Using Official Position; Criminal Code, Article 333 – Exceeding Official Powers; Criminal Code, Article 144³ – Degrading or Inhuman Treatment; Criminal Code, Article 157¹ – Disclosure of Personal Secret; Criminal Code, Article 239¹ – Public Incitement to Acts of Violence; Law on Political Unions of Citizens, Article 34 – Illegal Donation.

In a democratic country where institutes act in line with the Constitution, instead of following narrow party interests or informal decisions of a single person, a **Parliamentary Commission would be established** in response to the facts revealed by Facebook which would investigate the issue openly and transparently. Of importance is that since February 2019, there is a **Group of Disinformation and Propaganda** in the Parliament of Georgia which aims to study the main challenges and problems in Georgia concerning disinformation and propaganda and draft recommendations to improve the performance of the Georgian government. Facts exposed by Facebook would render the activity of the Group of Disinformation and Propaganda purely formal unless the recommendation on adequate counter-measures (for instance: an independent and impartial investigation) is included in the Group's final report.

Under current circumstances when the Georgian Dream, which is the main entity exposed as committing non-democratic and possibly a criminal action, controls the majority in the Parliament of Georgia, the creation of a Parliamentary Commission or/and adequate steps from Georgian law enforcement bodies are less likely. Furthermore, Koka Kandiashvili, who led the Prime Minister's Communication Department until 2013 and later [served](#) as the Georgian government's chief PR consultant, in response to the Facebook investigation [announced](#) in his interview with the *Asaval-Dasavali* newspaper that "Georgian Dream supporters will become increasingly active in social networks and will double their efforts to expose the United National Movement."

The statements of the Georgian Dream representatives, who in response to Facebook's statement still talk about the United National Movement, were no less cynical and concerning. Mamuka Mdinardze [stated](#) that the "United National Movement's party activists (together with their "bot-trolls" and "fake pages") hysterically report every Facebook user and page which express support for the government" and claimed that was the reason behind Facebook's decision for the mass removal of the fake assets. Rati Ionatamishvili from the Parliamentary Majority stated that he did not [exclude](#) that the United National Movement created certain pages and later reported them itself. The Speaker of the Parliament, Archil Talakvadze, [stated](#) that the inauthentic behaviour on Facebook was funded by entities loyal to the Georgian Dream.

The leaders of the Georgian Dream, including Mamuka Mdinardze and Irakli Kobakhidze, have also talked about the need to regulate the fight against disinformation. Irakli Kobakhidze [stated](#) that a package of laws against disinformation was submitted to the Parliament which, among other things, would also respond to "swearing" on TV. It is unclear which draft law⁵ Mr Kobakhidze mentions although it is very unfortunate that his statement has nothing to do with the actual fight against disinformation and, in reality, it implies threat and censorship of media entities which are deemed unacceptable for or critical of the ruling party.

⁵ At the beginning of 2019, President Salome Zurbishvili and the Georgian Dream leaders, including Irakli Kobakhidze, were naming a French law against manipulation of information in order to argue for the necessity of regulating libel and fake news and were wrongly interpreting that law. See GRASS's publication on this topic, available at: <https://grass.org.ge/uploads/other/2019-06-06/452.pdf>