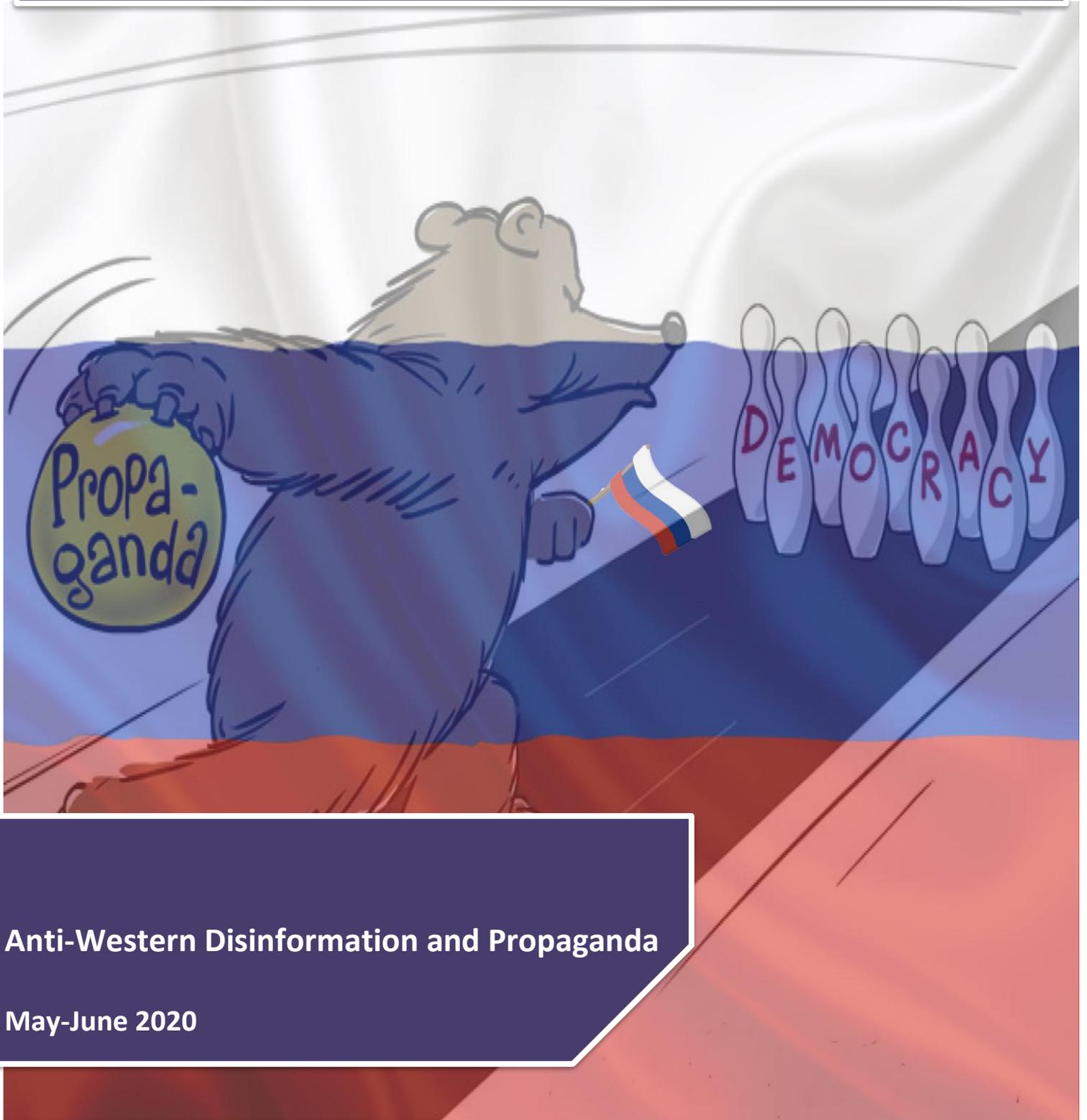


# Disinfometer



Anti-Western Disinformation and Propaganda

May-June 2020

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## Introduction

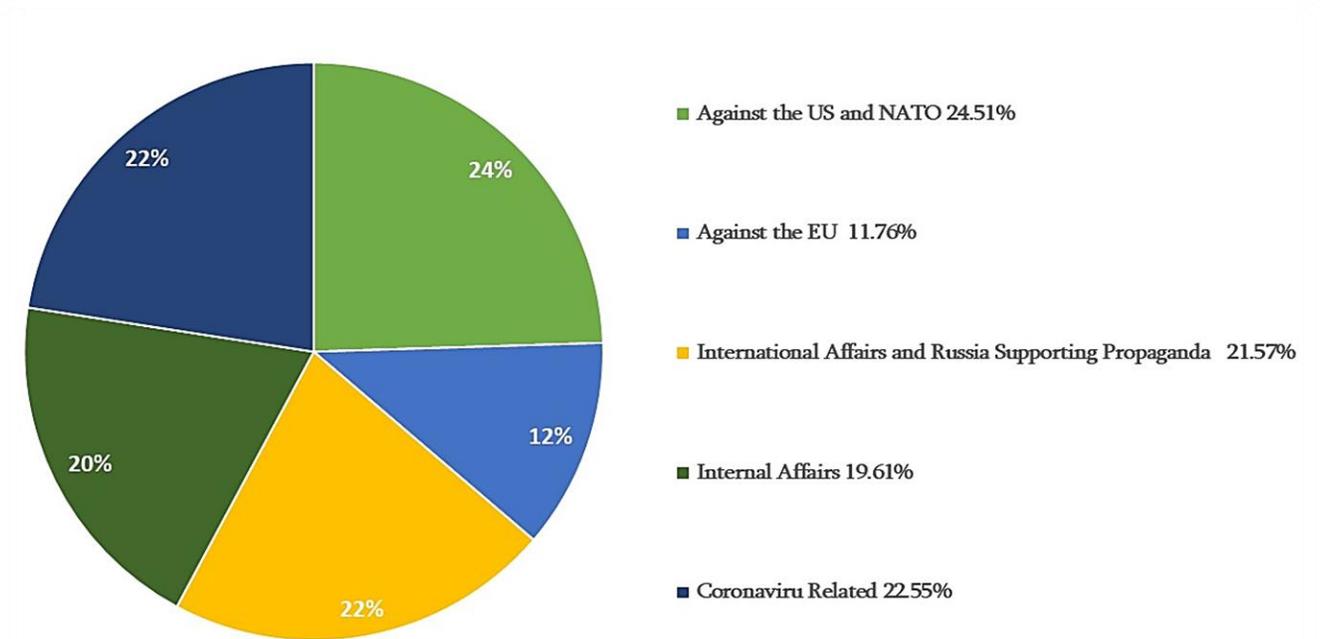
Georgia has been targeted by active anti-Western and pro-Russian disinformation for years. This report aims to study the messages of the disinformation mouthpieces and inform readers about trends in their discourse both in regard to Georgia's foreign and domestic political processes.

This report offers a review of the anti-Western and the pro-Russian messages between 1 May 2020 and 30 June 2020. Ten online media outlets and eight Facebook pages were selected for monitoring based on Georgia's Reform Associate's FactCheck Georgia's regular monitoring. In total, 396 items (articles, videos, photos, Facebook posts) were monitored and 102 media products were included in the report. This publication overviews those materials which were the most clear-cut within the anti-Western and pro-Russian media discourse and had a campaign-like dissemination. As a result of the monitoring, five major clusters of anti-Western and pro-Russian disinformation have been identified.

The Facebook social analytics tool CrowdTangle was used to measure the dissemination of disinformation within the social network.

## Main Findings

### Disinformation by its targets



#### Disinformation Against NATO and the USA

- Georgia's independence is a total sham, because Georgia is a US colony
- There are two women presidents in Georgia: Salome Zurbashvili and Kelly Degnan
- "Political prisoners," Gigi Ugulava and Irakli Okruashvili, were pardoned against the will of the Georgian people on the instruction of the US
- Adam Kinzinger is a de-facto ruler, president, king and patriarch of Georgia
- Washington is getting ready for a military coup d'état in Georgia before the elections
- The US is repressive and a completely police state and cannot teach us a thing about tolerance
- Georgia does not benefit from "cooperation" with the US
- The US and the West limit freedom of speech in social networks
- NATO gets increasingly weakened and, therefore, Georgia has to revise its foreign policy and seek security guarantees elsewhere
- Neutrality is a real alternative to Georgia's Euro-Atlantic orientation

#### Disinformation Against the EU

- Western integration has its terms and conditions which envisions agreeing to LGBT propaganda
- Georgia is an EU colony
- Territories of Georgia and Ukraine are occupied by the EU and the West seeks to artificially separate these two countries from Russia

- The Euro-Atlantic vector aimed at NATO and EU membership has to be revised
- The EU is still unable to handle the coronavirus whilst China beat the virus in a matter of days
- The EU is no longer a future for Europe, let alone for Georgia and the coronavirus pandemic proved that
- Each amount of financial aid provided by the West is a new noose of obligations for Georgia inside of which the country has to put its head
- In the case of Georgia's EU membership, Turkey may direct migrant waves from Greece to Georgia
- The majority of the Western population which was brought up on Christian values is governed by an immoral and godless minority
- Georgians should not Europeanise and must remain as Georgians (they are taking our Georgianhood away from us)
- There is an ongoing and deliberate moral degradation of the younger generation in primary schools and colleges of European countries
- The EU forced Georgia to adopt such "anti-human laws" as a "foreigner's right to permanent residence," the "anti-discrimination law" and "juvenile justice"

### **Disinformation on International Affairs and Russia Supporting Propaganda**

- It is necessary for Georgia to start a direct and high-level dialogue with Russia without interference from Western countries
- The West deliberately hampers Georgia's direct dialogue with Russia to prevent its loss of influence over Georgia in the case of the latter normalising relations with Russia
- Georgia has no alternative other than Russia and Georgia's development and unification is unimaginable without the restoration of Georgian-Russian relations
- For the death of the Georgian soldiers in the August 2008 war, "Saakashvili, who was the chief instigator of that gamble, is more to blame than Moscow"
- Georgian anti-Russian media cannot hide its satisfaction vis-à-vis the growth of the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Russia
- An ongoing ideological-propaganda war was declared against Russia and all other freedom-loving nations precisely by Western liberalism
- It is Stalin and the USSR first and foremost which have to take credit for the allied victory in World War II
- The West tries to rewrite the history of World War II
- In addition to Russia's "temporary occupation," Turkey has "occupied" 34% of Georgia's ancient territories for good whilst Azerbaijan seeks to capture Davit-Gareji. Therefore, we have to wage an equal fight against each and every occupier neighbour

### **Disinformation Regarding Georgia's Internal Developments**

- Azerbaijanis seek to capture Gareji and Kvemo Kartli
- Azerbaijan, similar to Russia, seeks to occupy Georgian lands
- People who do not speak Georgian are not full-fledged Georgian citizens
- Facebook's decision to remove News Front from its platform is an act against the freedom of speech
- The aim of the Code of the Rights of the Child is to destroy the institute of the family
- The Lugar Laboratory carries out secret work and serves American interests
- 5G technology is hazardous for human health and real information is hidden from the population

- 5G technology aims for total control over humans

### Disinformation Against the Coronavirus

- The novel coronavirus is a less dangerous virus and is similar to the common flu
- Bill Gates funded the creation of the coronavirus in a Wuhan laboratory to use mandatory vaccination for population control
- Bill Gates, Elon Musk and Masonic groups aim to reduced world population to 1 billion and they will use Musk-invented microchips to this end which will be inserted in human bodies through the coronavirus vaccine
- The coronavirus originated “owing” to the synthetic bacterium Synthia which was invented to eliminate oil spilled at sea by the Americans
- 5G towers contribute to the spread of the coronavirus
- The Lugar Laboratory has been carrying out classified research since 2012 and the Americans purposely disallowed the spread of the coronavirus in Georgia to make sure the Lugar Laboratory was not blamed
- Vaccination is a weapon in the hands of the Masons in order to annihilate and degenerate people
- Wearing face masks is harmful for human health and they actually increase the risk of infection let alone protecting us from it
- Face masks are an ideological weapon and people are trained into slavish obedience by wearing them
- Western liberal forces are fighting against the Georgian Orthodox Church on the pretext of the coronavirus

### Disinformation Against NATO and the USA

Numerous attempts to discredit the USA – a traditional target of disinformation and propaganda – have been identified during the monitoring period. The central line of propaganda was to portray the USA as Georgia’s metropole and “harmful” partner which constantly interferes in the country’s internal politics and pushes Tbilisi to act in Washington’s own interests. The following sources were active in spreading the anti-American messages: **Georgia and the World newspaper, the Anti-liberal League, Cardhu, Georgia Above All, Anti-liberal Doctrine, Politicano and Capital City Facebook pages as well as the Saqinform, News Front and Viewpoint online media outlets.**

As in the previous months, groups cultivating anti-American sentiments claimed in May-June that the USA is not a friendly state and in fact Washington uses Tbilisi to achieve its own goals. According to this narrative, Georgia’s independence is a total **sham** since the country is a US **colony** and decisions in Tbilisi are **made** in line with Washington’s will and desire. Saqinform, a pro-Russian media outlet, claimed that Georgia has two women **presidents**: the first is the country’s “fictitious president,” Salome Zurabishvili, and the second is the US Ambassador to Georgia. **According** to Saqinform, the multi-billion-dollar aid given to Georgia by the USA was enough to give the “Americans the right to interfere in foreign and domestic politics, the judiciary and electoral systems, demand changes in the constitution and determine the proportion between the ruling party and the opposition in the parliament.” Of note is that in order to foster anti-American sentiments, the USA was **portrayed** as an actor similar to Georgia’s occupier Russia as well as Turkey which is also **often** portrayed as an occupier.

**Georgia is a US colony and Washington uses Tbilisi to achieve its own goals**

Of note is that in May 2020, President Salome Zurbashvili pardoned political prisoners, Gigi Ugulava and Irakli Okruashvili, which was [preceded](#) by calls from Georgia's Western partners, including American politicians, to respect the 8 March agreement. The pro-Russian media responded harshly to this decision and claimed that it was against the will of the Georgian people. For instance, News Front [argued](#) that "American imperialism scored a victory over the Georgian people at the hand of the very president elected by the Georgian people" whilst Adam Kinzinger, a US Congressman and Co-chair of the Georgia Caucus who frequently made [statements](#) in regard to the ongoing political crisis in Georgia, was referred to as a "third-rate" ruler of Georgia. The Anti-liberal Doctrine Facebook page went even further in their assessment and [proclaimed](#) the US congressman as the "de-facto ruler, president, king and patriarch of Georgia." In the same period, the anti-Western Cardhu Facebook page [published](#) a fabricated "quote by Stalin" in order to discredit the USA, claiming that Stalin said: "Until now, I thought democracy was the power of the people but comrade Roosevelt explained it to me that democracy is the power of the American people."

Georgia's American partners have been targeted multiple times by anti-Western groups amid the political crisis about the electoral system. In particular, the pro-Russian Viewpoint deemed [unacceptable](#) the "open interference of the American senators, ambassadors and European MPs in Georgia's domestic affairs." According to Viewpoint, the USA will try to change the government of Georgia against the will of the Georgian people and bring a "bloody regime" back in the government. According to the [post](#) of Soso Manjavidze, the former leader of the pro-Russian Alliance of Patriots of Georgia who is promoted by Viewpoint, "the main pretences [of the American politicians] vis-à-vis the Georgian government is the latter's insufficient and inconsistent slavish mentality... More joyful slaves are needed, the ones who can discern their master's wish at a glance." In another article, Viewpoint suggested a more radical scenario and [argued](#) that "Washington is getting ready for a military coup d'état in Georgia" and "releasing the participants of the coup d'état is part of this plan." Gulbaat Rtskhaladze, the founder of the pro-Russian Eurasian Institute, was of a different opinion and made the following [statement](#) in his interview with *Georgia and the World*: "Americans, both liberals or non-liberals, pursue a single policy towards Georgia. There is no difference for them if the United National Movement or the Georgian Dream wins. They take no interest in that, since they have balanced their positions in both the UNM and the GD. Therefore, it is not a big tragedy for them what the configuration in the parliament will be." Of note is that Mr Rtskhaladze stated in the same interview: "It was planned to build serious bridges with Russia in 2019. The Georgian and Russian presidents were supposed to meet and I was informally involved in this affair... This thing failed because of Zurbashvili's lack of a serious attitude towards to state affairs."

**Washington is getting ready for a military coup d'état in Georgia before the elections**

Local anti-American voices used the series of protests and measures taken by law enforcement that followed the police killing of an Afro-American man, George Floyd, as yet another possibility to discredit Washington, simultaneously seeking to link the events with the unfolding domestic political process in Georgia. In particular, pro-Russian *Georgia and the World* [responded](#) to Adam Kinzinger's [assessment](#) on the American protests and blamed the US for having double standards: "Those who loot shops in the US are criminals whilst a treasury thief and those willing to storm the parliament building in Georgia are political prisoners?" The Capital City Facebook page [criticised](#) the Georgian media for "not paying due attention" to the ongoing American protests

and the Politico Facebook page [argued](#) that the “US is repressive and a totally police state” where enormous resources are [spent](#) for the “police sector” whilst “Saakashvili in the past simply copied this inhuman police-run model and did not invent the bicycle himself. So if you condemn Misha, start with the US, please.” Another [article](#), published by Viewpoint, questioned the need of the US aid provided for Georgia’s democratic development: “It is under their dictate that criminals are called ‘political prisoners’”... What can they possibly teach us, a nation which is a cradle of tolerance, which created classical traditions of tolerance?”

Various Facebook pages promoted anti-American messages. For instance, the Georgia Above All Facebook page [stated](#): “The US and the EU are patron countries of gangsters, robbers, murderers, drug-addicts and the LGBT” whilst Politico sought to [remind](#) readers about racism and stories of black slavery in the US. According to the anti-American groups, Georgia does not benefit from “cooperation” with the USA since Washington constantly acts in its own interests and “[measures](#) everything with a colonial measurement.” To corroborate such claims, the pro-Russian Viewpoint [provided](#) the example of Georgia’s natural resources; in particular, “exporting abroad 80-100 kilograms of pure gold” from the Kazreti gold mine, arguing that “American Masons are desperate to get a hold on Georgia and are making the country empty of Georgians.” The continuation of this narrative was in [another](#) of Viewpoint’s articles where TV Obiektivi anchor, Valeri Kvaratskhelia, argued: “We are helping the world’s strongest country, the USA, with our extremely poor capabilities. We do not spare the lives of our youth to protect America’s interests and they only exploit us... What kind of cooperation is that or, more precisely, what kind of dishonesty is that?”

**Georgia does not get real benefit from cooperation with the US whilst Georgian young people sacrifice their lives**

Anti-Western actors also blamed the West, in general, and the US, in particular, for limiting freedom of speech in social networks. In particular, as [stated](#) by Gulbaat Rtskhiladze, during his last day the editor-in-chief of the pro-Russian and anti-Western News Front, the latter’s “Facebook page with 14,000 subscribers was blocked.” Mr Rtskhiladze stated “News Front Georgia made the entire Liberal-Soros swamp hiss” and he believed that this was an indicator of the success of the work performed.

**NATO gets increasingly weaker and, therefore, Georgia should seek security guarantees elsewhere**

Another traditional focus of anti-Western disinformation and propaganda – discrediting NATO and campaigning to criticise Georgia’s NATO membership aspirations – was identified during the monitoring period. According to anti-NATO propaganda, the Alliance is gradually weakening over time. In this regard, the pro-Russian Viewpoint [claimed](#) that “America’s confrontation and fixing a US gaze in Asia deprived the Alliance of its status of a security guarantor. As a result, it caused the growth of Russian influence in Europe and threatened the stability of NATO member states.” According to this narrative, NATO’s irreversible decline will push Georgia to [revise](#) its own foreign policy and seek security guarantees elsewhere.

The groups which oppose Georgia's Euro-Atlantic orientation suggested the adoption of neutrality as an alternative. Many outlets were involved in promoting this view among the wider public. In particular, Viewpoint [disseminated](#) the position of Akaki Jorjadze, Head of the Presidium of the All-Georgian National Assembly, stating: "I suggest Georgia's neutrality with special status for survival! (Neither "north" nor "west" – the USA, NATO or other – we have to have equal relations and good neighbourly relations with all). [According](#) to another anti-Western and pro-Russian outlet, *Georgia and the World*, "[Georgia] should not host drills of either NATO or any other military-political block which brings us nothing except troubles and disasters. Otherwise, Georgia will be turned into a second Syria, utterly ruined as a result of confrontation between the big powers." Given this factor, *Georgia and the World* asserts that Georgia has to pursue a non-alignment policy.

**Georgia should adopt neutrality so we are no longer a matter of dispute between**

### Disinformation Against the EU

The monitoring revealed sources which promoted disinformation and propaganda to discredit the EU: the Alt-Club Facebook page, Alt-Info, Viewpoint, the Antiliberal Doctrine Facebook page, Saqinform, the Politicano Facebook page, the Cardhu Facebook page, the Stalin Facebook page, the *Georgia and the World* newspaper and the Miraculous Victory movement.

The previous monitoring identified massive propaganda by the pro-Russian sources to discredit the EU using the coronavirus pandemic. The EU continued to be targeted by disinformation in May-June as well, although the coronavirus was no longer a main focus and the mostly traditional narratives came back. However, pandemic-related messages did not fully disappear.

Anti-Western sources also [claimed](#) that "Western integration has its own terms and conditions which envision agreeing to the equality of LGBT individuals and LGBT propaganda." The narrative, according to which Georgia is a [colony](#) of the West, was also reiterated.

According to Viewpoint and the Anti-liberal Doctrine Facebook page, the West "organised" the Maydan in Ukraine. In addition, the Western democratic countries played a huge role in the occupation of two countries (Georgia and Ukraine) since velvet revolutions separated them from Moscow and "which in the future [brought](#) a nullification of diplomacy and the undoing of the territorial integrity of these countries."

**The violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and Georgia is a result of the Western-encouraged separation from Russia**

In regard to the propaganda narrative promoted about the coronavirus, the editor of Saqinform, Arno Khidirbegishvili, [argued](#) for instance that "Georgia aspires to the West whilst Georgians are running from the West back to Georgia [because of the coronavirus] and the Euro-Atlantic orientation of NATO and EU membership which currently seems to have no alternative and needs to be revised." The [message](#) that "people in France and Italy are en masse throwing the

**The European Union still cannot handle the virus which China beat in a matter of days**

EU flags away” was [promoted](#) again. According to the pro-Russian Saqinform, “the EU is still unable to handle the coronavirus which China beat in a matter of days.” Dimitri Lortkipanidze [stated](#) that the EU is not the future of Europe, let alone for Georgia, which was proven by the coronavirus pandemic. The propaganda narrative about Western aid to Georgia during the pandemic was again pushed forward. According to this [narrative](#), “each amount of Western financial aid to Georgia is a noose of new obligations inside of which Georgia has to put its head.”

The issue of migrants in Europe and their being “privileged” was topical during the reporting period. For instance, some sources claimed that “in one of the French regions, police were instructed to [reduce](#) patrols in Muslim settlements during Ramadan.” On the other hand, disinformation was promoted that after joining the EU, Georgia as Turkey’s closest neighbour with a land border may become a weapon or victim in a confrontation between Brussels and Ankara. This may be manifested in Turkey’s decision to redirect migrant waves from Greece to Georgia as “punch against the EU.”

**In case of Georgia’s EU membership,  
Turkey may turn migrant waves  
from Greece to Georgia**

The anti-Western sources highlighted the negative aspects of Western values during the monitoring period. [According](#) to the pro-Russian *Georgia and the World*, “majority of the West’s population, which was brought up on Christian values, is ruled by a minority of immoral and godless Satanists.” Another pro-Russian online media outlet, Viewpoint, promoted the [message](#) that Georgians should not Europeanise and remain Georgians because Georgians belong to another race – Caucasians – and have a peculiar mentality. Purveyors of anti-Western propaganda also [made references](#) to Europe’s [past](#) and recalled that Belgium possessed a colony and slaves in Africa 70 years ago whilst *Host and Guest* was written in Georgia and the country had a queen in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and there has never been anti-Semitism in the course of 26 centuries. Therefore, Europeans should not teach Georgians tolerance and human rights. The anti-Western disinformation also [targeted](#) Western education alleging that the younger generation is deliberately subjected to moral degradation in the primary schools and the colleges of the “civilised” West.

Anti-Western and pro-Russian sources supported Polish authorities since “Poland [rejects](#) the LGBT ideology.” The sources replicated the Polish president’s statement that “LGBT ideology is [worse](#) if compared to the communist ideology.”

An [article](#), promoted by the Miraculous Victory Movement, included delineated anti-Western messages. According to the messages, Georgia’s friendship with the West is perilous since the “West already imposed ‘inhuman laws’ in Georgia such as granting permanent residence rights to 300,000 foreigners, the anti-discrimination law, juvenile justice, the gradual introduction of sodomy propaganda subjects at schools, the legalisation of sodomy in the army, the legalisation of same-sex marriage, the decision of the Ministry of Health to remove sodomy from the list of psychiatric disorders, the introduction of chipped ID cards (without offering an alternative) which will lead to inserting implants under people’s skin in the near future and the legalisation of sects.

**The EU imposes “inhuman”  
legislation over the country  
which is unacceptable for  
Georgia**

## Disinformation on International Affairs and Russia Supporting Propaganda

As part of the monitoring, the following purveyors of Russia supporting disinformation and propaganda have been identified: the Stalin Facebook page, the Georgia Above All Facebook page, the *Georgia and the World* newspaper, News Front, the Holy War – Information, Analysis Facebook page, the didisamamulo.ge website, the Anti-liberal Doctrine Facebook page and Viewpoint.

The [message](#) about the necessity of negotiation with Russia which disinformation campaigns indicate is impeded by Europe and the USA was [actively promoted](#) during the monitoring period. In particular, pro-Russian sources commented on the idea voiced by Konstantin Kosachev, Chairperson of the International Affairs Committee of the Federation Council of Russia, about the restoration of parliamentary dialogue with Georgia and Ukraine. These sources argued that Giorgi Volski, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, rejected this suggestion under Western pressure whilst pro-Russian sources were emphasising the importance of direct relations with Russia.

**The West impedes Georgia from having negotiations with Russia in order to prevent its loss of influence over Georgia**

According to *Georgia and the World*, Russia made the first steps several times whilst Georgia customarily rejected the dialogue, although not of its own free will. The newspaper explains that the West's decision to "forbid" one-on-one negotiations between Georgia and Russia stems from the fact that a Russian-Georgian dialogue may solve those problems which are critical for the Georgian people and Russia may offer Georgia something "better than MAP." *Georgia and the World* argued that "European and American leaders know very well what Russia can say and this is why they do not want to allow Georgia to be at the negotiation table without intermediaries; that is, supervisor-monitors." Dimitri [Lortkipanidze](#) also offered his [remarks](#) on Kosachev's suggestion, claiming that the West impedes Georgia from normalising relations with Russia. Mr Lortkipanidze criticised everyone who thought that Kosachev's idea was a manifestation of Russian propaganda and dismissed it as such. This, according to Mr Lortkipanidze, was a manifestation of anti-Russian hysteria. He believes that there is a necessity for the restoration of Georgian-Russian relations "since otherwise, the development of Georgian state is impossible" because "Georgia is attached to Russia through placenta." Apart from accusations of impeding Georgia from having direct negotiations with Russia, the West was also [blamed](#) for its unwillingness "to have a well-off population in Georgia because an economically prosperous nation will overthrow the yoke of [Western] slavery." To solve this problem, Viewpoint [suggested](#) empowering the Georgian lobby in the Kremlin whilst News Front [opined](#) that Georgia should start negotiations with Russia "directly and at the highest levels" as soon as possible in order to start de-occupation and the normalisation of relations with Russia. According to News Front, this step would reflect the will of the majority of the Georgian people and if the Georgian authorities "await someone else's permission they would better state that openly and the people will decide what to do." Therefore, News Front floated the idea of holding a plebiscite/referendum on launching negotiations with Russia at the highest level.

**Georgia's development without Russia is impossible, since Georgia is attached to Russia through placenta**

According to the pro-Russian sources, a government which aspires to NATO membership and which does not make steps to normalise relations with Russia will always be bad. They claim that all “Western-looking” people are no better than each other whilst being “pro-Russian” should not be considered as something negative. *Georgia and the World* wrote that the acknowledgement that “we have no alternative except Russia and may die from starvation” is considered as betrayal of the West whilst in fact the West needs to “cleanse” Georgia in order to turn it into a “European-American proving range.”

Viewpoint wrote that for the death of Georgian soldiers in the August 2008 war “Saakashvili, who was the chief instigator of that gamble, is more to blame than Moscow.”

News Front wrote that as a result of Russia being number-two in terms of confirmed coronavirus infections, the “anti-Russian mass media in Georgia could not hide its satisfaction.” In addition, News Front blamed the liberal media for discrediting Belarus.

The monitoring identified a narrative justifying the USSR’s annexation of Georgia. According to this narrative, had Georgia not been a part of the Soviet Union it would have been turned into a Turkish vilayat, disintegrated or been erased from the map as a state. As part of the discussion on World War II, the role of Stalin and the USSR was still promoted and exaggerated. The pro-Russian media blamed “neoliberals” for rewriting the history of World War II and belittling Stalin’s role. In addition, *Georgia and the World* published another disinformation new item including the statements of the Kremlin propagandist, Yakoov Kedmi, that the “Poles killed more Hebrews in World War II as compared to the Germans,” adding that this has never been recognised in Poland. The other disinformation news item, pertaining to World War II, was voiced on air on TV Obiektivi and published in *Georgia and the World*. According to this piece of disinformation, “the collective West imposed two world wars on mankind in the 20<sup>th</sup> century” and “in the second, the most ruthless war, the Soviet people achieved a brilliant victory under the genius leadership of Joseph Stalin but the war against mankind and against Russia has not ended.” According to this disinformation item, the continuation of the war is sometimes manifested in the “resurgence of the fascist monster” and sometimes in “digitalisation, vaccination and chippisation,” although all of them seek to attack Russia and aim to bring mankind to its knees.

**It is Stalin and the USSR first and foremost which have to take credit for victory in World War II and the West seeks to rewrite history**

Pro-Russian propaganda called for people to celebrate 9 May whilst News Front’s former editor, Gulbaat Rtskhaladze, informed Georgian World War II veterans from the pages of the *Georgia and the World* newspaper that the “government of Russia will give a one-off monetary assistance to Georgian veterans across the country this year as well” (GEL 200 per each person). To collect this assistance, Mr Rtskhaladze said that veterans had to write a statement addressed to the Head of the Russian Federation’s Interest Section and submit it to him or to Tite Lepsaia, (the head of a veterans’ NGO) who in turn would submit the letters to Mr Konishev, the head of the Russian Federation’s Interest Section at the Embassy of Switzerland to Georgia.

One of the goals of Russian propaganda is to cultivate the image of Turkey as an enemy among the Georgian population through promoting an anti-Turkish narrative. These type of messages were identified in May-June as well. Of interest is that one of the propaganda platforms disseminated the anti-Turkish narrative within the

context of the American Black Lives Matter campaign. According to this [narrative](#), Georgian “pseudo liberals” justify toppling the statues of the American confederates; however, these “pseudo liberals” do not protest Turkey selling 1.5 million Georgians at a slave market and instead said that the initiators who wanted to erect a statue in Anaklia of the 1.5 million Georgians who were sold were “Russian agents” and blamed them for provoking a war against Turkey.

The May-June monitoring also identified a [narrative](#) according to which, apart from Russia’s “temporary occupation” of Georgia, we also have to highlight the 34% of Georgia’s ancient territories which are occupied for good by Turkey and [Azerbaijan’s] attempt to capture Davit-Gareji as well as promote such messages as “Turkey is an occupier” and “Davit-Gareji is Georgia.”

**Turkey is as big of an occupier as Russia and we also have to fight accordingly against Turkey**

### Disinformation Regarding Georgia’s Internal Developments

Viewpoint was particularly active in May-June in terms of promoting disinformation and propaganda regarding Georgia’s internal developments as well as unimpededly disseminating materials containing hate speech. *Georgia and the World* together with the Anti-liberal Doctrine Facebook page and “Youthful” have also been traditionally vocal.

Radical and nationalist groups used the May-June events unfolding in Davit-Gareji and Marneuli (about Narimanov’s statue) to foster chauvinism and ethnic hatred. Viewpoint published the Facebook [publication](#) of Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, Head of the Human Rights Defenders’ Union, where he called Azerbaijanis as separatists and called for increased attention from the government “until Kvemo Kartli is captured like Gareji.” The *Alia* newspaper published another [interview](#) with Nikoloz Mzhavanadze where he openly refers to Azerbaijan as an occupier and equates it with Russia.

*Georgia and the World* published an [interview](#) with Levan Chachua, the leader of the Georgian Idea political party, where he blamed Azerbaijani soldiers for the annexation and occupation of Davit-Gareji and referred to the Azerbaijani people as occupiers. Viewpoint, in reposting a Facebook [publication](#) of one of Facebook users who criticised the government’s approach to providing information about coronavirus safety measures to ethnic Azerbaijanis in the Azerbaijani language, engaged in a manifestation of chauvinism and hate speech. Viewpoint also [reposted](#) the idea of one Georgian Facebook user, currently in emigration, who called for the government to suspend Georgian citizenship for everyone who does not speak Georgian.

**Similar to Russia, Azerbaijan also seeks occupation and annexation of Georgia**

Viewpoint published the [opinion](#) of Jumber Kirvalidze, a political commentator, where he argued that Georgia will never be able to regain the occupied territories if it keeps a pro-Western orientation.

The so-called Code of the Rights of the Child was again widely discussed among right-wing and nationalist groups. In his [interview](#) with *Georgia and the World*, Levan Chachua talked about the Code of the Rights of the Child adopted by the Parliament of Georgia and argued that the new code aimed to protect the Western-imposed

“liberast” values. Mr Chachua claimed that according to the new code, if a parent forbids an underage child to engage in tobacco or alcohol consumption or reproaches him for his clothing choice, this would qualify as violence and all of these constitute a deliberate policy to destroy the institute of the family.

Viewpoint published journalist Gia Gabrichidze’s [opinion](#) where he referred to Georgian NGOs and the Public Defender, Nino Lomjaria, as chief enemies of democracy.

The Anti-liberal Doctrine Facebook page [claimed](#) that “based on the information of Facebook’s administration, the United National Movement paid USD 23,800 to advertise anti-Orthodox pages which published blasphemous and offensive posts about Orthodox saints.” *Georgia and the World* assessed Facebook’s decision to remove the News Front-affiliated network from the platform and [decried](#) it as a non-democratic step taken to curb the freedom of speech. The newspaper of proclaimed Georgian “Soros” organisations, particularly ISFED, as primary guilty parties in the process.

**Those who do not speak Georgian cannot be a full-fledged Georgian citizen and the government has to suspend their citizenship**

*Georgia and the World* devoted an extensive [article](#) to the Lugar Laboratory, ostensibly trying to provide a neutral assessment of its work. Nevertheless, the spirit of the article was that the Lugar Centre was an opaque facility whose construction and functioning were associated with numerous secrets. The newspaper argued that the Americans themselves thought that the laboratory’s work suspicious and provided journalist Jeffrey Silverman’s article as an example where he spoke about the laboratory’s territorial proximity to the airport which simplified logistical hurdles vis-à-vis loading secret biological weapons from the laboratory onto aircraft undetected. In another article, *Georgia and the World* [argued](#) that secret tests were taking place at the Lugar Laboratory which were so dangerous that the Americans refrained from conducting them on US soil and used Georgia to this end. Sputnik Ossetia also devoted a large [article](#) to the Lugar Laboratory, speaking of the obscure nature of the laboratory’s work and the possible breach of international standards. This narrative was in line with the positions of the Russian authorities, especially with the [statement](#) of the Russian MFA Press Speaker, Maria Zakharova, made a month earlier.

**Lugar Laboratory serves American military interests and secret works are in progress there**

One of the main targets of disinformation in May-June was the so-called 5G technology. Although the latter is not yet functioning in Georgia and the Georgian National Communication Commission issued permits to launch 5G in testing mode only, it was still scrutinised by the anti-Western actors. The online media outlet, Viewpoint, has been particularly active vis-à-vis 5G technologies. On 3 May 2020, Viewpoint published an [opinion piece](#) by Professor Zurab Kumsiashvili where he spoke on the threats coming from 5G technology. According to Mr Kumsiashvili, “that forceful propaganda which is being promoted on 5G benefits and safety in the world is funded by companies and individuals who introduce this technology and is aimed at masses with a below average knowledge of this subject which in fact constitutes the majority of society.” Mr Kumsiashvili also claimed that 5G technology weakens the immune system and causes a rise in body temperature which contradicts the Constitution of Georgia. On 25 May 2020, Viewpoint published another [interview](#) with Mr Kumsiashvili on the

same matter where he toned down his criticism of 5G technology, although continued to assert that it was dangerous for insects and birds and threatened bees with extinction.

Viewpoint published a [video](#) where one Facebook user measures radiation in close proximity to 5G towers with a “special device,” saying that the radiation level is sharply above the allowed limit and is critically hazardous for human health. Viewpoint also reposted a [petition](#) launched by one user of manifest.ge appealing to governmental bodies to stop the introduction 5G technologies in Georgia. Viewpoint also posted an [information](#) on its website about a planned anti-5G technology rally and called for people to take part in the protest despite the coronavirus restrictions imposed across the country. The Youthful Facebook page [claimed](#) that 5G technology was created to control humans. Saqinform’s Editor-in-Chief, Arno Khidirbegishvili, [argued](#) that the day when the Tbilisi 5G tower was launched in a testing mode “three young and healthy birds – a pigeon, a sparrow and a parus died in my yard. Moving rapidly like they were manipulated by remote control, they crash landed on my windows and died.”

### Disinformation Regarding the Coronavirus

Coronavirus-related disinformation was again actively promoted in the May-June reporting period. Similar to the previous months, false information was disseminated about the origins of the coronavirus as well as about the global elites being behind the virus and the medicine/treatment of the disease. Of note is that clergymen and associated individuals were actively involved in promoting disinformation regarding the coronavirus.

The following sources were again prominent voices in spreading the coronavirus-related disinformation: Viewpoint, *Georgia and the World*, Saqinform, Sputnik and the Youthful, Georgia Above All and Cardhu Facebook pages.

Conspiracy theories about the origins of the coronavirus and globalist groups using the virus for their own interests were in active circulation in May-June. The Georgia Above All Facebook page [argued](#) that “Bill Gates is a world terrorist and criminal, willing to reduce the population through vaccination and spares no effort and money to this end. Bill Gates funded the process of obtaining the coronavirus from bats in a Wuhan laboratory.”

**Bill Gates, Elon Musk and  
Masonic groups aim to reduce the  
world population to one billion**

The Cardhu Facebook page shared Mikheil Tsagareli’s [video](#) where he claims that Bill Gates, Elon Musk and Masonic groups are aiming to reduce mankind to one billion and will use the coronavirus and anti-coronavirus vaccination to this end. In particular, they will insert microchips in human bodies through vaccination and then lock people up in jails if there is a refusal of vaccination.

*Georgia and the World* published an [article](#) based on Russian sources where Bill Gates was referred to as the “Trojan horse” and argued that he has been planning for years to reduce the world’s population by spreading different viral diseases. *Georgia and the World* published another [article](#), again based on Russian sources, which included conspiracy theories about the origins of the coronavirus. According to the article, the US-made synthetic bacterium Synthia, intended to cleanse the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and which was found in fish and later reached China’s Wuhan market, caused the emergence of the coronavirus type in humans. *Georgia*

*and the World* also manipulatively [reported](#) information about the murder of a US-based ethnic Chinese scientist who was ostensibly killed because of his research on the coronavirus and a probably ground-breaking discovery. News Front shared a [publication](#) of one Facebook user who claimed that Georgian doctors said that the coronavirus does not exist in Georgia and it is just the common flu. The Youthful Facebook page promoted false [information](#) that the term COVID-19 is inscribed on some parts of the micro schemes of 5G towers.

**The coronavirus is like a common influenza and it is not at all dangerous**

As in the previous months, the Lugar Laboratory and related myths have again been targeted by disinformation. Viewpoint [offered](#) a Georgian compilation of Eurasia Daily's "explorations" on the Lugar Laboratory where Dilyana Gaytandzhieva, a journalist having ties with the Kremlin, manipulatively talks about the research on coronavirus diseases with the involvement of Georgian and American biologists having been carried out at the Lugar Laboratory since 2012. Saqinform's Editor-in-Chief, Arno Khidirbegishvili, sought to [convince](#) readers that the Americans disallowed the spread of the coronavirus in Georgia on purpose in order to make sure that the Lugar Laboratory was not blamed. The Tskhinvali-based Sputnik Ossetia devoted a separate [article](#) to the Lugar Laboratory and linked the facility with the coronavirus and its possible man-made origins together with other older narratives. Sputnik Ossetia, based on Russian special services, [disseminated](#) information that Georgians were trying to spread hazardous viruses, including the coronavirus infection, from the Lugar Laboratory to the territory of the so-called South Ossetia.

**Americans disallowed the spread of the coronavirus in Georgia on purpose in order to make sure that the Lugar Laboratory was not blamed**

Disinformation about the coronavirus vaccines and vaccination in general was actively promoted in May-June. The leader of the Georgian Idea political party, Levan Chachua, in his [interview](#) with *Georgia and the World*, claimed that there will be an attempt to reduce the world's population to one billion through vaccination and he called for people to refuse not only vaccination but the vaccine-supporting political class as well. Viewpoint reposted Mikheil Tsagareli's [publication](#) where he called for the population not to get vaccinated since vaccine is a weapon in the hands of the Masons to degrade and annihilate the population. Viewpoint also published an [article](#) based on Russian sources claiming that Bill Gates and Anthony Fauci lost a case in the US Supreme Court which ruled that vaccination would not be mandatory since there is no real evidence of vaccination being safe.

**Vaccines are weapons in the hands of the Masons by which they aim to reduce the world's population**

In addition, disinformation in regard to the harmfulness of wearing face masks was actively promoted. Viewpoint [argued](#) that wearing face masks for a long time causes "health problems, fainting and coma." [According](#) to Tvm.ge, leaving aside the fact that face masks do not protect us from the coronavirus, they also contribute to the increased risk of infection.

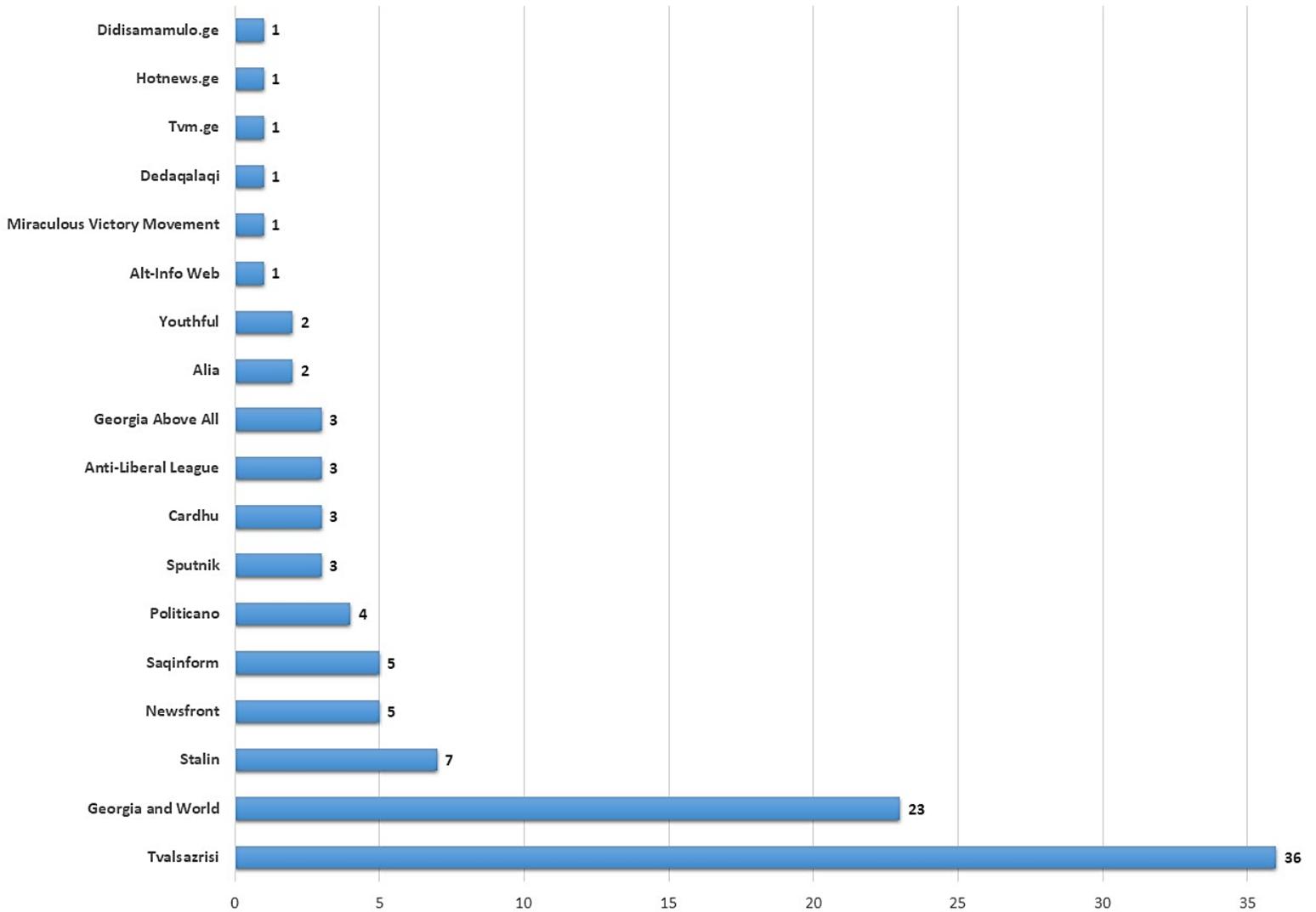
The role of clergymen can be discussed separately whilst analysing the coronavirus-related disinformation. Archpriest Saba Chikaidze [claimed](#) that the world is governed by shadow forces - the so-called Masons - and argued that the aim of these groups is to reduce the world's population to one billion and it is the coronavirus

that they use as a main weapon to this end. Anton Bulukhia, Archbishop of Vani and Baghdati, [stated](#) that he periodically receives evidence that the coronavirus could be a bluff, alleging that the coronavirus vaccine could be a weapon to enslave people. Archbishop of Khoni and Samtredia, Saba Gigiberia, also [claimed](#) that mankind will soon get an offer of the vaccine which would be a weapon in the hand of the devil: “A vaccine will be offered to mankind and humans which will be not against the virus but for enslaving them, ruling them, making them obey. This would be one of the strongest weapons in the hand of the devil to rule over people.” Archpriest Shalva Kekelia was also prominent in making anti-vaxxer statements, [claiming](#) that if people would be unable to travel or work without vaccination then it would be a sign that the vaccine in fact serves different purposes. In this case, Shalva Kekelia stated that he will not receive the vaccine and called for other to follow his suit. Giorgi Andriadze, a member of the governing board of the Foundation of the Patriarch of All Georgians, [argued](#) that wearing face masks poses health hazards and called the mask a neo-Trotskyist and neo-Marxist ideological symbol. Priest Sebastiane Neparidze also lashed out against face masks and [wrote](#) on social network that mandating the wearing of face masks was a death sentence for people with respiratory diseases.

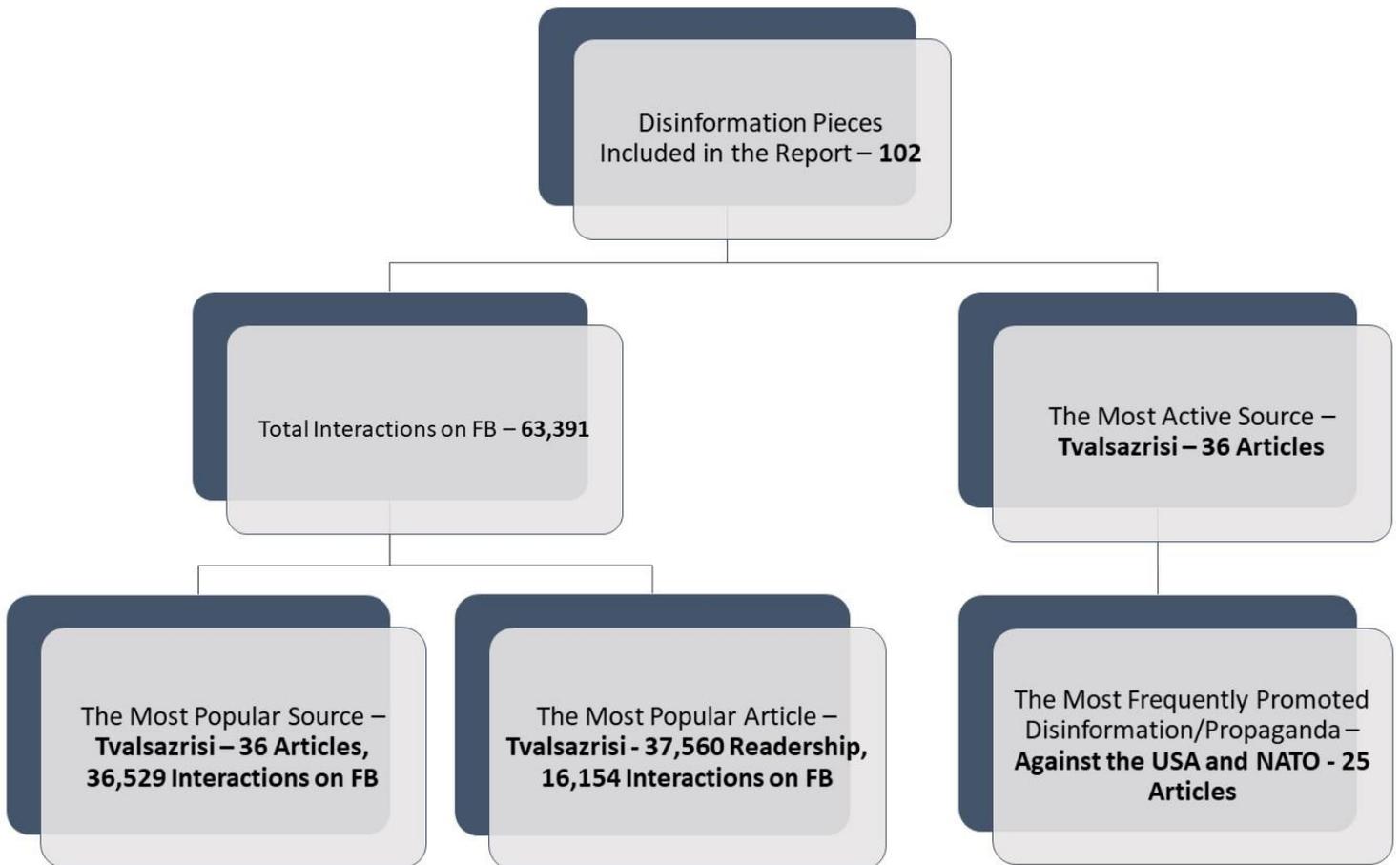
In his [interview](#) with *Georgia and the World*, theologian Vazha Otarashvili stated that the Western, liberal institutions and organisations use the coronavirus pretext to fight the Georgian Orthodox Church and its head, Ilia II. Mr Otarashvili stated: “Their main goal in this case is to deprive humans of spiritual nourishment, separate them from the Lord and turn them into manipulated soulless objects who would constantly be controlled by the world’s globalist powers.”

**Western liberal institutions  
fight the Georgian Orthodox  
Church under the pretext of the  
coronavirus**

## Statistics of the Sources Included in the Report



## Statistics of the Main Actors



*Georgia's Reforms Associates (GRASS) is a non-partisan, non-governmental policy watchdog and multi-profile think-tank which was established in October 2012. GRASS conducts research and in-depth analysis of Georgia's foreign, security, disinformation/propaganda, public policy and public administration fields.*