



# GRASS Disinfo Brief

**MONITORING PERIOD:**

**May 22 - June 4**

GRASS  
REFORMANDA

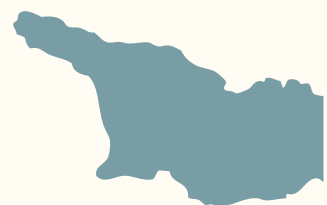
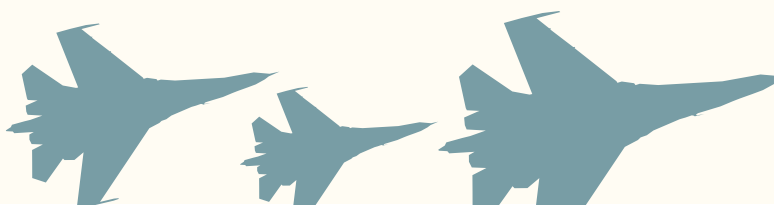




### PM's comments at GLOBSEC regarding NATO and the war in Ukraine stir controversy

Speaking at GLOBSEC, in response to the moderator's question about his opinion why Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Georgia's Prime-Minister [replied](#): "I think everybody knows the reason". On the additional question of the moderator: "I am not sure I do, what do you think it is?", PM replied: "I think you know it well, and the audience knows it. One of the main reasons was NATO, NATO enlargement, right? and many other reasons." The moderator asked for clarification: "you think that NATO enlargement provoked the war?" to what PM answered: "I do not want to speculate, and I do not want to quote the statements of the Russian government. But one of the reasons was Ukraine's will and determination to become member of NATO, and so therefore, we see the consequence". His comments sparked a major controversy in Georgia and also internationally. PM defended his remarks, [stating](#) that the next day the President of the European Commission made a speech and she also said that one of the reasons for this war is that Ukraine wants to be a member of the European family, and President Macron repeated the same, and moreover, he said that Ukraine and Georgia were given the prospect of joining NATO without any security guarantees, which led to Russia's aggression. He [claimed](#) that he had not said anything new, just a few days later, Ursula von der Leyen said the same in Bratislava, with a different wording, instead of the word "NATO", she used "European family".

- Political opposition accused PM of blaming NATO enlargement as a cause of war which repeats Russian propaganda and damages Georgia's NATO aspirations.
- Politico [reported](#) on the news with a headline: "NATO aspirant country blames NATO for Russia's war on Ukraine. Georgia wants to join the military alliance and the EU, but prime minister's new remarks won't go down well".
- MEPs were also highly critical of the PM's remark, notably MEP Rasa Juknevičienė [commented](#), "Говорит Москва" (Moscow is speaking).
- Georgia's Minister of Internal Affairs [claimed](#) that international partners are often disguised as friends but often scold them. He explained that what the PM spoke was true and nothing new – even Zelensky was saying that they would fight for the sake of NATO; also this has been stated on a number of occasions by world leaders, and the PM repeated it which is being repeated by others, including Zelensky. However, according to the minister, opposition was trying to create an elephant out of an ant.



- Other leaders of the Georgian Dream also defended PM, [saying](#) that PM has not said that Georgia is giving up on NATO or the European future”. Speaker of the Parliament [called](#) the criticism concerning this issue a disinformation campaign, and a classic example of formation and dissemination of propaganda messages by internal and external sources to discredit Georgia. According to him, those engaged in this campaign are those who oppose Georgia’s progress towards the EU and NATO.
- Another GD leader [clarified](#) that “Georgia and later Ukraine became the target of Russian aggression because we wanted to make our own decisions about our future. We want our country to be free, sovereign and free. The choice of Georgia, our people and our government is the European family, Georgia's integration into the Western society, European and Euro-Atlantic space, and we are the government that, with the support of the people and society, wrote this historical choice into the Constitution...”.
- Pro-Russian propagandists claimed that this question was posed to PM Garibashvili because they are trying to [put pressure on Georgia](#) and make Georgian government say something that will be later used against it with the overarching [goal](#) of overthrowing it and bringing into power their slaves which will then plunge Georgia into the war.

#### **GD (at least partially) accuses previous government of loss of territories in 2008**

In Bratislava, regarding the question whether the 2008 war was an act of aggression/unprovoked aggression, PM replied: “I do not want to go into details about that war because we have our own view: I mean if we were in the government – if this government, our government was in power – I think we would do everything possible to avoid that war”. Later in the response he called Russia’s actions aggression, and criticised the world of not paying enough attention, for instance imposing sanctions on Russia. This line regarding the 2008 war was repeated by other GD leaders, as well, thus at least partially blaming the previous UNM government for the outcomes of the war. For instance:

- First Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, Giorgi Volski, [stated](#) that “Russia’s aggression was largely caused by those felonious mistakes and perhaps the treasonous position of the government of that time, which literally destroyed the roadmap of the US and the EU which we have been following with high intensity and efficiency. Since July 2006, so many surprising and suspicious mistakes have been made that you cannot think of anything other than the fact that there was a conspiracy and the government of the "National Movement" (UNM) helped the occupation of the territories [by Russia]”.
- Mayor of Tbilisi and Secretary General of Georgian Dream, Kakha Kaladze [claimed](#) that in 2008 Georgia lost the territories, villages, and many Georgian civilians and heroic soldiers died due to



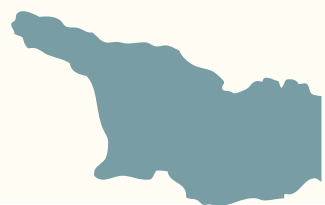
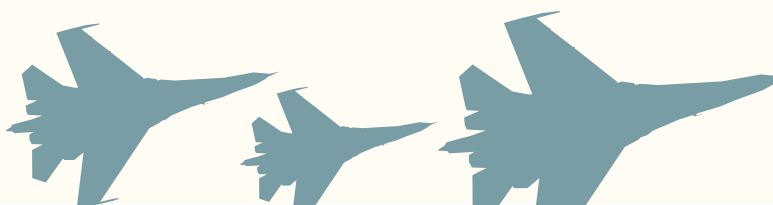
the foolish policy of the "National Movement" (UNM). According to him, if Georgian Dream would have been in power, that disaster of 2008 would have happened.

#### **Pro-Kremlin media in Georgia name NATO as a reason for Russia's full-scale aggression:**

- Anchor of a pro-Russian Sezoni TV [used](#) the comment of Germany's FM Baerbock that Ukraine cannot join NATO until it is in war to disseminate propaganda about Georgia's NATO integration. He claimed that the war, which already resulted in loss of [territories](#) (Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region) and lives for Ukraine, was a result of Ukraine striving towards NATO, and despite this NATO still decided to close its doors to Ukraine. Based on this, he stated that pro-Western forces call on Georgia to continue on the path towards NATO despite NATO not admitting Georgia and causing the loss of territories. He argued that if Georgia is to be saved, NATO and EU integration policy should end.
- [According](#) to anti-Western activist and host of pro-Russian Alt-Info, the war started because Ukraine turned towards the West, and Ukraine invited NATO and the EU into its state, increased the influence of the West. Hence, tensions started in 2014, with the help of Russia, and the citizens of Russia fought alongside the citizens of Ukraine alongside their compatriots against the pro-Western junta in Ukraine. The reason for this was that they do not want their world, as they call "the Russian Mir" (Russian World), to become the Western world. According to him, Russia has not started a full-scale war due to the EU or the increasing influence of the West, but Russia started a full-scale war after Ukraine's talks about NATO became real and serious.

#### **Pro-Russian sources level up fearmongering by revolutions and chaos:**

- Pro-Russian Sezoni TV's permanent host – an anti-Western lecturer – [claimed](#) that a pro-Western opposition politician Helen Khoshtaria cooperated with Russian MP Sergei Gavrilov and caused unrest in Georgia with a preplanned scenario to damage Georgia and its people economically – referring to the controversial visit of Sergei Gavrilov in Georgia which sparked huge protests of June 20 in 2019 after which Russia banned direct flights to Georgia.
- He also [claimed](#) that Georgia's President Salome Zourabichvili was fueling unrest during 7-8 March protests (against the "foreign agents bill") from the US, and her visit to Brussels might also led to calls for revolution from her. According to propaganda, she was in the US during that time in order to then claim power in Georgia and hold snap parliamentary elections, however, the



plan was thwarted by Minister of Interior Gomelauri and the government who acted well but could not finish the business.

- Soso Shatberashvili – head of Leftist Alliance – [claimed](#) while speaking on pro-Russian Alt-Info channel that the US is doing everything to cause destabilisation in Georgia, but could not manage to gain momentum in the public. He claimed that fifth column in Georgia – political opposition and NGOs – are trying to stir public outcry, most recently on the case of resumption of direct flights from/to Russia, but people did not follow them because people needed resumption of direct flights. He added that two currently jailed public figures - ex-President Saakashvili and Director of opposition-affiliated Mtavari TV, Nika Gvaramia – were planning a revolution in a leaked phone call.
- Another propagandist [explained](#) the active support of the US towards opposition by claiming that current government turned out not to be willing to pursue the US interests in Georgia – hence, the US wants to bring back the UNM government which will carry out any order from the US be it opening of the second front against Russia or anything else.

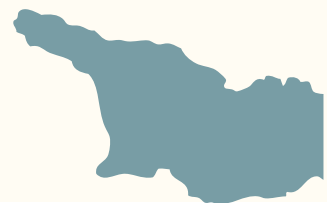
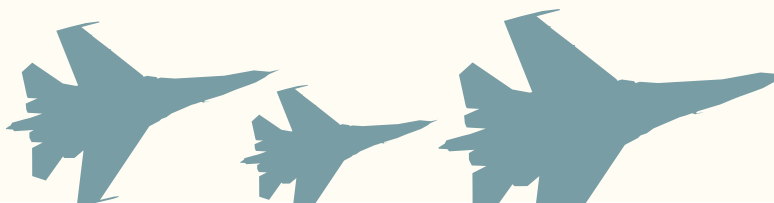
**For Georgian propagandists Russia is a role-model of a big state:**

- According to pro-Russian [propagandist](#), Russia helped Georgia regain Adjara, Guria and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions, and without Russia Georgia would not exist today; Russia also helped Georgian population to increase and if Russia has done some bad to Georgia, Russia has done much more good. He added that Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia has not done anything good to Georgia, on the contrary – taken away territory, and therefore, Russia is a sole state that has done much good for Georgia.
- Another propagandist [argued](#) that pro-Western society should not be cheering the collapse of Russia because in that case there would be 50 Russia instead of one.
- Member of the pro-Russian Conservative Movement [argued](#) that Russia's aim is not conquer or geopolitics (but added that he does not justify Russia's actions), but Russia prefers to have warm relations, alliances, and benefit from this, including vis-à-vis Georgia. He claimed based on this assumption that Georgia should form good relations with Russia and end the regime of constant confrontation, and not be a headache for Russia in the South Caucasus. However, the West is trying to sabotage this process and not even let the normalisation of relations between Russia and Georgia to be in the agenda, on the contrary – the West is trying to conduct destructive actions in Georgia with the hands of its agents in Georgia.



### Propaganda continues to blame the West of using Ukraine as a polygon:

- According to Shatberashvili, Ukraine is [governed](#) by Nazi and fascist government with the leadership of clown Zelensky who is leading Ukrainian people and nation to the full genocide. Propagandists were dissatisfied by Georgian government not saying this publicly.
- Member of the pro-Russian Conservative Movement [stated](#) that what Ukraine has done in regards to Euro-structures has led to war, but the EU and NATO are not doing anything except providing weaponry, turning Ukraine into a military polygon. Hence, he argued that Georgia should say no to Euro-structures, i.e., NATO and the EU.
- According to an anti-Western clergyman, Ukraine has [never](#) helped Georgia. Another propagandist [suggested](#) that the only thing that Georgia and Ukraine have in common is colour revolutions organised by George Soros and his institutions.
- Pro-Russian Alt-Info's anchor [claimed](#) that Zelensky is a traitor of Ukraine, but he does belong to Ukrainian nation but was rather imposed by external forces – he is not Ukrainian neither by his ethnicity, nor religion because he is not Orthodox believer – therefore, is actively fighting against Orthodox church in Ukraine and is laughing on the deaths of Ukrainians and Russians together with the US authorities.
- According to [disinformation](#), Minsk Accords were only a tool for the West to win time to prepare Ukraine for war. During this time, Poroshenko was bombing his own people – something that Putin is talking about now, but the West has ignored the deaths of children and women. Propagandist also justified the annexation of Crimea with this false narrative – Russia annexed Crimea after Poroshenko declared war on its people and the population was in danger, leaving no choice to Russia.
- Propaganda [asserts](#) that despite the mainstream media portraying 2014 demonstrations in Ukraine as peaceful, in reality it was a military coup d'état with the support of the US administration.
- Alt-Info's another anchor [stated](#) that when Blinken responded to Russian demands in December 2021, the US effectively told Russia that they will not take into account the interests of Russia and the issues enshrined in the documents of OSCE and the UN.
- Pro-Russian propagandist [claimed](#) that the raids in Belgorod do not suggest that Russia is weakened, but it indicates that Ukraine was trying to divert the attention from the fall of



Bakhmut (same interpretation of the Belgorod raids has been identified on several [occasions](#)), and also Russia needed justification for deepening its operation into Dnepropetrovsk after Donetsk would be fully captured. He also stated that the possibility of Ukraine taking back its territories that it previously had is 0% as that would only be possible if Russia will collapse because Russia has annexed those territories unlike Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions.

- Propagandist Clergyman [stated](#) that the Church was destroyed in Ukraine by a systemic attack which led to the destruction of the state, and the liberal West is fighting against Church in Georgia with the same aim – to then drag Georgia into the war with Russia, like Ukraine.

### **Propaganda against the EU: The West is an enemy of Georgia that aims to drag Georgia into the war with Russia**

- Propaganda sources were [disseminating](#) a false [dilemma](#) – [integration](#) into the EU and NATO by saying no to Georgia's occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region or abandoning the path of European and Euro-Atlantic integration and [negotiating](#) with Moscow on solving the problem of occupied regions.
- According to [propaganda](#), today Georgia does not have any friends because 27 EU member states, the ambassadors of which rushed into the cabinet of Minister of Economics Davitashvili and demanded sanctioning Russia, cannot be considered friends; on the contrary – they are enemies as they want to drag Georgia into the war.
- Alt-Info also [argued](#) that currently focus should be on explaining to the society that the West is no longer (but has not been previously too) Georgia's partner, on the contrary – the West is an enemy of Georgia that aims to drag Georgia into the war with Russia.
- Another propagandist [suggested](#) that if the EU was good, the UK would not have exited. He also claimed that the Soviet Union was better because the EU/the West wants to control every day to day aspects of internal affairs of Georgia.
- According to pro-Russian [Alt-Info](#), the talk about the EU's intention to strengthen the mechanism of suspension of visa-free travel is linked to the issue of 12 priorities – when the situation concerning the implementation of the 12 priorities escalates in the autumn, it is highly likely that the EU cancels visa-free travel.
- One propagandist [suggested](#) that the EU cannot decide on granting Georgia a candidate status as the real decision-maker is the US.
- According to [Alt-Info](#), if the EU wants stability in Georgia, it would grant Georgia a candidate status to end the conflict inside Georgia concerning the EU membership candidacy, but the EU



is not doing it as they are using it as a leverage to keep afloat the destructive forces by which the collective West desires to change the government in Georgia through a revolution.

- Alt-Info [argued](#) that when Croatia was joining the EU it was forced to give up all national interests, including regarding ethnic minorities and vis-à-vis Serbia. This led to Croatia losing its influence in the Balkans. According to propaganda, same would have happened regarding Georgia – forcing Georgia to give up all its interests. Contrary to Croatia, nobody needs Georgia's accession to the EU as they are already achieving their interest regarding Georgia, which is keeping tensions with Russia.
- Another propagandist [claimed](#) on Alt-Info that due to geographic considerations, NATO and the EU accession is and has always been out of question for Georgia – the aim of the West regarding Georgia is joining the war against Russia.

**Propaganda against the US focuses on the US agents in Georgia and claims the US has “spiritually occupied” Georgia:**

- Propaganda [claimed](#) that the US wants a war in Georgia and is staging provocations to this end – the plot of dragging Georgia into the war with Russia is the following: damaging Russian citizens in Georgia which would lead to a response from Russia and Russia's response would create a sentiment in Georgia to fight against Russia.
- According to a [propagandist](#), the US and its allies are not interested in restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity. If Georgia is united by the permit of Russia's administration Georgia will lose its value as a satellite of the US, that, according to disinformation, is used to provoke Russia to the detriment of Georgia, without the US defending or actually helping Georgia.
- Pro-Russian anchor of Sezoni TV [declared](#) the US as the biggest enemy of Georgia as Washington is destroying Georgia by opposing normal relations with Russia which would result of creation of jobs and increase of Georgian farmers' production. The respondent – anti-Western clergyman – added that no empire has ever done more evil in the world than the US.
- The same clergyman [stated](#) that the US is implementing a policy of genocide of Georgians – first, the US provoked a war in Abkhazia in the 1990s with the hands of the CIA agent Shevardnadze in order to cause animosity between Georgians and Abkhazians and Georgians and Russians, which forced Georgia, a small nation, to seek support of the US, making Georgia a vassal state of the US. Another propagandist also [suggested](#) that Shevardnadze was a CIA agent who helped the





US fulfill its plans by 120% [during his tenure as FM of USSR], and it was the reason he was brought into power in Georgia.

- According to a [propagandist](#), the US order to the UNM-supporters and agents is Georgia to open a second front against Russia, which the US has presented as an ultimatum to Georgian government. According to the propagandist, the US is also seeking opening a second front in the Central Asia.
- Propagandist [claimed](#) that the US-financed and controlled agents in Georgia are blackmailing a well-known priest Father Shalva Kekelia, and force him to support them. The propagandist further claimed that the US-controlled gay-mafia is engaged in every field and body, especially in the ministry of education which represents a nest of the agents of the UNM and LGBT agents.
- Pro-Russian anchor [continued](#) the same narrative by claiming that the US has achieved with its agents in Georgia something that no Georgia's historical enemy could not – conduct Georgia's spiritual occupation. He also [claimed](#) that the US and its agents oppressed Georgia for more than 30 years, killing patriots and leaders of national movement [not referring to the political party], such as Guram Sharadze and ordered torture of Georgian prisoners during Saakashvili's rule in order to destroy Georgians – an aim that continues with inertia even today. He vowed that when the US will run from Georgia, every of its agent will not be able to fly away with it, as it happened in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Syria.

**Alt-Info hosts prominent American propagandist [Scott Ritter](#), here are the main points:**

- Russia is a big country, or rather, the biggest country on earth, with huge natural resources and an economy – all of which make it a huge power in the world. That is why the US tried to bring Russia to its knees.
- The US's attempt to bring Russia to its knees is the reason of the creation and existence of NATO.
- NATO does not exist to protect Georgia. NATO used Ukraine and does not protect it when it is being destroyed. NATO will try to use Georgia in the same way.
- Georgia and especially Ukraine were part of a plan to destroy Russia. The US is not interested in Georgia at all and will not put its soldiers in danger because of Georgia, but will use Georgia to weaken Russia.
- NATO and the US are not helping Georgia to get its territories back. Instead of working on bringing Georgia closer to the Ossetians and Abkhazians, they decided to open a second front in Georgia against Russia, the results of which would be the total destruction of Georgia – not something what a friend does to a friend.



- Russia did not want this war, Russia tried to avoid the war by all means. Russia has been asking not to sign up to join the Western alliance. Russia supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine, Russia tried until the last minute to solve this problem peacefully, but when all options for peaceful solution of the problem were exhausted, Russia entered Ukraine and conducts a special military operation, the purpose of which was to bring Ukraine to the negotiating table.
- The West is currently demanding adoption of Western values from Georgia that go against Georgian traditional values, thus endangering the security and survival of the country, and the loss of national identity.
- The weapons that are given to Ukraine are quite old tanks, and the same Leopard tanks that were handed over are removed from the arsenal, they actually do not work.
- BRICS is expanding: Egypt, Iran, Argentina, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, etc. are the countries that want to join, the organisation is growing and becoming a massive economic institution. Therefore, Georgians should wake up, realise that their future is not joining the European Union and that everybody wants to join BRICS. Georgia's future is also in BRICS, where a global economic relationship is created where everyone is equal, that means multiculturalism, not American institutionalism which is taking away from everyone everything that is appropriate for America's needs.
- Georgia's many years of history with Russia make connection with Russia seem more natural than with the European Union or the United States.

