



# GRASS Disinfo Brief

Special Issue ahead of  
LGBTQI+ gathering in Tbilisi

GRASS  
REFORMANDA



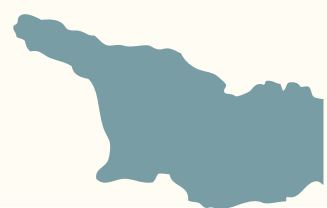
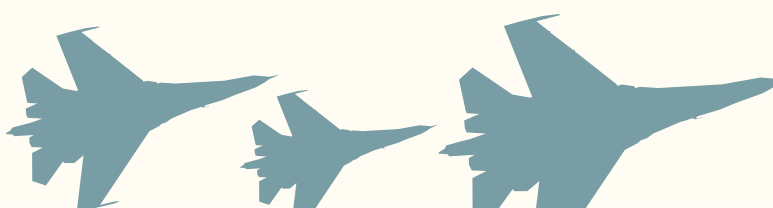


On July 5, 2021, violent groups rallied in the centre of the capital Tbilisi and made it impossible to hold the planned Pride March as the Police turned out incapable of ensuring the protection of the minority group. However, as the Pride March was cancelled, the gathered violent groups directed their violence towards the media representatives (journalists and cameramen) and bystanders, physically assaulting more than 50 media representatives in the process, with the police being unable to stop them. However, GD chairman Irakli Kobakhidze [claims](#) two years after that the July 5 violence did not have any organisers.

The Pride Weeks in Georgia have been under close scrutiny due to the ongoing and concerning risk of increased violence. In 2022, extremist groups vehemently protested against the discreetly held Pride events. These same groups, responsible for organizing anti-LGBT demonstrations, also act as sources of propaganda within Georgia. At GRASS, we pay special attention to the narrative propagated by these outlets, as it provides crucial insight into the prevailing situation. Consequently, we have modified the traditional format to emphasise the urgency of the issue and deliver the necessary information.

Violent groups, spearheaded by the openly pro-Russian Alt-Info – the locomotive of pro-Russian and anti-Western disinformation and propaganda in Georgia and proponent of alliance with Russia – have announced a massive gathering in Tbilisi on July 8 with the aim to suppress the Pride event – Tbilisi Pride Fest 2023 - held at Lisi lake, near the recreational zone on the outskirts of Tbilisi. Risks of violent actions from their side are very high and it is a likely scenario based on their messaging, statements and graffiti throughout the city; heavy police presence is expected. Elements of these groups have already held relatively small-scale protests outside the conference hall where a conference was held in the framework of the Pride Week on June 6.

However, our special issue cannot leave alone the elephant in the room – that is an increasing anti-LGBT rhetoric from the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party and their leaders. Even though the elections are in 2024, GD seems to be in the pre-election mode full-swing, and its main tactic is to create fictional enemies and illusional problems and then showcase that GD is trying



its best to tackle the issues and is protecting Georgia from such threats. Pro-governmental propaganda has created two such problems – the Global War Party, relating to the “second front conspiracy” (this issue will be covered in the June edition of the GRASS Disinfo Brief, which will be available next week) and “LGBT propaganda”. Namely, GD leaders are stating that there are massive LGBT propaganda campaigns underway in the West that had already had a tremendous impact. Additionally, they assert that attempts of LGBT propaganda have started in Georgia, and they will not permit it, aiming to protect Georgia's youth generation from such influences. This alarming trend is further exacerbating the already fragile situation, fuelling anti-LGBT sentiments in the public and encouraging violent groups.

## **GD resorts to “protecting youth” from “LGBT propaganda” after PM’s CPAC participation**

This propaganda from the GD mainly started after PM Irakli Garibashvili addressed the annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) on May, 4, held in Budapest this time. As noted in the May 1-14 issue of the [GRASS Disinfo Brief](#), he claimed that GD “will oppose the evil that has arrived in the name of fake freedom and fake truth”, “will not allow the violence of the minority against the majority” just as they will not allow violence against the representatives of the minority, will also protect the rights of the majority, for whom the family is a union between a man and a woman, a mother is a woman, and a father is a man”.

- In his defence, the head of GD’s Parliamentary Faction and the party’s Executive Secretary, Mamuka Mdinardze stated that for them every kind of “unhealthy” propaganda, including LGBT propaganda, is unacceptable to them.
- Another MP from Georgian Dream called the PM’s Budapest CPAC speech “an address of honourable Prime Minister of an honourable country” and asserted that “mother is for sure a mother and father is for sure a father” and he will answer to anyone who thinks that this is the encouragement of violence. He added that they are tolerant, they respect everyone’s opinion but this does not mean that any minority group to overshadow the will of the majority.
- Senior GD MP Irakli Kadagishvili clarified PM’s statement that they are not talking only about physical violence, but moral violence, as well. According to him, neither side

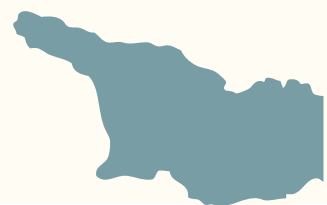
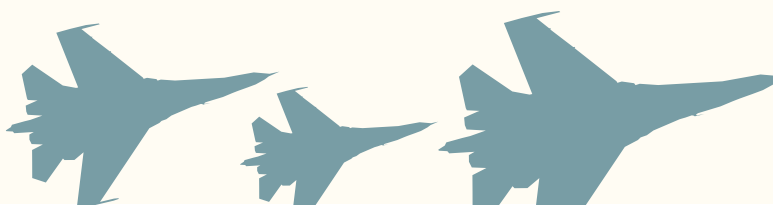


should impose their behavioural culture over the other side, and in case of violence of the minority against the majority, there should be meant when they are trying to establish the values by means of propaganda that are not in line with the values of the society.

- In response to the criticism of the Party of European Socialists (PES) – of which GD was a member before, but then left it before PES discussed the status of GD in the party, PM [stated](#): “I went to a meeting of the American Republican Party in Hungary, where American presidents and congressmen go and [PES] denounced my participation, with two statements dedicated to how dare it. They said that you [referring to himself] used anti-LGBT phrases. Sorry, friends, we are like that, we want this kind of Georgia - conservative, national, defender of family values, and if because of that they want us to be gone [from the party], farewell, I wish them success.”

After this, GD actively resorted to the narrative that they are protecting society from LGBT propaganda.

- There was an incident when some youngsters threw Russian roubles at the GD chairman and leader of the parliamentary majority Irakli Kobakhidze who [responded](#) by stating that there were several young people affiliated with Formula TV channel who have every kind of orientation, including political, messed up, and they should be put on the right track - boys should get wives, girls should get married and they should have children.
- In reference to this incident, Mamuka Mdinaradze [urged](#) several TV channels, which he believed were promoting LGBT propaganda, to distinguish between LGBT advocacy and the protection of rights. He argued that conflating the two would result in a clash of values, asserting that the media would ultimately be on the losing side. According to him, contrary to the perceptions of them that the younger generation is an LGBT generation, in reality, it is not the case. He added that Georgia has a healthy young generation with a healthy future, a national government that is protecting this healthy, the most talented, and educated generation from LGBT propagandists and every other



type of malign propaganda. He vowed that no one would let this [LGBT propaganda] happen without consequences and no one will forgive this [to the LGBT propagandists].

### **McDonald's under fire for alleged "LGBT propaganda amongst children"**

Another case for the GD to fight against "LGBT propaganda" was related to the brochure in the McDonald's Happy Meal product regarding Elton John stating: "... And he made it! He started a healthy diet, good sleep and taking care of himself. He became one of the most successful solo male performers, get married and with his spouse David and two sons created such a family that he was always dreaming of". This incident was labeled as LGBT propaganda aimed at children by propaganda sources and the GD leaders. As a result, McDonald's faced intense pressure and became a target for anti-LGBT groups, leading to protests specifically targeting McDonald's and its Georgian branch owner, Temur Chkonia.

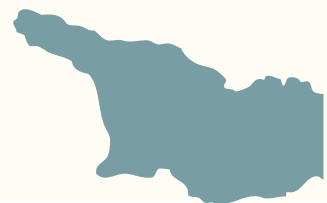
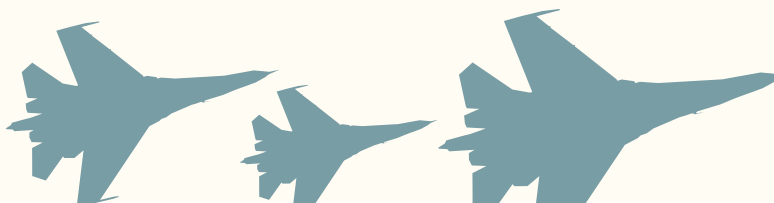
- Mamuka Mdinardze [stated](#) that in the Happy Meal, children are offered and provided with documents containing LGBT propaganda which is an attempt to sneak in this topic and get children used to it from a young age. He claimed that this is damaging and nobody will ever be able to call propaganda protection of rights. He said that the rights of people of every orientation, be it sexual, should be protected but LGBT propaganda is categorically unacceptable, and called the McDonald's case disgusting.
- Mr Kobakhidze [stated](#) that conducting LGBT propaganda to the children is shocking for him and expressed hope that the representatives of the company would review the contents of their materials. He said that a very large part of the public was, of course, outraged by the content contained in a particular children's booklet and it was, of course, shocking and infuriating. Kobakhidze claimed that this is a disaster and under no circumstances should this propaganda be aimed at children. According to [him](#), every sane person should dissociate from LGBT propaganda in children which is categorically unacceptable. He further expressed hope that it was a mistake and that the management of the company will also dissociate from it.
- Mayor of Tbilisi and GD's Secretary General Kakha Kaladze [commented](#) on the issue that "when there is propaganda of filth, we have to give it a name, no matter whom it comes from and no matter where it is. When dirtiness is promoted among children, it is very harmful and first of all, we, fathers and mothers, should raise our voice about it". He



vowed not to let anyone strengthen such propaganda in Georgia. He also directly claimed that LGBT propaganda is a great filthiness and is categorically unacceptable. Kaladze also [claimed](#) that LGBT people do not need additional protection because like other citizens of the country, they are defended by the law and the state.

### GD concerned over the effects of LGBT propaganda in the West, suggests legislative regulation of the issue in Georgia

- Prime Minister Garibashvili then [raised](#) the issue of LGBT propaganda in foreign kindergartens and schools and called it unacceptable and something they should oppose. He expressed his concern about the statistics that 22% of French youngsters identify as LGBT and called it an alarming tendency. He argued that everyone is free of choice but claimed that over-the-line propaganda in foreign kindergartens and schools is absolutely unacceptable. Additionally, he claimed that the societal response to the McDonald's case was strong and adequate because propaganda was taking place amongst the children in one of the most popular restaurants "which is, of course, a totally immoral and unacceptable campaign".
- Kobakhidze also [commented](#) on the statistics regarding France, where he claimed 22% of people between 18 and 25 age, identify as LGBT, and the US, where 20% identify as LGBT, and other countries with higher numbers. He asserted that this incident served as evidence that propaganda has the potential to influence a person's sexual orientation, raising significant concerns. He reiterated his firm stance that the dissemination of LGBT propaganda to children is unequivocally unacceptable and emphasised the need to take all necessary measures within the bounds of legal frameworks to combat it. He expressed his hope that Georgia would not face demands or pressure to endorse LGBT propaganda aimed at children, as such expectations would be deemed unacceptable. Kobakhidze emphasised the significance of this stance, particularly in light of the outspoken statements made by certain countries regarding Estonia's recent approval of same-sex marriage.



- The issue escalated even further. Kobakhidze [claimed](#) that political parties and NGOs and media affiliated with the opposition are engaged in pseudoliberal propaganda, including spreading LGBT propaganda amongst children.
- The peak of GD's campaign, on June 30 - just before the start of the Pride Week in Tbilisi, was during the PM's address to the Parliament. He once again [denounced](#) the "immoral campaign" of McDonald's. PM Garibashvili claimed that LGBT propaganda in kindergartens and schools is unacceptable and that what is happening in Europe and in the US in this regard is a catastrophe. He argued that this should be tabooed in Georgia, possibly regulated on the legislative level. Garibashvili added that discussion should start on the issue of LGBT propaganda and Georgia's position should be articulated in a clear manner – what is acceptable and what is not. He also opined that the Ministry of Education should protect kindergartens and schools from malign propagandists. He also stressed that Georgia is facing serious issues concerning the birth rate and MPs should not be thinking of starting LGBT propaganda in the kindergartens and schools but on initiating programmes such as "at least four children".

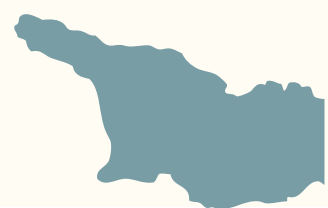
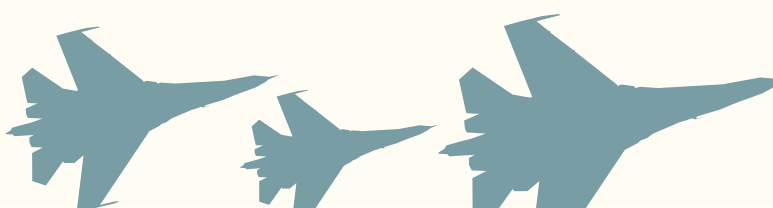
### **Anti-Western and Pro-Russian sources level up anti-LGBT propaganda**

Unsurprisingly, propaganda sources took advantage of the fertile ground created for them by the ruling Georgian Dream party leaders, and its affiliated propagandists to spread their messages on the issue and call on the public to gather on July, 8 to suppress Pride Fest 2023. To this end, they are manipulating the public that the Pride event would take place in the streets whereas the events are [planned](#) behind closed doors in the private property. Their other propaganda messages concerned the EU and the West, as well:

- Alt-info propagandist [alleged](#) that the Western nations are imposing LGBT pride upon the Georgian population, suggesting that Europe and the US have a vested interest in creating chaos within the country and intentionally exacerbating tensions between Georgia and Russia.
- The same propagandist [suggested](#) that if the EU grants Georgia candidate status, it will demand that Georgia hold LGBT marches, legalise same-sex marriage and teach schoolchildren about LGBT lifestyle. A propagandist clergyman also [stated](#) that the EU is forcing Georgia to sow sodomy in the country.



- Pro-Russian propagandist [called on](#) pro-Western Georgians suggesting that instead of Europe, which the propagandist portrayed as being filled with gay individuals, they should consider going to Russia, a country depicted as having an abundance of beautiful women. The propagandist extolled the virtues of the Russian state, emphasising that Georgians who do not display EU and NATO flags would be received with respect and hospitality in Russia, as it was presented as an unsuitable environment for gay activists.
- An anti-Western propagandist emphasised that Western culture has only introduced LGBT propaganda to Georgia, alleging that instead of providing a security umbrella, the West exploits Georgia in its confrontations with Russia.
- Another Alt-info propagandist [argued](#) that Western-funded groups plan to force LGBT propaganda on the country and morally break it. According to their claims, the West has purported plans to systematically undermine the moral fabric of the Georgian people across all levels, with the intention of rendering them incapable of resistance in the future.
- Another Alt-info propagandist [accused](#) President Salome Zourabichvili of being an agent and taking direct orders from the West, specifically, opening a second front with Russia and imposing an LGBT agenda on the Georgian people, thus degrading the Georgian Orthodox Church. The propagandist emphasised that everything anti-Georgian is coming from the West.
- [According](#) to a pro-Russian propagandist, by spreading LGBT "filth" the country and its sanctity are getting violated, therefore the government should enact a law against it and prohibit LGBT pride from taking place. The propagandist called on the government to prevent a civil confrontation, because if such law is not adopted, the people themselves will guarantee its execution, thus (in)directly justifying the use of violence.
- Apart from Georgia, propaganda once again [asserted](#) that the Ukrainian government took orders from the West, therefore they are the ones responsible for the destruction of





Ukraine - Ukraine is so obedient to the West that even after the start of the war the government took time to organise an LGBT march.

## **Anti-Western, anti-LGBT propaganda intensifies ahead of Pride Festival**

- A well-known anti-Western propagandist [concluded](#) that the presence of numerous foreigners at the opening event of Pride Week is evidence of the liberal West actively promoting the perversion of Georgian children. The Georgian government also faced criticism for permitting the events of Pride Week to take place. The critic specifically targeted the EU and the UN, accusing them of being primary advocates responsible for inflicting various forms of terror on the global stage.
- The same propagandist [disseminated](#) false information suggesting that children in Europe, particularly in Sweden, roam the streets naked and receive early education about how there are no differences between genders, claiming that this serves as evidence of alarming LGBT propaganda. This narrative posits that discussions surrounding the protection of children from such influences pose challenges to Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration, as the Western countries prioritise LGBT values.
- During a talk show on Alt-info, another pro-Russian propagandist [propagated](#) false information, claiming that LGBT advocates aim to promote sexual activities among third and fourth-grade students. This narrative emphasised the cultural differences between Georgians and Europeans, asserting that as Caucasians, Georgians expect foreigners to demonstrate greater obedience and respect to their traditional values.
- Anti-Western propagandist [argued](#) that anyone supporting integration with the West must participate in LGBT pride events, something deemed unacceptable by the propagandists. This statement was supported by another propagandist who argued that both President Zourabichvili and President Zelenskyy advocate for the same agenda.