



# GRASS Disinfo Brief

**MONITORING PERIOD:**

**September 1-10**

GRASS  
REFORMANDA



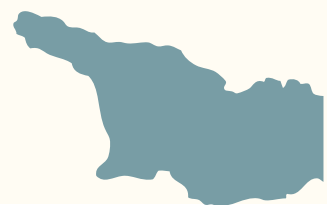
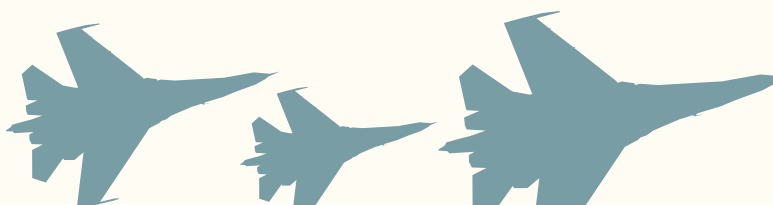


### Topics of the issue:

- Propaganda targets President Zourabichvili after proceeding with visits in Europe despite government rejection, GD threatens impeachment
- Disinformers fuel anti-EU propaganda amid Josep Borell visit to Tbilisi, Georgia's EU membership aspirations portrayed as futile
- GD and "People's Power" continue rhetoric about ambiguous "Global War Party"
- Propagandists continue to call for close relations with Russia, portraying it as the only way to regain territorial integrity
- Propaganda continues to justify Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, discredit Ukraine's liberation efforts
- Anti-US conspiracies continue to blame US for Russia's aggression in Ukraine and Georgia
- Propagandists speculate about the tense situation in the South Caucasus, Armenia criticized for joint military drills with the US

### **Propaganda targets President Zourabichvili after proceeding with visits in Europe despite government rejection, GD threatens impeachment**

On August 30th, the Government of Georgia issued an official statement saying that the President's administration had initially made an overture to the Government on July 12th concerning the possibility of a diplomatic visit to Germany. On August 3rd, the Government opted to decline not only the aforementioned proposal but also any subsequent proposals for official visits scheduled for the remainder of the year, including visits to Ukraine, Poland, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, the United Arab Emirates, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and Israel. The pronouncement notably emphasized the constitutional framework governing the President of Georgia's role in foreign relations. As per the Georgian Constitution, the President exercises representative functions in foreign affairs only with the explicit concurrence of the



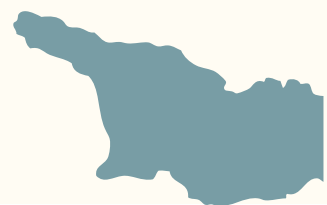
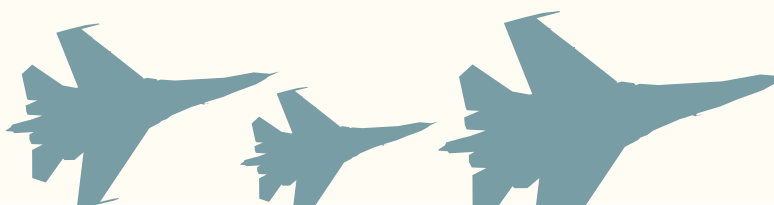
Government, as the execution of the nation's foreign policy falls squarely within the purview of the Government of Georgia, read the statement. Simultaneously, on August 30th, the President's Administration made an announcement detailing the commencement of a series of high-level diplomatic meetings commencing on August 31st with the President of the Federal Republic of Germany. President Zourabichvili embarked on discussions with European leaders, including President Frank Walter Steinmeier of Germany, President Charles Michel of the European Council, and President Emmanuel Macron of France. However, in a retaliatory measure undertaken on September 1st, Chairman Irakli Kobakhidze of the Georgian Dream party formally declared the initiation of an impeachment process against the President, citing alleged constitutional violations.

- While announcing the ruling party's plans, Kobakhidze underlined that President Zourabichvili's past statements about how the government is only formally fulfilling the 12 priorities set by the European Commission point to her opinion that Georgia does not deserve candidate status. Therefore, her visits to Europe are only counter-productive and damage the chances of Georgia receiving it. Kobakhidze levelled accusations against the President, insinuating that she is seeking political gain from the possibility of Georgia obtaining candidate status, all while casting aspersions on her for purportedly obstructing the nation's path to attaining such recognition. Despite the impeachment requiring 100 votes in the Parliament, which means that GD has to garner additional votes from opposition party MPs, Kobakhidze stated that the ruling party would not cooperate with the radical opposition, in contrast to the President.
- The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, also issued similar remarks, emphasizing the President's apparent lack of conviction in Georgia's eligibility for attaining candidate status. He contended that the President's assertion regarding the government's insufficient commitment to fulfilling the 12 priorities was false and disparaging to the Georgian populace. Consequently, he decided to decline the President's proposals for foreign visits. Mr. Gharibashvili reiterated that, in spite of the challenging geopolitical circumstances, GD had effectively averted the emergence of a second front in Georgia. He underscored that, over the past decade, neither the President



of Georgia nor the opposition had substantially contributed to the cause of European integration. The GD had exclusively achieved all progress in this regard.

- The Chairman of the Parliament, Mr. Shalva Papuashvili, maintained a resolute stance regarding the President's European visits, categorizing them as constitutional transgressions. Consequently, he affirmed the validity of the Georgian Dream's decision to pursue the impeachment process. Papuashvili acknowledged the fact that the ruling party does not have enough votes in the Parliament to conclude the impeachment and stated that each MP should exercise their political responsibility, not mentioning any plans to negotiate with the opposition. According to the Chairman, “If we do not respect the constitution ourselves, then no one will respect our constitution or our state”.
- According to GD MP Mamuka Mdinardze, it is impossible to mobilize 100 votes. However, he posited that the opposition's support for a President found to be in violation of the constitution provides an insight into their true objectives. Mdinardze explicitly declared that GD has no intentions of collaborating with the opposition to secure the requisite votes. Furthermore, he did not rule out the possibility that the United National Movement (UNM) might engage in negotiations with the President, potentially abstaining from voting for her impeachment in exchange for a pardon for Saakashvili. Although the MP does not expect President Zourabichvili to take such steps, Mdinardze thinks this is still possible since the President and the UNM have the same message box and receive instructions from the same source.
- GD MP, Irakli Zarkua, emphasized that the President was elected to protect the constitution, not violate it, making the ruling party's reaction adequate. Zarkua, pointing at the opposition's double standards, recalled times when the opposition severely criticised President Zourabichvili, only to now extend their support to her. Furthermore, Zarkua levied accusations against the President, asserting that her actions were aimed at undermining the progression of Georgia's attainment of candidate status, and underlined that despite the impeachment process, the President will not become more adequate.



However, the ruling party's decision demonstrates that no one, including the President, can violate the constitution and get away with it.

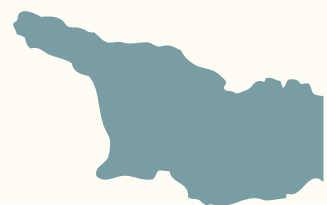
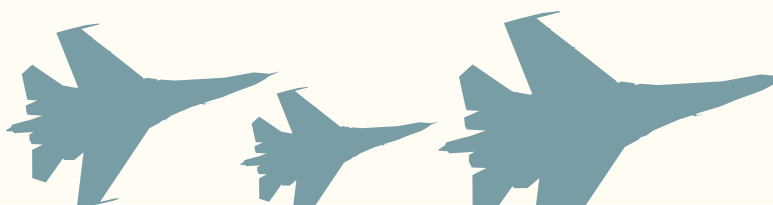
- "People's Power" MP Guram Matcharashvili alleged that the impeachment process will expose the link between President Zourabichvili and the "Global War Party". Another People's Power MP, Dimitri Khundadze, stated that the President had effectively traded her nation's constitutional duties for those bestowed upon her by her handlers. Additionally, People's Party MP Mikheil Kavelashvili argued that President Zourabichvili was carrying out directives provided by the same elusive "Global War Party."
- "People's Power" movement member Davit Kartvelishvili assessed President Salome Zourabichvili's meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron as a meeting between an agent and its superior to give out additional instructions for the agent. In making this assertion, he levelled an accusation against the President, insinuating that she acts as an agent of a foreign nation.
- An editor of the pro-Russian online website "Saqinform" wrote that Zourabichvili went to Europe to make sure that Georgia does not receive candidate status. The objective, as articulated by this viewpoint, is to subsequently lay blame on the Georgian Dream (GD) party, thereby inciting protests against the ruling party and exacerbating the domestic situation within the country. In a separate article, the pro-Russian editor emphasized that the EU's primary concern lies not in whether President Zourabichvili violated the constitution but rather in her adherence to directives aimed at undermining the present government. The article suggests that the EU is preparing the President to issue a pardon to the former Georgian President, Mikheil Saakashvili. Another pro-Russian website published an article, according to which the UNM is backed by the collective West and President Zourabichvili, which guarantees that UNM will have enough votes to enter the Parliament through the upcoming 2024 parliamentary elections.

**Disinformers fuel anti-EU propaganda amid Josep Borell visit to Tbilisi, Georgia's EU membership aspirations portrayed as futile**



On September 7<sup>th</sup>, Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, arrived on an official visit in Tbilisi, during which he met with the Government representatives, the President, opposition parties and civil society organization members. During his visit, although Josep Borell had encouraging words about Georgia's European future, he also underlined the EU's regret about the resumption of direct flights between Georgia and Russia, making Tbilisi a hub for bringing Russians to Europe. The High Representative also commented about the impeachment process being launched against the President by the ruling party, stating that it increases counterproductive polarisation. Most importantly, Josep Borell made a statement about Georgia's progress in fulfilling the 12 priorities set by the European Commission, stating that as of last June, Georgia has delivered on three of them, while the rest of the priorities require additional work.

- Georgian PM Irakli Gharibashvili replied to the High Representative's comments. Regarding the resumption of flights between Georgia and Russia, Prime Minister Gharibashvili clarified that no sanctioned airline or aircraft is permitted to operate within Georgian airspace, signifying the government's commitment to upholding strict discipline and ensuring complete transparency. Turning to the impeachment process initiated by the ruling party against the President, the PM characterized it as a strictly legal matter. He underscored that, as Georgia endeavours to construct a European-style democracy, the paramount imperative is protecting and adhering to the constitution. Addressing the issue of the 12 priorities set by the European Commission, Prime Minister Gharibashvili argued that the Georgian government has undertaken all possible actions within a short timeframe, while Ukraine and Moldova were granted the candidate status as a bonus in advance despite not fulfilling EU's recommendations, which seems unfair. The PM emphasized that the Georgian side expects fair treatment and, therefore, granting of candidate status from the EU. Given the precarious geopolitical climate and



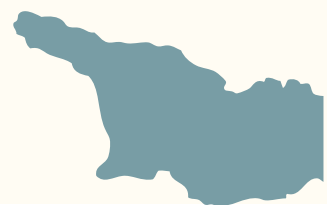
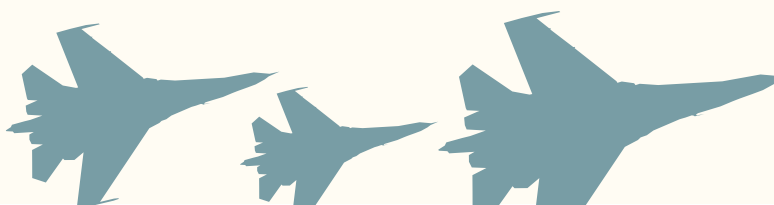
the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, he argued that any adverse decision from the EU toward Georgia could inadvertently be a green light for Russia.

- Chairman of GD, Irakli Kobakhidze, stated that the impeachment process does not exacerbate polarisation, but by foreign agents embedded into opposition parties, non-governmental organizations and media outlets, which deliberately and artificially increase polarisation. Kobakhidze also underlined that polarisation is being exacerbated by violating the constitution, effectively blaming President Zourabichvili.
- GD leader and Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze also commented on the High Representative's statements about the President's impeachment process. Kaladze stated that the country's European future is harmed by the violation of the constitution by the President. According to Kaladze, while he understands the High Representative's position, Georgia is a sovereign state and respecting the constitution and laws is very important to the government.
- GD MP Mamuka Mdinardze also assessed the High Representative's visit and statements. Mdinardze stated that if the EU makes an unfair decision concerning Georgia, it will be a push towards Russia. Josep Borell compared EU-Georgia relations to a professor-student relationship. In Mdinardze's opinion, it feels like Georgia, the student, is being deliberately failed by the professor, the EU, as Georgia is one of the frontrunners of EU membership according to the EU's criteria. If the European Commission comes to a fair conclusion, Georgia should be granted candidate status unconditionally.
- "People's Power" movement member Davit Kartvelishvili criticized Josep Borrell and recalled his visit to Ukraine in 2020, stating that the EU is not an ATM for Ukraine and reforms are needed. According to Kartvelishvili, a country that still has an exceptional corruption problem was still granted a candidate status. Therefore, Borrell's assessments about Georgia's progress are a farce, unfair and deceptive. Kartvelishvili suggested that if Georgia were to get dragged into the war against Russia, it would not have a problem regarding candidate status.
- A pro-Russian propagandist on Alt Info argued that every visit made by a high official from the EU aims to assess the situation in the country to adjust and improve their attacks



on conservative-minded patriots. The EU is attempting to maintain a pro-Western agenda in Georgia, which also includes opening a second front and exacerbating relations between Georgia and Russia. Another propagandist on Alt Info criticized Borrell's past statements about how the EU is a garden while the rest of the world is a jungle. The propagandist argued that the EU created its "garden" through genocide and robbery of other countries, not through correct policy and democracy.

- Pro-Russian website "GeWorld" published an article, according to which the real reason behind Josep Borrell's visit was to assess the situation in the country personally. The West is interested in changing the current government and wants to see whether or not protests will start in case the EU does not grant Georgia candidate status. The West will attempt to remove the government via revolution, leaving Georgia weaker and more dependent on the West. In an interview with the same website, a prominent pro-Russian propagandist argued that Georgia's sovereignty is only formal, and Josep Borrell visited Georgia not as a partner but as an enslaver. According to the propagandists, Georgia will not have any socioeconomic development in case of EU membership, and Georgia is unrelated to European culture and identity.
- Pro-governmental social media account argued that Josep Borrell's statements were intended to cause chaos and anti-governmental sentiments in the country until the end of autumn when the EU makes a decision about Georgia's candidate status. According to a propaganda source, Josep Borell's critical statements were masterfully shut down by the Georgian Prime minister. The social media account also criticized Borrell's statements about how Georgia has become a hub for Russians entering EU countries and emphasized that the same arguments are never used against Turkey, through which many more Russians enter the EU. Additionally, the post author mentioned how Moldova, a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, received a candidate status and Georgia did not, pointing to the EU's lack of consistency.





## **GD and “People’s Power” continue rhetoric about ambiguous “Global War Party”**

- GD MP Irakli Zarkua adamantly claimed that the international conference titled “Defeating Putinism” held in Tbilisi on September 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> was intended to harm Georgia’s national interests because the government did not open a second front against Russia. Zarkua stated that Georgia would not become “a banana republic”, calling David Kramer, Executive Director of the George W. Bush Institute, and Viola von Cramon, member of the European Parliament, losers and paid lobbyists assembled to lay a foundation for a revolution in Georgia and open a second front against Russia.
- GD Chairman Irakli Kobakhidze also commented about the conference and stated that other than some individual experts who probably did not know about the true contents of the conference, the attendees were members of the collective UNM and its foreign partners. Additionally, on numerous occasions, the Chairman of the ruling party has contended that the President and the radical opposition share a common patron, whom he enigmatically refers to as the "Global War Party."
- On September 7<sup>th</sup>, former Public Defender of Georgia Nino Lomjaria presented a new platform titled “Georgia’s European Orbit”, which aims to unite people with different political backgrounds for Georgia’s European future. On September 11<sup>th</sup>, “People’s Power” released a written statement arguing that the “Global War Party” does not forgive GD for not opening a second front and is attempting to overthrow the current government and install the UNM as the ruling party. In order to help UNM gain the majority in the Parliament, the “Global War Party” is assisting different political parties, civil society organizations and platforms such as “Georgia’s European Orbit” to undermine GD and help UNM win in the 2024 elections, but according to the statement, the attempts were futile before and will be again so in the future.

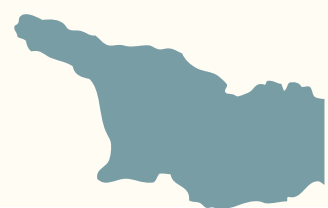
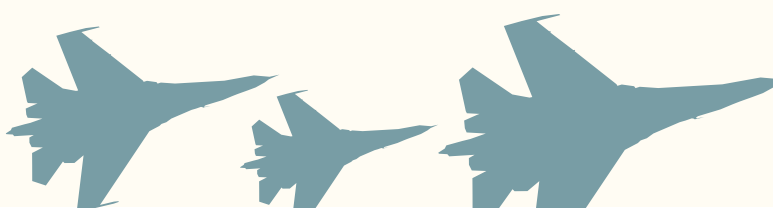
## **Propagandists continue to call for close relations with Russia, portraying it as the only way to regain territorial integrity**

- The “Eurasian Institute” director and pro-Russian propagandist announced on Sezoni TV’s broadcast that the Russian governmental programs will allow Georgian citizens to study in Russia for free and without passing exams. Additionally, Russian universities



will not require knowledge of the Russian language and, by necessity, will provide free one-year Russian language courses. The propagandist appealed to the viewers to apply, as the program offers abundant educational and future employment possibilities.

- A social media profile published a post aimed at collecting signatures for a statement beseeching Russian President Vladimir Putin to restore normal relations with Georgia. The statement praises the Russian President for his “fight against globalism and world injustice” and underscores the historical unity of Georgians and Russians while highlighting that Georgia only developed under Russian rule. The statement reads that the signatories confirm their love for orthodox Russia, a guarantee of peace and stability in the Caucasus.
- A propagandist on the pro-Russian channel Sezoni TV stated that despite losing territories to Russia, the Georgian government has refrained from negotiating with Moscow. This stance, the propagandist contended, is devoid of practicality and unlikely to improve the situation. The same propagandist appeared on Alt Info’s broadcast and reiterated a well-established pro-Russian narrative, suggesting that the Russian Foreign Affairs Minister has expressed support for the notion of Georgians, Abkhazians, and Ossetians coexisting within a single state. Sezoni TV anchor posited that the re-establishment of Georgian-Russian relations would serve as a foundational step toward the repatriation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the restoration of territorial integrity.
- Editor of pro-Russian “Saqinform” published another opinion piece, in which he argues that the restoration of Georgian-Russian relations will make the reintegration of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region realistic. In a different article, the same propagandist claims that Georgians have been fighting foreign adversaries for centuries, mostly unsuccessfully, but was eventually saved by the Treaty of Georgievsk, which resulted in Russian protection and unification of Georgia. In another article, the Editor of “Saqinform” wrote that Russia is a traditional leader of the Caucasus region, and the



Georgian government should acknowledge that. Whatever Georgia does on its path towards Euro-Atlantic integration, it will remain a foreign country to the West.

- A prominent pro-Russian propagandist called on the people to donate resources for humanitarian aid on the front lines for the Russian side. According to him, many Georgians live in Russia in far better conditions than those living in Europe and the US. Therefore, humanitarian aid sent to the Russians from Georgia will give Georgians living in Russia a good name.
- Another pro-Russian propagandist's article praised Bidzina Ivanishvili for initiating the Abashidze-Karasin format for direct Georgian-Russian negotiations but also criticised him for not fully restoring relations with Russia, which would allow for the opening of Russian factories in Georgia, as well as sending Georgians in Russian educational institutions and employing people in Russian enterprises. According to the propagandist, all of the above would improve the situation in Georgia.

### **Propaganda continues to justify Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, discredit Ukraine's liberation efforts**

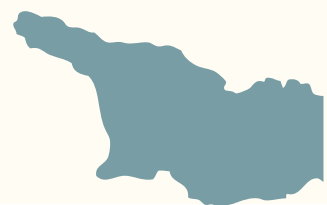
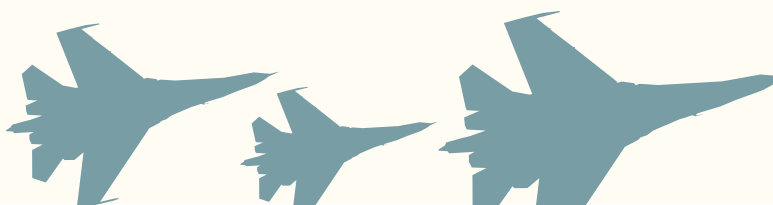
- Propagandists on Sezoni TV called Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine a defensive war, as Russia is not only fighting against Ukraine, but the collective West and most importantly, the US. The same propagandist alleged that Zelenskyy was placed and is controlled by the Americans in order to destroy the Ukrainian people. Another propagandist claimed that Russia is not being defeated and the Ukrainians are experiencing massive losses while continuing to lose territories to the Russian army.
- A propagandist blamed the West for provoking the war in Ukraine and exacerbating it by providing fighting materials for Kyiv. According to the propagandist, the West aims to kill as many Slavs as possible with the hands of other Slavs while robbing and destroying Ukraine. Even after the war, Ukraine will need to beg for financial support from the West to rebuild the country, which would span numerous years, as the rapid development of significant infrastructure was allegedly only feasible during the era of the Soviet Union.



- A social media profile wrote a post according to which the current Ukrainian government representatives are descendants of Stepan Bandera and his group, who collaborated with the Nazis and killed many Georgians during world war II. Therefore, it is illogical to regard Ukrainians as friends of Georgia.

### **Anti-US conspiracies continue to blame US for Russia's aggression in Ukraine and Georgia**

- A prominent pro-Russian propagandist who often appears on Alt Info and Sezoni TV stated that former US President George W. Bush was one of the people that urged Mikheil Saakashvili to start a war against Russia in 2008. Additionally, he claimed that while John McCain has the title of national hero of Georgia, he was one of the biggest enemies and initiators of the 2008 August war, ultimately resulting in Russia recognizing Georgia's breakaway regions as independent states. By saying so, the propagandist shifted the blame for the Russian occupation to the US.
- Another propagandist on Alt Info alleged that the UNM was aided and elevated to power through US support, and the same scenario is occurring in Ukraine. The US, in the name of democracy, liberalism and human rights, is supporting fascist and bloody regimes in Eastern Europe, and Zelenskyy's and Saakashvili's regimes, according to this perspective, are an example of that.
- A similar idea was voiced in an article published by a pro-Russian website, according to which the US started a revolution of ideas in Georgia as soon as it became independent in 1991. The Rose Revolution was staged, and the US planted Saakashvili's regime to transform the brains of Georgian citizens.
- A social media user posted about how the US and the EU are the main occupiers because the US conquered half of Asia, while the EU dissolved Serbia and "took Kosovo". Another social media user posted about how the US and the EU destroyed Georgia and conducted a genocide in the country.



## **Propagandists speculate about the tense situation in the South Caucasus, Armenia criticized for joint military drills with the US**

- Pro-Russian “Saqinform” editor argued that Turkey has shortages of drinking water and, therefore, plans to attack either Nagorno Karabakh or Armenia. In the event of an unsuccessful invasion in these territories, the editor surmised that Georgia might become a target, given its considerable water resources. The editor further asserted that Georgia possesses abundant natural resources, although this information is allegedly being concealed from the public to avert any potential reluctance among the Georgian public to continue collaborating with the US, NATO and the EU.
- The same propagandist claimed that the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, is satisfied with the status quo and does not want to stir up the situation, but he is obligated by “big brother” Turkey to aid in Turkic expansion plans and attack Armenia.
- Pro-Russian propagandists were especially angered by Armenia’s decision to hold joint military exercises on Armenian territory. One propaganda source argued that the joint exercises will only bring tension in the South Caucasus, which will result in Armenia’s destruction. According to the propagandist, the West has no chance of success in the South Caucasus and only aims to create chaos and disrupt Russia and its allies.