



# GRASS Disinfo Brief

**MONITORING PERIOD:**

**19-24 September**

GRASS  
REFORMANDA





## Topics of this issue:

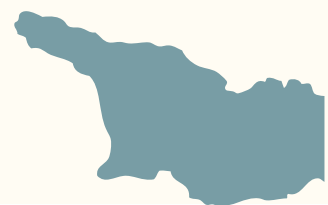
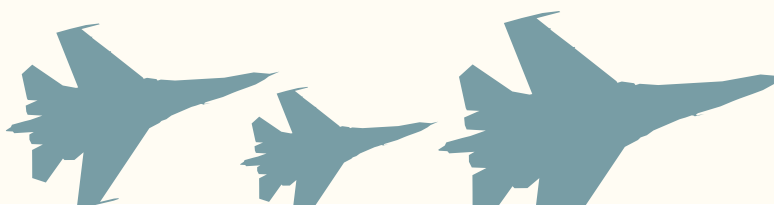
- National Bank of Georgia reverses the decision to limit Otar Partskhaladze's access to bank assets, GD names US sanctioning Partskhaladze a gift to the opposition
- Russian Propaganda insists Pashinyan's pro-Western stances deprived Armenia of Nagorno-Karabakh
- Pro-Kremlin groups repeat conspiracy of the West planning a coup in Georgia and insist 12 priorities urge Tbilisi to promote LGBT propaganda
- Russian propaganda in Georgia fosters Moscow's "savior" image, promoting the idea that Georgia's path to development hinges on forging a partnership with the Kremlin
- The US is again blamed for preparing the coup d'état in Georgia

**National Bank of Georgia reverses the decision to limit Otar Partskhaladze's access to bank assets, GD names US sanctioning Partskhaladze a gift to the opposition**

After the US State Department issued sanctions on former Chief Prosecutor of Georgia, Otar Partskhaladze, on 14 September, the Georgian National Bank initially [announced](#) that in accordance with international sanctions, it would limit Partskhaladze's access to bank assets. On September 18<sup>th</sup>, the ruling party's Chairman, Irakli Kobakhidze, [denounced](#) the National Bank's decision, declaring it a gross violation of the constitution, particularly with one of its principles – the presumption of innocence. The following day, the National Bank reversed its decision, similar to Kobakhidze, explaining a U-turn by the Constitution of Georgia and the presumption of innocence and [stating](#) that international sanctions may not be applied to a Georgian citizen unless there is a guilty verdict in the applicable case against them in the court of Georgia.

Following the decision, the National Bank's three vice presidents and an advisor [resigned](#), and private banks [announced](#) they would continue following international sanctions. On the same day, [President Zourabichvili](#) urged the President of the National Bank to resign, [the International Monetary Fund](#) announced that the National Bank's decision could have potential implications for Georgia's IMF-supported program, which includes a loan of \$289 million, while the [State Department](#) warned of the risks of possible sanctions for individuals who conduct transactions with Otar Partskhaladze.

In response to the resignation of NBG's vice-presidents, the parliament of Georgia [appointed](#) new Board members, Nana Keinishvili and Teimuraz Khomeriki, whom President Zourabishvili initially nominated. Later, her Parliamentary Secretary announced that the President had withdrawn her endorsement for their appointment. Despite the President's change of stance, Parliament proceeded to appoint these candidates (as otherwise, failure to



appoint new candidates could have led to the dysfunction of NBG in the coming months), whose professional qualifications and independence have raised concerns among many.

It is yet another story of how Otar Partskhaladze held Georgian citizenship, as according to Georgian legislation, Georgian citizen loses their citizenship if they accept the citizenship of another country. In Partskhaladze's case, it was reported that he gained Russian citizenship in 2021, and the Administration of the President of Georgia [stated](#) that no document regarding Otar Partskhaladze's request for dual citizenship was sent to them. Despite the President's initial urging to the Justice Ministry to initiate the process of revoking Partskhaladze's Georgian citizenship, she later refused to do so when the documents were finally submitted to her, [claiming](#) that "if the former Prosecutor General should be punished, he should be punished precisely as a citizen of Georgia".

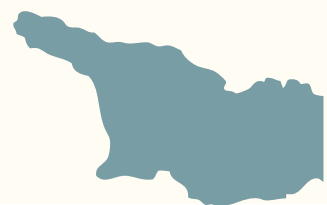
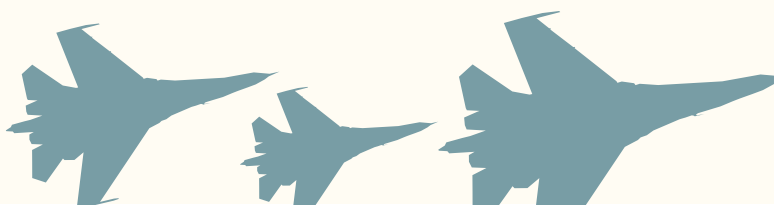
- In an attempt to shield Partskhaladze, the Chairperson of the ruling party, Irakli Kobakhidze cited a Strasburg court practice, [claiming](#) that a criminal penalty on a person without a verdict, as is the case with sanctions against Partskhaladze, directly contradicts the principle of the presumption of innocence. He also denounced calling Partskhaladze an agent until evidence is presented and the Georgian court makes a relevant ruling.
- In another commentary, Irakli Kobakhidze [called](#) the State Department's decision a gift to the opposition in Georgia to stir up yet another tempest in a teapot. Continuing, he said that whoever brought these papers about Partskhaladze to the State Department intended to give a helping hand to the opposition. Likewise, GD's Executive Secretary, Mamuka Mdinaradze [claimed](#) that sanctioning Partskhaladze was an order by "a very powerful group" to create a pretext for the opposition to stir up chaos. Mdinaradze added that the State Department was unwittingly used in this scheme, explaining that the "group" behind Partskhaladze's sanctioning is so powerful that they even managed to trick the US, Georgia's strategic partner.
- In order to explain why President-nominated two candidates were appointed to the NBG, Kobakhidze [stated](#) that this was a move to prevent a sabotage that President Zurabishvili and the opposition were plotting against constitutional body.
- Georgian Dream's Secretary General and Tbilisi Mayor, Kakha Kaladze, [voiced](#) criticism against President Zurabishvili's request for NBG's Natia Turnava to resign, characterizing it as direct pressure on a constitutional body. Kaladze remarked, "the President, who is expected to be the foremost defender of the Georgian Constitution, is undermining our statehood and constitution." On another note, Kaladze [recalled](#) sanctioning Georgian judges in a similar manner and again requested that Georgian public deserve to be given more facts and evidence by the strategic partner on their decisions.
- Georgian Dream leader Archil Talakvadze [said](#) that currently, the main topics on the political agenda are EU integration and different social and economic issues, however, the opposition and their media affiliates are only fussing around Partskhaladze's case, proving that the Georgian opposition is bankrupted.
- Georgian Dream MP, Givi Mikanadze, [stated](#) that the radical opposition in Georgia is urging the government to prioritize decisions made by certain U.S. agencies over the Georgian Constitution. He said that they have asked for evidences behind the US



decision. As he claimed, the Georgian law enforcement structures have also launched investigation. However, he argued that appropriate enforcement measures would have been taken by Georgian side if any wrongdoing had been found.

- People Power MP Guram Matcharashvili [says](#) the US decision to sanction Otar Partskhaladze, who has not held a public position for over a decade now, is an instrument to “punish” the Georgian government for not opening a “second front” against Russia and to cause its illegal overturn.
- Leader of the pro-Kremlin Alt-Info/Conservative Movement, Shota Martinenko [called](#) the US move to sanction Partskhaladze as one of the steps of the Western playbook for undermining sovereign countries.
- Pro-Kremlin Alt-Info broadcasting [denounced](#) a move by Georgian law enforcement bodies to launch investigation into Partskhaladze’s case, saying that the USA is a foreign country and Georgian institutions should not act based on the decision they make. Herewith, Alt-Info anchor added that if Georgia was against 70-year Soviet rule from the Moscow, it should similarly resist becoming subservient to directives from Washington.
- Pro-Kremlin Alt-Info’s guest speaker [stated](#) that the decision by the commercial banks that they are adhering international sanctions and disregarding National Bank of Georgia’s order illustrates that Georgian Dream is powerless and the West has its agents infiltrated everywhere in Georgia. The Alt-Info anchor also [chimed](#) in, criticizing the Georgian Dream for having staff at National Bank of Georgia who swiftly left their positions at the first sign of instability.
- Other propagandist on Alt-Info [focused](#) his argument on the fact that Partskhaladze has not held any public position for a decade and he could not have had any influence on Georgian politics, concluding that his sanctioning is groundless and just a mockery of Georgian people.
- Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, the anchor at the pro-Kremlin Sezoni TV, [voiced](#) his backing for Otar Partskhaladze, citing the argument that the paramount duty is to protect Georgian citizens. In a similar vein, he denounced the US decision, labeling it as unsubstantiated due to the absence of any evidence or facts provided by the Americans to prove Partskhaladze's guilt.
- Pro-Kremlin social media actors also [voiced](#) their condemnation of Georgian commercial banks for complying with US sanctions, contending that this underscores that this sector operates under US jurisdiction rather than Georgian sovereignty.

**Russian Propaganda insists Pashinyan’s pro-Western stances deprived Armenia of Nagorno-Karabakh**



On September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan initiated what it described as "anti-terrorist operations" in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. In a national address Wednesday evening next day, Azerbaijani President declared that Baku had reasserted its control over the region. This development has triggered political turmoil in Armenia, with crowds converging outside government offices in Yerevan, demanding Prime Minister Pashinyan's resignation. Simultaneously, another group of protesters expressed frustration over Moscow's failure to halt Azerbaijan's actions, assembling outside the Russian Embassy in Yerevan and voicing anti-Russian slogans.

These events have not gone unnoticed by pro-Kremlin figures in Georgia, who are capitalizing on the situation to advance a narrative aligned with the Kremlin's viewpoint, which says that, Armenia's pro-Western stance, championed by Prime Minister Pashinyan, was the main cause of Yerevan's diminishing support in the Kremlin and subsequently, losing of Nagorno-Karabakh to Baku.

- The pro-Russian Alt-info anchor [claimed](#) that Russia is the sole actor capable of ensuring Armenia's security, and its security was assured as long as Armenia maintained a strong partnership with Russia. If Armenia wanted to be a pro-western state, it should have anticipated that the preservation of Karabakh would not be guaranteed since, unlike Russia, the West cannot ensure the security of its allies or anyone. As a lesson learnt from Armenia's experience, Alt-Info concluded that countries [in South Caucasus] carrying out a sharply anti-Russian policy are destined to "suffer with economic decline, lose territories and have their security generally "hung in the air". Alt-Info also called on the Georgian public to draw the right conclusion from Armenia's experience and emphasised the need to establish more favourable relations with Russia, by which Georgia could position itself as a key player in the region.
- Similarly, Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, the anchor of the pro-Russian Sezoni TV, [argued](#) that when a CSTO member country like Armenia conducts joint military drills with the United States, Russia's main geopolitical rival, it might raise concerns that "Sorosist" Pashinyan's actions could potentially jeopardize not only Karabakh but also Armenia as a whole. Mzhavanadze warned that collective "Sorosists" have the same plan for Georgia, to further antagonize Georgia against Russia and instil instability.
- Continuing with similar rhetoric, Mzhavanadze of Sezoni TV [emphasized](#) that the key factor in either preserving or reclaiming territories lies in maintaining positive relations with Russia, cautioning that a pro-NATO stance would lead to territorial losses. Mzhavanadze also speculated that if Georgia persists in its declared Western-oriented foreign policy, Moscow might consider offering Javakheti (Georgia's southern region, where ethnic Armenian population resides) to Armenia as a strategic move to draw Yerevan back into the Kremlin's sphere of influence.
- Notorious propagandist on NewsFront [accused](#) Pashinyan and his governing team of being under George Soros's influence, asserting that they maintain close ties with Western Armenians who hold anti-Russian sentiments, particularly among the diaspora residing in the USA, France, and various European nations. The article continues portraying Pashinyan as primarily serving Western interests, with his main objective being the reduction of Russian influence in Armenia. According to Kremlin propaganda,

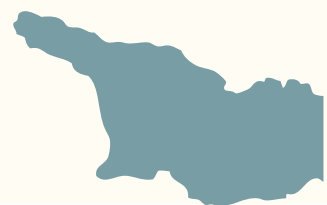
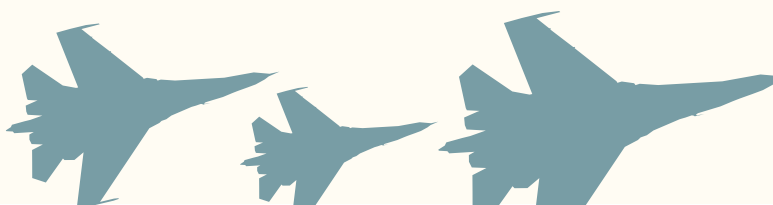


this includes the withdrawal of the Russian military base in Gyumri and the removal of Russian peacekeepers from Nagorno-Karabakh. Russian propaganda suggests a multi-step plan was orchestrated to achieve these objectives, notably the initiation of a new conflict in Karabakh, as witnessed in 2020. Propaganda continues, saying that Azerbaijan's regaining control over the region would result in Russian peacekeepers leaving the area. On how to expel Russians from Gyumri, propaganda suggests that Pashinyan, with instructions from the West, will improve relations with Turkey, leaving no reason for Moscow to retain a military base in Armenia.

- Social media accounts on Facebook also joined pro-Kremlin TV outlets with similar claims. One such account [posted](#) that “America started to “make Armenia happy”, which will cost the latter not only Karabakh but also the territories of Armenia itself.” Another account notorious for its pro-Kremlin stances on Facebook ironically [questioned](#) whether the US military personnel who completed the military drills are still in Armenia, while the administration of Karabakh signs the act of capitulation with Azerbaijan on the day of Armenia's independence.

#### **Pro-Kremlin groups repeat conspiracy of the West planning a coup in Georgia and insist 12 priorities urge Tbilisi to promote LGBT propaganda**

- Nikoloz [Mzhavanadze](#), the anchor of the pro-Russian TV channel Sezoni TV, claimed that the EU has as part of the 12 priorities demands to detain all those who “fight against Sodom and Gomorrah”, apart from those who were already imprisoned after July 5, 2021. Failure to comply with this demand, he claimed, would jeopardize Georgia's candidacy status within the EU. Grisha Oniani, the leader of the “Stalin” organization, echoed this viewpoint and stressed that the 12 priorities entail support for the LGBT community, meaning allowing same-sex marriage.
- The [editor](#) of the pro-Russian website Isari.ge says that Ukraine did not deserve the candidacy status, but since Kyiv is fighting against the enemy of the EU, Russia, Brussels was ready to give it status and potentially even may welcome it as a full member state in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, Hamlet Chipashvili claimed that Ukraine will still have to fulfill the 12 priorities and other tasks imposed by Brussels, including: “recognition of the LGBT community, regularly holding gay parades, same-sex marriage, gender transition, admission of pornographic films, legalization of prostitution, cultivation and use of marijuana; recognition of English as the state language and necessary knowledge of English for state officials and those in military service“.
- [According](#) to the propagandist on Alt-Info the West is planning and funding different groups to organize a *coup* in Georgia. Alt-Info representative also speculated that these attempts could be somehow linked with granting Georgia EU's candidacy status, which according to him, is useless.



- [Another](#) propagandist on Alt-Info claimed that “all the recommendations or tasks given to the Georgian authorities by the EU and the collective West in general, will be used as trade items to direct or neutralize various events in Georgia in their favor.”

### Russian propaganda in Georgia fosters Moscow's "savior" image, promoting the idea that Georgia's path to development hinges on forging a partnership with the Kremlin

- Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, a pro-Russian propagandist and Sezoni TV broadcaster who recently visited Moscow, [talked](#) about Russia's historical role in the process of restoring the territorial integrity of Georgia. He argued that Georgia's survival is linked with Russia, highlighting Russia's assistance in regaining control of Adjara, Guria, and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions in the past. In contrast, Mzhavanadze [attacked](#) the West, accusing it of “succeeding in destabilizing this country [Georgia], destroying generations, and negatively influencing and poisoning the youth.” Furthermore, he pointed to the situation in Ukraine as evidence that its partnership with the West has left Ukraine in a state of ruin. As an alternative, the pro-Kremlin propagandist highlighted benefits of the partnership with the Kremlin, which, according to him, has led to prosperity in Belarus—a country capable of manufacturing buses and boasting significant industrial capacity.
- Another expert Edisher Gvenetadze on Sezoni TV [claimed](#) that Russia serves as the "cure" for addressing Georgia's problems and just as water is essential for fish and air is vital for humans, for the current state of Georgia good relations with Moscow are paramount.
- On a similar note, Grisha Oniani, the chairman of the "Stalin" organization in Georgia, [expressed](#) his belief that Russia represents his sole source of hope and that the key to reclaiming the territories lies in engaging in dialogue and negotiations with Russia.
- A controversial Georgian priest closely affiliated with Alt-Info, Spiridon Tskipurishvili, who gained notoriety for his calls in 2021 to use violence in the name of God during the Pride March in Tbilisi on July 5th, [stated](#) on Alt-Info that "a strong, Christian Georgia aligns with the interests of only one state - Russia. Turkey and Iran do not desire a Christian Georgia, while the US envisions a different kind of Georgia – full of sins akin to those of Sodom and Gomorrah."
- The editor of the pro-Russian website Saqinform [asserted](#) that Georgia can overcome political polarization only when Georgians make the only right decision: alliance with Russia, also adding that no other viable option exists.
- Georgian actors were [supported](#) by Kremlin-funded Sputnik-Georgia to further solidify Russia's mightiness, emphasizing Russia's leadership in developing "smart" drones, their extensive production, and their utilization in combat. The article claimed that Russia surpasses NATO in the ongoing war in Ukraine, which presents a concerning trend for



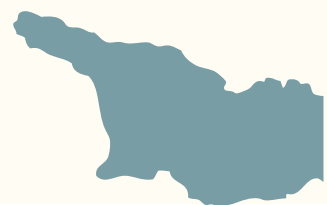
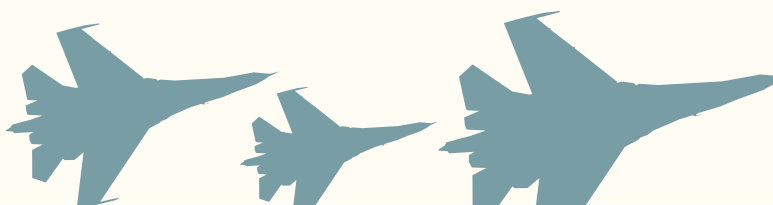
Western nations. However, the author of this opinion piece cautioned the West, urging them to be even more concerned, as "the capabilities and combat effectiveness of Russian fighter drones are set to continually increase."

### **The US once again blamed for preparing a coup d'état in Georgia**

Following the September 18<sup>th</sup> statement about alleged preparations for a coup d'état released by State Security Service of Georgia (SSSG), pro-Russian propagandists say the US is the main addressee of the accusations.

Last week, SSSG statement claimed that a certain group operating both outside the country and internally is planning to destabilize the country and cause a crisis in the October-December period to overthrow the current government. October-December is a period when the European Commission will release its conclusion regarding Georgia's candidate status, and according to the statement, the expectation of the conspirators preparing to overthrow the government is based on the assumption that the published conclusion will be negative, creating a fertile ground for riots, which conspirators will utilize. State Security Service named the main authors of the alleged plan - the former Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia and current Deputy Head of Military Intelligence of Ukraine, Giorgi Lortkipanidze, the former member of the Mikheil Saakashvili's security detail, Mikheil Baturin, and the commander of the "Georgian Legion" operating in Ukraine, Mamuka Mamulashvili.

- A pro-Kremlin outlet has [proposed](#) that the United States, rather than Giorgi Lortkipanidze or Mikhail Baturini, should be identified as the primary driving force behind the coup attempt. He also called on the State Security Service to dare to say that the desire to organize a Maidan in Tbilisi comes from the State Department and the US Embassy in Georgia. This narrative has been [echoed](#) by a pro-Russian social media account, known for its unwavering support of Russia's war in Ukraine. According to this propagandist, the United States may endeavor to instigate a third coup d'état in Georgia, citing the volatile situations along its borders as a means to weaken Russia.
- Another pro-Russian journalist [noted](#) that a Western-inspired coup and civil unrest represent a new peril for Georgia. He claimed that Armenia and Azerbaijan have already fallen prey to destabilization efforts, raising concerns about how Georgia might be enticed into a similar fate and to what extent the Georgian government will persist the Western pressure.
- A member of the pro-Russian Alt-Info/Conservative Movement, who is a frequent guest on Alt-Info broadcasting, [assumed](#) that the government knew about the preparations for the state unrest in Georgia even before. However, SSSG chose to issue the statement regarding coup preparations at this specific moment rather than in the past, primarily because the ruling party Georgian Dream had come to the belief that the West, including the United





States, would not change their demand to Georgia for a confrontation with Russia and their potential support for a 'Maidan-style' movement in Georgia. According to the propagandist, the US views Georgia primarily as a proxy or front-line state in its dealings with Russia and all of the U.S.'s efforts and actions in Georgia have been geared toward this strategic objective.

- An editor of the openly pro-Russian media Saqinform [compared](#) Georgia to the Caucasus mountain-chained Amirani, a mythological character, who was pecked by white-headed eagle representing the USA. According to the propagandist, Georgian Dream is attempting to break Georgia's shackles, but because of Western influence on its constitution and their attempts to hinder its economic cooperation with the superpowers, such as Russia and China, they are unable to fully liberate the country.
- Another pro-Kremlin social media account referred to the Russia-Ukraine war and [stated](#) that, in fact, war is waged between Russia and the US. The account went on to accuse Americans of choosing the territory of Ukraine as the war arena and its population as cannon fodder.