



GRASS Disinfo Brief

MONITORING PERIOD:
February 20 – February 26



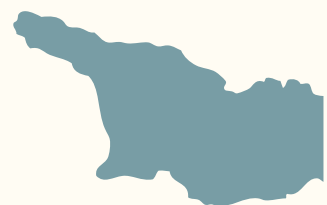
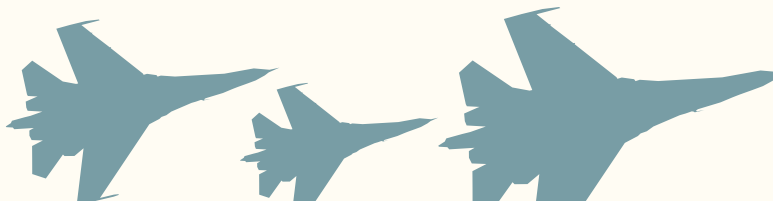
- Chairperson of the parliament stays consistent in reprimanding CSOs and donor organizations
- State Dept.'s internal memo makes headlines in Georgia, the ruling party argues LGBT propaganda is one of the biggest challenges facing the civilized world
- Ruling Party-affiliated People's Party movement questions the strategic partnership between Georgia and the US
- De-facto authorities in occupied Abkhazia attack USAID, the State Dept. and the EU
- Pro-Kremlin propaganda strengthens the "Second Front" conspiracy and blames the EU for undermining traditional values
- Propagandists say NATO is an "accelerator of war"
- Pro-Kremlin propagandists reinforce narrative that the key to Georgia's territorial integrity and security lies in Moscow
- Propaganda uses the Kremlin's narratives to undermine Ukraine's efforts to defend itself from Russian aggression

NB: On February 29th, the Georgian Dream announced their plans to introduce a draft law in Parliament within two weeks, which would aim to comply with Georgia's constitution while restricting the promotion of what they termed "non-traditional lifestyles." The party stated the law would "protect the public from the pseudo-liberal ideology and its negative consequences." The GRASS Disinfo Brief will continue to follow developments related to this proposed legislation in upcoming editions.

Chairperson of the Parliament stays consistent in reprimanding CSOs and donor organizations

Chairperson of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, issued several statements against Georgian CSOs and donor organizations throughout the week. He used harsh rhetoric when delivering the Report on Activity of the Parliament for 2023 and the Action Plan for 2024 at the plenary session while also individually criticizing NDI and Transparency International during his comments to journalists.

- While delivering the Report on Activity of the Parliament for 2023, Shalva Papuashvili [stated](#) that despite the claims of foreign-funded CSOs, time has shown that their financial transparency remains an issue. He argued that among institutions involved in public policy decision-making, the non-governmental sector is the **least transparent**. He continued by repeating a message that characterizing the proposed "Law on Financial Transparency" as an "Agents Law" or a "Russian Law" was inaccurate, as the law was modeled on the US Foreign Agents Registration Act and similar regulations discussed in the EU. He suggested that depriving the public of information on CSOs' foreign funding sources and interests is problematic. Papuashvili stated, "The violent demonstrations in



March showed us that our **strategic partners have a special responsibility in curbing radicalism in Georgia**. Any ambiguous statement made by them can be successfully used by radical, irresponsible groups." He argued that this manifested during the March demonstrations when for the first time in Georgia's history there were attempts "to **burn people alive** with Molotov cocktails."

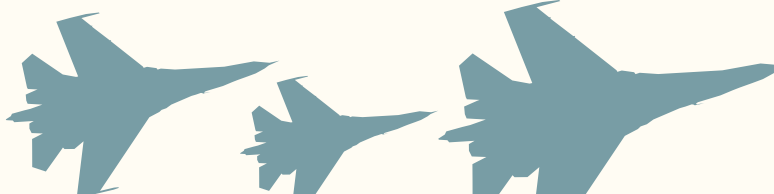
- The National Democratic Institute's (NDI) Pre-election Delegation to Georgia released a [statement](#) that assesses the broader political environment, reviews electoral preparations, and offers recommendations to promote more inclusive, transparent, and accountable elections. The report assesses the latest amendments to the electoral code as "inconsistent with international recommendations and the Venice Commission, and could further reduce the trust in the CEC." "Most critically, the recent amendments abolished the position of Deputy Head of the CEC, a position filled by the opposition", reads the statement. Shalva Papuashvili [stated](#) that the **assessments within the report are misleading**. According to him, abolishing the position of Deputy Head of the CEC will not reduce the role of the person who currently holds it. He has the same one vote as his fellow opposition representatives in the CEC, and he will continue to have that vote in the decision-making process. He argues that the fact that NDI's report references the Venice Commission is also misleading as the Venice Commission bases its recommendations on the April 19th agreement. As Papuashvili explained, since the **April 19th agreement is non-existent**, the recommendations from the Venice Commission are "**factually incorrect**" and as such, **NDI referencing the Venice Commission is misleading**. "I am very sorry that the conclusions of the Venice Commission are being manipulated, unfortunately, this is being promoted by various non-governmental organizations", said Papuashvili.
- Transparency International - Georgia released a [statement](#) expressing views on reforms needed to strengthen parliamentary oversight of the security sector, in response to one of the steps set out by the EU for opening membership accession talks. In response, Shalva Papuashvili [stated](#) that Transparency International – Georgia has one goal: removing the Georgian Dream party from government and bringing the United National Movement to power. He claimed the organization's Executive Director, Eka Gigauri, did not challenge a statement last fall by the Soros Foundation head about aiming to create political change. Papuashvili also recalled the Tbilisi protests in 2022 and said that Transparency International – Georgia was a co-organizer of the protests, which called for the government's resignation.
- The United National Movement has proposed implementing a vetting system to re-evaluate individuals appointed to key justice system positions. This extraordinary mechanism would be conducted by a commission of international experts with authority over these decisions. The ruling party has criticized the initiative as conflicting with Georgia's sovereignty. Shalva Papuashvili [stated](#) that donors, through funded CSOs, want to appoint judges in Georgia. He argued this seems to confirm the negative influence of excessive dependence on foreign funds. According to [Papuashvili](#), some CSOs actively support foreign involvement in selecting Georgian judges. "We understand when donors



request involving some CSOs in discussions, and when we do, the CSOs in turn request involving their donors in decision-making. **If they want us to leave the country so that CSOs and donors can run it, they should say so,**" stated the Parliament Chairperson. He argued that **respect for Georgia's sovereignty is slowly being crossed when donors, through funded CSOs, propose appointing Georgia's judges.** Papuashvili stated this goes against the Georgian Constitution and the spirit of independence.

State Dept.'s internal memo makes headlines in Georgia, the ruling party argues LGBT propaganda is one of the biggest challenges facing the civilized world

- Anti-Western disinformation and propaganda sources actively disseminated information about US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken sending out a memo to State Department staffers, which urged them to use gender-neutral language and avoid using terms such as “mother” and “manpower”. Leader of the Parliamentary majority, Mamuka Mdinardze [responded](#) to the news by stating that LGBT propaganda is one of the biggest threats facing the civilized world, which has unfortunately penetrated official state institutions. No matter how friendly a country or its representative is to Georgia, suggesting to use terms such as “parent” instead of “mother” and “father” to avoid gendered-language is disturbing and extremely and categorically unacceptable, as he said. According to him, in Georgia, no group or person who is a supporter of this propaganda should ever be brought close to governmental power. We have to differentiate between protecting minority rights and propaganda, which has turned into a huge problem. “Georgia, its government, any of its governments must ensure that it protects its society and future generations from this”, stated Mdinardze.
- Chairperson of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili also [responded](#) to this news. He stated that countries can regulate linguistic norms as they see fit. However, in his view, experience shows that promoting such approaches sometimes begins in Georgia through different organizations and foreign funding. "It is expected that activists will soon appear in Georgia as well, who will tell us that Mother of Georgia should no longer be called Mother of Georgia, Mother tongue (Deda Ena) should no longer be called Mother tongue, etc. In the past, when we heard one or two such cases from abroad, of course it was taken with irony, but we see that today this issue is so serious that even the Prime Minister of the UK had to emphasize that a woman is a woman and a man is a man," said Papuashvili. "It is important to not allow our language to be interfered with by the flag of false values," he added.
- Leader of the Georgian Dream-affiliated People's Power movement, Guram Matcharashvili held a press conference in the Parliament, where he also referred to



Antony Blinken's memo and [stated](#) that a presentation for a book titled "Blue, queer story in Georgian Art" is being planned, which propagates that "Georgian art has many examples of LGBT propaganda". According to Matcharashvili, this is disinformation, and the fact that The Embassy of the Netherlands, the Embassy of Switzerland, and the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) are financially supporting it, is unfortunate. As Matcharashvili claimed, "they are telling the public that LGBT propaganda is natural and Georgia should not lag behind in this supposedly European and civilized achievement." The MP stated that in 2021 "the radical opposition" happily signed a memorandum supporting the dissemination of LGBT propaganda and protection of LGBT persons. "This is the type of future and generation they want", said Matcharashvili. He accused the opposition and CSOs of having "a colonial and slavish psychology, being obedient" as they never made a comment about Antony Blinken's memo or the fact that children were involved in an LGBT parade in Spain. As Matcharashvili continued, it is interesting what the embassies and donor organizations say about financing LGBT propaganda, when 90% of the population is against it.

Ruling Party-affiliated People's Party movement questions the strategic partnership between Georgia and the US

A [statement](#) released by the Georgian Dream-affiliated People's Power (PP) movement claimed that Antony Blinken's memo about gender-neutral language coincided with UK NHS officials saying that milk produced through drug-induced lactation by transgender women is as beneficial for infants as milk from biological mothers. Simultaneously to these events, the statement underlines that an LGBT parade was held in Spain, which involved children wearing revealing clothes.

As the statement claims, for quite some time now, pseudo-liberal ideology and LGBT-propaganda have been gaining strength and reaching new heights internationally. However, the fact that official western structures of the highest level have become the main source of pseudo-liberal propaganda, exacerbates the situation. "The demonstrative involvement of the US Secretary of State in all of this has already answered all questions about where and by whom these processes are being managed", reads the statement.

Against this backdrop, the PP raises a serious question - **Is the United States of America, in its essence, really a strategic partner of Georgia?** "We believe that the current reality allows us to **draw the opposite conclusion**", says the movement.

According to PP, for years, Georgia buried its head in the sand and referred to the US as a strategic partner:

- which Georgia has no free trade agreement and active economic links with;
- no direct flights and freedom of movement;
- from which, for 30 years, almost no investments have come to Georgia;
- who has been sending Georgia congratulatory letters from the level of Assistant Secretary of State for years;
- who poured money into the Georgian economy only in 2009, when it needed to save the United National "Agentocracy";



- whose so-called financial aid goes to CSOs NGOs and, through fictitious CSOs, to parties that are exacerbating polarization, disrupting state institutions, and spreading pseudo-liberal ideology in Georgia.

As the statement continues, the financing of Georgian politics by the Americans has already taken such rough forms that they no longer shy away from directly financing opposition politicians.

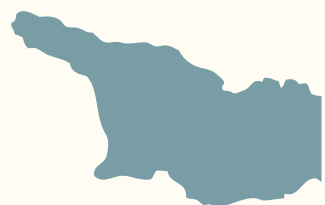
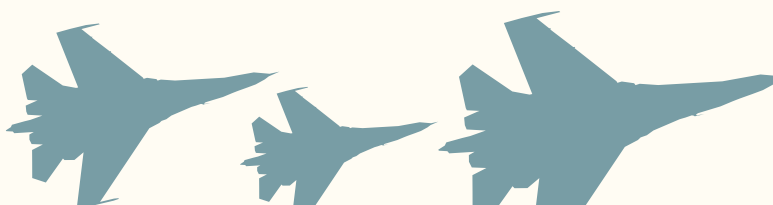
The statement concludes by claiming that pursuing American interests with American money would not be a problem at all, if the interests of the US and Georgia coincided at least on a general level. **According to the movement, the main problem is that American interests are fundamentally different from Georgia's national interests.** For the US, strategic partnership does not mean deep economic relations, direct flights, freedom of movement, and minimal diplomatic respect in terms of protocols. It means **feeding radicalism and exacerbating LGBT propaganda.**

Taking this all into account, the movement suggests that Georgian people should not only consider comparing the approaches of the US and China towards Georgia, but also [they] “should openly discuss how much a strategic partnership is worth to us with a country that is busy disrupting state institutions and values in Georgia, constantly trying to organize a revolution, and engaging in LGBT propaganda”, concludes the statement.

Member of the People's Party movement, Davit Kartvelishvili, published a separate post on social media, where he [argued](#) that China established a visa-free regime with Georgia, a step that the US never dared to take. China also signed a free trade agreement with Georgia, something that the US has refrained from doing. Moreover, Georgia is awaiting an economic investment boom from China, while no investments have originated from the US in Georgia since the Georgian Dream came to power. According to him, the US only finances the attempts to overthrow the government. Kartvelishvili continued to argue that China has no problems with having direct flights with Georgia, while the US never made that decision. As the author concluded **“this is a short answer to why Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze met with the Chinese Ambassador first, and then with the US Ambassador.”**

De facto authorities in occupied Abkhazia attack USAID, State Dept. and the EU

So-called “President” of occupied Abkhazia, Aslan Bzhania [claimed](#) that **USAID's operations conflict with Abkhazia's "strategic partnership" with Russia**, that implies certain obligations on Abkhazia, one of it being limiting the operation of USAID in Abkhazia. As he continued, Russia has prohibited USAID's activities since 2012, and while Russia is engaged in a full-scale military conflict, Abkhazia should not allow an organization hostile towards Russia to operate on Abkhazian soil.



De facto Minister of Foreign Affairs Inal Ardzinba made similar statement. [According](#) to him, the **US State Department, USAID and the European Union are aggressively isolating Abkhazia**, thus cooperation with them is highly **undesirable**. "The most important task set by these structures is to limit the Kremlin's so-called malign influence in Abkhazia and de-occupy Abkhazia, which we will not allow. When we openly said that USAID's official website stated these goals, it was removed from their website within days. This shows the sophisticated methods of manipulation used by our opponent and adversary," said Ardzinba.

Pro-Kremlin propaganda strengthens the “Second Front” conspiracy and blames the EU for undermining traditional values

- Pro-Russian Sezoni TV broadcaster, Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, traditionally voiced several anti-EU, anti-Western narratives last week. [According](#) to Mzhavanadze, the EU's attitudes towards Georgia are not changing and it will never accept Georgia as a member – “No matter how much we want Europe, **Europe does not want us**”, he said. He continued by claiming that the EU wants to bring the United National Movement in power and does not like the fact that Tbilisi is not currently being bombed.
- The propagandist also [stated](#) that Greece, a country with an Orthodox Christian majority, legalized **same-sex marriage due to a directive issued by the EU**. The EU is raging a battle against the Church and is limiting freedom and democratic principles in all of its member states. As Mzhavanadze continued to argue, the EU is demanding that Georgia “accept transgenderism and sodomism”, **Russia is building Churches** in the name of Saint Nino, a beloved Saint in Georgia who preached Georgia in the 4th century. “We throw paint at Russian Saints while Russia builds churches in the name of our Saints”, stated Mzhavanadze.
- Dito Chubinidze, who regularly appears on Sezoni TV, [propagated](#) that the Russia's invasion of Georgia in **2008 was planned and provoked by the West**. A broadcaster on Alt Info also voiced the same [claim](#), according to which former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili was used by the West to provoke a war with Russia so that chances of Georgian-Russian rapprochement in the future would become minimal.
- The same Alt Info propagandist [attacked](#) Georgian CSOs and argued that the protests against the Russian “Foreign Agents Law” on March 7-8th, 2023 illustrated how protective CSOs are of their funding. As he continued, CSOs are engaged in public life but operate with foreign funds, which means that they **serve foreign interests**. According to him, policy-making should be done with local money, not foreign funds. On a different occasion, the propagandist stated that the EU is anti-Georgian in terms of ideology, policy, justice, and those **Western politicians** who talk about the reforms and independence of the courts secretly want to acquire **control over the Georgian justice system**.
- A propagandist who often appears on Alt Info's broadcasts, Kakhi Khutsishvili, spread several anti-Western narratives. He [argued](#) that the door to the EU is open but Georgia will never be allowed to enter as Europeans do not respect Georgia. Even if Georgia becomes a member of the EU, it will put the country in a worse situation. According to

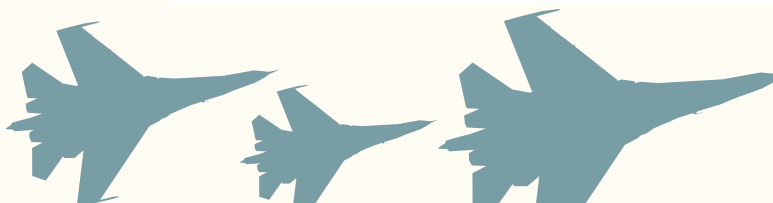


him, Georgia's **economy** will become even **more weakened** due to an abundance of regulations causing prices to rise. He argued that the EU is limiting economic development, which is highlighted by the **farmer's protests in member states**. On a different broadcast, the same propagandist [claimed](#) that Euro-Atlantic integration is incompatible with **restoration of territorial integrity**.

- A prominent propagandist on Alt Info's broadcasts, Aleksandre Palavandishvili [stated](#) that the Georgian people want German pensions, American military strength, and Georgian values. However, according to him, by accepting to fulfill the steps set out by the EU, the government is agreeing to take Georgia on **Ukraine's path – legalize same-sex marriage and get destroyed because of war**.
- Editor of pro-Russian "GeWorld", Arno Khidirbegishvili [argued](#) in his article that Georgia has to make a decision between the **EU's 9 steps and the 10 commandments**. If Georgia does not comply with the EU's demands, it will not be accepted as a member. However, by complying with the nine steps, Georgia will refuse its own culture, traditions, religion, good relations with Russia, and economic development, which will ultimately lead Georgia towards "the **Ukrainian path**".

Propaganda says NATO is an "accelerator of war"

- Vato Shakarashvili, former member of the Georgian Dream and the founder of the party - "Georgia first and foremost" published an [article](#) on a newly established website "Geo First". The article states that more than 20% of Ukraine's territory is occupied, towns and cities have been razed to the ground, thousands of civilians have died, more have become displaced from their homes, and Ukrainian soldiers continue to fall on the battlefields. However, rather than pointing to the culpability of the aggressor which initiated the unprovoked invasion on Ukrainian soil, Shakarashvili blames NATO expansion for the abovementioned. He underlines that the \$170 billion **US assistance** for Ukraine has only **prolonged the war**, and Western countries, most notably the US, have failed to efficiently assist Ukraine, further prolonging its suffering. To support his argument, Shakarashvili quotes the prominent Realist International Relations scholar, **John Mearsheimer**, and argues that while questioning NATO has become taboo due to "the liberal agenda", Georgian must start discussing whether NATO is a guarantee of security or an accelerator of war.
- A propagandist on Alt Info [argued](#) that if it is in Georgia's national interest **to maintain peace it should not pursue NATO membership** as NATO officials have publicly declared that they are getting ready for a war with Russia. The propagandist used the traditional fear mongering narratives and claimed that if Georgia were to become a NATO member, it would be destroyed as it would find itself in the epicentre of the conflict between NATO and Russia.



- A broadcaster on Alt Info [stated](#) that if Georgia wants to ensure security in the Black Sea basin, it either has to negotiate with Russia or defeat it in an armed conflict. Due to the unrealistic nature of the latter, the propagandist argued that since NATO is indirectly involved in a conflict against Russia, **Georgia should abandon its goal of becoming a NATO member and start negotiations with Russia to ensure security.**
- Another propagandist [questioned](#) the resilience of NATO and other Western institutions. According to him, if **Donald Trump is re-elected** as President, he might **stop financing NATO**, which will cause it to **dissolve**.

Pro-Kremlin propagandists reinforce narrative that the key to Georgia's territorial integrity and security lies in Moscow

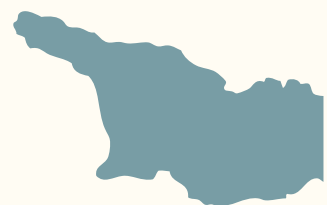
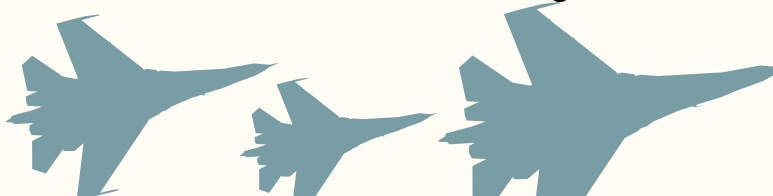
- Member of the European Socialists political party and the member of the Georgian Parliament, Fridon Injia, appeared as a guest on Sezoni TV's broadcast and [stated](#) that negotiations with Russia are necessary, however, in order to do that, the Georgian government needs to **regain sovereignty** which has been **seeded to the West** for the past thirty years.
- Sezoni TV broadcaster and pro-Russian propagandist Nikoloz Mzhavanadze [stated](#) that Georgian soldiers fighting for Ukraine are undermining Georgia's chances of restoring territorial integrity as Georgia cannot take back control of its occupied territories without negotiating with Russia. He adds that **thoughts about Russia dissolving is "an illusion only believed by idiots."** He also [claimed](#) that creating jobs, restoring territorial integrity, and improving demographic, economic and social situation in Georgia is directly connected with having good relations with Russia. To this end, he continued to argue that Georgia should participate in the **3+3 platform** until it is too late.
- Frequent guest of Sezoni TV and pro-Kremlin propagandist [asserted](#) that the **real key** to Georgia's territorial integrity **lies in Moscow**, not in Brussels or Washington.
- An anchor on Alt Info [argued](#) that if the Georgian Dream was smart enough it would capitalize on the fact that Moscow likes the steps taken by the Georgian government as it increases the chances of restoring territorial integrity.
- A guest on Alt Info [claimed](#) that Russia is urging Georgia to sit at the negotiation table to solve issues diplomatically and as the propagandist argued, due to historical ties Georgia and Russia have basis to negotiate – Georgian's have fought to protect Russian lands since the 19th century, while the **Russians saved Georgia from physical destruction** many times.
- A propagandist on Alt-Info's broadcast [assessed](#) Türkiye as Georgia's "genetic enemy" which conducted genocide against Georgians by means of The Treaty of Amasya. However, Georgia was saved by Russia. He continued that Türkiye is currently trying to carry out the Great Turan geopolitical project, and since Georgia is part of that imperial ambition, **Türkiye continues to pose a threat** to Georgia's security. Consequently, as the propagandist suggests, Georgia should seek **protection from Russia**.
- Another propagandist on Alt Info reiterated the same narrative and [stated](#) that Georgia needs to cooperate with Russia, Iran and China because of the threat coming from Türkiye and its will of expansion.



- A guest on Sezoni TV broadcast [claimed](#) that even the broadcast of Ilia Topuria's performance in the UFC, Russian sport commentators cheered on Georgia. According to the propagandist, since Russia is “a closed down country”, those commentators would not have cheered on Georgia without the Kremlin's instructions, which means that **Russia is sending signals to Georgia to start negotiations**. In reality, the Russian-speaking commentators that the propagandist was referring to were Georgian and Armenian, broadcasting on the Setanta Sport channel (See FactCheck Georgia's [article here](#)).
- February 25th marked the 103rd anniversary of Soviet Russia's annexation of the Georgian Democratic Republic. However, [according](#) to a prominent pro-Russian social media account, February 25th 1921 marks the date when Georgia “started to develop in every sense”.

Propaganda uses the Kremlin's narratives to undermine Ukraine's efforts to defend itself from Russian aggression

- Kremlin-affiliated Sputnik Georgia published an [article](#) written by a Russian “expert” claiming that the Ukrainian government hoped to open **the second front** in Georgia, which has been proven by the statements made by Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the past. However, according to the expert, Georgia avoided this pressure and chose appropriate foreign policy which will be much appreciated by Russia.
- Another similar [article](#) on Sputnik Georgia attributed the 2014 Maidan Revolution to the CIA. The article claims that the **US** provided **funds** for Ukrainian CSOs, planted agents in the government, and orchestrated a **coup**.
- Anchor of Sezoni TV Nikoloz Mzhavanadze [claimed](#) that Ukraine is done for and soon its neighboring countries will divide its territories between them. This narrative systemically gets propagated as it suggests that Ukraine's borders are artificial and as such, its modification cannot be counted as illegal. Mzhavanadze also [assessed Kazantip](#), electronic dance music festival that took place every year from 1992 to 2013 in Crimea, **as the reason why Ukraine lost control over the peninsula**. He also recalls that Georgian clergy stopped Kazantip from taking place in Anaklia or Georgia would lose Anaklia as well.
- Mzhavanadze also [pointed](#) to the farmer's protests taking place in Poland, members of which did not allow grain-loaded trucks to enter Poland from Ukraine. According to Mzhavanadze, Poland is more of a problem for Ukraine, rather than a partner, and if Georgians had done the same as Polish partners, Georgia would be internationally condemned.
- Alt Info broadcast anchor [asserted](#) that Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been defeated in any case – either he loses the military conflict or gets overthrown by Ukrainian people.
- Another Alt Info propagandist [said](#) that Ukraine was being **prepared for war** throughout the years **by the West and treacherous Ukrainian government officials**. The US is using Ukraine to pursue its geopolitical interests and **weaken Russia**, but, as the propagandist claimed, **Ukraine is losing the war**.



- The Editor of pro-Russian “GeWorld” Arno Khidirbegishvili published another article, in which he refers to Ukrainians as “**insolent Nazi’s** who demanded military equipment from Georgia.” As the pro-Kremlin propagandist [argued](#), had Ukrainians not sold weapons to the United National Movement’s government in 2008, Georgia would now be unified because “Saakashvili started his August adventure with the Ukrainian weapons and the hope of Ukrainian military support.”