



GRASS Disinfo Brief

MONITORING PERIOD:
March 26th – April 3rd

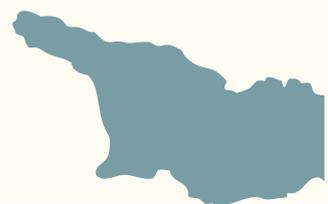
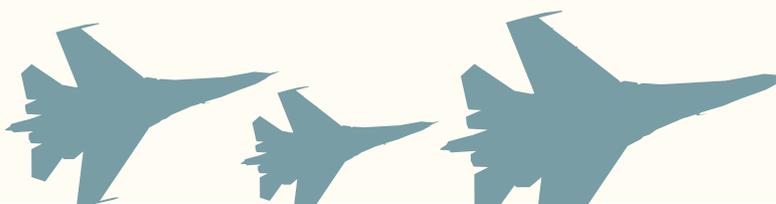


- **Georgian Dream re-launches Russian-style “Foreign Agents Law”**
- **Statements from “People’s Power” about the Russian-style “Foreign Agents Law”**
- **Coordinated social media campaign supporting the Russian-style “Foreign Agents Law”**
- **Openly Pro-Kremlin groups support the Russian-style “Foreign Agents Law”**
- **Georgian Dream laid grounds for the Russian-style “Foreign Agents Law” before the announcement**
- **Georgian Dream links LGBT propaganda to “foreign agents” and the West**
- **Other anti-Western narratives voiced throughout the week revolved around anti-LGBT propaganda**

Georgian Dream re-launches Russian-style “Foreign Agents Law”

After repeatedly denying plans to reintroduce the Russian “Foreign Agents Law” throughout the past year (1, 2, 3), the Georgian Dream once again broke its word. On April 3rd, Executive Secretary of the ruling party, Mamuka Mdinardze, announced that the Georgian Dream will reintroduce the exact copy of the law initiated in March 2023, with the exception of dubbing foreign-financed CSOs as “conduits of the interests of foreign powers” instead of “Foreign Agents”. Unsurprisingly, as Mdinardze himself underlined, the Founder and the Honorary Chairman of the ruling party, Bidzina Ivanishvili, supports the initiative. Georgian Dream members followed up the reintroduction of the anti-EU and Russian-style “foreign agent” law with additional anti-Western narratives:

- Mdinardze stated that **CSOs funded by Western donor organizations are the least transparent** in the country, which is one of the biggest challenges facing Georgia’s security. According to him, Western-funded CSOs deliberately falsified the parallel vote tabulation results during 2020 Parliamentary elections, putting “rich NGOs” in the epicenter of revolutionary processes throughout 2020-2021; They demanded the resignation of the government and hoped to come to power along with the United National Movement; They were involved in protests throughout 2022 aiming to exacerbate relations between Russia and Georgia and cause destabilization; Over the years, CSOs are waging **“a Soviet-style campaign” against the independence of the Georgian judiciary**; They are actively involved in the spread of **“pseudo-liberal ideology and “LGBT” propaganda**”; and lastly, Western-funded CSOs are engaged in campaign aiming to undermine the public trust in the Georgian **Orthodox Church**. In the first part of his speech, Mdinardze was able to **reiterate virtually all of the propaganda narratives traditionally voiced by pro-Russian groups**.
- Mdinardze asserted the abovementioned “histerical campaigns were led by a person who was an Ambassador of one of the country’s at the time, but turned out to be serving

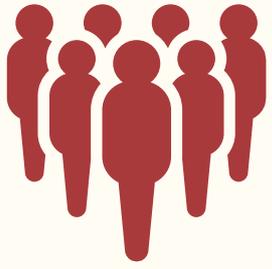


the interests of the Global War Party”. **Mdinardze was referring to Kelly Degnan, the former US Ambassador to Georgia, who allegedly also “fed a shameful lie to the Georgian citizens”** when she referred to "Foreign Agents Law" as Russian, even though it was copied from the US and had nothing to do with the law enforced in Russia, as per Mdinardze. The leader of the Parliamentary majority stated that since the practice of supporting extremism in Georgia declined under the new US Ambassador, the ruling party hopes that Robin Dunnigan will not follow Kelly Degnan’s steps and lie to the Georgian people. According to him, no matter who spreads false information about the law being Russian, the ruling party has the power and independence to expose lies around the law.

- As Mdinardze continued, despite the lack of transparency about foreign funds, specific cases of funding extremism in Georgia to support revolutionary processes were evident. Namely, USAID, European Endowment for Democracy (EED), and National Endowment for Democracy (NED), **were financing radical groups such as “Droa”, “Franklin Club”, and training sessions conducted by "Canvas" aiming to teach young people methods of violently overthrowing the government.** According to Mdinardze, EED and NED have already illegitimately influenced the 2024 Parliamentary elections.
- The news was followed by heated discussions and confrontation at the Parliament’s plenary session, where opposition MPs protested the reintroduction of the bill. As a response, Chairperson of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, pledged to disable the microphones of those MPs who would refer to the reintroduced law as “Russian”.
- At a press briefing following the plenary session, Papuashvili stated that “one of the Ambassadors”, meaning former US Ambassador, Kelly Degnan, **branded the “Foreign Agents Law” as Russian and reinforced the disinformation campaign around it.** He also stated that Western donor organizations have nothing to do with Europe that Georgia is a part of. **“Georgia is not a part of Europe that clandestinely funds radical, extremist groups and hostile political parties”,** Papuashvili said. According to him, Georgia’s partners admit that there is a lack of transparency, however, the ruling party encounters “a brick wall” when it tries to move forward with the issue.
- During the Parliament’s plenary session, Georgian Dream MP Beka Odisharia remarked about the “Canvas” trainings funded by USAID in September 2023: **“Was the training pro-European?! They taught people how to use weapons and make weapons that burn people!”.**
- Deputy Chairperson of the Parliament, Gia Volski asserted that anyone who adamantly opposes, as he called it, “the law on transparency”, **is involved in a revolutionary plan** and does not want the people to have information about CSO funding.

Statements from “People’s Power” about the Russian-style “Foreign Agents Law”

Since last year, “People’s Power”, infamous for initially introducing the Russian “Foreign Agent’s Law” in March 2023 and outspoken advocates of anti-EU and anti-US propaganda, have



remained resolute in their support of the Russian-style law and continued to breathe life into the “foreign agents” and “Global War Party” conspiracies to this day.

- Guram Matcharashvili alleged that as time goes by, it becomes evident that **foreign forces are directly and publicly attacking Georgia’s sovereignty and its independent judiciary.** “They do not hide their wish to appoint judges”, he claimed. While talking about the law, his argument was that if the US, France, and Canada have adopted, **while the EU is in the process of reviewing a similar law**, it is legitimate for Georgia do so as well.
- Davit Kartvelishvili, known for his notable anti-Western rhetoric, asserted that if any embassy refers to anything in the law as “Russian”, a relevant diplomat should be summoned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an explanation. In the case of an international organization, the issue of its dishonesty of this organization should be raised, and **if it persistently refers to the law as "Russian," measures should be taken to prohibit its activities within the country.**
- Another member of “People’s Power” explained the Parliamentary majority’s decision by saying that **secret funds flowing into the country**, which, according to her, go towards activities aimed against the state.

Coordinated social media campaign supporting the Russian-style “Foreign Agents Law”

As soon as the ruling party's decision was announced, "People's Power", a pro-government group, and "In Reality", a page managed by the ruling party's communications department posing as a fact-checking operation, as well as anonymous Facebook pages that repeatedly post content aimed at discrediting the ruling party's opponents, posted infographics portraying the law's provisions as measures for "transparency" in a coordinated manner.

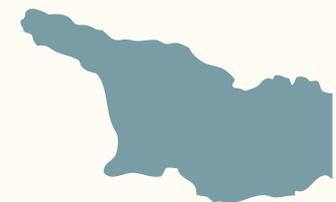
Posts shared by the Facebook pages - “Agents”, “Political Absurdity”, „People’s Power”, “In Reality”

კანონმდროვეტი
„უცხოური გავლენის გამჭვირვალობის შესახებ“

- კანონის მოცულობა**
6 მარტი (11 მუხლი)
- უცხოური ძალა**
უცხო სახელმწიფო, უცხო უწყისო ორგანიზაცია ან ინტერნაციონალური ორგანიზაცია
- სუბიექტის დასახელება**
უცხოური ძალის ინტერესების გამტარებელი ორგანიზაცია
- ვის ეხება**
არასამხარბო ორგანიზაციის პირი და მედიარეგანიზაცია, რომლის შემოსავლის 20%-ზე მეტი უცხოეთიდანაა (არ ეხება ფიზიკურ პირებს)
- რა ვალდებულება აქვს ორგანიზაციას**
ყოველ წლის იანვარში წინა წლის შემოსავლების და ხარჯების დეტალური იტემების საინფორმაციო
- რა ხდება თუ დეკლარირებას არ მოახდენენ**
მოლოდ კარიმა, 25 000 ლარი დეკლარაციის წარუდგენლობისთვის (თუ შაინე არ წარადგენს 20 000 ლარი არაუმეტეს თვეში ერთხელ)
- რა ხდება ამ კანონის მიღების შემდეგ**
საინფორმაციო ორგანიზაციები, რომელთა შემოსავლების 20%-ზე მეტი 2023 წლის მონაცემებით უცხოეთიდან იყო, ვალდებული იქნებიან კანონის ამოქმედებიდან 3 თვეში წარადგინონ 2023 წლის დეტალური

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#არმოცუპეა!

კანონი - გამჭვირვალობის შესახებ

ვის ეხება	ვის არ ეხება
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> არასამხარებო იურიდიულ პირებს მედია-ორგანიზაციებს ვინც შემოსავლის 20%-ზე მეტი უცხოეთიდანაა დაფინანსებული 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ფარმერებს სტუდენტებს პეიზაჟისტებს სამხარებო საქმიანობით დაკავებულ ორგანიზაციებს

კანონი

სინამდვილეში

✗ პროპაგანდისტული მედიები, მათ შორის „მთავარი არხი“, „ტვ პირველი“, „ფორმულა“, „პუბლიკა“, „ნეტგაზეთი“ და „რადიო თავისუფლება“ ცდილობენ „უცხოური გავლენის გამჭვირვალობის შესახებ“ კანონპროექტის დისკრედიტაციას და მისი კვლავ „რუსული კანონის“ სახელით დაბრუნებას.

✔ **სინამდვილეში**, რადიკალური ოპოზიციის და მათი პროპაგანდისტული მედიების ანტიკარტული დეზინფორმაციული კამპანიის მიზანია, კვლავ დამალული დარჩეს უცხოეთიდან პარტიების და რადიკალური ჯგუფების ფარული დაფინანსება. კანონპროექტი აწესებს გამჭვირვალობის ყველაზე მინიმალურ სტანდარტს.

!! მოკლე ინფორმაცია გამჭვირვალობის კანონის შესახებ:

- კანონის დასახელება - კანონი „უცხოური გავლენის გამჭვირვალობის შესახებ“
- კანონის მოცულობა - 6 გვერდი (11 მუხლი)
- უცხოური ძალა - უცხო სახელმწიფო, უცხო ქვეყნის ფიზიკური, ან იურიდიული პირი
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- ვის ეხება - არასამხარებო იურიდიული პირი და მედიაორგანიზაცია, რომლის შემოსავლის 20%-ზე მეტი უცხოეთიდანაა (არ ეხება ფიზიკურ პირებს)
- რა ვალდებულება აქვს ორგანიზაციას - ყოველი წლის იანვარში წინა წლის შემოსავლების და ხარჯების დეკლარირება იუსტიციის სამინისტროში
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"In Reality", along with anonymous Facebook pages, posted discrediting photos of CSO representatives, civic activists, and opposition politicians who actively oppose the Russian-style "Foreign Agent's Law". These pages echoed the Georgian Dream's narrative that similar laws exist in countries like the US, France, and Canada, branding opponents as purveyors of disinformation. They also propagated the narrative that those depicted in the propaganda pictures are against transparency and harbor malign goals aimed at undermining the Georgian state.

Posts shared by the Facebook pages - “Political Satire”, “Viola Cramonadze”, “Political Absurdity”, “In Reality”, „Terenti Gldaneli”.

რატომ ეწინააღმდეგება ქართული NGO საქართველოს გამჭვირვალობის შესახებ კანონს, როდესაც ნარობათბაული ქვეყნების უმრავლესობაში ეს რეგულაცია მოქმედებს?

უცხოური გავლენის გამჭვირვალობის შესახებ კანონის დამცველები

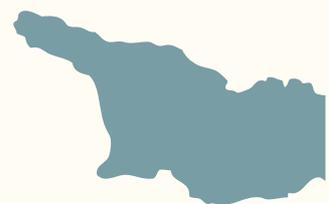
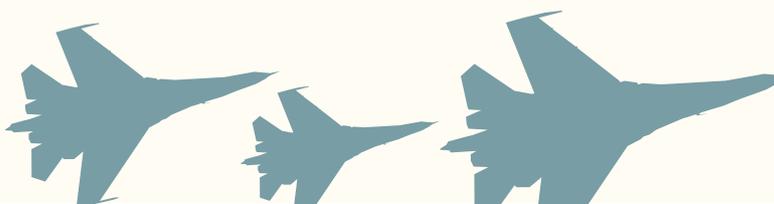
უ.ც.ი.გ.ო.ები

უცხოური ძალის ინტერესების გამტარი ორგანიზაცია



Openly Pro-Kremlin groups support the Russian-style “Foreign Agents Law”

- Pro-Russian propagandist and blogger Beka Vardosanidze, who is linked with the Alt Info group and was repeatedly attacking former US Ambassador Kelly Degnan, **shared Mamuka Mdinardze’s quote about Kelly Degnan serving the “interests of the Global War Party”**. “He said Kelly Degnan is a bad Missus!”, writes the propagandist.
- Alt Info pundit Aleksandre Palavandishvili **echoed** the narrative voiced by Georgian Dream members, stating that the **law does not contradict democratic principles** and that its adoption would strengthen Georgia's sovereignty. Additionally, he reiterated the



ruling party's message that **foreign funds are being used to cause chaos** and destabilization in Georgia.

- Similarly to the ruling party, another guest on Alt Info claimed that the argument against the law about foreign funds already being transparent is a lie.
- Propagandists on Solidarity for Peace, another pro-Russian broadcast, repeated the Georgian Dream's narratives. One of the pundits on the broadcast, much like Mamuka Mdinardze and Shalva Papuashvili, argued that "one of the Ambassadors" promoted the Foreign Agents Law as "Russian", and made the opposition adopt this message.
- Similarly to the ruling party, a guest on Solidarity for Peace stated that young people realized how they were lied to during the protests in March 2023 and regret participating in demonstrations.
- One of the leaders of Alt Info, Shota Martinenko stated that **the West was planning a major offensive against the Georgian Dream**, necessitating the ruling party's decision to reintroduce the Foreign Agents law and initiate amendments limiting "LGBT propaganda." "It is a fact that the confrontation [between the West and the Georgian Dream] is reaching its maximum, and society should be ready for anything," wrote the propagandist.
- A guest on Alt Info voiced the same theory. According to him, **the West has tried everything to get rid of the Georgian Dream**. He continued saying that the ruling party anticipates a major offensive from the West before the elections, and the reintroduction of the law aims to mitigate the West's influence and thwart this perceived attack.
- A propagandist argued that **the current US Ambassador to Georgia is openly supporting the opposition**, which is why the ruling party's decision should be perceived as a step to mitigate American influence.
- Other pundit on Alt Info's broadcast linked the Russian "**Foreign Agents Law**" to the "**second front**" **conspiracy**, alleging that the West, specifically the Biden administration, wants to cause destabilization in the Caucasus. According to them, **the West demanded Bidzina Ivanishvili to open a second front against Russia, which he would not do**.

Georgian Dream laid grounds for the Russian-style "Foreign Agents Law" before the announcement

Prior to the reintroduction of the Russian-style "Foreign Agents Law", Georgian Dream members made several statements targeting CSOs, donor organizations, and embassies.

- On March 27th, the Head of the EU Delegation in Georgia, Pawel Herczynski, made a statement about how the European Commission's first enlargement report stated that the European Commission's first enlargement report highlights the necessity of evaluating the integrity of Georgian judges, a process that should involve international experts. As a response, Shalva Papuashvili, the Chairperson of the Parliament, argued that involving foreign experts in evaluating judges' integrity would contradict Georgia's Constitution and independence, asserting that Georgia does not require foreign experts to make internal decisions. "We already trusted EU experts when we allowed Polish doctors to

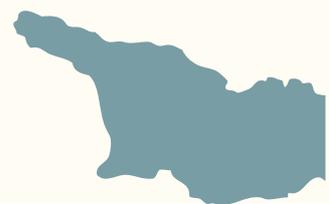
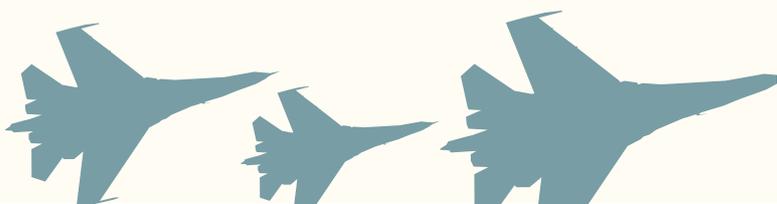


visit Mikheil Saakashvili. We trusted the EU, and the EU disappointed us," stated Papuashvili.

- Along with the Head of the EU Delegation, the Executive Secretary of the ruling party, Mamuka Mdinardze pressured US Ambassador, Robin Dunnigan, and stated that the **ruling party unconditionally demands the US lift the sanctions imposed on Georgian judges** last year (See previous edition of GRASS Disinfo Brief). As Mdinardze argued, there is no evidence that would prove the relevance of the sanctions. Moreover, it bolsters the foolish campaign executed by the CSO sector, the United National Movement and its branches.
- Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze stated that **foreign agents have been stigmatizing the Georgian judiciary** for years, labeling the judges as a clan, which according to him, is “a Soviet-style propaganda campaign”.
- General Secretary of the Georgian Dream and Mayor of Tbilisi, Kakha Kaladze repeated the same message about **“some powers wanting to control the courts and judges”**. According to him, Georgia is an independent state, and it should be respected.

Georgian Dream links LGBT propaganda to “foreign agents” and the West

- Prime Minister Kobakhidze argued that “the collective United National Movement”, meaning the opposition, wants to vote in favor of the law against “LGBT propaganda”, **but are not allowed to do so by their patrons**.
- Georgian Dream MP Irakli Zarkua stated that the opposition and CSOs are receiving money to undermine Georgian identity, Orthodox Christianity, Culture, etc. **“If you lose your faith, traditions, what the hell do you need the EU or any other union for?!”**, said Zarkua. According to him, those who are against anti-LGBT law only care about pursuing interests of foreign powers.
- Chairperson of the Georgian Dream, Irakli Gharibashvili, asserted that Georgia is a small, but strong and proud nation and will protect its interests. As he stated, no one thought that same-sex marriage laws would sweep over Europe. He also referred to US President Joe Biden releasing a statement about the International Transgender Day of Visibility – **“It is a catastrophe. They bring transgenders in schools, kindergartens and tell children they can change their sex”**, exclaimed the former Prime Minister.
- Chairperson of the Parliament’s Legal Issues Committee, Anri Okhanashvili, stated that the ideology about telling children how they can change their sex is permeating Georgia, which is concerning. According to him, **“serious funding” is channelled in Georgia through grants to support this propaganda**, and the ruling party is preventing it from spreading further.



Other anti-Western narratives voiced throughout the week revolved around anti-LGBT propaganda

- Host of pro-Russian Sezoni TV broadcast, Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, claimed that Georgia cannot have relations with the US because it opposes the law against LGBT propaganda. He claimed that the US does not permit Georgia to adopt certain laws or maintain relations with Russia, China, and Iran, which he argued hinders Georgia's development and undermines its sovereignty.
- Alt Info pundit, Aleksandre Palavandishvili, alleged that the West forced Georgia to adopt laws that support LGBT propaganda – the law on anti-discrimination, the law on the rights of the child, and “gender policing”.
- Another Alt Info pundit also argued that the US is interfering in Georgia’s internal affairs by going against the “**anti-LGBT propaganda law**”. “They [the US] openly admit that if we do not agree on everything we do internally, they will **punish** us”, stated the propagandist.
- According to another narrative, if a representative of the LGBT community commits a heinous crime, they will not be punished, while those who protest against the “LGBT agenda” are persecuted relentlessly.
- Pro-Russian propagandist Hamlet Tchipashvili appeared on Sezoni TV and propagated that **if Georgia became a member of the EU, it would lose its sovereignty** – Georgia would not be able to control its borders, territories, and laws. “We will be a country without policies, sovereignty, independence”, the propagandist said. As he continued, Georgia would never become a member of the EU or NATO because it would cause problems for the West in regard to the economy and security. Sezoni TV host Nikoloz Mzhavanadze argued that even if Georgia became an EU member, it would degrade like Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.
- Mzhavanadze called the US “**the empire of evil**” and accused it of **staging coups in Georgia in 1991 and 2003**. According to him, the US had knowledge about human rights violations during Saakashvili’s government, and moreover, he tortured people with the American’s instructions.