



# GRASS Disinfo Brief

**MONITORING PERIOD:**

**May 8th – May 13th**

GRASS  
REFORMANDA

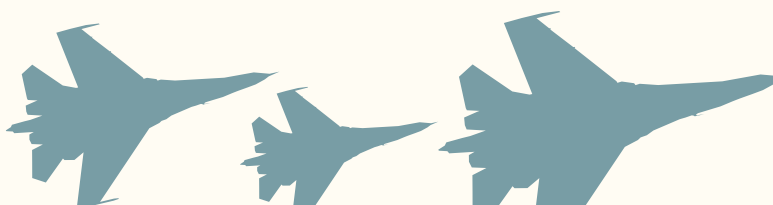




- Prime Minister defends Russian-style foreign agents law and Bidzina Ivanishvili
- Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Parliament spearhead Georgian Dream's attacks on Western partners
- State Security Service of Georgia supports Georgian Dream-backed conspiracy about "certain groups planning a revolution in Georgia"
- Physical attack and smear campaign on opponents of the Russian-style Foreign Agents Law continues, Georgian Dream blames opposition for inciting violence
- Pro-Russian groups share the SSSG's narrative about the West executing "a Maidan-like scenario"

### Prime Minister defends Russian-style foreign agents law and Bidzina Ivanishvili

- Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze released an [open letter](#) to the "honest youth". In it, he emphasizes that **many of the young people actively protesting the law on transparency of foreign influence are members of the "United National Movement's" youth wing**. Violent youth organizations funded by Georgia's ex-defense minister Davit Kezerashvili and foreign donors with dark and non-transparent money are active in the protests, he claims. While downplaying the size of the protests, the Prime Minister acknowledged that honest young people are also part of the protest – "Since the initiation of the law on transparency, protests have been held in Tbilisi, in which up to 10 thousand people participate steadily", he claimed. In the letter, **Kobakhidze gives an example of an honest young person to illustrate how mistaken the Georgian youth is**. He claims that young people were dragged in the attempts to overthrow the government in 2020 when opposition parties and NGOs declared the parliamentary elections as rigged; in 2021, young people were used to pressure the ruling party to sign the April 19th agreement mediated by Charles Michel; in 2021-2022, young people were lied to by the "United National Movement" about Mikheil Saakashvili dying in prison. "Despite many mistakes, the honest young man once again firmly believed in his analytical skills when the war broke out in Ukraine. On the very first day of the war, he declared Volodymyr Zelenskyy as the leader of the civilized world and a hero. Today, this young man realizes that his analytical conclusions were far from the truth; however, he never once considered admitting his mistakes" Kobakhidze continues his argument. He states that young people were deceived about Ukraine and did not see the attempts to open a second front in Georgia. Moreover, they supported the revolutionary processes in 2022 after the EU denied Georgia membership candidate status. According to Kobakhidze, the same young people, despite making analytical mistakes in the past, are protesting the law without ever having read it. As Kobakhidze claims, these young people do not think for themselves and only believe the information provided by associated professors from Ilia



State University and NGO representatives. **Overall, Kobakhidze's letter demeans young people who continue to protest against the Russian-style law, portraying them as unintelligent and easily manipulated.**

- In the same letter, Kobakhidze argues that 60% of the Georgian public supports adopting “the law on transparency”. The Prime Minister went so far as to cite unnamed opinion polls, allegedly conducted by the ruling Georgian Dream party, which dubiously claimed GD support among “highly intelligent” voters is 73.8%, and among those of “average intelligence - 45.6%. With this unknown research, **Kobakhidze claims that people with high IQs support the ruling party, while its opponents and participants of the ongoing protests lack intelligence** and thus fail to sufficiently analyze the situation regarding “the law on transparency”. “I am deeply convinced that we should act not according to the demands of honest young people, but according to the demands of 200 thousand young, middle-aged and elderly people who came to the Georgian Dream rally on April 29”, read Kobakhidze's letter.
- Kobakhidze also met with the TV presenters of political talk shows, including those critical of the government. The discussion was broadcast live by several media outlets. The Prime Minister [argued](#) that the ruling party is moving forward with dignity and national interest at heart, which is why “unfounded threats do not impact the government and the Georgian people”. He stated that as the Georgian Dream's policy towards the EU was successful in December 2023, it will continue to be so in the future. “They [EU] will open accession talks, and in 2030, Georgia, among the candidate countries, **will be the readiest to join the EU.**”
- Kobakhidze continued to [claim](#) that NGOs are using foreign funds for revolutionary processes. According to him, when society has information about certain NGOs acting against the interests of the Georgian people – by **inciting revolutions, causing chaos, promoting LGBT propaganda, attacking the Orthodox Church, propagating the use of narcotics, undermining strategic economic projects** – it will insure a lot of threats to Georgia.
- Kobakhidze also [claimed](#) that those against “the law on transparency”, including Georgia's Western partners, have not provided any concrete arguments about why the law is bad and only issue general statements about how it hinders Georgia's path towards European integration, which is insufficient. He also claimed that the Press Speaker of the US State Department lied about FARA only registering entities from foreign governments because Mikheil Saakashvili's mother and TV Formula were also registered in FARA. **Kobakhidze's statement is a lie.** Saakashvili's mother and TV Formula were never registered in FARA. However, those lobbying firms operating on their behalf in the US, GP International LLC / DBA GlobalPoint International and their specific activities were. US law considers specific activities carried out at the behest and

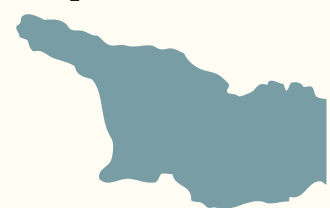


control/order of a foreign principal to be registered. In this case, the foreign principal is a company, or a political party leader supervised or subsidized in part by a foreign government, foreign political party, or other foreign principal outside the US (Giuli Alasania and TV Formula).

- Kobakhidze [argued](#) that Georgia’s partners and donor organizations want the Georgian Dream to repeal the law because **“no one wants their funds to be transparent, no one wants their money to be spent transparently”**, and while it is understandable, it is unacceptable to the ruling party.
- Commenting on EU countries and the US potentially sanctioning the founder of the Georgian Dream and oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, **Kobakhidze stated that Ivanishvili is already de facto sanctioned.** The Prime Minister referred to [the dispute](#) between Bidzina Ivanishvili and the “Credit Suisse” bank, to which the billionaire entrusted his assets. The issue is related to the loss of funds belonging to Ivanishvili on the stock exchange by the bank’s representative, Patrick Lescadron. Even though the US has nothing to do with it, Ivanishvili and his party continue to claim it as a de facto sanction by the West on the oligarch. As Kobakhidze stated, Ivanishvili and the ruling party are used to threats from Russia and individual politicians in the West. Therefore, it will not deter them from protecting Georgia’s national interests.

### **Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Parliament spearhead Georgian Dream’s attacks on Western partners**

- Traditionally, Prime Minister Kobakhidze made a [statement](#) about the ambiguous “Global War Party”. This time, he clarified that **the unspecified party does not encompass all US and EU political institutions. However, it still has a massive influence over them.** Kobakhidze even argued that the “Global War Party” easily leverages the EU as the bloc requires unanimity when making decisions, and as such, influence over even one member state is enough to impact the EU’s decisions. Furthermore, Kobakhidze expressed hope that the US and EU, victims of the “Global War Party”, can free themselves from this unknown group.
- Kobakhidze also [said](#) that “the United National Movement” was brought to power by foreign forces through violence and stone-throwing. According to him, **the state will not allow the “collective national movement” and its foreign patrons to replace the Georgian culture of peaceful protest with the non-Georgian culture of violent protest.**



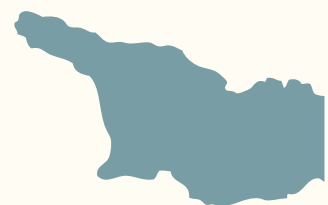
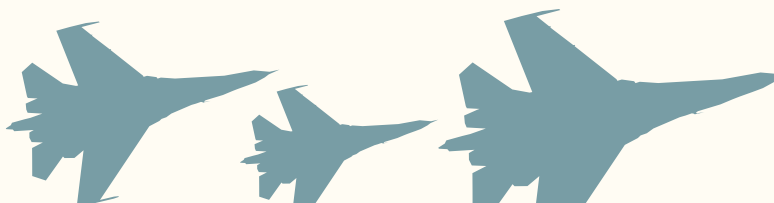
“Establishing the culture of violent protests is also connected with the black money, which the radical opposition and its foreign friends are fighting to hide today”, argued the Prime Minister.

- Answering a question about the EU potentially stripping Georgia of visa-liberalisation privileges, Kobakhidze [stated](#) that some might threaten the ruling party with potential personal sanctions, which are unfounded and unserious, but speculations about **stopping the visa-liberalisation regime and threatening the Georgian people would be even more absurd.**
- After protesters openly [announced](#) plans to spend the night in front of the Parliament building and refuse entry to the Georgian Dream MPs on the morning of May 13th, on May 12<sup>th</sup>, [Irakli Kobakhidze](#) and Minister of Internal Affairs, [Vakhtang Gomelauri](#) issued statements that any attempts of violence or picketing of the Parliament building would be prosecuted under the Criminal Code. **Kobakhidze also sarcastically called on the police to “operate with higher standards than the US and Europe”.** Protesters eventually did not picket the building, although they were still forcibly removed from the back of the building by masked police, with [several violent arrests](#) executed in the process.
- Chairperson of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili [expressed](#) disappointment that some politicians in the West regard themselves as Jupiter and Georgia as a bull – What is allowed for Jupiter [the West] is not allowed for the bull [Georgia]. **Papuashvili once again pointed to the EU working on a similar directive and Canada adopting a similar law. Papuashvili’s statement is manipulative.** The Georgian version of “the law on transparency of foreign influence” radically differs from those in works or adopted by Western democracies (See FactCheck Georgia’s articles for details – [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)).
- The European Court of Justice released a decision about the crackdown on protesters by police forces on the night of June 19th, 2019. Papuashvili [used](#) the decision to criticize the West and European donor organizations. According to him, opposition politician Nika Melia was justifiably arrested for inciting violence on June 19th. However, Georgia’s Western partners pressured the ruling party to release him on bail through the April 19th agreement. Papuashvili highlighted that Melia’s bail was paid by the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), which is currently funding NGOs and political parties characterized by the most radical behaviour. “Last week, they attacked the Parliament of Georgia once again. Unfortunately, the mistake of 2019 was repeated again, and **some foreign actors baptized the violent demonstrations as “peaceful” and condemned the legitimate actions of the police**”, argued Papuashvili.
- Papuashvili [accused](#) the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) and National Endowment for Democracy (NED) of financing groups who initiate radical actions



during protests, including picketing the Parliament building. Speaking about the critics of the Russian-style foreign agent's law, Papuashvili said that **opinions from some foreign actors who called on Georgia to impose sanctions on and engage in a military confrontation with Russia while demanding the release of Mikheil Saakashvili from prison are less trustworthy**. As for other colleagues in general, the ruling party is ready to talk with them, but unfortunately, Papuashvili claimed that they have not heard any substantive arguments to date.

- As for statements made by the EU representatives and embassies in Georgia about values, Papuashvili [claimed](#) that the only thing that opposes European values is the way EED clandestinely spends money in Georgia. **EU institutions can stop it but choose to continue confrontation in Georgian society, including by branding the draft law as anti-European.**
- Responding to a [statement](#) made by the UK embassy, which called on the Georgian government “to take immediate steps to prevent the unlawful intimidation of protestors, and to investigate all rights violations and abuses”, **Papuashvili scolded embassies and said they confuse their functions with that of the Georgian judiciary** by pointing to the Georgian police about what is lawful and what is not. “The embassies should think more since NGOs funded by them are the participants of these violent protests... the donors should stop avoiding responsibility for it”, said the Chairperson of the Parliament.
- The “People’s Power” movement, part of the parliamentary majority, released a [statement](#). “The foreign ministers of 4 EU member states are coming to Georgia: Gabrielius Landsbergis (Lithuania), Margus Tsahkna (Estonia), Thordis Gylfadottir (Iceland and Baiba Braže (Latvia). Also, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag, Michael Roth, the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Lithuanian Seimas, Žygimantas Pavilionis, and the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, James O'Brien”, **the movement called on the government to reconsider letting them in the country**. The movement argued that these figures have officially announced that the purpose of their visit is to support the "Western course" of the country, but in fact, they openly support “the United National Movement” and attack the Georgian government. Against this background, the “People’s Power” movement says that **the Georgian government should refrain from meeting with politicians who come with destructive aims**. Moreover, the movement claims that the main goal of the statements made by these figures against the Government of Georgia in the last two years is to **involve Georgia in the war and open a second front against Russia**.





## State Security Service of Georgia supports Georgian Dream-backed conspiracy about “certain groups planning a revolution in Georgia”

State Security Service of Georgia (SSSG) released a [statement](#) claiming that certain groups are trying to organize provocations during the current protests near the Georgian Parliament, which are aimed at the development of destructive and violent scenarios. **The plan is allegedly supported by foreign funds**, which are managed by the leaders of specific parliamentary and non-parliamentary political parties and heads of non-governmental organizations. Georgian citizens outside the country are actively involved in the mentioned criminal plans, in particular, a specific part of **Georgians fighting in Ukraine**, who declare their readiness to come to Georgia and actively participate in the planned violence against the police. According to the SSSG, plans also include blocking the Parliament, the Government of Georgia, and other state institution buildings, as well as crucial highways and railways.

The SSSG also claims that organizers of criminal actions instruct young people to bring flammable substances to the Parliament, which will later be used in order to make Molotov cocktails. Foreign powers instruct these young people **and have been trained by “CANVAS” and Peter Ackermann training modules, which aim to start a “Maidanization”** process and drag the country into a civil war similar to one that occurred in Georgia in the 1990s.

The special target of the protest organizers’ aggression is law enforcement officers. **Methods used during “color revolutions” are planned**, which encompasses demoralizing and provoking law enforcement, as well as using threats, bribes, and staging disobedience towards the government, which ultimately aims to overthrow the government by violent means.

- Irakli Kobakhidze [stated](#) that **the Georgian Dream protected the country from a revolution many times before and will successfully do so again**. “The collective national movement” has no resources for a revolution, and in contrast to Yanukovich’s Ukraine and Shevardnadze’s Georgia, Georgia under the Georgian Dream is a strong sovereign country, and there is no chance of a Maidan-like revolution, he claimed.
- Kobakhidze also [stated](#) that the country cannot permanently live in the **closed circle of polarization, which is artificially exacerbated by foreign forces**, including by opaquely funding non-governmental organizations and media outlets. Overcoming the artificially created polarization from foreign forces and radicalism is the responsibility of the Georgian government towards the people, Kobakhidze claimed.
- Shalva Papuashvili recalled the USAID-funded training conducted by “Canvas”, which is still under investigation by the SSSG, and claimed that “Canvas” provided training to young individuals and influential non-governmental organizations expected to play a pivotal role in violently attempting to overthrow the government (See relevant issue of [GRASS Disinfo brief](#)). “A few months ago, when the “Canvas” trainings were being investigated, we saw what the scenarios were like and what was taught. We see these scenarios playing out”, argued Papuashvili. **According to him, the protests in Georgia are**



**similar to Maidan** – a newly married couple arriving at the protest, a protester playing a fortepiano, etc. – are rituals deliberately used to portray the violent protests as benign, which also occurred during the Maidan protests.

- Papuashvili also [claimed](#) that the opposition did not start the protests. Initially, the opposition opposed the law but did not start mass protests until they received instructions to do so. **Only after they received a signal from the outside, from their patrons and financiers, did they start this protest**, the purpose of which is confirmed by the SSSG to be the development of a violent scenario and the implementation of a Maidan-like project in Georgia.

### Physical attack and smear campaign on opponents of the Russian-style Foreign Agents Law continues, Georgian Dream blames opposition for inciting violence

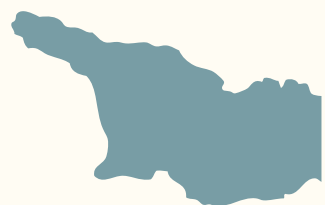
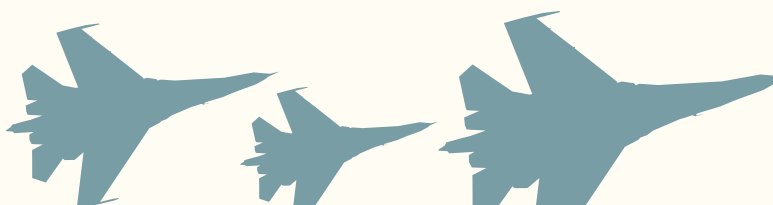
On the night of May 8th, opposition party members and activists were attacked by several unidentified men near their homes. Reports about attacks on [Dimitri Chikovani](#), a member of the “United National Movement”, were quickly followed by news about attacks on former diplomat [Gia Japaridze](#) and one of the organizers of the protests against the Russian-style Foreign Agents Law, [Lasha Gvinianidze](#).

On May 9<sup>th</sup>, a member of the “Girchi – More Freedom” party, [Boris Kurua](#), was also physically assaulted by several men, as well as [Nodar Chachanidze](#), a member of the “Akhali” opposition party. Leader of “Girchi – More Freedom”, Zurab Girchi Japaridze reported [several ambush attempts](#), even claiming to have fired several warning [gunshots](#) to fend off attackers in one instance. Opposition activist from Marneuli, Giorgi Mumladze, reported being attacked [two separate](#) times.

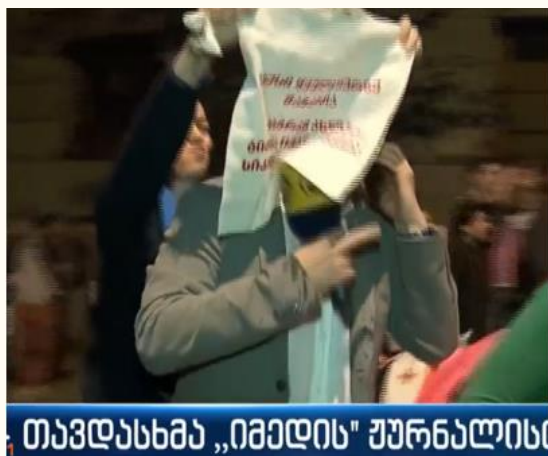
Simultaneously, masked men vandalized [the offices](#), [homes](#), and [personal cars](#) of activists and NGO representatives. Graffiti and posters put up on walls and cars read “betrayer of the homeland”, “grant-eater agent”, “executor of foreign commands”, etc.

**No arrests have been made in any of the abovementioned cases.**

- The Prime Minister [recalled](#) how the leader of the “Citizens” party, Aleksandre Elisashvili, [hit](#) the leader of the Parliamentary majority, Mamuka Mdinardze, during the Legal Issues Committee hearing, as well as [attacks](#) on pro-governmental TV channel journalists during protests [journalists were not physically attacked, although protesters did not shy away from expressing their disapproval of the pro-governmental TV channels]. **Kobakhidze underlined that diplomat did not express their concerns on these cases but were quick to react to “violence against violent people”.**







*Attack on Imedi TV journalist (left), attack on the member of “the United National Movement”, Dimitri Chikovani (right)*

- Chairperson of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, [blamed](#) the opposition for cheering on Aleksandre Elisashvili after he hit Mamuka Mdinardze, which, according to him, **creates a cycle of violence and “the United National Movement” is attempting to drag the whole society into it.**
- While condemning violence and promising to investigate the abovementioned cases of violence towards opponents of the Russian-style Foreign Agents Law, the Minister of Internal Affairs, **Vakhtang Gomelauri**, [accused](#) his opponents of **having double standards** for not condemning violence against Imedi TV and POSTV journalists.
- The Minister of Justice, Rati Bregvadze, [stated](#) that people should not jump to conclusions and blame the ruling party supporters for the attacks. **“If anyone benefits from these kinds of disturbance, it is certainly the people who stand at the forefront of the protests”**, he said, while not excluding the possibility that these victims of violence have beaten themselves up on purpose.
- Mayor of Tbilisi, Kakha Kaladze, while condemning violence, also [recalled](#) how Aleksandre Elisashvili hit Mamuka Mdinardze and how protesters harassed Imedi TV and POSTV journalists. According to him, when Salome Zourabichvili pardons a person who tried to burn a policeman alive [despite the prosecution not providing sufficient evidence to prove it] and the opposition makes this person a hero, it incites violence.
- Deputy Chairperson of the Parliament, Gia Volski, [claimed](#) that these types of attacks negatively affect the Georgian Dream’s image and, thus, it is illogical for the ruling party to be behind it. Moreover, **if anyone can execute such attacks, it’s the radical opposition.**

Pro-Russian groups share the SSSG’s narrative about the West executing “a Maidan-like scenario”



- One of the hosts of Alt Info's broadcasts [argued](#) that protests against the draft law in Tbilisi means that the Maidan-like scenario has been initiated, which is also evident from statements made by Western politicians. According to the propagandist, these politicians are directly involved in planning the protests in Tbilisi. The propagandist claimed that the same people who planned and executed the Maidan revolution in Ukraine are managing the protests in Tbilisi.
- The same propagandist [spread](#) a lie about the EU's nine steps for Georgia, stating that one of the steps involves opening a second front against Russia. Another member of Alt Info amplified the narrative that the protests aim to destabilize the country, overthrow the government, and open a second front in Georgia.
- A member of Alt Info [pointed](#) out similarities between the Maidan revolution and protests in Georgia. Similar to the Chairperson of the Parliament, the propagandist claims that deliberate performances such as bringing a newly-wed couple to the protest are part of Ackermann's plans to stage a theatrical show and mask a violent protest as a peaceful one.
- One of the main Alt Info propagandists, Aleksandre Palavandishvili, while discussing the ongoing protests, [suggested](#) that the rallies completely follow the traditional scenario of a color revolution. He also scolded the younger generation and argued that they do not remember and understand what happened to Ukraine after ousting Yanukovich in 2014. He noted that they would not turn up to the protests if they did.
- Like the Prime Minister, a guest on Alt Info [argued](#) that the younger generations lack intelligence and understanding of the situation. She attributed this to European education standards and underlined that young people are very mistaken and do not understand either Georgian or European values.
- A guest on Alt Info [accused the young protesters of using narcotics](#) during protests and insulting police officers while under the influence.
- Prominent pro-Russian propagandist and blogger Beka Vardosanidze also made parallels to the Maidan revolution. [According](#) to him, the US administration and Victoria Nuland specifically trained young Ukrainians to be at the forefront of the protests and impact societal perceptions. He also spread a conspiracy that Yanukovich and the opposition reached an agreement to hold snap elections, but the US got involved and started firing



at protesters from sniper rifles, leading to the Maidan revolution and Yanukovych's departure.

- Pro-Russian Sezoni TV host Nikoloz Mzhavanadze [argued](#) that the young people demanding a European future in the streets of Tbilisi want **more sodomy in Georgia**. He **called the young protesters traitors, Georgia's enemies, and perverts**. According to him, Europe has no values nowadays and is only interested in **dragging Georgia into a war against Russia**.
- Mzhavanadze [expressed](#) concern about people distributing food and drinks at the protests. He argues that Victoria Nuland also distributed food at the Maidan protests and which are being organized by "dark foreign funds" in Tbilisi, which is why transparency of foreign funds is necessary.
- A guest on Sezoni TV [stated](#) that ever since the ruling party initiated the draft law, military escalation between Armenia and Azerbaijan has died down. According to the narrative, the West wanted to start a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan and wanted to use Georgia for this purpose, but the draft law ruined this plan.
- Arno Khidirbegishvili, the editor-in-chief of pro-Russian "SaqInform", published an article in which he [argued](#) that the Georgian Dream made many concessions to the West. However, this was not enough, and the West demanded that Georgia – legalize same-sex marriage, allow vetting in the Georgian judiciary, open a second front against Russia, impose economic sanctions on Russia, block the border with Russia and not allow direct flights. According to the pro-Kremlin propagandist, the ruling party did not accept meeting these demands, and as a result, Washington and Brussels decided to change the government in Georgia.
- Hamlet Tchipashvili, one of the prominent pro-Russian propagandists who copies Kremlin narratives in his articles, [argued](#) that 30 years of close relations with the West turned Georgia into a vassal stripped of its values, patriotism, love of the homeland, and sexual identity. According to him, Western politicians are against the draft law because they want to keep their funds, plans, and agent network a secret from the Georgian people.