



GRASS Disinfo Brief

MONITORING PERIOD:

June 4th – June 10th

GRASS
REFORMANDA





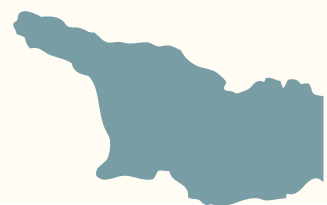
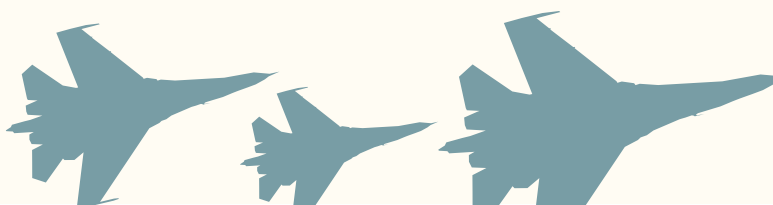
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Statement from Georgia's Reforms Associates

On June 9, a member of our organization, the debunking editor of FactCheck Georgia, Mariam Tsitsikashvili, accidentally came upon Viktor Japaridze at the Tbilisi International Airport. Japaridze is one of the members of the Georgian Parliament who voted for the so called Russian law. Mariam remarked on the MP's political decision, within the scope of the freedom of speech and expression, without the use of obscene and offensive words. Shortly after the incident, Mariam Tsitsikashvili was arrested on charges of petty hooliganism. Interpreting the expression of disappointment towards the MP's political decision as petty hooliganism violates the rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia and represents another step towards growing authoritarianism in Georgia.

In addition, it is clear from the video that the MP uses discriminatory vocabulary towards Mariam Tsitsikashvili. To Mariam's remark that she is the daughter of an immigrant mother and that her mother is ethnically Ossetian, the MP responds several times: "It is apparent." Article 2, Sub-section B of the Code of Ethics of the Member of the Parliament of Georgia obliges the member of the Parliament to treat all citizens equally, regardless of origin, ethnicity, social status or other distinguishing features. This is also defined in Sub-section N of Article 3 of the Code of Ethics. Such action from a member of the Parliament of Georgia violates the requirements defined by the Code of Ethics. In addition to the violation of the Code of Ethics, this action stirs up ethnic intolerance and threatens the protection of freedoms and rights as defined by the Constitution of Georgia.

During the conversation, the employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who arrived at the location, considered that there was no violation of the law as evidenced by the fact that the police officer left the location soon. Mariam's arrest took place later, which had the appearance of retribution – to create discomfort for the person expressing an opinion unacceptable to the MP. Mariam was restricted from boarding her plane and she was arrested and taken to city court. They did not arrest, however, they restricted the right to free movement and did not allow Irina Gurgenchvili, the person accompanying Mariam, who did not take part in the



mentioned events at all, to board as well. Irina Gurgenashvili's passport was confiscated and they "explained" to her that a decision had been made to not allow her to board. To treat a citizen in such a way as to restrict the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of movement without any justification is another flagrant violation of the law. It is also important that, simultaneously with these events, Viktor Japaridze boarded the plane freely and his movement was not hindered. This means that the police decided to detain Mariam and restrict the person accompanying her from boarding the plane, based on Viktor Japaridze's statement, without any additional investigation or questions.

Tbilisi City Court started the hearing of the case on 9 June. However, it gave the parties time to present evidence and postponed the process until 19 June. In connection with the incident, we will use all means at our disposal - GRASS is going to appeal to the court with a request for compensation for the damage caused, to the Ethics Council of the Parliament of Georgia to determine the violation of the requirements of the Code of Ethics by the MP and to the Public Defender of Georgia - to establish a position regarding the said incident.

U.S. issues first tranche of sanctions against Georgian officials, ruling party responds

On June 6, Matthew Miller, the Spokesperson for the U.S. Department of State, announced that due to the Georgia Dream anti-democratic actions as well as its recent statements and rhetoric, which risks derailing Georgia's European future, the U.S. taking steps to impose visa restrictions on dozens of Georgian individuals. This first tranche of visa restrictions comprises members of the Georgian Dream party, members of parliament, law enforcement, and private citizens, as well as their family members.

In an interview from June 4, EU Ambassador to Georgia Paweł Herczyński said that the EU will have to check whether visa liberalization conditions still apply to Georgia. He also stated that the EU could turn to the option of modifying financial assistance to Georgia.

- Prime Minister Kobakhidze stated that sanctions cannot be taken seriously and are counterproductive to those who issue them. He also recalled visa restrictions issued by the U.S. against Georgian judges, which according to the Prime Minister, were baseless, anti-Georgian, and damaged America's image in Georgia.
- Asked what he would tell the Georgian people who might be deprived of visa liberalization with the EU, Kobakhidze responded that "no one can dare punish the Georgian people." He repeated that 60% of the population supports the ruling party and the "law on transparency", and that more people attended the ruling party's rally than the protests against the law. Therefore, Kobakhidze framed the potential suspension of the visa liberalization as an act against the Georgian people.
- The Chairperson of the Parliament stated that he was elected by independent Georgian people and as such, he does not plan on basing his decisions on threats and blackmail coming from abroad. He once again equated Georgia's Western partners with Russia and

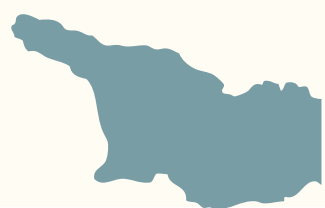
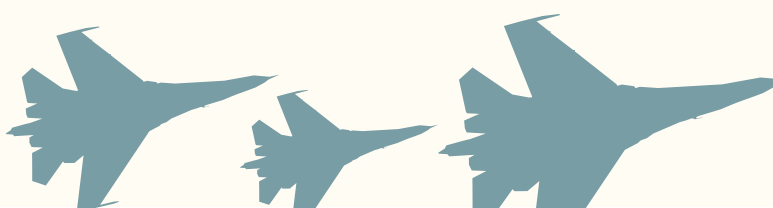


stated that Russia has been trying to influence Georgia with sanctions for years and now the West is employing the same “Russian style” towards the Georgian people.

- Papuashvili also said that when soldiers from NATO member states would not even leave military bases while in Afghanistan, Georgian soldiers were fighting on the front lines. “Especially, the representatives of the countries who came out on the demonstrations in Tbilisi and are being aggressive, they should have fought when there was a war. They would not even leave the bases” stated the Chairperson of the Parliament, adding that the U.S. threatening sanctions against a country that fought alongside it damages relations between the nations.
- Before Matthew Millers announcement on June 6, General Secretary of the Georgian Dream and Mayor of Tbilisi, Kakha Kaladze stated that it is **unserious to talk about sanctions** against Georgian officials and that there are no reasons for it. After the announcement of U.S. visa restrictions, Kaladze said that “**no one is afraid of sanctions**” and that talks about the Georgian government undermining the European integration process is cynical.
- Georgian Dream MP, Irakli Zarkua stated that changes should occur in the U.S. and that Donald Trump will make it greater and fairer. “**Mr.Trump, good luck, wish you victory**”, said Zarkua.
- According to the member of the People’s Power movement, Guram Matcharashvili, if he has to choose between walking with the national flag in Georgia and walking with an LGBT flag in the U.S., he will choose the former. He expressed hope that the U.S. will in fact reconsider relations with Georgia and perceive it as an equal, rather than a second-hand country.
- Another People’s Party movement representative, Dimitri Khundadze, stated that the U.S. made a grave mistake by interfering in Georgia’s internal affairs and pressuring state institutions. He assessed the sanctions as a “backsliding of democracy and a dark day for Western democracy”, adding that he would rather be sanctioned than allow the “Maidanization” of Georgia and war.

Georgian Dream says those who testified at U.S Congressional hearing are traitors

On June 4, the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) held a congressional hearing on the “MEGOBARI Act” which envisions imposing



sanctions on Georgian officials who undermine the country's democracy and also includes provisions about enhancing bilateral relations and support. The hearing featured testimonies from Ivane Chkhikvadze, EU Integration Program Manager at the Civil Society Foundation (CSF), Natalia Sabanadze, former Georgian Ambassador to the EU, and William Courtney, former U.S. Ambassador to Georgia. The hearing focused on the negative effects of the Russian-style foreign agents law, the Georgian government's crackdown on protesters, repressions, and general steps taken by the ruling party towards authoritarianism.

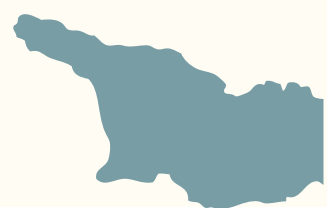
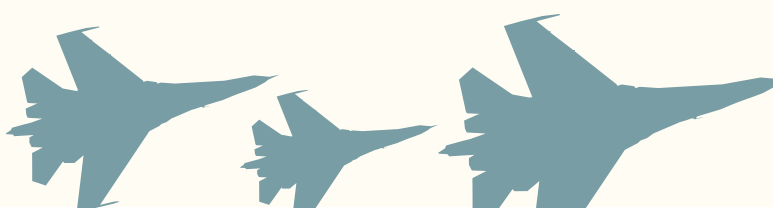
- Prime Minister Kobakhidze stated the law discussed in Congress being called “MEGOBARI” is cynical because it is a hostile act and should rather be called “DAUDZINEBELI Act” [Daudzinebeli means “sleepless” in Georgian, as in the phrase Daudzinebeli enemy – sleepless enemy is a common language to use for foes. The ruling party often refers to Georgia’s partners as “Daudzinebeli partners”, suggesting that while they are formally partners, they have malign intentions].
- Kobakhidze reiterated the narrative that the former U.S. Ambassador, Kelly Degnan, was involved in two coup attempts in Georgia during 2020-2022, and such Congressional hearings further damage U.S.-Georgia relations instead of developing it. The Prime Minister also referred to Ivane Chkhikvadze’s and Natalia Sabanadze’s testimonials as treason.
- Kobakhidze argued that most of the **American financial assistance in Georgia is directed towards NGO funding and it cannot be regarded as assistance to Georgia**. As for military assistance, according to the Prime Minister, helping Georgia in the defense sector is also in the interest of the U.S. and if it were decreased, it would have an equally negative affect on American security.
- According to the Chairperson of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, speeches from Ivane Chkhikvadze and Natalia Sabanadze will go down in history as **one of the biggest treasons** against the homeland. As he assessed, just like Sergo Orjonikidze led the Red Army in 1921, Chkhikvadze and Sabanadze are leading the sanctions in Georgia.
- Georgian Dream MP, Nino Tsilosani stated that the “Helsinki Commission” held a hearing based on a letter by “an expired politician” – Shalva Natelashvili, and listened to a testimony from “an expired Ambassador” – Natalia Sabanadze, while one of the Congressmen preannounced a revolution. According to her, the hearing was an attempt to create an alternative reality.
- “What we saw in the U.S. Congress was an announcement of a violent revolution, a **plan for the “Ukrainization” of Georgia**, and an insatiable desire to destroy our country”, stated a member of the People’s Power movement, Mikheil Kavelashvili.



- People's Power movement dedicated a statement to the **Congressional hearing**, assessing it as an open “**malicious and revanchist clown show**, with the participation of the homeland-less “Georgians”, which clearly revealed the interests of some political groups in the West to **overthrow the Georgian government** elected by the Georgian people and bring back its agents to power. According to the statement, the law being called “MEGOBARI Act” is cynical, mocks Georgia, and in reality, is the “**enemy act**”. Moreover, the most tragic thing is that the Americans brought on two homeland-less people as witnesses and made them say abominations about their own country. As the statement reads, the “enemy act” demonstrated a clear threat of a revolution and the interest of “Ukrainization” of Georgia.
- The statement also discusses Article 5 of NATO. According to the movement, the Georgian **people were lied to that NATO membership would guarantee Georgia's security**. The Georgian people were led to believe that in the case of NATO membership, if a conflict started, the U.S. army would automatically come to Georgia's aid. However, the statement argues that Article 5 is a manipulative record that gives all the member countries of the alliance the full right to be guided by their own interests and can avoid involvement in any military conflict, even in the case of an attack on one of the member states. “A question arises – who needed to execute this propaganda based on lies in order to mislead the Georgian people? The answer is simple – throughout the years the “**Global War Party**” used EU and NATO as an instrument to influence people”, concludes the statement.

Georgian Dream says European Parliament election results demonstrate EU policy shortcomings

- Shalva Papuashvili stated that the snap elections in France, the resignation of the Belgian Prime Minister and the results of Germany's ruling coalition show a reaction to the EU's policies, especially towards foreign policy. According to him, there is also a tendency in the European youth to support conservative, traditional attitudes.
- Georgian Dream MP argued that the election results also demonstrate an adequate answer to the baseless sanctions towards Georgia – “does protecting national interests and reducing foreign influence, which is supported by the majority of the population of the EU, mean that the European population wants to undermine democracy? Sanction EU citizens, too, then” argued the MP.



- Another Georgian Dream MP, Aluda Ghudushauri, argued that French President Emmanuel Macron's policy, who condemned the Russian-style foreign agents law, is a total failure. According to him, European policymakers should face reality because the ultra-liberal line that dominated their policy has been fundamentally changed in a number of countries.
- The European Parliament elections showed that the so-called radical liberalism is losing its position in Europe and is slowly but surely replaced by right-wing political forces, stated another Georgian Dream MP, Irakli Kadagishvili. According to him, Europe should realize that the future of Europe should be decided in Europe, that pseudo-liberalism hinders development, and that war should not be a priority.
- According to Georgian Dream MP, Davit Matikashvili, election results showed that the European population does not trust the political system, the political actors who managed the processes in the European Parliament, and the politics of the EU in general. The processes that have been taking place in the EU until now turned out to be undesirable for the European electorate itself.
- Pro-governmental POSTV, owned by a member of the People's Power movement and MP, Viktor Japaridze, published a postcard mocking Emmanuel Macron, underlining while the French President criticized the Georgian government, he was forced to announce snap elections due to his unpopularity.
- Another postcard from POSTV **belittles former MEPs Viola von Cramon and Anna Fotyga**, stating that they lost the elections and that they were engaged in lobbying connections with the United National Movement.

Georgian Dream initiates law against "LGBT propaganda"

On June 4, the Chairperson of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili announced the ruling party's plan to initiate a law "on family values and the protection of minors," as well as amendments to 18 laws that would limit LGBT rights. According to Papuashvili, the law will be reviewed during the ongoing spring session of the Parliament and will be adopted in the second and third hearing in autumn.

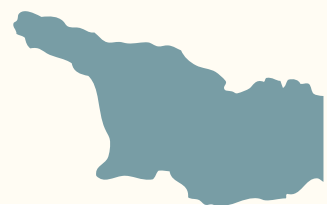
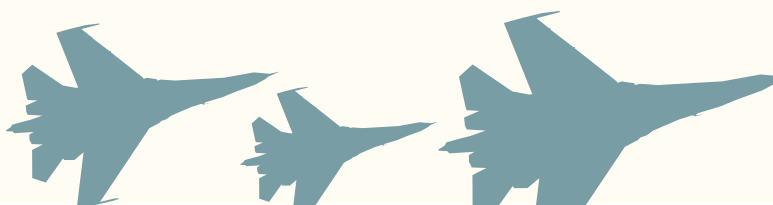
1. The law will outlaw any type of alternative union to marriage that is not between a man and a woman;
2. The law will outlaw persons who identify themselves as a gender different from their sex or are not heterosexual to adopt a child;
3. The law will outlaw any type of medical manipulation for the purpose of gender reassignment;



4. The law will prohibit a person from indicating a gender different from their sex in documents issued by the state;
 5. The law will prohibit “LGBT propaganda” in an educational institution, in particular, the dissemination of any type of information, that is aimed at promoting a person's belonging to a gender different from their own, same-sex relations, or incest.
 6. The law will prohibit broadcasters from disseminating any type of information, which is aimed at promoting a person's belonging to a gender different from their own, same-sex relations, or incest. In particular, the law will prohibit the broadcasting of a scene depicting an intimate relationship between members of the same sex or a scene of incest;
 7. The law will prohibit public gatherings or demonstrations aimed at promoting a person's belonging to a gender different from their own, same-sex relations, or incest;
 8. The law will annul any type obligation imposed within the framework of labor relations, which is aimed at neglecting biological sex, both in private and public institutions.
- Prime Minister Kobakhidze stated that human rights are protected and will continue to be so in the future. However, propaganda is unacceptable because it poses serious threats and the law tackles exactly that.
 - In a different statement, Papuashvili said that although the Georgian people support the law, the opposition does not support it because they are only interested in what their foreign patrons tell them to do.

Other disinformation and propaganda narratives voiced by the ruling party

- Kobakhidze stated that after the Maidan revolution in Georgia, **Ukraine’s new government was appointed by foreign forces which led to negative consequences.** According to him, before Maidan, Ukraine had territorial integrity and an increasing economy. Today, Ukraine is destroyed, the economy is in a catastrophic state, Russia occupied 20% of its territories, and tens of thousands of people died. “We will do everything to prevent Maidan and Ukrainization in Georgia. The **second front** is something that we will not allow in our country,” said Kobakhidze.
- According to Papuashvili, the way the EU has been treating Georgia for the past two years is **unfair and goes against European values.** He also admonished the EU Ambassador



for not publicizing the finances that flow in Georgia from the EU and for not stopping the **European Endowment for Democracy fund from operating opaquely**, which secretly spends money in Georgia on **radicalization and terror for political purposes**. He argued that some EU institutions are interested in having a “secret piggy bank” in Georgia to influence political processes, which is the most anti-European action.

- On another occasion, Papuashvili, as well as Kakha Kaladze, commented on the Freedom and Prosperity index published by the Atlantic Council. The report places Georgia in the category of free countries, ahead of Poland, Hungary, and all the other EU membership candidate countries. According to the ruling party high-ranking officials, the index is a testament that Georgia was unjustly not granted candidate status in 2022, and is unjustly criticized by the EU nowadays. In reality, the Freedom and Prosperity index uses data from 2022, before the Georgian Dream initiated the Russian-style foreign agents law twice.
- Georgian Dream MP, Nino Tsilosani commented on the OSCE/ODIHR’s legal analysis of the “law on transparency of foreign influence”, which states that the law “contains serious deficiencies that make it incompatible with international human rights standards”. According to Tsilosani, when the ruling party members met with OSCE/ODIHR representatives, they saw the necessity of adopting the law. However, issued a critical analysis because “it is a conclusion written by Saakashvili’s lawyer... political biases are clear.” In reality, one of Saakashvili’s lawyers, Jeremy McBride was not involved in writing the legal analysis. He was involved in an expert panel which provides recommendations to ODIHR.

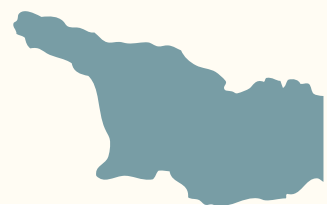
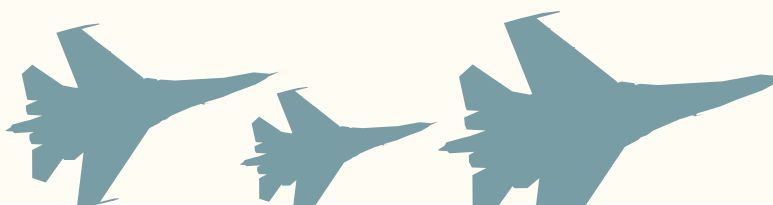
Pro-Kremlin groups continue endorsing the Georgian Dream’s narratives

- Pro-Russian Sezoni TV host and propagandist, Nikoloz Mzhavanadze argued that Western countries are fighting against Georgia to create problems for Russia. Particularly, this includes plans of **inciting a revolution in Georgia** and **overthrowing the Georgian Dream** government. According to Mzhavanadze, there are clear statements made by Western politicians about plans to start a **Maidan-like revolution in Georgia**.
- Jondi Baghaturia, the leader of the anti-Western political movement Georgian Dasi, claimed on Sezoni TV’s broadcast that the protest against the Russian-style foreign agents law was a **special operation executed by the West to destabilize Georgia**, but has since failed. According to him, many people, especially the youth, understood that they were **used as pawns for the benefit of the privileged NGO and political party representatives**.
- A propagandist on Alt Info purported that pro-Westerners against the law have no ability to independently assess the situation because they are slaves of the West. Had the West



not labeled the law as Russian, the protests would not have started because referring to the law as Russian is baseless and only those who lack critical thinking assess it as such.

- Edisher Gvenetadze, a pro-Russian propagandist who also frequently appears on pro-governmental media channels, claimed that the whole world, especially the European and American bureaucracy, united against Georgia as if started a war of conquest. He suggested that such coordinated international condemnation of the “law on transparency” points to a clandestine plan against Georgia.
- Edisher Gvenetadze also claimed that the U.S. imposed sanctions on Georgian officials because a government elected by the Georgian people **did not ask for permission from Washington before adopting “the law on transparency”** as the West views Georgia as its slave. “Even the Kremlin did not put us in this type of situation”, he argued.
- Tristan Tselashvili, a former Georgian high-ranking officer who was previously imprisoned for spying in favour of Russia during the 2008 war, propagated that the **law is necessary to save the future generation of Georgia**, including those who are brainwashed by the West and protested against the law.
- One of the hosts on Alt Info's broadcasts and propagandist, Giorgi Dzvelaia, similar to the ruling party, assessed U.S. **sanctions against Georgian officials as threats and blackmail**. Another propagandist reiterated the narrative and added that the U.S. sanctions were triggered by the fact that the scope of U.S. intelligence agencies is on the verge of being eliminated in Georgia.
- Another propagandist on Alt Info argued that the West has only brought destabilization, bloodshed and death to any country it had influence in. According to him, the Georgian Dream should not allow such things to happen in Georgia by completely destroying NGOs.
- A guest on Alt Info spread a conspiracy about Western funds being channeled through Georgia to the Middle East and Armenia to spread its influence. According to him, the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia was organized with such funds. He argued that the “law against agents” would undermine these efforts and the operation of U.S. and European covert activities in Georgia.



Pro-Kremlin groups spread anti-Western conspiracies

- According to clergy on Alt Info, the West opposes “the law against LGBT propaganda” because it sees that **Georgia is freeing itself from the West’s submission**. He argued that Georgia was a colony of the West because it dictated what laws could be adopted and **sponsored laws restricting the Orthodox faith and transforming the Georgian family institution to “a liberal family”**.
- One of the hosts of Alt Info’s broadcasts repeated the People’s Power movement’s narrative about Article 5 of NATO **not guaranteeing the security of a member state in case of an attack from a foreign nation**. He also purported that the “LGBT agenda” is pushed by the West through media, films, NGOs, Georgian TV networks, and educational institutions with the aim of **perverting the future generation and undermining the Georgian identity**.
- The same propagandist besmirched the EU Ambassador, stating that **he and other EU bureaucrats are propagandists of perversion and pedophiles**. Moreover, according to him, the West is sanctioning and blackmailing Georgia because it did not engage in a confrontation with Russia.
- Tristan Tselashvili stated that liberal-fascist LGBT powers in the U.S. the UK and the EU have imposed their ideology on traditional families by permeating schools, universities, and state institutions with the “LGBT agenda”, which led to the Georgian youth being under Western influence.
- A propagandist on Alt Info purported that the **U.S. stages color revolutions not only in the Post-Soviet space**, but throughout the whole world because it is based on an ideology against humanity and aims to enslave the world
- Another propagandist claimed that the U.S. will release fabricated records of Georgian Dream MPs in the run up to the elections to discredit the ruling party. “The next step will be the Maidanization of Georgia”, he stated.
- Mikheil Zghenti, a member of the pro-Russian “Solidarity for Peace” party, said that living in Europe will be unbearable in 10-15 years. He argued that Georgia should immediately and categorically refuse to partner with the West as it is the only way to save the country. According to him, Georgia is decimated and weak because of Western influence. The propagandist also falsified history and claimed that in 1801 and 1921 Russia did not want to annex Georgia but was forced to because of the West, although he did not specify how the West prompted Russia to invade Georgia. However, as he stated, Russia only ever attacked Georgia when it sensed a threat, and the liberals nowadays want to create the same threats to Russia today, which will potentially trigger a Russian invasion.