



Preventing Far-Right Extremism in Georgia

Far-Right Rhetoric and Trends in Social Media

(March-April)

2022

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1. Introduction

Openly pro-Russian and far-right media platforms and political actors have been particularly active in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war. The main platform of the Kremlin disinformation campaign in Georgia is Alt-Info. It broadcasts the ongoing war in Ukraine in its special news coverage. The Democracy Research Institute (the DRI) is particularly interested in this media platform as it has an intensive online interaction.

This report presents the outcomes of social media monitoring. It analyses the messages of the far-right media outlets that spread disinformation against the background of the Russia-Ukraine war in the period of March-April 2022 and examines the main trends in their manipulative discourse. During the reporting period, the DRI analysed 475 incidents, where propaganda content was spread on social and online media. The discrediting and disinformation campaign against the Ukrainian government was actively carried out on the Facebook pages linked to Alt-Info: [Conservative Women](#), [Conservative Movement – Lagodekhi Organisation](#) and [Here is Conservative](#).

During the reporting period, Georgian Dream and Alt-Info repeatedly made similar statements to discredit the Ukrainian government. The Alt-Info hosts expressed their support to the Georgian government for not joining the sanctions imposed on Russia. Alt-Info accused United National Movement of provocative actions and attempts to incite a war in Georgia with the help of Ukrainian lobbyists.

Alt-Info and the Georgian authorities had identical harsh rhetoric also with regard to Oleksiy Arestovich, Adviser to the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine. On 30 April 2022, Prime Minister of Georgia, [Irakli Gharibashvili](#), referred in a negative context to the [critical remarks](#) made by Arestovich about Georgia's policy and dismissed his assessments as “absurd”. In their turn, the [Alt-Info team](#) accused Arestovich of incendiary actions and blamed him for putting a strain on the relations between Georgia and Ukraine. The Alt-Info hosts expressed solidarity and support to Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of Georgian Dream, when [audio recordings](#) of the conversations that allegedly took place between him and sanctioned Russian oligarch Vladimir Yevtushenkov were leaked to the media. According to the audio recordings, a meeting took place between Yevtushenkov's representative in Georgia and Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili. The [Alt-Info team](#) welcomed the information and demanded the Georgian government to enhance its trade and economic ties with Russia instead of imposing sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili.

During the reporting period, two main trends were identified in the rhetoric of Alt-Info. On the one hand, direct support to Russia in the Russia-Ukraine war and attempts to discredit Ukraine were noticeable; on the other hand, the main emphasis was on spreading anti-Western and anti-NATO narratives.

While assessing the current events in Ukraine, Alt-Info presenters, who are also the leaders of the openly pro-Kremlin Conservative Movement, actively made pro-Russian statements, normalised the Kremlin's aggressive military intervention and spread disinformation against Ukraine. It is noteworthy that, on 24 March 2022, the National Communications Commission of Georgia [detected](#) elements of

war propaganda in Alt-Info's activities and stated that it contradicted the principles of the Law of Georgia on Broadcasting.

In the wake of the ongoing war in Ukraine, anti-Western rhetoric intensified in Alt-Info's editorial policy. Alt-Info has been making a lot of effort to stir up public scepticism against NATO. It has been using the crisis in Ukraine to illustrate the need to distance oneself from the West. Their disinformation narratives are in direct alignment with the messages of the Kremlin media outlets.

The far-right political forces in Georgia use their social and online media platforms to create false public sentiments. They try to establish the opinion that the Ukrainian authorities caused the Russia-Ukraine war at the instigation of Western powers. The leaders notorious for far-right sentiments deny the bombing of civilians by Russia and hold the Ukrainian government morally accountable for the consequences of the war.

Georgian far-right forces that are openly pro-Russian repeat the Kremlin rhetoric, the unambiguous message of which is that Russia holds the moral high ground. Furthermore, by diminishing the Ukrainian authorities, they seek to demonstrate Russia's military superiority.

1. Alt-Info's Pro-Russian Discourse and Anti-Western Messages

In the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war, the far-right media platform Alt-Info has been openly peddling pro-Kremlin discourse, which clearly seeks to justify or deny the war crimes committed by Russia. Alt-Info constantly pushes pro-Russian media propaganda that portrays the West as the instigator of the war. Furthermore, against the background of the Russia-Ukraine war, the Alt-Info hosts are trying to emphasise the need for Georgia to maintain closer ties and direct dialogue with Russia, which is presented as the only way to save the country. During the media-monitoring period, several key messages voiced by Alt-Info were identified. On the one hand, there are calls for support to Russia and the glorification of its military prowess, and, on the other hand, there are attempts to demonise Ukraine and stir up anti-Western sentiments.

Message No. 1 – Russia Does Not Attack Civilians and Does Not Bomb Residential Settlements

On 22 February 2022, two days before the full-scale war had started, Margarita Simonyan, one of the leaders of the Kremlin's disinformation media campaign and the editor-in-chief of the Russian television network RT, had [stated](#) in *Россия 1* (Russia 1) programme Evening with Vladimir Solovyov that “*the Russian army does not pose a threat to civilians.*”

Alt-Info's messages, in turn, has been echoing this Kremlin's propaganda narrative. Accordingly, the task of Alt-Info in the disinformation media campaign is to maintain Russia's moral high ground and present it as a humane party.

On 19 March 2002, in the programme Alt-Analytica, Shota Martinenko, a host of Alt-Info and one of the leaders of Conservative Movement, [voiced](#) his opinions, according to which Russia does not bomb

settlements actively as it avoids killing people, which is morally correct but a mistake from a military point of view. [This statement is a lie](#). According to the [statement](#) made by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 22 March 2022, several thousand civilians were killed in the Russian armed attack on Ukraine. Military raids were carried out on a number of civilian facilities such as [hospitals](#), [theatres](#) and [schools](#) in various Ukrainian cities.

On 22 April 2022, Guram Palavandishvili, the head of the far-right Children's Rights Society, who was invited to the Alt-Info programme [Comment of the Day](#), stated, “*Despite the largescale attack, Putin is doing his best to conduct a humane war. He ordered that the bunkers in Azovstal where women and children are staying should not be attacked.*”

The Kremlin's propaganda, in which Russian President's spokesperson [Dmitry Peskov](#) is instrumental, accuses the Ukrainian government of using civilians as a human shield. Konstantine Morgoshia, the founder of Alt-Info, spreads an identical message. On 21 April 2022, in the programme the Commentary of the Day, Morgoshia [stated](#) that the Azov Battalion uses women and children as cannon fodder. “*I cannot imagine how one can be proud of the Azov Battalion, which consists of ordinary sadists who use women and children in basements to discourage Russia from using weapons against them. We all know that civilians are in this basement against their will and used as cannon fodder.*”

On 30 April 2022, Dimitri Lortkipanidze, the Head of the Primakov Foundation, spoke at length about the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war in the Alt-Info programme [Comment of the Day](#). He focused on the plight of the people trapped at the Azovstal plant and the humanitarian crisis. Dimitri Lortkipanidze assessed the commission of war crimes in Bucha and Irpen and the grave humanitarian crisis in Azovstal as pre-staged scenarios. According to him, Russia was supposed to be given the “label” of a perpetrator of grave crimes against humanity. “*Next to Azovstal there is the Ilyich plant, which housed thousands of Marines, most of whom were captured, and Russia created all the preconditions for this. So, what could possibly be the reasons for not opening an “evacuation corridor” for the wounded, civilians and the elderly?*”

[Message No. 2 – Russia's Military Advantage is Evident and Ukraine Will Lose the War](#)

The Alt-Info hosts seek to establish an opinion that the Russian army is invincible and its military operations in Ukraine are successful. According to them, Russia is acting with the right strategy and its military potential is limitless. In this regard, the [statement](#) of Shota Martinenko, the leader of Conservative Movement, is noteworthy. The statement was made in the Alt-Info programme Alternative Vision on 24 April 2022: “*Even if the war ends at this stage, Russia has already won. It already seized the Ukrainian territory that is twice as large as Georgia is and, if Russia is losing the war, why it is not panicking and mobilising the population. If Russia is losing the war, how did it take the city of Mariupol? And how is it that the Russian army is making progress each day?*” In the programme, he branded the military successes of Ukrainian forces and the defeat of Russia as Liberal disinformation.

On 23 April 2022, Giorgi Kardava, the host of Alt-Info and the chairperson of Conservative Movement, reviewed the Russia-Ukraine war in [Alt-Analytica](#). According to him, Russia has been conducting dozens of military strikes on Ukraine on a daily basis for two months. According to Kardava, Russia's military aviation potential is also limitless. In order to discredit the Ukrainian army, Kardava aired a

[video](#), which, according to him, shows the deplorable condition of the Ukrainian army in Donbas and Ukrainian soldiers fleeing the front line.

On 13 April 2022, Konstantine Morgoshia, the founder of Alt-Info, spoke about Russia's "high military potential" in the programme [Comment of the Day](#). He blamed President Zelenskyy and his team for the war. He also noted that Russia's military resources are quite large and efficient. *"In 45 days, Russia occupied Ukraine's territory which is as large as the United Kingdom. This is what actually happened. Russia has many resources that, despite the losses, will ensure the job is done. The problem here is why President Zelenskyy and his ridiculous government have brought the Ukrainian people to this stage."*

Konstantine Morgoshia sums up his opinion on the Russia-Ukraine war in a Facebook [post](#), where he notes, *"the scenario may develop differently, but 100% of the territories of Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic, I mean, including Mariupol, will be completely occupied. Kharkov, too, is likely to be taken by the Russians. Furthermore, they will never leave either Melitopol or Kherson. This means that Ukraine will lose 100% of its largest industrial zones and the Sea of Azov."*



კოკა მორგოშია
11 April at 00:19 · 🌐

ნშირად მეკითხებიან, როგორ დამთავრდება რუსეთ - უკრაინის ომი ... !
ნუ ცხადია ამაზე, ზუსტი პასუხის გაცემა შეუძლებელია. მაგრამ მე მაინც ჩემს ანალიტიკას დავდებ და ვნახოთ რა მოხდება.

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პირველი ისაა, რომ საწყის ეტაპზე ოროვე მხარე შეცდა ... ანუ უკრაინას არ უგონა, რომ რუსეთი ესე მასიურად და ყველა მხრიდან შეუტევდა. უკრაინაში ბევრს ჯეროდა, რომ სანქციები რუსეთის ფედერაციას ჩამოანგრევდა. რაც არ გამართლდა. ანუ ამ შემთხვევაში უკრაინის პრობლემა კიდევ ისაა, რომ 100%-ითაც რომ ცოდნოდათ ყველაფერი მაინც მათ მაგივრად, ომის დაწყება არ დაწყების გადაწყვეტილებას აწუშიებდა 😞 🇺🇦 ანუ ყველაზე დიდი და ტრაგიკული შეცდომა უკრაინელების ის არის, რომ ზელინსკის და ბაიდენის ... ბინძურ თამაშებს ვერ აღუდგნენ წინ. !

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Message No. 3 – Sanctions Imposed by the West are Ineffective

Irakli Martinenko, the host of Alt-Info, assessed the Russian economy through the prism of military operations and observed that Russia had no large financial loss. In the [programme](#) Alternative Vision, which was aired on 22 April 2022, Martinenko described the Russia-Ukraine war in terms of

¹ Koka Morgoshia, 11 April 2022, "They often ask me how the Russia-Ukraine war will end. Well, it is obviously impossible to give an accurate answer to this question, but I will still give you my analysis and let us see what will happen. At this initial stage, both sides made a mistake. Ukraine did not know that Russia would embark on this full-scale offensive and would attack it from all sides. Many in Ukraine believed that sanctions would lead to the collapse of the Russian Federation but this hope turned out to be false. I mean, in this case, the Ukrainian problem is that, even if they knew 100% of everything, the decision about starting or not starting the war would be made by the US. I mean the biggest and tragic mistake made by Ukrainians is that they could not do anything against the dirty games played by Zelenskyy and Biden."

establishing a new world order, noting that Western sanctions are not an obstacle for Russia. *“It is a lie that Russia is exhausted by sanctions and cannot continue. Russia will not stop the war. Both America and Russia realise that there is no rush in Ukraine. The West will try to reduce imports from Russia, but Russia has already begun to search for alternatives to circumvent these sanctions.”*

Two days later, on 24 April 2022, in an interview with Alt-Analytica, Martinenko [stated](#) that Russia was a "self-sufficient" country with huge natural resources and the ability to produce food for itself and for selling it to other countries. *“The US's wish that the population would revolt in Russia has not come true. To the contrary, the population's desire is for the country to finish its work. Russia has oil and gas and, therefore, will continue production.”*

In the programme [Comment of the Day](#), aired on 30 April 2022, Irakli Morgoshia, a member of Conservative Movement's political council, gave his opinion about the sanctions imposed on Russia. He noted that Russia is a major supplier of energy resources to Europe and, consequently, the sanctions imposed on it will cause a crisis in Georgia as well as in other European countries. Irakli Morgoshia also focused on the damage done to Russia because of these sanctions but added that this could not be the main factor to stop the war. *“Sanctions are hurting Russia, but that will not stop the war. On the other hand, we see that Russia is the main supplier of energy to Europe and, if this war continues and sanctions are tightened, this crisis will affect us as well.”*

Alt-Info focused on IDS Borjomi Georgia, a mineral and freshwater producer, which had to [suspend](#) production due to sanctions imposed on Russia. Alfa Group, one of the largest Russian private investment holding companies, owns a 60% controlling stake in the Georgian company. On 29 April 2022, in the Alt-info programme [Alternative Vision](#), the leader of Conservative Movement and the Alt-Info host, Shota Martinenko stressed the need to improve economic relations with Russia. According to him, if Georgia follows the direction taken by Ukraine, its statehood will be destroyed. *“Of course, this is a colossal problem. Not only Borjomi but also other companies will face such problems. There is virtually no solution other than increasing our economic stability by deepening economic relations with Russia.”*

Alt-Info presenters do not see any problem in maintaining communications with sanctioned Russian oligarchs. Moreover, in the wake of the war in Ukraine, they call upon the Georgian authorities to be more active in terms of seeking trade with Russia. The far-right media platform reacted to the leaked [audio recording](#) of the alleged conversations between Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of Georgian Dream, and Vladimir Yevtushenkov, a sanctioned Russian oligarch. According to the recordings, the authenticity of which has not been confirmed, Yevtushenko's representative met with Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili. Bidzina Ivanishvili facilitated the meeting. Based on this incident, the opposition forces raised the issue of imposing sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of Georgian Dream.

On 26 April 2022, in the programme [Alternative Vision](#), the host and the head of the political party Conservative Movement, Giorgi Kardava stated that personal sanctions could not be imposed based on the recordings. In his opinion, the opposition's demand for sanctions against Bidzina Ivanishvili was motivated by the desire of United National Movement to return to power. Giorgi Kardava stated the

following: *“Another issue is the face of United National Movement and the Liberal Opposition. They will be happy to support sanctions, not only against Bidzina Ivanishvili but also against Georgia, just so that the standard of living falls here and people start struggling. When there is a social explosion afterwards, they can manipulate these issues to piggyback on people’s indignation and get back in power.”* In the same programme, another host of Alt-Info, Shota Martinenko, made a statement in support of Bidzina Ivanishvili. He positively assessed the attempt to negotiate with the sanctioned Russian businessperson and called the visit of his representative to Georgia an opportunity to bring economic benefits. [Shota Martinenko](#) stated the following: *“There is no problem with Ivanishvili talking to a Russian businessman. It is even necessary; they must speak and communicate. Not only to avoid the conflict but also so that our country has economic benefits.”*

Message No. 4 – Ukraine Itself Trades with Russia, Therefore Its Claims Against Georgia are Unreasonable

The rhetoric of the hosts of Alt-Info and Georgian Dream is identical when it comes to assessing the critical statements made by the Ukrainian authorities. Alt-Info and Georgian Dream usually make similar comments about Oleksiy Arestovich, Adviser to the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine. On 30 April 2022, the Prime Minister of Georgia, [Irakli Gharibashvili](#), described Arestovich's [critical remarks](#) against the Georgian authorities in a negative context, saying, *“Arestovich himself is a disgrace and such absurd assessments are what damages relations with the Ukrainian people.”* Oleksiy Arestovich’s critical statements have not gone unnoticed by the Alt-Info team either. On 29 April 2022, in the programme [Alternative Vision](#), host Shota Martinenko called Oleksiy Arestovich an “America’s spy” and blamed him for stirring up the confrontation between Georgia and Ukraine. Martinenko called upon the Georgian authorities to make “harsher” statements to the Ukrainian authorities and speak openly about the fact that this is an “attempt to drag Georgia into the war.”

The rhetoric of the Alt-Info team and Georgian Dream towards the Ukrainian authorities became particularly aggressive after the [statement](#) of the Major Intelligence Division of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, according to which Russia plans to import sanctioned products with the help of Georgia. Irakli Kobakhidze, Chair of Georgian Dream, dismissed the accusations of Ukrainian intelligence as “absurd” and “[plucked out of thin air](#)”, while Rati Ionatamishvili, a member of the parliamentary majority, [described](#) the statement of the Ukrainian intelligence as “slanderous, really unfriendly and a dirty provocation.” Rhetoric in support of the government is noticeable in the campaign launched by Alt-Info. On 7 April 2022, in the programme [Alternative Vision](#), Giorgi Kardava, the Secretary-General of Conservative Movement/Alt-Info, imparted manipulative information about the transit of Russian gas from Ukraine to Europe and stated that the Ukrainian government's claims against Georgia are inadmissible when Ukraine itself trades in Russian gas. With this statement, Kardava tried to discredit Ukraine and accused the Ukrainian government of bombing its own people with Russian money. *“They do not block the gas themselves, these monkeys... Ukraine trades in gas, Russia bombs Ukraine with that money received from the gas. It has not even declared war and, at the same time, they have claims against us.”*

Giorgi Kardava's statement is manipulative and serves to discredit the Ukrainian government. According to the [Minister of Energy of Ukraine](#), the main mission of the country is to maintain a partnership with the West. For this reason, it fulfils its obligations during the war, which includes gas

supplies to Europe based on agreements concluded with various companies.

Narratives similar to the manipulative statement made by Giorgi Kardava, leader of Conservative Movement, have been widely circulated on the Facebook pages: [Conservative Women](#), [Conservative Movement – Lagodekhi Organisation](#) and [Here is Conservative](#).



Message No. 5 – The West Wishes to Open the “Second Front” in Georgia

In parallel with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the military attacks, the hosts of Alt-Info, within the format of various programmes, spread the narrative that the collective West wants to open a second front in Georgia. The purpose of this message is to arouse anti-Western sentiments among the Georgian population, instil irrational fears and demonstrate the need for a closer partnership with Russia. The Alt-Info team seeks to use the crisis in Ukraine to show that Russia is the only guarantor of Georgia's security. Furthermore, like the representatives of [Georgian Dream](#), the Alt-Info team is trying to discredit United National Movement and present it as a "war party" whose only wish is to involve Georgia in the war.

On 30 April 2022, in the Alt-Info programme [Alt-Analytica](#), the host, Irakli Martinenko, blamed the Ukrainian authorities in hostile tones and voiced the government’s narrative. According to him, ***“United National Movement was considered by the Ukrainian authorities as a tool of war against Russia. When the war started in Ukraine, the Ukrainian authorities were talking directly to each other that, if there were a Saakashvili government, there would be a war in Georgia, and this government (Georgian Dream) are called rabbits. This is a reality. The Ukrainian government is angry with the Georgian government.”***

² Conservative Women, 8 April, 2022, “You, cutthroats wishing for Georgia to be involved in the Russia-Ukraine war! Explain to me what is scrawled and scribbled in this photo?! That “hero” of yours, Zelionka, even this second, as I am typing this post, is transferring 15 million cubic metres of gas through Ukraine to Europe and increases Russia’s income by 400-500 million dollars a day!! So, what does it mean? Is he supporting the aggressor’s economy? And what kind of sanctions are you demanding from Ukraine you incorrect cutthroats?”

³ Conservative Movement – Lagodekhi Organisation, “Did you know it? Zelenskyy is demanding Georgia to sever its economic ties with Russia and, at the same time, he himself transfers daily 15 million cubic metres of natural Russian gas. So, Zelenskyy, in his own words, supports and funds the Russian military apparatus by 400-500 million dollars a day!”

On 29 April 2022, Jondi Baghaturia, a guest on Alt-Info's programme [Comment of the Day](#), and a leader of the political party Kartuli Dasi, reviewed the Russia-Ukraine war and said that Georgia's involvement in the conflict in any form or fashion was inadmissible. According to him, opening the second front in Georgia seems to be in the interests of the West. *“There is an opinion in the collective West and the so-called ‘ours’ having Georgian surnames, being servants of the collective West and serving their interests, that if the second front is opened in Georgia, the Russian military and financial forces will be dispersed.”* Jondi Baghaturia develops his theory and observes that the opening of the “second front” will automatically lead to a Russian attack on Georgia, which will have disastrous consequences for the country. *“What kind of dispersion should the opening of the second front cause in Georgia?! Russia will not even need to bring its army here. Iskander will be fired from any of the bases located in the North Caucasus. Tbilisi will be bombed. There will be many deaths and the economy will be destroyed. We will lose more territories, if not the state altogether.”*

Irakli Martinenko, a member of Conservative Movement's political council and Alt-Info presenter, linked the demand for the release of former President Mikheil Saakashvili from prison with a desire to start a war and the “second front” in Georgia. In the programme [Alternative Vision](#), aired on 29 April 2022, he stated, *“Of course, Saakashvili's release means that Georgia will pursue more policies to open the second front. Saakashvili does not need to come to power. His release is just a step towards this aim.”* Irakli Martinenko accused the West of trying to involve Georgia in the Russia-Ukraine war and using United National Movement for this purpose. *“The only thing for which the West needs Georgia is a war with Russia, which it is trying to achieve through United National Movement. We need to realise that.”*



On 21 April 2022, Shota Martinenko, host of the Alt-Info programme [Alternative Vision](#), stated that Western forces are putting pressure on Georgia to “drag the country into the war.” According to him, the Georgian society should respond quickly and unambiguously to this pressure. Otherwise, it will be impossible for Georgia to avoid the war. *“The West is a source of pressure on Georgia. The West is trying to drag us into the war ... In response to this pressure the Georgian society must show its wrath. Why is this pressure? To drag us into the war.”*

2. Openly Pro-Russian Discourse of the Far-Right Political Forces In the Wake of the Russia-Ukraine War

In the wake of Russia's military intervention in Ukraine, it is noticeable that political forces known in Georgia for their openly pro-Russian and far-right sentiments became active to “deepen” their cooperation with Russia.

Alliance of Patriots of Georgia

On 4 April 2022, a month and a half after the launch by Russia of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the leaders of Alliance of Patriots of Georgia, Irma Inashvili and Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, held an official meeting with the representatives of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly in Russia. Agasi Arabyan, President of the Russian Javakhk Diaspora, paid a visit to Russia with them. He [tweeted](#) about the visit on his Twitter account on 5 April 2022, stating that the purpose of the meeting was to improve Russian-Georgian relations and abolish the visa regime for citizens of Georgia. From the Russian side, the meeting was attended by Vladimir Jabarov, the Deputy Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Federation Council, and Mikhail Sinitsyn, a representative of the same committee.



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Information about the visit of Alliance of Patriots of Georgia was also officially published on the website of the [Federation Council](#) of Russia. According to the information posted on the council's website, Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi briefed his Russian counterparts on the activities of Alliance of

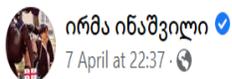
⁴ Agasi Arabyan, 5 April, “Friends! As we were notifying you, we have guests from Georgia. As per their wish, on 04 April 2022, we organised an official meeting in the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. The purpose of the meeting was to sort out relations between Russia and Georgia, to restore the direct aviation contact between Russia and Georgia and to abolish visa regime for citizens of Georgia.”

⁵ The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, V. Jabarov had a meeting with the head of the political party Alliance of Patriots of Georgia, D. Tarkhan-Mouravi.

Patriots of Georgia, noting that the party supported the country's neutrality in the international arena. At the meeting, the leader of Alliance of Patriots of Georgia stressed the importance of maintaining mutually beneficial relations between Russia and Georgia. On his part, Vladimir Jabarov [stated](#), “*Our countries have centuries-old friendship and I am convinced that there are many people in Georgia who are in favour of expanding contacts with Russia.*”

Alliance of Patriots has yet to make an official statement regarding the visit. [Irma Inashvili](#), the leader of the party, limited herself to a Facebook post, where she noted that, “*German Chancellor Scholz has visited Russia. He is constantly talking with Putin on the phone. French President Macron too. They have a sense of responsibility. We also need to talk to Russia about neutrality, peace ... and that we do not want enmity and war, about this too. And right now, we have to talk, along with Scholz and Macron, to avoid the war and disaster.*”

Irma Inashvili also actively argues on her Facebook page that Georgia's only salvation is in declaring neutrality and working closely with Russia. In parallel with this view, she openly spreads anti-Western statements and discredits the Ukrainian authorities.



ირმა ინაშვილი
7 April at 22:37

მაოცებს კანი კალაძის კომენტარი. მეგობარი ქვეყანა ომშია და ნეიტრალიტეტზე ამიტომ, თურმე, არ უნდა ვილაპარაკოთ. ამ დროს მეგობარი ქვეყანა ნეიტრალიტეტსაც იხვეწება და პუტინთან შეხვედრასაც. ეს მეგობარი ქვეყანა ომში გითრევს და რით ვერ გაიგეთ, რომ ზელენსკის სააკაშვილის მეგობარია, არც საქართველოს და არც თავად უკრაინის მეგობარი არ არის. ვიმეორებ: ორი თვის წინ რონ დაუწყო ნეიტრალიტეტზე ლაპარაკი, თავის ქვეყანას ომს ააცილებდა.



ირმა ინაშვილი
6 April at 22:01

ომი საშინელებაა. ომი ტრაგედიაა. ომში, როგორც წესი, ჩვეულებრივი, მშვიდობიანი მოსახლეობა ზიანდება. ისევ ვამბობ: შეძრული და დამწუხრებული ვართ, უკრაინის ტრაგედიის გამო და ისევ ვიმეორებ: არავითარ შემთხვევაში იგივე ტრაგედია არ უნდა განმეორდეს საქართველოში. ფაქტია, რომ უკრაინის ხელისუფლებამ ვერ გამოავლინა თავი საქართველოს მეგობრად. ყოველიურად ვხედავთ მცდელობას, რომ საქართველო როგორმე ჩაებას რუსეთთან კონფლიქტში. ზელენსკის ხელისუფლების მხრიდან იმგვარი განცხადებები კეთდება, რომ ეს არც მეგობრულია, არც პარტნიორული, არც კორექტული და არც ობიექტური. რა კონტრბანდული იარაღი?! ხომ ყველას ესმის, რომ საქართველოდან არაფერი მსგავსი არ ხდება! საქართველოს ომში ჩათრევის მცდელობა,- ეს ჩვენი სახელმწიფოს შიდა საქმეებში უხეში ჩარევაა, რასაც აკეთებს უკრაინის მთავრობა. მეორე ფრონტი საქართველოზე არ უნდა გაიხსნას. ამას წინ უნდა აღვუდგეთ. მე სრულიად ვიზიარებ უნგრეთის ხელისუფლების პოზიციას. კონკრეტულად, უნგრეთის საგარეო საქმეთა მინისტრის დღევანდელი განცხადების პათოსს, რომ უნგრეთი იცავს მისი ხალხის ინტერესს და რომ უკრაინის ომი მათი ომი არაა.

⁶ Irma Inashvili, 7 April 2022, “Kakhi Kaladze’s comment surprises me. A friendly country is at war and it seems that for this very reason we should not be talking about neutrality. At the same time, the friendly country is begging for both neutrality and a meeting with Putin. This friendly country is dragging you into the war and you still do not get it that Zelenskyy is Saakashvili’s friend and he is no friend of either Georgia or Ukraine. I repeat: had he [Zelenskyy] started talking about neutrality, he would have avoided the war in his own country.”

⁷ Irma Inashvili, 6 April, “War is horrible. War is a tragedy. As a rule, an ordinary, peaceful population is a victim of war. I am repeating one more time: I am horrified and saddened by the Ukrainian tragedy, and I am saying it one more time. Under no circumstances should this tragedy be repeated in Georgia. It is a fact that Ukraine failed to show itself as a friend to Georgia. Each day, we witness an attempt to involve Georgia somehow in the conflict with Russia. The statements made by Zelenskyy’s government are neither friendly nor partner-like, neither decent nor objective. What smuggled weapons! Everybody knows that nothing like this is happening in Georgia! An attempt to involve Georgia in the war is a gross intervention in the internal affairs of our state. This is what the Ukrainian government is doing. There should never be a second front opened in Georgia. We should oppose this. I am in full agreement with the position of the Hungarian authorities, in particular, the spirit of the

Dimitry Lortkipanidze's Primakov Centre

Dimitri Lortkipanidze, the head of the openly pro-Russian Primakov Georgian-Russian Community Centre, also paid an official visit to Moscow. On 24 March 2022, he chaired a [meeting](#) in Moscow. It was organised by the Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Support Fund, established by the Russian government, and the Primakov Centre associated with it. Experts and political scientists from Russia and Georgia participated in the meeting. Leonid Drachevsky, Executive Director of the Gorchakov Foundation and Dimitri Lortkipanidze addressed the participants with welcoming speeches. According to an official [statement](#) of the Primakov Centre, “*the participants of the meeting will discuss not only the current Russian-Georgian relations but also issues of maintaining global and regional security, economic, spiritual and moral values.*” Grigory Karasin, the Chairman of the Federation Council Committee of Foreign Affairs, also [addressed](#) the meeting, positively assessing the Georgian government's refusal to join the sanctions imposed on Russia.

The Ukrainian side painfully received the statement. Oleg Nikolenko, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine [tweeted](#) on 25 March 2022, addressing the Georgian authorities: “*Grigory Karasin praised Georgia for not supporting the sanctions against Russia and promised to thank it. Tbilisi – after what Russia has done to you since 2008 – are you not ashamed?*”

The meeting was held in Russia on 24 March 2022 and Gia Volski, First Vice-Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, assessed the participation of the Georgian side in it as an anti-state action. According to him, “*no one was there on behalf of Georgia and several experts went on a private initiative.*”⁸



A meeting of Russian and Georgian experts was held in Moscow

statement made today by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary that Hungary is defending the interests of its people and that Ukraine's war is not their war.”

⁸ Interpressnews, “*Gia Volski - Georgia is the country with the greatest threat from Russia after Ukraine, regardless of whether Karasin makes you happy with his statement - we are number one target, we should remember that*”, 25.03.2022, available at: <https://bit.ly/3OKn57z>.

Григорий Карасин о связях Грузии и России: «У наших отношений есть светлое будущее»



Grigory Karasin about ties between Georgia and Russia: “Our relations have a bright future”

Conservative Movement of Alt-Info

On 14 March 2022, Konstantine Morgoshia, the founder of Alt-Info and the leader of the far-right political party Conservative Movement, made an announcement on Georgian [media platforms](#) about the party’s full representation in Russia.⁹ Morgoshia named improving and deepening the relations between Russia and Georgia as the purpose of the visit. “*We are seen as an adequate people who think rationally and can sort out the relationship between the two countries [Georgia-Russia].*” Morgoshia [confirmed](#) to the media that the source of funding for his party would be the people working in Russia. According to the information at the disposal of the DRI, to this day,¹⁰ Alt-Info and Conservative Movement have not yet visited Russia. Konstantine Morgoshia [explained](#) that it was due to the ongoing hostilities in Ukraine.

3. Transformation of the Far-Right Political Party Conservative Movement Amid Civil Protests

During the reporting period, changes took place in the management of the far-right Conservative Movement. On [11 April 2022](#), Zura Makharadze, the party's chairperson, was replaced by Giorgi Kardava. The latter was the party's Secretary-General before the changes. It is evident from the documents submitted to the Public Registry that Shota Martinenko currently holds the [position](#) of the Secretary-General of the party. In addition to internal leadership changes, the name of the party was also changed. Currently, the party is called Conservative Movement/Alt-Info.

On 26 April 2022, in the Alt-Info programme [Comment of the Day](#), Zura Makharadze named the difficulties in his personal life as the reason for leaving the party’s leadership. He also denied the allegations about the split within the party and his arrival in Moscow, adding that he had spent 48 days in a monastery. In a [video address](#) released on 13 March 2022, Makharadze announced his temporary exit from the TV screen and the party.

⁹ Netgazeti, *Alt-Info Party is Planning to Visit Russia with Its Full Representation* 14.03.2022, available at: <https://bit.ly/3KI5dag>.

¹⁰ As of 30 April 2022.

According to [TV Pirveli](#), the conflict between Koka Morgoshia and Zura Makharadze who blamed each other for embezzling Russian money was the reason for the personnel changes in the party. Konstantine Morgoshia called this information “nonsense and lies” and maintained that there was no confrontation between him and Zura Makharadze. Alt-Info founder Koka Morgoshia said the following in an [interview](#) with media platform Alia: ***“Zurab Makharadze is no longer the chairperson of the party because we have other plans regarding him. Our party has no leaders, all our members are precious to us, so it does not matter which party member will be the chairperson.”***

During the reporting period, against the background of internal organisational changes, the trend of regional expansion and growth of the visibility of Conservative Movement was maintained. The openly pro-Kremlin force actively continued to open regional offices throughout Georgia. Sources of the party’s funding and private donations are still [questionable](#) since they are completely disproportionate to the logistics and costs. It is noteworthy that, during the reporting period, the party [opened](#) new regional offices in Mestia, Zugdidi, Kazbegi, Aspindza, Tsalka, Adigheni, Lanchkhuti, Ozurgeti, Chokhatauri and Kobuleti. In a number of cases, the opening of the party's offices was followed by a public protest, which escalated into physical and verbal confrontations. On 22 March 2022, a protest rally in front of the newly opened Conservative Movement office in [Kobuleti](#) was followed by group violence. Civic activists demanded the closure of the office of the pro-Russian party. It soon escalated into a physical confrontation between them. With regard to the acts carried out during the protest, the prosecutor's office brought charges against five individuals. The activities of Alt-Info and Conservative Movement and the opening of a new office were also met with protests in Ozurgeti. On 12 March 2022, local civic activists held rallies, the main demand of which was to put an end to the activities of the openly pro-Russian party in Ozurgeti. Priest Vakhtang Tokhadze [blessed](#) the opening of Conservative Movement’s office in Ozurgeti and told reporters that “ties with Russia are necessary.” Because of this, Shemokmedi Metropolitan Reverend Joseph [suspended](#) him from the priesthood.



Conservative Movement



კონსერვატიული მოძრაობა - ოფიციალური გვერდი ...
28 March · 🌐

დღეს პარტია "კონსერვატიული მოძრაობის" ოფისები მესტიის მუნიციპალიტეტის სოფელ ხაიშსა და ზუგდიდის მუნიციპალიტეტის სოფელ დარჩელში გაიხსნა.

ხაიშის ოფისს ნინო ჭკადუა, ხოლო დარჩელის ოფისს რენო კუკავა და მათე მარშანია უხელმძღვანელებენ.

პარტიაში გაწევრიანების ან გასაუბრების მსურველებს შეგიძლიათ მოგვმართოთ ზემოთ აღნიშნულ მისამართებზე.



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The regional offices of Conservative Movement were opened amid civil protests in [Oni](#) and the village of [Darcheli](#) of the Zugdidi Municipality. By the end of March, civic activists in [Oni](#) painted the office of Conservative Movement in the colours of the Ukrainian flag. A small group of citizens painted the Ukrainian flag on the door of the office and wrote “Z” in red which is the symbol of Russian propaganda. The opening of Conservative Movement's regional office on [28 March](#) 2022 in the village of Darcheli was immediately followed by protests from locals.



Source: Reginfo



Source: Mtisambebi

¹¹ Conservative Movement Official Website: Today, the offices of the party Conservative Movement were opened in the Village of Khaishi of the Mestia Municipality and the Village of Darcheli of the Zugdidi Municipality. Nino Chkadua will head the Khaishi office, and Reno Kukava and Mate Marshania will be the co-heads of the Darcheli office. Those wishing to become members of the party or have an interview with us can apply to us at the addresses indicated above.