

FAR-RIGHT RHETORIC AND TRENDS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AND IN ONLINE MEDIA



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Understanding and Combating Far-Right Extremism and Far-Right Nationalism in Georgia.

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the far-right groups in Georgia use social networks and online media platforms for fear-mongering, fostering false public sentiments, and supporter mobilization. To analyze their agenda, rhetoric and main narratives, in this report, the Institute for Democracy Research summarizes the results of the monitoring carried from September 2021 to August 2022. During the reporting period, DRI has studied 2163 cases of propagandistic materials distributed by the far-right on social networks and online media.

We have found through the observation that the discourse of the far-right in Georgia is characterized by its ability to transform over time, and respectively, the rhetoric of the far-right changes according to specific political or social events. For example, if at the beginning of the reporting period, self-government elections were relevant with its accompanying anti-Western messages and efforts to discredit the "National Movement," November-December 2021 were dedicated to protesting pandemic related regulations, and anti-vaccination (anti-vaxxer) sentiments were activated. However, since February 2022, against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war, anti-Western and sharply pro-Russian rhetoric gained traction.

On February 24, 2022, parallel to the start of a full-scale war against Ukraine by RF, openly pro-Russian far-right political players unleashed a full-scale information war and targeted the Georgian society. Because of the importance of the issue, the report focuses on the propagandistic assessments of the far-right groups operating in Georgia and their leaders. We will look at their speech about the ongoing war in Ukraine, which they spread through social networks and those media outlets, openly linked to the Kremlin's politics. The ongoing information war in Georgia was notable for its insistent emphasis on the threat of war and thus inciting irrational fears in society, Euroscepticism and discrediting the collective "West," accompanied by the openly pro-Kremlin propaganda.

During the reporting period, we found a trend that the leaders of Georgian Dream and the far-right group have identical messages on the issues of the threat of war and Euroscepticism, which is mainly materialized in discrediting the opposition powers and presenting the West and Western values in a negative context. This trend became exceptionally vivid after the Russia-Ukraine war.

Because of social network and online media monitoring, three main pillars were identified in the speech employed by the far-right. These three fields proved to be the most active areas of engagement:

- 1 Anti-Western rhetoric** - tightly linked to the following disinformation: the West supports the opening of the second front in Georgia. This false message was actively pushed by government representatives and people openly associated with them. Anti-Western rhetoric became acute when Georgia was expecting the EU's decision on granting the status of a candidate country for the membership.
- 2 Anti-NATO Campaign** - by appealing to military neutrality, the campaign was pushed to argue that changing Georgia's foreign policy orientation should be on the political agenda.
- 3 Pro-Kremlin rhetoric** - was used to promote the idea of establishing direct dialogue and partnership relations with Russia while the Russia-Ukraine war is raging in Europe.

According to the DRI's observation, this massive media campaign against the West and NATO was aimed at preparing public opinion to change the country's foreign policy orientation, which aligned well with the goals of the Pro-Kremlin media. The tendency to discredit the Ukrainian government is also noticeable - the far-right leaders tried to foster the views that the Russia-Ukraine war was provoked by Ukraine, at the whim of "Western" powers. Because of this, in their assessment of the dynamics of the war, the far-right mainly attempted to normalize the Kremlin's aggressive military intervention and morally justify their action. The far-right leaders denied the facts that the RF is targeting the civilian population and laid full blame at the feet of Ukrainian authorities for the consequences of the war.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Using the content analysis method, this report describes the activities of far-right political entities and media platforms, manipulative media context, trends and discourses on social networks and online media from September 2021 to August 2022.

As a result of our monitoring, the main political narratives of far-right political parties and leaders were analyzed. In particular, we describe the disinformation, discredit and hateful messages pushed on the official and supporter pages of the following political parties: "National Movement - Georgian March", "Georgian Idea, Conservative Movement and Georgian Alliance of the Patriots.

Within the framework of monitoring, we also monitored the movements and organizations noted for their far-right attitudes: "Nation and State", "Society for the Protection of Children's Rights", "Morality" and "Ertoba, Raoba, Imedi (ERI)".

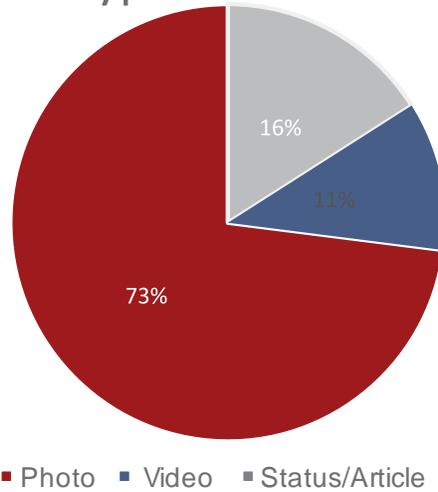
The following media platforms with openly pro-Kremlin and anti-Western sentiments also came into the research focus: "Georgia and the World", "Sakinform", "News Front" and "Alt-Info".

To study the far-right rhetoric in depth, DRI observed individuals known for their far-right attitudes expressed on their personal Facebook pages: Irma Inashvili and Davit-Tarkhan Mouravi (Alliance of Georgian Patriots), Levan Chachua (Georgian Idea), Zura Makharadze, Konstantine Morgoshia, Irakli and Shota Martynenko, Giorgi Kardava (Conservative Movement), Sandro Bregadze (Georgian March), Zviad Tomaradze (Nation and State), Guram and Aleksandre Phalavandishvili (Society for the Protection of Children's Rights) and Davit Lortkifanidze (Primakov Georgian-Russian Community Center).

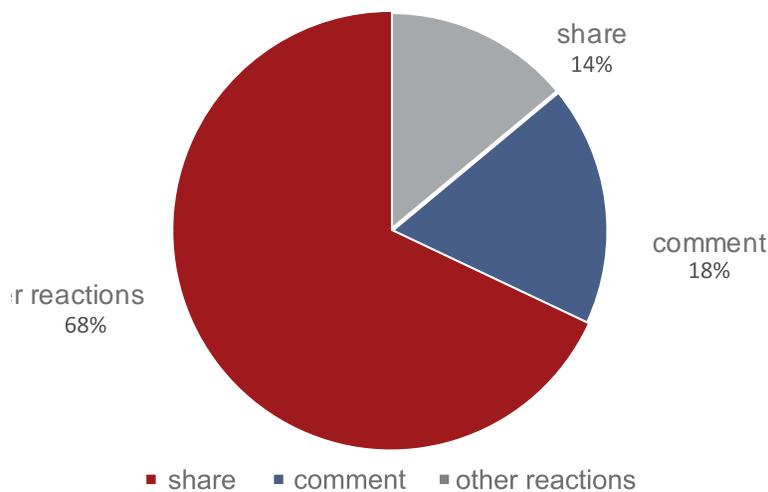
We also monitored and analyzed those online spaces and media content which push and foster the agenda and postulates of the far-right powers the most. We qualitatively studied the frequency and areas of distribution of manipulative and populist narratives. For this purpose, we used Facebook's analytical tool crowdtangle.

As a result of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the information material within the monitoring, we found that 73% of the posts were texts (statuses, articles), 11% were video content (including, live broadcasts) and 16% were photos. The total interaction of the posts studied showed that messages aimed at inciting anti-Western sentiments - by emphasizing the dangers of war - stood out with the highest intensity.

Types of Posts



Online Interaction



1. CHANGE IN FAR-RIGHT'S ONLINE RHETORIC OVER TIME

During the reporting period, the rhetoric of far-right groups was focused on three main events: 1) self-government elections of 2021; 2) pandemic and anti-vaccination campaign; 3) Russia-Ukraine war from a pro-Russian perspective. Despite the changes in the online discourse over time, the anti-Western campaign has not lost its relevance, which underwent content transformation according to political and social events.

The far-right groups in Georgia do not have a unified agenda. Despite this, they are united in their ultra-nationalist sentiments, directed against the collective Western pluralism and structural diversity.

During the reporting period, we found that far-right groups react to all major political events in the country and change their agenda accordingly. Their formal or informal activities are aimed at inciting irrational societal fears. These groups actively employ social networks and online media platforms to push false public sentiments. In addition, the trend of growing legitimacy of far-right groups was observed and can be directly linked to the availability of public spaces and the frequency of media coverage afforded to them.

At the beginning of the reporting period, the 2021 self-government elections were in the center of attention of far-right groups and their leaders, against the background of which the political transformations of the far-right groups became noticeable. On the one hand, reorganization of the far-right powers, and on the other, consolidation emerged as a key trend.

From October through December 2021, political narratives in far-right rhetoric were replaced by anti-vaccination views. Against the backdrop of the pandemic, far-right leaders and activists [Zviad Tomaradze](#) (public movement "Nation and State"), [Levan Chachua](#) (political party "Georgian Idea") and [Beka Vardosanidze](#) (media blogger) actively used various media platforms to promote anti-vaxxer misinformation and organize public protests.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 completely changed the agenda of far-right groups. Ukraine and the collective West became the main target of their propaganda campaign. Against the background of the Russia-Ukraine war, the anti-Western campaign and pro-Russian rhetoric gained traction. In numerous cases, the online narrative of the far-right groups was in direct agreement with the messages of the Kremlin's media.

In the far-right discourse, the Russia-Ukraine war collapsed into smaller talking points. As mentioned earlier, time variation of their main messages is discussed and expanded in three pillars in this report; These are: anti-Western rhetoric, pro-Russian discourse and anti-NATO campaign. Such a structure allows for a thorough analysis of the far-right rhetoric about the war and offers a chronologically accurate presentation of the transformation of their narratives.

1.1. SELF-GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF FAR-RIGHT GROUPS

At the initial stage of the reporting period, the center of attention of the far-right leaders was self-government elections of 2021. On the one hand, their political transformation, and on other, their indirect support of the government became apparent.

Considering the elections, the far-right leaders focused on the necessity to reorganize and join powers. Against the backdrop of the self-government elections of 2021, the leader of the political party Georgian Idea. Levan Chachua and the head of Primakov Georgian-Russian Community Center (Primakov Foundation) [Dimitri Lortkipanidze](#), accentuated the need to unify national-conservative powers into an united flank. Another far-right leader, Sandro Bregadze from the Georgian March, announced plans for the total overhaul of his organization to prepare for the 2024 parliamentary elections.

Overall, far-right groups and their leaders viewed the 2021 election process and its outcomes in a negative light. Both the criticism of the government and the attempt to discredit the National Movement were on display.

[Irma Inashvili](#) and [Levan Chachua](#), respectively, the leaders of political parties Georgian Alliance of the Patriots and Georgian Idea, called the elections "illegitimate." They accused the governing Georgian Dream and opposition National Movement parties of rigging the elections and blamed them equally.

The activities of National Movement and Georgian Dream and their linkage with the elections came under the focus of the far-right political movement "ERI" and its leader [Levan Vasadze](#). On the one hand, he accused the government of collaborating with the National Movement, and on the other, he made a statement supporting Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of "Georgian Dream", and referred to him as a great philanthropist.

In the Alt-Info's TV show, Children's Rights Protection Society's leader Guram Phalavandishvili [spoke to support](#) of Georgian Dream and noted that per se, he is not hostile towards their voters.

Georgian March leader, Sandro Bregadze said: *"If one was to put the National Movement as the alternative to the Georgian Dream, a hundred times the government would win."*

Ten political entities with right-wing conservative views were on the ballot in the 2021 local self-government [elections](#). And the Georgian Alliance of the Patriots still stood out among them with their extreme right-wing views.

By the parliamentary elections of 2024, there was already a growing trend which saw the far-right groups morph into political parties. [On December 7](#), the National Public Registry Agency officially registered the far-right, homophobic and violent group Alt-Info by the new name - Conservative Movement party, which is now openly preparing for the 2024 elections and is actively considering strengthening alliances and partnership ties with the Kremlin in their declared plans.

On October 30, 2021, Zviad Tomaradze from the public movement Nation and State, known for his homophobic and xenophobic rhetoric, held the [founding](#) congress of his political party. Although according to the August 2022 data, the public registry does not yet list the registration of this party, the leaders of Nation and State actively continue to mobilize supporters.

Far-right political Parties and public movements are aggressively using their respective official websites to spread their political ideology and agenda. Georgian Idea's Online platforms [gartuliidea.ge](#) are associated with their name, as is [zneoba.ge](#). The public movement ERI owns website [eri.ge](#), and the Georgian Alliance of the Patriots has [patriots.ge](#) to spread their political views.

1.2. ANTI-VAXXER CAMPAIGN LED BY THE FAR-RIGHT

At the initial stage of the reporting period, in parallel to the self-government elections, the pandemic and the related anti-vaccination media campaign were on a daily agenda for the far-right. Lugar Laboratory became a key target of disinformation and propaganda. Several conspiracy theories were pushed.

Openly pro-Russian media Georgia and the World published an article on September 28, 2021. [The article](#) claimed it was based on the "leaked info from the Pentagon." It argued that America had turned Georgia into a polygon for biological experiments and the Lugar laboratory had contributed in creating Covid-19

virus. A far-right blogger [Beka Vardosanidze](#) amplified this message on his own Facebook page. And a month later, on October 24, he pushed another misinformation that the Lugar laboratory itself was involved in the coronavirus's creation. The far-right leaders: [Levan Chachua](#) and [Zviad Tomaradze](#) spoke against mandatory [vaccination](#). They completely denied the existence of the pandemic and argued that the global-liberal flank was imposing vaccination as a sign of their dictatorial influence.

Zviad Tomaradze, the leader of the public movement Nation and State was the most active in the anti-vaxxer disinformation media campaign, spreading false information regarding masks and covid passports. On his [Facebook page](#), he responded to the [decision](#) of the Interagency Coordination Council which made masks mandatory for students and called it a crime to force children to wear masks because it causes a decrease in immunity, negatively affects lungs and provides no antiviral protection at all. Tomaradze pushed these falsehoods on other far-right media platforms: [Alt-Info](#) and [Obieqtivi](#).

Media blogger Beka Vardosanidze was also actively involved in the anti-vaccination campaign. Following the footsteps of Zviad Tomaradze, he too, tried to influence public opinion and strengthen anti-vaxxer sentiments. During the reporting period, Tomaradze and Vardosanidze jointly organized 8 demonstrations, mostly demanding to abolish "Covid Passports" and repeal covid regulations imposed by the Coordinating Council. The organizers mobilized supporters via Facebook pages and groups.

1.3. FAR-RIGHT'S FOCUS ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

In the far-right rhetoric, the Russia-Ukraine war has become the main issue since February, 2022. Anti-Western rhetoric, anti-NATO campaign and pro-Russian discourses unfolded as the war progressed. The transformation of the main messages of far-right groups over time is presented chronologically and analyzed in this document.

Parallel to the military intervention and attacks on the civilian population in Ukraine, the Kremlin's media has been engaged in intense information war. Openly pro-Kremlin and far-right groups from Georgia were actively involved in this disinformation media campaign. Initially, their main goal was to legitimize Russia's aggression, later to be replaced by an ideological message that presented RF as a strategic partner for Georgia and a counterweight to the collective West. At the end of the reporting period, in full unison with some representatives of the government of Georgia, anti-Western rhetoric proceeded with full steam, largely inciting war-related fears in the society. These far-right groups tried to portray Ukraine as a party pushed by NATO and the European Union and then abandoned by them while it was waging war with Russia. Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, they openly called on the Georgian authorities to abandon Western foreign vector and declare military neutrality. Manipulation with religious identity and emphasis on ideological alignment with Russia as a monotheistic country was also noticeable in their campaign.

In summary, the far-right groups tried to advance military neutrality, using the war as the backdrop, sow fear about the war, strengthen pro-Kremlin sentiments and present the West in a negative light, according to which NATO and the European Union are the roots of all the problems Georgia and Ukraine face. The falsehood that the West wants to open a second war front in Georgia was most notable since it had the highest online engagement. At a certain stage, this narrative was directly connected to another Kremlin's message, that to provoke a war, the liberal powers are stirring up Russophobic sentiments in Georgia.

During the reporting period, Ukrainian refugees were also targeted by Russian disinformation. In the war's aftermath, Georgian far-right platforms repeatedly published information aimed at inciting negative attitudes towards Ukrainians in Georgian society.

During the monitoring process, we unequivocally arrived at the conclusion that the far-right groups tried to swing the public mood by appealing to the Russia-Ukraine war, and promoting the change of the country's foreign orientation by constantly discussing the dangers of war. Their propaganda campaign, which weakens Georgia's very statehood, is continuing to damage Georgia's international image and its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

2. ANTI-WESTERN RHETORIC OF FAR-RIGHT GROUPS AND ITS TRANSFORMATION OVER TIME

The anti-Western rhetoric of far-right groups and their leaders, saturated with disinformation and propaganda messages, is always relevant. However, it also undergoes a process of transformation depending on the political or social processes that are occupying the public's mind for a specific period.

At the beginning of the reporting period, anti-Western messages were visible amid the pandemic and local elections. Facebook pages and online media related to far-right political entities frequently coordinate propaganda information to further disintegrate and polarize Georgian society. This was done to influence voters' political views. Posts with misleading content were published to demonize Western institutions.

Between September and December 2021 simultaneous important trends emerged: far-right groups kept pushing anti-vaxxer misinformative campaigns and also kept attacking the West. In December, Public Defender of Georgia Nino Lomjaria became a victim of aggressive rhetoric. The political party - Conservative Movement - held a protest [on December 24](#) to protest PDO's work. Namely, the protest organizers were demanding the PDO to defend the interests of those who were arrested in the aftermath of the 2021, 5 July events for attacking journalists. They tasked her to demand that these perpetrators be freed. On the days before the protest, a December 21 post on Alt-Info's affiliated Facebook page Traditionalist Platform published a series of [videos](#) titled "Liberalism is dead." In the video, Conservative Movement calls on their supporters to show up for the protest on 24 December and burn the EU's and USA's flags. The video went viral on Facebook pages: [Georgian conservatives](#) and [LevanVasadze's Supporters](#). The leaders of the Conservative Movement were blaming United States and the European Union embassies for the July 5 events, while accusing the PDO for having double standards and bias against their associates.

In October, parallel to the elections, to discredit the collective West, the hosts of [Alt-Info](#) TV show announced that the reentry of the former president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili into Georgia was only made possible with the assistance of the West, and with a NATO military ship from Turkey. As the anti-vaxxer campaign intensified, a new message emerged in the anti-Western rhetoric: the pandemic was orchestrated by the globalist Western powers and aimed at establishing a [Covid dictatorship](#) around the world.

In the period from February to August 2022, the Russia-Ukraine war became the most pressing among all other issues. Totally new narratives emerged in the far-right's anti-Western rhetoric. Since February 24,

against the background of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the opening of the second front of the war in Georgia. Attempts to incite irrational fears in the society by constantly emphasizing the dangers of the imminent war have been pushed the most. This became an important disinformation trend for the Georgian far-right.

The representatives of far-right groups kept spreading false information and attempted to interlink the issues of giving Georgia the status of a candidate country for EU membership and opening the second war front at the demand of the West. The anti-Western disinformation media campaign continued and transformed even after the final decision of the European Council, according to which Ukraine and Moldova were indeed granted the status of candidate countries for membership, while Georgia's status was postponed until the end of 2022, subject to implementing the recommendations set by the European Commission. The decision of the European Commission regarding the status of a candidate country for EU membership was met with identical anti-Western rhetoric by the prominent "former" members of Georgian Dream and the leaders of far-right groups who claimed to be interested in better informing the public about this development.

The information campaign the government and far-right groups launched simultaneously was noted by its effort to discredit the West, demonize opposition, and incite nihilism regarding the Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia. Georgian Dream founder Ivanishvili's Supportive messages could be heard from time to time. Like the representatives of the "Georgian Dream", the leaders of the far-right groups discredited the protests "Toward Europe " with identical messages. They accused the opposition parties, saying they were the main culprits for trying to destabilize Georgia.

One of the main messages of the ongoing anti-Western rhetoric in the war's background was to portray the Western strategic partners as hostile to Georgia. Their accusatory speech said that the West would rudely and illegitimately interfere in the internal affairs of the sovereign country. From this point of view, during the reporting period, the main targets of the aggressive rhetoric of the far-right groups in Georgia were the ambassadors of the United States of America and the European Union. Far-right groups attempted to present the relationship between Georgia and its Western partners in a negative light and to push a lie that the United States of America does not consider Georgia as an equal, but as a subordinate that it uses further its own agenda.

The line of demoralization of Euro-Atlantic institutions appears constantly in the informational propaganda war launched by the far-right. However, this campaign has doubled against the background of the Russia-Ukraine war; Narratives have also been transformed. The Alt-Info team actively tried to portray the Ukrainian government as the West's "puppet" regime, incited by NATO to fight Russia. Alt-Info used the Ukrainian crisis to inflame anti-NATO skepticism and illustrate the need for complete distancing from the West. This "logic" of the start of the ongoing war in Ukraine is in full agreement with the messages of the pro-Russian media. These media aim to revive the popular fears about the loss of the occupied territories and to present the idea of the desire to join NATO as incompatible with Georgia's national interests.

Against the backdrop of anti-Western rhetoric and demonization of Euro-Atlantic institutions, far-right leaders kept lobbying for an alternative, pro-Russian foreign policy orientation, calling on the Georgian authorities to enter the dialogue with the Kremlin. Their propaganda campaign wanted to change Georgia's foreign policy and replace pro-Western views among the population with pro-Russian ones. These groups

also sow nihilism regarding the European Union, claiming that Georgia has no real prospect of joining the European Union.

Far-right groups in Georgia most often use social media to push propaganda and disinformation narratives. Their activity on Telegram channels and on a Russian-language platform vkontakte.ru was especially well noticed. This trend was caused by Facebook's mass deletion of pages and groups openly associated with far-right groups since 2020, because of their "coordinated, inauthentic behavior." During the reporting period, another apparent trend was the attempt to discredit the values and virtues of the European Union, which injected irrational fears in the society about the loss of national identity.

During the reporting period, anti-Western rhetoric was mostly pushed through these Far-right Facebook pages: [Azimuth](#), [Sarcastic](#), [Anti-liberal coalition](#), and [Traditionalist Platform](#). On the one hand, the discrediting of the opposition and promoting Levan Vasadze's political movement ERI and Alt-Info was actively occurring on these pages.

2.1. GEORGIAN DREAM AND FAR-RIGHT GROUPS WITH IDENTICAL ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES

As we mentioned above, the central place in the anti-Western campaign of far-right groups during the reporting period was a deliberate attempt to incite fear regarding Georgia's involvement in the war. In this discourse, the "West" was presented as a party that kept forcing the Georgian government to open a second war front in the country. The main target of the disinformation campaign was Kelly Degnan, the ambassador of the United States of America to Georgia. The tendency of far-right groups to portray the West in a negative light has been significantly strengthened by the rhetoric of government representatives and those openly associated with them.

Observation shows that the anti-Western rhetoric of far-right groups and Georgian Dream is active whenever the West criticizes Bidzina Ivanishvili. At the initial stage, a key event was the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on June 9, 2022 "On the violation of media freedom and safety of journalists in Georgia." In it, the European Parliament criticized Bidzina Ivanishvili for his role in the deterioration of democratic processes in Georgia. The Parliament recommended imposing sanctions on him. In the wake of the publication of the resolution, far-right groups and Georgian Dream became agitated in unison, spreading identical anti-Western messages and statements supporting Bidzina Ivanishvili. Both groups and their representatives tried to portray the West in a negative context and accused the Euro-Atlantic institutions of wanting to provoke a war in Georgia. From the side of the government, the leaders of Georgian Dream who were distinguished by their anti-Western rhetoric: Mamuka Mdinardze, Irakli Kobakhidze and Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili. They, like the leaders of the Conservative Movement party, condemned the resolution of the European Parliament and accused the MEPs of provoking war and other actions directed against Georgia's national interests.

On June 10, **the General Secretary of Conservative Movement /Alt-Info, Giorgi Kardava** took part in the TV show [Alternative Vision](#), where he criticized the resolution of the European Parliament and stated that *"the West needs Georgia as a center of tension, a military springboard. Bidzina Ivanishvili cannot fulfill this function even if he was to organize LGBT pride in Georgia."* **Mamuka Mdinardze, the leader of Georgian Dream**, [responded to](#) the debate held in the European Parliament on June 8 and openly accused the West of inciting the second front of the war in Georgia.

General Secretary of Conservative Movement Giorgi Kardava and chairperson of Georgian Dream Irakli Kobakhidze accused MEPs of pursuing the interests of the National Movement. In particular, at the extraordinary [briefing](#) held on June 9, the leader of the ruling party stated that the European Parliament's resolution is a "paradoxical" and condemned the request of the European parliamentarians to "free" Mikheil Saakashvili and to impose sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili. He also pushed the narrative about the attempt to involve Georgia in the war and said: "Maybe the "well-wishers" don't like that Georgia has completely distanced itself from the fatal and doomed war and did not allow anyone to destroy the country." In the Alt-Info TV show Alternative Vision, Conservative Movement party's secretary general, Giorgi Kardava said that the European Parliament's critical resolution on Georgian Dream is directly linked to the efforts of the National Movement and aims to strain political relations with Russia.

While assessing the resolution, the main disinformation narrative, pushed by the leader of the Conservative Movement Konstantine Morgoshia was to say that the West is trying to involve Georgia in the war. And at the same time, Bidzina Ivanishvili received his support. On June 11, Morgoshia speech in the Alt-Info's TV show [Comment of the Day](#) noted: "The part of the resolution that was announced is entirely unfair, both from the point of view of the media, and regarding Bidzina Ivanishvili, who is being sanctioned because he does not want to go against the wished of the Georgian people and open a second war front in Georgia."

The Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili also [assessed](#) the resolution and called it "shameful." "I object to the shameful resolution, missing the face of Megi Kardava, the main executioner, the face of Saakashvili, whose brigades of killers tortured and raped our citizens."

The orchestrated attack of the far-right leaders and government representatives on the country's western partners especially intensified after the [open letter](#) was published by Bidzina Ivanishvili on July 27. The former Prime Minister of Georgia positively assessed the political activities of "Georgian Dream," repeated the anti-Western narrative of involvement in the war and connects the personal financial dispute in the Swiss bank with the ongoing political processes in Georgia. In the letter, Ivanishvili also note that after the start of the war in Ukraine, he met the US ambassador Kelly Degan, adding that this happened at the request of the diplomat herself. With this statement, he somehow continued the anti-Western rhetoric that Mikheil Kavelashvili, an MP who formally left the Georgian Dream stated. He accused Kelly Degan that after the start of the war in Ukraine, she was trying to involve Georgia in the war and cited the meeting with the ambassador Bidzina Ivanishvili as a proof. Kavelashvili called on Bidzina Ivanishvili to inform the public about the details of the meeting with the ambassador and to answer the rhetorical question whether he was being blackmailed in connection with the opening of the second war front in Georgia.

Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze directly linked Bidzina Ivanishvili's letter to the attempt to involve Georgia in the war and [stated](#) that "non-governmental organizations, certain political parties and "the head of the Security Council of a friendly country to ours" were especially active in this direction.

The leaders of the right-wing groups repeated the messages of these MPs and the mayor of Tbilisi, although these MPs had formally left "Georgian Dream":

- Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, chairperson of the far-right party Georgian Alliance of the Patriots responded to Ivanishvili's letter on the TV channel [Obieqtivi](#). He noted that "from this letter it became clear that there were attempts to involve Georgia in the war. Actually, there is a lot of financial pressure on Bidzina Ivanishvili, and in my opinion, the solution is for him to return to politics."

- The leader of the far-right organization Society for the Protection of Children's Rights, **Aleksandre Phalavandishvili**, broadcast the letter of the former prime minister to Alt-Info TV show [Comment of the Day audience](#). He said: *"Ivanishvili sent a message that Georgian Dream has strained relations with the West after they refused to join the war."* In the same program, he considered the ex-PM's letter as an attempt by the West, with the assistance of its own diplomatic corps, to involve Georgia in a war against Russia.
- **Levan Chachua**, the leader of the far-right political party **Georgian Idea** also responded to Bidzina Ivanishvili's letter. He regurgitated the narrative about Georgia's involvement in the war under the pressure of the West and saw the role of the ex-PM as correct and pragmatic: *"The government took a pragmatic position when it resisted the pressure of Europe and America and did not involve the country in a war with Russia. It is a correct calculation, with this they will keep the government and get rid of the corrupt, outdated parties,"* said the leader of Georgian Idea.



Sozar Subari and Dimitri Khundadze, two MPs who formally left the Georgian Dream, also accused the US ambassador to Georgia of inciting war rhetoric. Their letter published on July 25 states: *"Not only do you not dissociate yourself from the rhetoric of war, but you support and incite it yourself; You sympathize with Bakuriani's revolutionary assembly and share the demand for the resignation of the government and the formation of a technical government.* The former members of Georgian Dream accused Kelly Degan of gross interference in affairs of the judiciary branch and cited the [statement](#) , of Lasha Chkhikvadze ,the judge of the case of Nika Gvaramia, general director of "Mtavari Arkhi" as proof of this. In it, judge Chkhikvadze accuses the embassy of putting pressure on him. The ambassador [denied](#) the accusation.

After the ambassador's answer, government representatives and leaders of far-right groups kept pushing the campaign to discredit the US ambassador. The chairperson of Georgian Dream did not find Kelly Degan's explanation clear enough and [stated](#) that "he did not hear the statement from the ambassador of the United States that the embassy "would not stoop to such a low level" as to pressure a judge." On the pro-government Facebook page [Fifth Column](#) a satirical card with the image of Kelly Degan and the inscription "Justice itself" was published. An identical card was posted on [Sarcastic People](#), a page linked to the far-right media platform Alt-Info. The disinformation narrative on the involvement of Georgia in the war

by the United States was actively pushed on the pages related to the government as well: [geopress](#) and [news blog](#).



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**მიხეილ ყაველაშვილის დია
ნარილი კელი დეგნანს**

**ქალბატონო ელჩო!
რამდენიმე დღის წინ თქვენ
დღის წინ თქვენ ბრძანეთ, ვი...**

GeoPress

The leader of the Conservative Movement [Zura Makharadze](#) also joined the anti-Western rhetoric directed against Kelly Degnan. He responded to the public letter of the formally former GD MPs and noted that Ambassador Kelly Degnan directly follows the directives of the United States government and supports those who want war, because the US expects Georgia to open a second front against Russia.

The anti-Western rhetoric turned vivid after the decision of the European Council granted Moldova and Ukraine the status of candidate countries for EU membership on June 24, while the decision on Georgia's bid was postponed until implementing the recommendations. These recommendations are imposed to strengthen democratic institutions. The government and far-right leaders explained failing to be awarded the candidate status by not getting involved in the war and attacked the Western partners.

Prime Minister Gharibashvili, during his presentations of the government program implementation report to the parliament, [stated](#) that the status was granted to Ukraine only because it is involved in the war and added that *"Should Georgia be punished because there is no war in Georgia today?!"* How should we understand this?!"

- The chairperson of Georgian Dream **Irakli Kobakhidze** [said](#): *"If we get involved in a military conflict, in this case we have a guaranteed candidate status in December."* He also noted that Ukraine received the status of a candidate country for EU membership because of the war.
- **Bondo Mdzinarashvili**, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Public Broadcaster, [repeated](#) the message of the government representatives on the far-right media platform Alt-Info: *"They refused to grant us the status of a candidate for EU membership, and this is only because we did not open a second front against Russia."*
- **The member of the Political Council of the Conservative Movement Irakli Martynenko** [repeated](#) the government message box. According to which Ukraine received the candidate status only because of the state of war and Georgia didn't for the same reason: *"How much cynicism is there when the granting of candidate status is linked to the war situation in Ukraine. If we were at war, we would have received this status. Georgian Dream did everything they were asked to do, except that it did not get involved in the war."*
- The leader of **Conservative Movement Zura Makharadze** argued about the decision of the European Council that its goal was to strengthen opposition parties and [said](#) on the air of Alt-Info that *the protests "Toward Europe" are like the Maidan protests in Ukraine, because of which Ukraine lost its territories and entered a war with Russia. A similar plan is in motion here. To what extent this will be implemented is another matter. The logic is as follows - this wave should rise - "they are taking away our Europeaness". Before the decision was announced, we said that they would not give us the status of a candidate to strengthen and create a strong impetus for these forces. The opposition has already lost momentum on all other protest topics."*



კობახიძე
 „...იგიღოთ არ მოგვცემდნენ კანდიდატის სტატუსს, რომ
 გაქმდებოდნენ ამბოხი მუხტი. ოკოზიცემ სპორტდსთ
 ყველა თემა უკვე დაკარგა...“-გურა მხსრბძე



კობახიძე
 „რამხელა ცინიზმი, როდესაც კანდიდატის სტატუსის
 მინიჭებას უკრაინის სომარ მდომარეობას უკავშირებენ.
 ანუ. ჩვენ რომ ომში ვყოფილიყავით...“-ირაკლი მარტინენკო

3. CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

Joining the North Atlantic Alliance is the declared goal of Georgia's foreign policy. It is supported by most of the population. Discrediting NATO occupies an important place in the disinformation campaign for the far-right. The disinformation campaign against NATO has been incessantly going on for several years now. Their propaganda messages are being frequently adjusted to fit a political and social processes flavor of the day.

At the beginning of the reporting period, against the backdrop of self-government elections of 2021, military neutrality was actively discussed in the far-right circles; However, against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war, their online narrative turned to NATO: that integration is disastrous for Georgia, etc. The far-right agitated the argument that close communication with Russia was needed.

[Georgian Alliance of the Patriots](#) actively discrediting the idea of joining NATO. They did this by appealing to military neutrality. The leaders of the party, Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi and Irma Inashvili, offered the voters the idea of military neutrality as an option that would solve Georgia's territorial integrity issues. A few days before Russia's military intervention in Ukraine, on February 21, 50 the far-right groups and organizations linked to the parties Alliance of Georgian Patriots, and Georgian March about 50 related organizations addressed Vladimir Putin with an [open letter](#). According to the letter, these groups support Georgia's military neutrality and thawing Georgia's frozen relations with Russia.

Against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war and media attacks against the US ambassador to Georgia, far-right groups pushed aggressive messages to the government and society that Georgia should quit its declared goal to integrate into NATO and prioritize following a pro-Russian foreign policy. Alt-Info tried to depict Ukraine as a party fooled by NATO and then abandoned in their war with Russia. They called on the authorities to change the Western orientation and to declare military neutrality. Against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war, [Kardhu](#), a Facebook page, characterized by its far-right rhetoric, actively tried to discredit NATO. On its platform, photo and video materials were often published, in which Russia's military advantages were shown, and against this background, Georgia's attempt to join NATO was argued to be a significant threat.

The leaders of far-right groups worked non-stop to promote neutrality along with discrediting NATO. In many cases, neutrality was presented as the only guarantee to Georgia's stability and lasting peace.

Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, the leader of the Georgian Alliance of the Patriots political party, [told](#) TV Obieqtivi, that the *"Goal of achieving peace can only be done through neutrality in the post-war period. This is the only way for small countries like Georgia."*

Irma Inashvili, another leader of the Georgian Alliance of the Patriots, fully blamed NATO for the ongoing war in Ukraine. She referred to NATO as an instigator of the war, and Ukraine as a victim of her own Western aspirations. Inashvili said: *"No NATO could and did help Ukraine!" They were neither admitted nor became a member of anything. Instead, they instigated and kept instigating them!* These statements are aimed at intimidating the public and fostering Euroscepticism in Georgia.

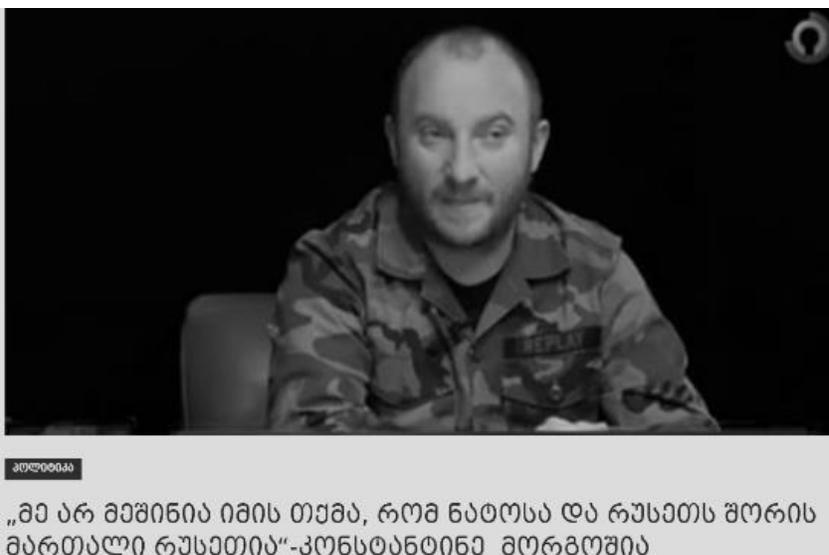
The Alt-Info team was using another important disinformation against NATO, that the military alliance was trying to prolong the war in Ukraine, serving its own interests. **According to Konstantine Morgoshia, the leader of the Conservative Movement**, *"NATO member states, based on their self-interests, are ready to*

sacrifice the last Ukrainian soldier, some of whom are Nazis, and some of whom are real Ukrainian soldiers who defend their homeland." In this way, the far-right is trying to foster a public sentiment that NATO cannot and will not be a security guarantor for Georgia. Obviously, the demand for neutrality is a thinly veiled pro-Kremlin message and wants to lobby for a pro-Russian foreign orientation in Georgia.

Konstantine Morgoshia aimed to diminish positive public attitudes and support for NATO in another [statement](#), where he openly supported Russia in the Russia-Ukraine war and declared that the Kremlin is morally right in its opposition to NATO. He portrayed Russia as a victim, and the West as a provocateur. According to Morgoshia, "although 20% of our country is occupied by Russia, the key to restoring territorial integrity is also hidden in Moscow ."

Morgoshia [On May 6's](#) Alt-Info TV show Alternative Vision, denounced NATO for trying to open a second war front in Georgia and noted that the West would abandon Georgia in the same manner it had abandoned Ukraine in this war. "It doesn't require a lot of explanation and a lot of thinking. NATO's request is to open a second front in Georgia. They came with the same request and the same effort months ago. If Ukraine is destroyed, what of Georgia? Will they not destroy it? It is self-evident that Georgia will be sold off and given away as a bargaining chip."

Immediately after the Russia-Ukraine war began, the far-right leader of the **political entity ERI, Levan Vasadze came to the front**. Speaking from the perspective of Russia security concerns, he assessed Ukraine's attempt to join NATO and Georgia as a threat and compared it to a "minefield," where handling Russia is a balancing act: "The reality In which we found ourselves during the last 48 hours, is that Putin is indifferent to criticism. **What is the difference for Putin, he will be cursed and sanctions just for Ukraine Sanctions, or for Transcaucasia as well? Therefore, we are in an extremely sensitive moment of our history, where we are walking directly on a minefield .**" - said Levan Vasadze on February 25 in Soso Manjavidze's author's [TV show](#).



The openly pro-Kremlin online media publications [Georgia and the World](#), [Sakinform](#) and [News Front](#) had similar rhetoric. Articles were published on their platforms, where the authors would openly engage in discrediting the NATO military alliance and the USA. As for Ukraine, they constantly repeated the Kremlin

narrative that Russia is only fighting to protect its own security. Against the background of the discrediting of NATO, these media platforms, in contrast to the Alliance of Patriots, did not focus on neutrality, but directly on the need for the alliance with Russia. For example, on February 27, 2022, [the editor-in-chief of Sakinform, Arno Khidirbegishvili](#), published an article titled "Georgia-Russia: union or neutrality?". In the article, he stressed that Georgia's only salvation lies not in neutrality, but in an alliance with Russia. "If Georgia wants to remove its internal borders, which Azerbaijan has now achieved, then it should ally with Russia, especially since Georgia's neighbors are not only friendly Armenia and Azerbaijan but also aggressive Turkey, with its strong army and declared territorial claims." On July 19, another publication [Georgia and the World](#) published an article in which the author argues Georgia should refuse the goal of joining NATO, citing the August 2008 war as the reason for it. The article notes that NATO and the European Union are allegedly hindering the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity and economic development, and that the 2008 war in Georgia was provoked by NATO itself.

4. THE PRO-RUSSIAN DISCOURSE OF THE FAR-RIGHT AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war, the far-right groups in Georgia tried to portray the Ukrainian government as a "puppet regime," the West as a party instigating the war, and Russia as an invincible state that is acting in national interests. During the monitoring period, a few key trends emerged on far-right platforms. On the one hand, calls supporting Russia and idealizing its military potential were made, and a message demonizing Ukraine was amplified in tandem with calls for joining the political-military platforms organized by Russia. Against the background of Russia's military intervention in Ukraine, the aggressive emergence of openly pro-Russian political powers and their push towards "deepening" cooperation with Russia was easily noticeable. The propaganda rhetoric of the Kremlin powers in Georgia was obviously aimed at changing Georgia's Western foreign policy orientation and at fostering pro-Russian sentiments in the society.

Far-right groups in Georgia pushed disinformation narratives regarding the ongoing war in Ukraine with the application of media and social networks we know are openly affiliated with Kremlin politics. Their unlimited access to a wide audience created a favorable environment for pro-Russians to take hold on public opinion. During the reporting period, a media campaign discrediting Ukraine was launched on the far-right Facebook page [Kardhu](#), where pictures and videos about the bombing and airstrikes of Ukrainian cities by Russia was incessantly published. Authors on online medias [Sakinform](#) and [News Front](#) also distinguished themselves with their pro-Russian rhetoric. Articles published on these platforms attacked the West and repeated the Kremlin narrative regarding Ukraine: that Russia is trying to ensure its own security. During the reporting period, the leaders of far-right groups also tried to convince the public of the ineffectiveness of the Western sanctions on Russia. This propaganda came from the idea that sanctions would have a devastating effect on the Western economies, not on RF. Against the background of these falsehoods, the far-right called on the Georgian government to stop helping Ukrainians, who, according to their evaluation, were in a privileged position compared to local Georgians.

During the reporting period, the Conservative Movement dedicated itself to the condemnation of NATO and the restoration of close ties with Russia. Making these their key political messages, and appealing to the new geopolitical agenda, the leader of **Alt-Info and Conservative Movement Zura Makharadze** [openly called on](#) Georgia to abandon its western foreign policy orientation: *"If 30 years ago we calculated to move towards only one geopolitical direction, now is the time when we are called to engage in a much more rational analysis. In case of Russia's victory in this war, Georgia a priori will have a dialogue with it, and we deem it necessary that there is a force in the country who can conduct a normal conversation with the Russians."* In his speech, Makharadze promised his party's supporters that the Conservative Movement will play a strategic role in restoring relations with Russia.

Message N1 - Sanctions against RF do not work. They will devastate the West instead.

In the wake of Russian propaganda, a disinformation narrative was actively pushed on the far-right platforms in Georgia. According to these narratives, the economic sanctions cannot harm Russia, but the West itself. The purpose of this message box was to portray Russia as a self-sufficient country and to emphasize the inappropriateness of joining the sanctions against Russia.

Zura Makharadze, the leader of the Conservative Movement, noted in the Alt-Info [program](#) Alternative Vision that Europe cannot survive the cold winter without Russian natural gas and will find itself in a total economic collapse. In the [Alt-AnalyticsTV show](#), he said that the Russian Empire, extremely insulted by the collapse of the Soviet Union, will not be intimidated by sanctions and is in the fight to win.

In an Alt-Info TV show [Comment of the Day](#) **Shota Martynenko** repeated the Kremlinist message of the far-right groups that defeating RF in the war would be impossible for Western sanctions, and the Ukrainian "proxy" regime will definitely lose this war on a grand scale.

Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, chairperson of the far-right party Georgian Alliance of the Patriots, emphasized the power of the Russian economy. On August 1, 2022, on the air of [Obieqtivi](#) he said: *"The economy of modern Russia has moved from the 36th place to the 6th place after the collapse of the Soviet Union. To hold a view that dismantling such a powerful economy with sanctions is irrational."*

Media outlets [Georgia and the World](#) and [News Front](#) also focused on the ineffectiveness of sanctions for Russia. Their argument was based on the statement of Russian President Vladimir Putin, where he assessed the sanctions against Russia to economic suicide committed by Europe. On February 28, [News Front](#) published a statement by Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, according to which the Russian President is indifferent to the sanctions imposed against him, and that Russia has the potential to compensate for the losses caused by the sanctions. This trend explains an undisguised involvement of openly pro-Russian media platforms in Georgia and the Georgian far-right in the information and propaganda war waged by the Kremlin.

*Message N2 - Russia's military superiority is obvious
and Ukraine will be defeated in this war*

The idealization of Russia's military potential is a characteristic element of the Kremlin's information campaign. It is successfully used by openly pro-Russian far-right groups in Georgia. During the reporting period, on the one hand, they justified Russia's aggression towards Ukraine, and they assured their audience of the inevitability of RF's victory.

The leader of the far-right party **Georgian Alliance of the Patriots, David Tarkhan-Mouravi** predicted the end of Ukraine's statehood on the airwaves¹ of [Obieqtivi](#). According to his statement, Ukraine is losing one territory after another, and these are coming under the Kremlin's control.

Alt-Info's TV show [Comment of the day](#)² hosted **Conservative Movement leader Shota Martynenko** who said that Russia will soon end the war in Ukraine and that the country is doomed. On June 16, in the [Alternative Vision TV show](#), while reviewing the Russia-Ukraine war, he added the West had already lost the war with Russia. Ukraine cannot regain the lost territories, he added: *"Everyone understands Ukraine cannot regain its lost territories. They cannot defeat Russia in battle. Hence, these territories should be given up to Russia."* He declared Russia the unconditional winner, which could conquer more territories, thanks to her powerful armies.

Another leader of the Conservative Movement Konstantine Morgoshia also assessed the territorial losses of Ukraine and noted in a Facebook post published on April 11 that *"there may be different scenarios, but 100% the complete occupation of the territories of the DNR LNR will take place, including Mariupol. Kharkiv will also probably be taken over by the Russians. Also, they will never leave Melitopol and Kherson. This means that Ukraine will lose 100% of the largest industrial zones and the Sea of Azov."* The same opinion was expressed by Konstantin Morgoshia in the Commentary of the Day on May 29. He noted that Russia's advance and victory in the war is inevitable, and that Ukraine has already lost its all-important territories, and that its future perspective depends only on Russia's good will: *"Ukraine was rich in grain, and now those territories are lost. They don't have a sea anymore. They have been left with a port where they have no means of maneuvering, and their future depends on Russia's good will, whether they will leave Nikolaev and Odesa ports under Ukraine's control, or not. I am sure that when the Donbass operation is resolved and the Ukrainian authorities admit Russia is slowly advancing, they will not even leave the port of Odesa under Ukrainian control."*

At the beginning of the war, the hosts of Alt-Info claimed that Russia would end its military intervention in a few days. However, their rhetoric changed. In July-August, they shifted their main emphasis to Russia's only partial use of its military potential. The leader of the Conservative Movement Zura Makharadze stated in the July 20 show [Alternative View](#), that the Kremlin, at that stage, was only using contractors to fight and that its elite units were not yet involved in military operation.

¹ August 1, 2022.

² July 25, 2022.



ალტერნატიული ხიდა (20.07.22)

კოკა მორგოშია
11 April at 00:19

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

პირველი ისაა, რომ საწყის ეტაპზე ოროვე მხარე შეცდა ... ანუ უკრაინას არ ეგონა, 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 აშშ მიიღებდა ... ანუ ყველაზე დიდი და ტრაგიკული შეცდომა უკრაინელების ის არის, რომ ზელინსკის და ბაიდენის ... ბინძურ თამაშებს ვერ აღუდგნენ წინ. !

Message N3 - Ukrainian refugees threaten Georgia, not incoming Russian citizens

Along with constantly emphasizing the danger of war that could erupt in Georgia, the ultra-right purposefully spread the falsehood that Ukrainian refugees present a significant challenge for the country's security. This message became especially vocal after the decree of the Tbilisi City Hall was published in July, according to which the government would cease funding for the program that provided subsidies for the accommodation of [Ukrainian refugees](#) in hotels from the beginning of August.

[Tatia Gabrichidze](#), a TV host at Alt-Info said that the challenge for Georgia is not Russian tourists, but Ukrainian refugees who have settled in Georgia. Instead of protecting their country, she continued, they are keeping themselves busy with entertainment and leisure activities in Georgia. Along with discrediting Ukrainians, she defended the Russian citizens who entered Georgia in large numbers and noted that they are guests and hostility towards them amounts to Russophobia.

Zura Makharadze, the leader of the Conservative Movement also joined the campaign to discredit Ukrainians and shared his conspiracy theory on the air of [Alt-Info](#). According to him, Ukrainians are saboteurs and their mission is to create disturbances in Georgia and organize several LGBT prides.

Amidst the campaign to discredit Ukrainian refugees, the far-right regurgitated all the key passages of the leaders of the Georgian Dream about "Russophobia" after the public protested a large influx of Russian citizens into Georgia. Georgian Dream and the ultra-right saw popular protest as "Russophobia" and linked it to the plan to open a second war front in Georgia, obviously provoked by the West.

- Prime Minister [Irakli Gharibashvili](#) said the public protest was a "harmful action" of the opposition and noted that "since they did not achieve their goal and could not bring the second [war] front to Georgia, they want to somehow harm our citizens and hinder the flow of tourists."

- Chairperson of Georgian Dream [Irakli Kobakhidze](#) He assessed the negative attitudes and fears of the society about the uncontrolled influx of Russian citizens as "xenophobia" and "chauvinism".
- According to the leaders of the Conservative Movement [Irakli Martynenko](#) and [Giorgi Kardava](#), liberal powers in Georgia are trying to conduct a mass-scale, aggressive campaign against Russian citizens, as a backup plan for their failed attempt to open a second front here.
- George Lomia from the Georgian Alliance of the Patriots on the airwaves of their own³ far-right TV company [Obieqtivi](#), argued that the West is whispering in Georgia's ear to treat Russian citizens poorly.

5. OFFICIAL VISITS OF FAR-RIGHT POLITICAL ENTITIES TO RUSSIA

Against the background of the Russia-Ukraine war, the main goal of the propaganda and disinformation media campaigns of far-right groups and their leaders was to lobby Russia. Hence, they supported the policy of rapprochement with the Kremlin. And to strengthen partnership relations with Russia, on a background of the war, far-right political actors departed for Moscow with official visits during early 2022.

A month and a half after the start of the war, on April 4, the leaders of the Georgian Alliance of the Patriots Irma Inashvili and Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi held an official meeting with the representatives of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly in Russia. Together with them, [Agassi Arabiani](#), the president of the "Russian Javakheti Diaspora" organization, accompanied their Russian tour. The meeting was attended by the Deputy chairperson of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Federation Council, Vladimir Jabarov, and the representative of the same committee, Mikhail Sinitsyn, [from the Russian side](#). The goal of the meeting was to maintain and improve bilateral cooperation with Russia.

With the war raging on, the head of the openly pro-Russian Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center Dimitri Lortkipanidze held official meetings in Moscow as well. On March 24, he led the meeting organized by the Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Support Foundation and the related "Primakov Center " established by the Russian government [in Moscow](#). The [official reason](#) for the meeting was stated as if to improve Russia-Georgia relations and to discuss regional security.

Shota Martynenko, the general secretary of another far-right party [Conservative Movement](#) and the chairperson of the party, Giorgi Kardava, were also holding meetings in Moscow. According to Konstantine Morgoshia, the founder of the party, his fellow party members met with politicians in Moscow to negotiate restoration of the visa-free regime and direct flights between Russia and Georgia. Martynenko noted that the current government of Georgia enjoyed more sympathy in Moscow than its predecessor, not least because it did not join the sanctions against Russia and tried to *"not get caught up in the senseless rhetoric imposed by the Europeans"*. [Shota Martynenko](#) had nothing but positive words about the results of the visit and noted that *"in Russia, the desire and opportunity for dialogue is noticeable at every step."* He opined that the issues of Georgian identity and Orthodoxy were an important guarantee of effective communication between two sides.

³ August 4, 2022

MAIN FINDINGS

- In the reporting period, the process of transformation of far-right groups into political actors became an important trend. Their visibility and legitimacy have increased.
- There are networked connections between various far-right groups operating in Georgia; These groups cooperate closely to form their strategies and action plans.
- Far-right groups actively use social networks to mobilize supporters and organize protests. At this stage, online platforms are their main area of activity in Georgia.
- On online media, far-right groups frequently push disinformation and create fake media content based on pro-Kremlin methods with the goal to influence public opinion.
- The current far-right discourse in social and online media is characterized by ethno-nationalist sentiments and strong pro-Russian message box.
- In the propaganda campaign of the leaders of far-right groups, discrediting NATO and the negative change of public opinion towards it occupies an important place.
- Far-right rhetoric is characterized by transformation over time, and follows the trajectory of the main political or social events occurring in the country. Its strongly anti-Western character remains constant.
- Against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war, anti-Western rhetoric has taken on new life and has emerged as a campaign to discredit the collective West. This is primarily done by appealing to the dangers of war: the danger of opening a second war front in the country and in this way, inciting irrational fears in the society.
- Using the background of the war, the presentation of the collective West in a negative light by the far-right groups and its association with the dangers of the war, was pushed in parallel with the anti-Western rhetoric of the government of Georgia.
- Leaders of far-right groups spread propaganda messages about Russia's military invincibility and Ukraine's imminent defeat. Another important narrative they pushed to the Georgian society concerned economic sanctions. Far-right claimed these economic sanctions caused backlash for the West.