

DEMOCRACY  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE  
(DRI)



**ANTI-GENDER  
RHETORIC AND  
DISINFORMATION  
CAMPAIGN  
RELATED TO  
GENDER ISSUES  
IN GEORGIA**

**2023**





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The positions and views expressed in the publication are those of the project team and should not be taken as the official opinion of the donor.

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## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:<sup>1</sup>

**FAR-RIGHT IDEOLOGY** - an umbrella term for a set of ideologies that use racism, xenophobia, misogyny, anti-Semitism and homophobia as operational tools.

**FAR-RIGHT ACTORS** - groups that stir up anti-liberal, anti-gender, strongly homophobic, xenophobic and nationalist sentiments in society. In addition, many times they are distinguished by the circulation of hate speech and violent practices.

**ANTI-GENDER MOVEMENT IN GEORGIA** - a movement that is simultaneously characterized by anti-feminist, homophobic and transphobic content; Opposes reproductive freedom and censors gender education programs. It aims to roll back major legal and legislative achievements related to sexual freedom and gender equality and laws against gender discrimination or sexual violence. The main actors of the anti-gender movement in Georgia are the far-right violent groups: "Georgian Mission", "Georgian Idea", "Children's Rights Protection Society", "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info", "Eri, Raoba, Imedi". These actors are characterized by pro-Russian sentiments and their rhetoric is, in fact, an echo of the current anti-gender state policy in Russia.

**ANTI-FEMINIST ATTITUDES** - a set of activities and attitudes that deliberately discredit women's movements and are directed against feminist views and values.

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<sup>1</sup> These definitions of terms are not universal in nature and have been developed specifically for the purposes of this monitoring.



## INTRODUCTION

The Democracy Research Institute dissociates itself from the sexist and homophobic statements cited in the document. However, given the research objectives, we convey them unchanged.

The strengthening of the anti-gender movement in Georgia, the main actors of which are the far-right, violent groups, is a glaring trend. These groups actively use social networks and online platforms to spread misogynistic, sexist, anti-feminist, and homophobic messages. Since 2019, the Democracy Research Institute has been monitoring the agenda and rhetoric of these groups and their leaders on social media, online media, and other news platforms.

The observation reveals that along with the activation of far-right groups, attempts to manipulate public opinion based on gender and LGBTQ + identity issues are increasing. Homophobic and transphobic<sup>2</sup> speech is clearly visible in public discussions, which became an important (geo) political challenge for the country. Disinformation media campaigns, often focusing on sensitive issues such as gender identity and sexual orientation contribute to the polarization of society and represent an obstacle to the country's western integration.

Far-right groups seek to mobilize supporters around identity, sexual and reproductive education, religious sentiments, and the institution of the family. And their aggressive policies against women represent a kind of an ideological matrix that restricts women's right to abortion, renews the practices of women's oppression, and supports the masculine hierarchy in family and public life. In addition, far-right groups portray feminists as the main actors responsible for women's problems. Consequently, discrediting feminism has become a kind of dominant political narrative for these groups.

Anti-gender rhetoric of far-right groups, which is significantly based on homophobic sentiments, was given a certain visibility and legitimacy by the policy pursued by the governing "Georgian Dream" party. During the reporting period, identical homophobic messages of the government and the far-right forces and mutual understanding-based, loyal policies were revealed. It is significant that the far-right groups are in full unison with the "Georgian Dream" and they both engage in the political instrumentalization of homophobia, in combination with anti-Western attitudes and false nationalist-religious sentiments.

This report sums up the results of the monitoring conducted by the Democracy Research Institute between April–August 2023; it identifies and analyzes the homophobic, misogynistic, and hateful messages of far-right groups. In the accounting period, 210 cases of anti-gender / anti-feminist online media and social media content was analyzed by the Democracy Research Institute.

As a result of the monitoring of social networks and online media, homophobic rhetoric was identified as the main direction in the anti-gender discourse of far-right groups and their leaders. In particular, the following 3 key concentration areas stood out:

- 1. Homophobic Rhetoric Around Tbilisi Pride Week** - Far-right groups' homophobic narratives intensified as May 17 approached, and culminated on July 8 with the disruption of the Tbilisi Pride-sanctioned festival. Appealing to the sentiments of supporters of pseudo-national organizations and instrumentalization homophobia in a political context became apparent.
- 2. Homophobic rhetoric of the prime minister on the conservative political action platform - the speech of the Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) on May 4, 2023**, which was saturated with homophobic messages, proved to be resonant in the far-right discourse. The openly pro-Russian far-right groups operating in Georgia responded positively to the Prime Minister's speech. In parallel with the Prime Minister's visit to Hungary, the far-right group "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" submitted a package of draft laws to the Parliament of Georgia aimed at restricting the freedom of assembly and expression for LGBTQ+ persons.

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<sup>2</sup> Transphobia - psychological and social superstition and discrimination against trans people.



**3. of civil activist Lazare Grigoriadis directed against discrediting campaign** - During the reporting period, far-right Kremlin groups, along with anonymous government reports, tried in full unison to discredit activist Lazare Grigoriadis and his supporters, who were arrested for assaulting a police officer and destroying property during protests against the “Foreign Influence Agents” bill. The campaign had a strongly sexist and homophobic nature.

Guram and Aleksandre Palavandishvili, the leaders of the organization “Society for the Protection of Children's Rights”, Levan Vasadze, the founder of the public movement “Eri, Raoba, Imedi” and Ramaz Gagnidze, the leader of the “Georgian Mission”, were particularly distinguished by their anti-gender/anti-feminist rhetoric during the reporting period. The media platform “Alt-Info” team was active with an anti-gender editorial policy. Beka Vardosanidze, a well-known far-right blogger, stood out with strongly anti-gender messages.

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the study is to analyze the main trends of anti-gender/anti-feminist discourse in Georgia, as well as to highlight the main far-right actors who present gender and LGBTQ+ issues in a manipulative and disinformation context. The report is based on the method of content analysis, and accordingly, it reflects the quantitative and monthly characteristics of media monitoring data. Facebook's analytics tool Crowdtangle is used for social media monitoring. Besides social media monitoring, we also used the main findings of online media monitoring in this report.

Within the framework of monitoring, we identified as research objects far-right groups and organizations, whose agendas feature anti-gender/anti-feminist rhetoric most clearly. As a rule, these groups are the main actors of the anti-gender movement in Georgia. Their behavior in social and online media has been monitored by the Democracy Research Institute for multiple years now. In particular, the report describes the activities of far-right groups (“Society for the Protection of Children's Rights”, “Georgian Mission”, “Eri, Raoba, Imedi”), far-right political groups (“Georgian Idea,” “Conservative Movement/Alt-Info”) and their leaders' official and supporters' pages, which have actively pushed disinformation and gender-based hate speech propaganda campaign.

Chapter one is dedicated to the identical, politicized homophobic rhetoric of far-right groups and the government of Georgia. The second chapter reviews the main features of the anti-gender rhetoric of far-right groups, while the third chapter describes the rallies held by far-right groups from a gender perspective. The final part of the report presents the main findings and relevant recommendations identified during the reporting period. At the end of the report, the outstanding key findings and individual developments of the reporting period are described.

The report collects and describes a wide range of anti-gender and anti-feminist rhetoric from far-right groups and covers topics of education, identity, legislation, and values. Qualitative data is a combination of a typology of anti-gender/anti-feminist messages, examples of misogyny, and visual (video and photo) material of manipulative content. Also, the report analyzes the main findings of the two periods of the reporting period according to the far-right group in terms of gender.

The anti-gender /anti-feminist editorial policy of the far-right media platform Alt-Info was also analyzed, which, due to its access to a wide audience and activity on the far-right wing, was under our special observation. In addition, within the framework of monitoring, we studied the materials of the openly pro-Kremlin online publications Georgia and the World and Saqinformi; Also, we analyzed those online space and media content, where the formation and dissemination of the action agenda and postulates of the far-right forces is most concentrated.

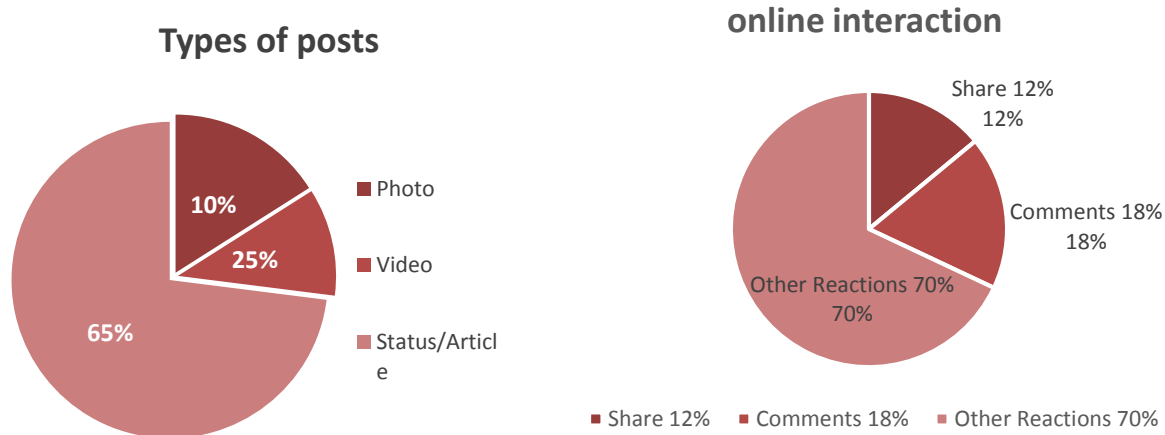
Also, as subjects of monitoring in social networks, we selected Facebook and Telegram accounts that are directly connected to certain far-right groups and are important tools for mobilizing support from their leaders:

1. The World Family Congress, which is associated with Levan Vasadze, the leader of the organization “Eri, Raoba, Imedi”;



2. [“Conservative movement /Alt-Info”](#) related pages;
3. Groups related to the far-right party [„Georgian Idea”](#);
4. Accounts related to the Primakov Georgian-Russian Community Center.

As a result of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the information material within the monitoring, it was revealed that 65% of the posts were published as textual material (status); video content (including live broadcasts) represented 25 % of the data, and photo material - 10%. The total interaction of the studied posts revealed that the highest intensity of the messages was motivated by homophobic attitudes. During the reporting period, it was also revealed that sexist language and homophobic messages were used both around issues of identity, and in the context of political opposition and to discredit those involved in civil activism.



During the reporting period, we also observed two rallies of far-right groups. Considering the goals and objectives of the project, within the framework of the monitoring of gatherings and manifestations, we focused on:

- Did the leaders of far-right groups or the participants of the gathering use hate speech?
- Was there a place for violent calls addressed to specific individuals or groups?

At the initial stage of the project, Based on the manual of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), we developed a special form of monitoring of gatherings and demonstrations, which gave us the opportunity to systematize important facts during the actions/contractions for the purpose of gender analysis.

## 1. POLITICAL INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF HOMOPHOBIA

In Georgia, the signs of instrumentalization of homophobia by the ruling political force became clear recently, which is a complex and dangerous phenomenon and has a (geo)political component. The government's manipulation of issues of sexual orientation and gender identity is often orchestrated together with far-right groups. Discrediting opponents with homophobic motives is also a noticeable practice in the anti-gender discourse.

The contours of the political instrumentalization of homophobia can also be seen in the agenda of the far-right violent group “Conservative Movement/Alt-Info”. In particular, against the backdrop of Kremlin sentiments, representatives of the mentioned group are trying to demonize the West and increase Russia's influence in Georgia. Political homophobia, which is characterized by geopolitical and social determinants, on the one hand, contributes to inciting irrational fears in society, and on the other hand, represents a kind of catalyst in terms of polarization.

In Georgia, we can consider as a political determinant of instrumentalized homophobia, on the one hand, the government's desire to mobilize supporters with conservative attitudes, and on the other hand, the attempt to divert public attention from important socio-economic challenges to LGBTQ+ community issues by



appealing to national-religious sentiments. By instrumentalization of political homophobia, the government and far-right groups try to strengthen their power and by introducing oppressive practices of LGBTQ+ individuals, establish an agenda that will strengthen their privileged positions by promoting an illusory reality.

The geopolitical determinant of political homophobia is manifested by appealing to traditional and religious sentiments, in an attempt to discredit the collective West, against the background of inciting pro-Russian sentiments. In particular, the far-right groups, in harmony with the government, are trying to advance the issues of rapprochement with Russia, presenting the West as incompatible with Georgian traditions, which promotes "LGBTQ propaganda" in Georgia. In addition, political homophobia significantly limits the space for LGBTQ+ people, in terms of cooperation with the state or law-enforcement bodies, in the process of fighting for their rights.

Homophobia which has legal, cultural, and religious aspects in Georgia, merges with anti-Western organizations in the political agenda and creates a fertile ground for the mobilization of supporters for the far-right, pro-Russian forces. Unlike the collective West, representatives of the LGBTQ+ community in Russia are persecuted; "LGBT propaganda" is prohibited by law. The Russian influence is clearly noticeable in the rhetoric of the Georgian far-right groups. During the reporting period, the political group "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" submitted a legislative amendment package: draft laws to the Parliament of Georgia, demanding to limit the manifestations of LGBTQ+ people. The authors of the draft law are the far-right leaders - Giorgi Kardava, Zurab Makhvaradze, Irakli Morgoshia, Shota Martinenko and Konstantine Morgoshia. They addressed the Parliament in November 2022 on behalf of "25,000 voters". The legislative initiative envisages changes in three legislative acts. Based on the initiative, the leaders of the violent group demanded a ban on "propaganda of sexual orientation" with the planned amendment to the "Assemblies and Manifestations" law. In particular, the draft law states:

1. *"It is forbidden to hold gatherings and demonstrations if it is aimed at, or during which, there may be a demonstration, promotion and/or propaganda of sexual orientation."*
2. *It is prohibited to hold an assembly or demonstration if it is aimed at or during which there may be any statements and calls that are against any religious movement, defamatory and/or contrary to the beliefs of people of any religious sect, and/or during which there may be any propagation of war and violence, incitement of national, regional, religious or social strife."*

Mamuka Mdinaradze, the chairperson of the parliamentary faction "Georgian Dream" responded to the draft law and noted that "the government does not plan to adopt such a draft law, which will affect the prohibition of "LGBT propaganda" and will pose a threat to protecting the rights of any group." Contrary to this, On May 2, 2023, Konstantine Morgoshia, the leader of the violent group "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info", published a status on his Facebook page, where he informed the public about the government's support for the said bill. According to his Facebook post, the government will support the bills proposed by them: ***"I have unshakeable information that Georgian Dream, through partner parties, will adopt all the laws that we have been asking and fighting for years!!! Among them, is the law against gay propaganda!!! This news makes me thrilled, better late than never!!!"***

MP Pridon Injia from the "European Socialists" also made a statement about his support for banning LGBTQ+ "propaganda" by law.

The far-right, anti-liberal wing has been demanding the restriction of the rights of women and the LGBTQ+ community at the legislative level for years. In 2014-2022, far-right groups registered legislative initiatives in the parliament, which provided for changes in the current legislation in order to limit the rights of vulnerable groups based on gender and sexual identity. Far-right actors demanded the removal of terms such as "sexual orientation" and "gender" from the anti-discrimination law.





**ANTI-GENDER LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES OF FAR-RIGHT GROUPS  
(2014-2023)**

Date	the law	Legislative change	Initiating party/organization
<b>07-11-2022</b>	Law of Georgia “On Assemblies and Manifestations”	It is prohibited to hold gatherings and demonstrations, if it is aimed at, or during which, there may be a demonstration, promotion, and/or propaganda of sexual orientation.	Conservative Movement / Alt-Info <a href="https://parliament.ge/legislation/25062">https://parliament.ge/legislation/25062</a>
<b>17-06-2019</b>	Civil Code of Georgia	“LGBTQ+ representatives” should be prohibited from holding positions in public bodies, as well as in all educational institutions.	Georgian Anti-fascist Organization <a href="https://parliament.ge/legislation/18434">https://parliament.ge/legislation/18434</a>
<b>21-04-2016</b>	Law of Georgia “On Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination”	Removing the entry on “sexual orientation, gender identity and expression” from the law.	“Demographic Development Fund” - Zviad Tomaradze <a href="https://parliament.ge/legislation/12702">https://parliament.ge/legislation/12702</a>
<b>02-12-2015</b>	Law of Georgia “On Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination”	Removing the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity”.	“Demographic Development Fund” - Zviad Tomaradze <a href="https://parliament.ge/legislation/12702">https://parliament.ge/legislation/12702</a>

On the part of far-right actors, the legislative changes registered in the parliament regarding gender and sexual identity can be divided into three main topics:

- 1) **RESTRICTION OF LABOR RIGHTS** - banning the appointment of LGBTQ+ people to leadership positions in public bodies and educational institutions;
- 2) **RESTRICTION OF THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION** - restriction of assembly and manifestation for people of LGBTQ+ identity, as well as restriction of assembly and manifestation by appealing to religious sentiments.
- 3) **ABOLITION OF THE NORM OF PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION** - limitation of the right to access legal mechanisms in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation.



## 1.1 THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOMOPHOBIC RHETORIC AT THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL ACTION CONFERENCE

During the reporting period, the homophobic rhetoric of far-right groups and the government intensified in full harmony on May 4, 2023, in parallel with the speech of the Prime Minister of Georgia at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). At the conference, Irakli Gharibashvili noted that **“concrete forces that oppose freedom and truth are trying to achieve their goals by destroying traditional, family values and turning to false freedom - for example, with LGBT propaganda, by trying to legalize gender reassignment for minor children bypassing their parents.”** Prime Minister's homophobic rhetoric, which is based on religious and national sentiments, is in full agreement with the messages of far-right groups.

The main motto of the CPAC conference is “Together we are stronger.” Speakers at the conference did not include a single incumbent political leader from an EU member or candidate country, except for Hungary's far-right Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Irakli Gharibashvili's participation in the conference was favorably responded to by the far-right conservative “Fundamental Rights Center” of Budapest with a post of April 26: *“Gender propaganda is not favorable to Georgia either, however, according to Gharibashvili, activists, and politicians must respect the will of the majority, which rejects the pressure of the LGBTQ propaganda.”*

Violent and openly pro-Russian far-right groups in Georgia responded positively to the Prime Minister's planned visit to Budapest back in April. On April 30, 2023, in the “Comment of the Day” program of Alt-Info, the chairperson of the far-right group “the Society for the Protection of Children's Rights” Guram Palavandishvili assessed the Prime Minister's visit to Hungary as an important event and noted that: *“Against the background of the world divided into pro-sodomist and anti-sodomist forces, Gharibashvili's Hungary visit is very important. I hope he will have the strength to tell the truth and condemn the anti-discrimination law.”* The Prime Minister's visit to the conservative platform was positively evaluated by the leader of “The Conservative Movement/Alt-Info”, Irakli Martynenko; however, in the April 28 Alt-Analytics program, he said that this visit will not be of much importance to the country unless the foreign [European] orientation is revised.



## 1.2 TBILISI PRIDE WEEK – THE TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIC RHETORIC OF FAR-RIGHT GROUPS

The homophobic rhetoric of far-right groups became prominent in July, parallel to the Tbilisi Pride week. The leaders of the violent group “Conservative Movement/Alt-Info” announced the cancellation of Pride Fest at the beginning of July and started organizing a large-scale rally. “Conservative Movement/Alt-Info” leader Zura Makharadze named the three main demands of the rally in the Realpolitika program on July 6:

1. Disruption of the Pride Festival;
2. Release of persons arrested in the case of July 5, 2021;
3. Adoption of the draft law against “propaganda of depravity.”



The representatives of the radical force started collecting money to mobilize supporters in the regions of Georgia, however, TBC Bank and Bank of Georgia froze their accounts. Most of the far-right leaders also issued calls containing violent language. The General Secretary of the “Conservative Movement” Giorgi Kardava in a video address referred to Pride Week as “propaganda of depravity and pathology” and called on the supporters to prevent it. According to Konstantine Morgoshia, July 8 might be an ode "Putting the last nail on the coffin erected on July 5" (Picture on the left).

The leader of the far-right violent organization “Georgia First”, Vato Shaqarashvili called on the organizers of Pride Week to cancel the event: “The Georgian people, not once and not only by word, but by action, have proven that they will not allow the so-called to hold Pride and this position will not be revised!”

Ramaz Gagnidze, the leader of the far-right organization “Georgian Mission”, called on the supporters to mobilize and disrupt the Pride festival, and noted in his Facebook post: “We are waiting for you, men and women, at 12 o'clock on the 8th at the Vazha monument to disrupt the LGBT parade on Lisi Lake!” (Picture on the right).

"8 ივლისი იქნება 5 ივლისს დადგმულ კუბოზე  
ბოლო ლუნსონის დაყვანა" - შორიშორია ისევ  
იბუქდება

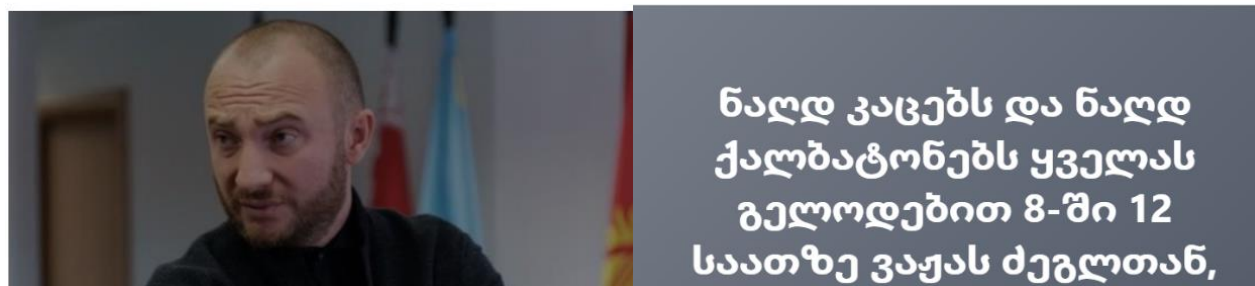
07.07.23 16:11

გამზარება



Ramaz Gagnidze

6 July · 🌐



Although long before the final event of Pride, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was informed about the violent intentions of the far-right groups, the Ministry did not provide the protections enshrined in the Constitution: freedom of assembly and expression of the LGBTQ+. On July 8 Violent groups were able to easily break through the police cordon and disrupt the Pride festival. The police representatives personally escorted Vato Shaqarashvili and “Conservative Movement/Alt-Info” leader Zura Makhvaradze into the area of the disrupted festival to convince them the festival organizers had been evacuated. There was no immediate reaction to the subsequent events when the representatives of the violent group raided the private area of the festival and started looting. The events that unfolded on July 8 are a logical continuation of the government’s loyal policy towards violent groups and are directly related to the impunity of the organizers of the violent crackdown on July 5, 2021, who mobilized and managed violent groups without hindrance.



### 1.3 SEXIST AND HOMOPHOBIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST LAZARE GRIGORIADIS

During the reporting period, activist [Lazare Grigoriadis](#), who was actively involved in protests against the bill on “Foreign Influence Agents” and was arrested on charges of assaulting a police officer and destroying other people's property, became the target of an aggressive rhetoric of far-right groups in March. On March 31, 2023, the Tbilisi City Court placed him in a pre-trial detention facility [as a preventive measure](#). In parallel with his trial, a discrediting, sexist, and homophobic campaign was launched against Lazare Grigoriadis and his supporters on the social network. It should be noted that together with openly pro-Kremlin forces, the government’s anonymous groups also tried to spread homophobic narratives about the activist and discredit him based on his appearance.

The far-right platforms, together with the anonymous, government-controlled pages (“[From Georgia](#)”; [Won't Let You Stir Up Things](#)“) spread written (posts, articles) and photos with manipulative content, according to which the supporters of Lazare Grigoriadis were connected with the United National Movement and were propagandists of “LGBT perverts.” The mentioned pages are distinguished by the distribution of material discrediting the opposition and supporting the government, which many times repeats the “Georgian Dream” message box in unison.

A Facebook page linked to the violent political group “Conservative Movement/Alt-info”, “[Shiin Evropiske](#)”<sup>3</sup> published photoshopped, fake photos to marginalize the activist. [One](#)<sup>4</sup> of them features a photo of Grigoriadis against a background of posters of drag queens and the caption #freedomforLazare, with the caption: “America's reality show transgender army stands in solidarity with Lazare”. In [another](#)<sup>5</sup> post, there is a photo of the Belgian Pride representative with an identical caption.



Anonymous pro-government page “[From Georgia](#)” distributed a disinformation narrative, according to which the rally to support Lazare Grigoriadis was organized by “people of unknown sexual orientation”. Also, the pro-government page [Won't Let You Stir Up Things](#) and the Facebook account of [Dato Abulashvili](#), associated with the violent group “Alt-info/conservative movement”, tried to discredit Lazare Grigoriadis with external features as well. Photo material with the title: “Supporting this “hero” is an insult to the nation!” was published on the mentioned pages. In the photo, King Erekle<sup>6</sup> II and Lazare Grigoriadis are compared to each other. The mentioned post was a clear demonstration of the fact that the far-right groups are deliberately trying to misinterpret the concept of “hero”.

It should be noted that the posts criticizing Lazare Grigoriadis and his supporters on the anonymous pages of the government are mostly sponsored, which raises the suspicion that the mentioned campaign against the activist is not a fragmented, but a part of a premeditated political agenda.

<sup>3</sup> The name is a pejorative play of words, that mimics the Shin Evropisken (Back to Europe) campaign slogan adopted by the Georgian civil society organizations. Shiin Evropisken has similar sounds as a sexualized insult in Georgian and is immediately recognizable as a pejorative word play.

<sup>4</sup> Fact-checker flagged the photo as software manipulated that may mislead the audience. Therefore, access to it is limited.

<sup>5</sup> Fact-checker flagged the photo as software manipulated that may mislead the audience. Therefore, access to it is limited.

<sup>6</sup> Frequently criticised by some for signing the defence treaty with Russian Empire that eventually led to the annexation of Georgia.





<p><b>"გმირი"</b></p>  <p><b>20 წლისამ დაჯოთა მამა</b></p> <p><b>21 წლისა შორიდან ისროდა ბენზინიან ბოთლებს</b></p>	<p><b>"მოლაღატე"</b></p>  <p><b>15 წლისამ აჩეხა ლეკების მეთაური</b></p> <p><b>76 წლისამ დალაშქრა განჯის სახანო და გაანთავისუფლა ქართველი ტყვეები</b></p>	<p><b>"გმირი"</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>20 წლისამ</b> ტრაქში დაჭრა საქართველოში მამა</li> <li>● <b>21 წლის</b> შორიდან ისროდა ბენზინიან ბოთლებს</li> </ul>	<p><b>"მოლაღატე"</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>16 წლისამ</b> აჩეხა ლეკების მეთაური</li> <li>● <b>76 წლისამ</b> დალაშქრა განჯის სახანო და გაანთავისუფლა ქართველი ტყვეები</li> </ul>
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Figure 1 left: "hero. 21 y/o. was throwing Molotovs;" Right: "Traitor": at 15 killed Lezghin Chieftain. at 76 attacked Ganja Khan & freed Georgians"

Figure 2 Left: hero. At 20, wounded his father in the arse. At 21 threw Molotovs. Right: Traitor: At 16 killed Lezghin Chieftain. at 76 attacked Ganja Khan & freed Georgians"

## 2. FAR-RIGHT GROUPS' ANTI-GENDER MESSAGES

During the reporting period, in the anti-gender/anti-feminist rhetoric of far-right groups, attempts to create an image of the depraved West by focusing on "sanctity of the family" and "LGBT propaganda" did not lose their relevance. The mentioned rhetoric became especially noticeable with the approach of May 17, which at the initiative of the Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia since 2014, the "day of sanctity of the family and respect for parents" has been celebrated.

One week before May 17, on May 11, 2023, the pro-Kremlin media platform "Saqinform" published [an article](#) "Adam and Eve were created by God, not Putin", where the editor of "Saqinform", known for his far-right organizations, Arno Khidirbegishvili, accused the West of violating Georgian traditions and the authority of the Orthodox Church. Also, he tried to demonize feminism and considered women's rights defenders among the "agents of the West", calling them "betrayers of the motherland" and collaborators.

*"I wonder why Georgian homosexuals and feminists are ashamed of their non-traditional sexual orientation?" Because all Georgian woke activists only pretend that they are fighting against "sexism", but in reality they are provincials and collaborationists suffering from complexes. None of them have their personal lives in order, they do not have a family, they are surrounded by the scorn of society and they feel excluded from society."* - mentioned in the article.

Another openly Kremlinist media platform "Georgia and the World" contains homophobic and hateful language in the [article](#) "Georgia needs a strong protector, i.e. Russia, not a pederastic „ally" USA" published on August 21, 2023. In the mentioned article, the West is demoralized and presented as the legalizer of "LGBT perverts", which fights against religious and national ideas in Georgia. In contrast to this, the author of the article presents Russia as a single-minded savior and main partner. *„LGBTs on a global scale, waving rainbow flags and defending pseudo-democratic values (i.e. ungodliness-Satanism) govern 51 countries. Under the auspices of the so-called collective West, and Russia, with whom with share common faith, is alone fighting them"* - the article mentions.





Alexander Palavandishvili, [leader of the Far-right Organization](#) Children's Rights Protection Organization, accuses the West of the LGBT agenda and states in his August 16, 2023 post on the FB page: *“Girlfriend-boyfriend practice prepared the ground for the LGBT agenda in the West. Therefore, we must be irreconcilable to any form of the sin of adultery (which leads to eternal death) if we do not want our children and grandchildren to drown in the pit of this sin - in the filth of Sodom! God bless us”.*

The leader of the far-right wing, Aleksandre Falavandishvili, actively used sexist language during the observation against women's rights defender Baia Patariaia and European parliamentarian Viola von Cramon. After the post supporting Tbilisi Pride, he referred to the MEP with the derogatory term “Cocktail Kramon”. For Aleksandre Falavandishvili, Baia Pataria's [statement](#) was the subject of a tirade, with which she criticized the activities of “Alt-Info.” He even noted that feminists do not object to issues of pedophilia in Georgia.



The caption to the left: Baia Patariaia has successfully done: if you mention this name and surname in succession, it becomes a pejorative term in the Georgian language.

Levan Vasadze, the leader of the far-right organization “Eri, Raoba, Imedi” also accuses the collective West of violating Georgian traditions and the family institution. He made a trial broadcast on “Eri Media” on July 9, 2023, appealing to national-religious sentiments, after the failed Tbilisi Pride on July 8, he [called](#) on the West to “respect Georgian traditions”. And demanded authorities interrogate all those ambassadors who were "provocateurs" and "fighting against the will of the Georgian nation" because they supported the Tbilisi Pride festival.

### 3. ANNOTATION OF FAR-RIGHT RALLIES

During the reporting period, the DRI observers monitored two gatherings organized by far-right groups throughout Tbilisi. The information about the actions/contractions became known through the social network, which is the most used platform for disseminating information and mobilizing supporters for far-right groups and their leaders.

At the far-right rallies, there was a lack of women among the organizers. Most demonstrators at these rallies were middle-aged men.

The first rally on July 1, 2023, was organized by the neo-fascist group “National Unity of Georgia.” The rally's



slogan was: “Protect your motherland! Protect your nation! Your own future”. The participants of the rally were protesting the simplification of the procedure for granting Georgian citizenship. At the small rally, which was attended by about 40 demonstrators, both neo-fascist and homophobic posters and various symbols were visible. Giorgi Chelidze was the organizer of the rally. There was a noticeable lack of women among participants. Female activists did not speak at the rally.

The second protest demonstration, which took on a large-scale violent character, was markedly homophobic. The meeting was organized by the “Conservative movement/Alt-info”. The strike was planned to disrupt the festival announced by Tbilisi Pride on July 8. Observers of the Democracy Research Institute monitored the July 8 rally throughout the day. On July 7, the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued [a statement](#), which stated that the closed event of Tbilisi Pride would be held in a peaceful environment and law enforcement officers would ensure security and law and order at all locations.

Despite the aforementioned guarantees, the demonstrators of the violent action easily [broke through](#) the police cordon near Lisi Lake and entered the festival territory. Instead of an effective, preventive, and immediate response to violations, the police removed the Festival participants [from the area](#). Although the organizers of the rally at the starting location of the gathering at the Vajra-Pshavela monument openly declared that they would do anything to disrupt the Pride Festival, the police did not offer any resistance to the demonstrators marching towards Lake Lisi. Several hundred law enforcement officers led the procession with a car escort. The police force itself [led](#) the leader of "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" Zura Makharadze and the founder of the violent organization "Georgia First" Vato Shakarashvili to the territory of the disrupted festival to convince them the festival organizers had been removed. The subsequent events, when the representatives of the violent group started [raiding](#) and looting the private territory of the festival, did not lead to a prompt reaction of the law enforcement officers.

As a rule, in the anti-gender/anti-feminist discourse of far-right groups, there are strong attempts to stir up homophobic sentiments in society by appealing to religious-nationalist sentiments. It is significant that on July 8, in the protest rally organized by the far-right groups, the clergy also took part. Even though they joined as ordinary demonstrators, several priests addressed the participants of the rally.



## MAIN FINDINGS

- In the anti-gender rhetoric of far-right groups in Georgia, there are strong homophobic sentiments, which are directly related to appeals to religious-national sentiments.
- An alarming trend is the coincidence of the official positions of the far-right groups and the Georgian government regarding the instrumentalization of homophobia. This trend renews violent practices against vulnerable groups and polarizes society.
- In Georgia, the anti-gender/anti-feminist rhetoric of far-right groups is occurring against the background of stirring up anti-Western and pro-Russian sentiments. Here, the West is presented as a "propagandist of depravity", and as a counterweight, "United Russia" is equated with protecting Georgian values.
- Women's rights activists, feminists, civil rights activists, and Western institutions are mainly targeted by the aggressive rhetoric of far-right leaders.
- There is a lack of women among the organizers of far-right protest actions. Most of the demonstrators of these actions are middle-aged men.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is important for the government to stop the political instrumentalization of homophobia and the indirect or direct support of violent groups.
- It is important for the authorities to ensure the protection of the rights and safety of vulnerable groups of LGBTQ+ people and women, including the freedom of assembly and expression guaranteed by the constitution.
- Given the government's passivity, the civil sector should actively provide information to the public about the future threats from the anti-gender/anti-feminist agenda of far-right groups.
- Research organizations should study the root causes that fuel extremist groups.
- Organizations focused on women's rights should prioritize the violent practices of the far-right groups in their strategic agenda, as far-right groups are trying to normalize these practices in Georgia.

