

ONLINE DISCOURSE AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF FAR-RIGHT GROUPS IN GEORGIA





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INTRODUCTION

Far-right groups in Georgia are increasingly gaining the potential to shape the political agenda. They employ a dual strategy by disseminating disinformation and discrediting narratives through mainstream media outlets, as well as actively positioning themselves on social networks and online media platforms. These groups aim to cultivate a hostile information environment, strategically navigating the polarized political landscape to reshape public discourse in the lead-up to the upcoming 2024 parliamentary elections. Given their explicit declaration of ambition to seize power, it becomes crucial to analyze their action agenda, rhetoric, and main narratives in preparation for the impending electoral period.

Since 2019, the Democracy Research Institute has been monitoring the activity of these groups and their leaders on social networks, online media, and other information platforms in order to study trends in the formation and development of far-right narratives. DRI also observes the protest rallies organized by them and studies the main sources of their financing.

Based on an analysis of 1,468 instances of propaganda content disseminated on social networks and online media, this report provides a summary of the activities of far-right groups over an eight-month observation period from May to December 2023. This report also delves into the political groups most active within the far-right wing, particularly those harboring ambitions to participate in political life. Additionally, the document outlines trends and key findings observed during the monitoring of gatherings and manifestations organized by far-right groups. The report also investigates the source of funding and dynamics of financial income for the far-right "conservative movement/alt-info," adding an additional layer of insight to our analysis.

Throughout the reporting period showed that the discourse from leaders of the "Georgian Dream" and the overtly pro-Russian far-right political faction "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" displayed similarities on the issues of Euroscepticism and homophobia - representatives of both political forces tried to stir up Euroscepticism and political instrumentalization of homophobia against the background of pro-Russian sentiments. The orchestrated rhetoric of the government and far-right groups became particularly noticeable after the US State Department imposed sanctions on the former Prosecutor General of Georgia, Otar Partskhaladze, for his role in the activities beneficial to Russia. The anti-Western rhetoric of violent groups and the government was virtually identical in October, amid a State Security Service [announcement](#) that at an USAID supported event, preparations for the "process of violently overthrowing the government" were underway.

The reporting period was distinguished by the special activity of political groups with far-right ideology in the political field:

- In 2023, neo-fascist Giorgi Chelidze founded the [group](#) "National Unity of Georgia" and [announced](#) he's running in the 2024 elections.
- The violent political group "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" has significantly expanded its operational area and started pre-election meetings in the regions of Georgia for supporter mobilization. In September, "Alt-Info" founded the violent movement "Anti-Maidan" by appealing to the need to mobilize "like-minded forces" against the coup attempt in Georgia. Nevertheless, the group's publicly declared financial resources have been drastically reduced.

Throughout the reporting period, our monitoring efforts identified three primary thematic directions that exhibited the highest levels of interaction within the discourse of far-right groups:

1. Homophobic rhetoric: gained prominence, particularly intensifying in proximity to May 17 and culminating on July 8, 2023, coinciding with the disruption of the festival announced by "Tbilisi Pride." Our observation discerned a government stance characterized by loyalty to far-right violent groups, a trend consistent with previous years. The homophobic rhetoric employed by these far-right groups was notably intertwined with anti-Western discourse and infused with national and religious sentiments.

2. Pro-Kremlin rhetoric: the second thematic direction observed during the reporting period was pro-Kremlin rhetoric, which underwent a transformation in response to political and social events in the country. Initially, far-right groups focused their pro-Russian rhetoric on issues such as the cancellation of the visa regime imposed by the Russian Federation on Georgian citizens and the resumption of direct air traffic. These groups sought to underscore the economic benefits of fostering close ties with Russia. However, starting in September, a notable shift occurred as the defense of Otar Partskhaladze, the former Prosecutor General of Georgia, became a resonant issue. Partskhaladze had been exposed by the U.S. State Department for his activities in favor of Russia.

3. Anti-Western and anti-American rhetoric: the third observed thematic direction was the surge in anti-Western and anti-American rhetoric, particularly heightened following the State Security Service's announcement implicating USAID in potential destabilization and civil unrest planning. The escalation of anti-American sentiment gained momentum after the renewed military conflict sparked by the Hamas attack on Israel in October. This development provided fresh impetus to the anti-American rhetoric espoused by openly pro-Russian far-right groups.

The far-right groups continued their aggressive anti-Western campaign, particularly in response to Georgia being granted candidate status for EU membership. In the initial stages, members of these violent groups attempted to instill Euroscepticism in society, persistently asserting that the European Union would not grant candidate status to Georgia. However, following the European Council's decision in December to grant Georgia the candidate country status, far-right groups initiated an intensified anti-Western campaign, prominently marked by the widespread destruction of EU flags. The arrest of "Alt-Info" activist Lasha Sharukhia, who burned the EU flag displayed on the Mtskheta Municipality's administration building, was followed by the launch of the "Burn the EU flag" campaign by violent groups. Leaders and members of the "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" engaged in a demonstrative acts of burning EU flags, recording videos, and disseminating them on social networks. [The court session](#) for Lasha Sharukhia is scheduled for February 5, 2024.

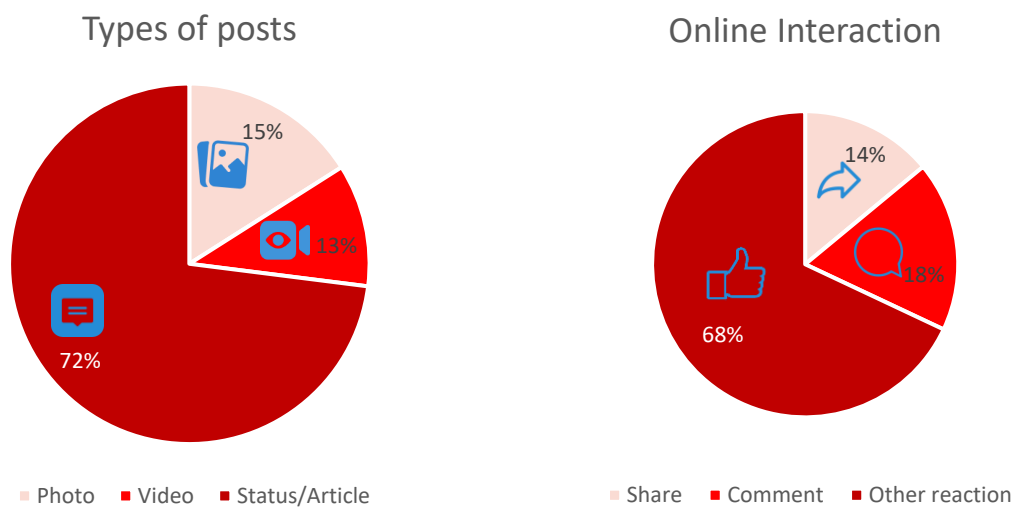
METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The media monitoring section of the report employs content analysis to depict the activities, manipulative context, trends, and discourse of far-right political entities, groups, and media platforms on social networks and online media from May to December 2023. The first chapter focuses on the pro-Kremlinist rhetoric of far-right groups, examining discourse related to political homophobia coordinated with the authorities. The second chapter delves into the anti-Western campaigns of violent groups, detailing key narratives and their evolution over time.

In conducting media monitoring, the Democracy Research Institute conducted an analysis of the primary political narratives propagated by far-right political groups and their leaders. The report provides insights into the official pages and supporters of "Georgian Idea" and "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info," as well as the neo-fascist organization "Georgian National Unity" and openly far-right groups such as "Children's

Rights Protection Organization," "Georgia First," and "Georgian Mission." Their disinformation, discrediting, and hate speech messages are thoroughly documented. Media platforms with overtly pro-Kremlin and anti-Western sentiments, namely "Alt-Info" and "Sezoni TV," are included in the Democracy Research Institute's research objects. Furthermore, the report analyzes online spaces and media content where the formation and dissemination of the action agenda and postulates of ultra-right forces were most active. The study qualitatively examines the frequency and scope of distribution of manipulative and populist narratives, utilizing Facebook's analytical tool, CrowdTangle.

Through quantitative and content analysis of the information material within the monitoring, it was revealed that 72% of the posts consisted of textual material (statuses, articles), 15% comprised video content (including live broadcasts), and 15% consisted of photo material.



In the third part of the report, which describes the main findings and trends of protests/ demonstrations by far-right groups, observer reports based on the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly are used for data analysis. During the reporting period, the Democracy Research Institute observed two rallies organized by far-right groups. Taking into account the goals and objectives of the project, within the framework of the monitoring of gatherings and manifestations, we focused on two main directions:

- Did the leaders of far-right groups or the participants of the gathering use hate speech?
- Were there any violent calls directed at specific individuals or groups?

The fourth section of the report outlines the results of financial monitoring and key trends related to "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info." It provides insights into the dynamics of their funding sources and quantities, listing the primary donors during the reporting period. Additionally, the report delves into the financial monitoring of the far-right media platform "Alt-Info," analyzing its main sources of funding and the financial resources of its owners. The concluding section summarizes the primary findings and offers relevant recommendations identified throughout the reporting period.

1. THE ORCHESTRATED DISCOURSE OF ULTRA-RIGHT GROUPS AND "GEORGIAN DREAM"

In the reporting period, the orchestrated campaign of the far-right groups and "Georgian Dream" focused on the following issues: 1) resumption of direct flights with Russia ; 2) hostility towards minorities and homophobia as a political tool to reveal the "deficiencies" of the collective West; 3) Protection of the former Prosecutor General of Georgia Otar Partskhaladze, who was exposed by the US State Department for his activities in favor of Russia, and therefore, covering the traces of the Russian spies in Georgian politics.

1.1. DIRECT FLIGHT WITH RUSSIA - IN THE PRO-KREMLIN FOCUS

The decree of May 10, 2023 signed by V. Putin, the visa regime for Georgian citizens was canceled and the restriction on direct flights between Georgia and Russia was removed. The decision was met with admiration by the openly pro-Russian far-right groups operating in Georgia. Emphasizing the importance of close communication with Russia is an important tool of political speculation of the pro-Russian violent "conservative movement/alt-info". The leaders of "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" considered the decision of the Russian President as a personal political merit and achievement.

"Conservative Movement/Alt Info" leader Konstantine Morgoshia noted in a Facebook post published on May 10: **"This is a victory achieved by our work and unity!"** According to him, the "Conservative Movement" fulfilled its political promise: it helped cancel the visa-free regime with Russia, restore direct flights and trade relations.

Giorgi Kardava, the chairperson of "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info", also assessed Putin's decision as an achievement of conservative forces. In the "Alt-Info" program "Alt-Analytics" Kardava said on May 10: **"It is thanks to [us] that Russia saw that all is not lost in relation to Georgia, and here is the force that will bring the country out of the crisis caused by liberalization."**

In parallel with the restored direct flights with Russia, ultra-right pro-Russian groups tried to create an illusory hope of the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity in the case of direct dialogue with Russia. On May 19, Irakli Martynenko said in the "Alternative Vision" program: **"If Georgia starts a good relationship with Russia, it will resolve its territorial integrity and we will have no more problems with Russia."**

Government representatives responded positively to the decree of the President of Russia regarding the introduction of a visa-free regime with Georgia. Foreign Minister Iliia Darchiashvili noted: **"From a humanitarian perspective, Moscow's decision is welcome development for any responsible government out there."**

Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of the "Georgian Dream" party tried to present the decision of the Russian government as good for Georgia by appealing to the economic benefit: **"What we saw today is the lifting of the sanction, that is, a certain punishment was imposed on the citizens of Georgia, up to a million people who are potential beneficiaries from this issue and ultimately, this sanction was lifted today."**

In parallel with the resumption of direct flights to Russia, the opposition forces and civil activists were opposed to the wedding of a relative of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Kvareli, where among the guests were those sanctioned by the USA, Canada, Ukraine, Great Britain, Japan and Australia - Lavrov's daughter. After creating discomfort for the guests of the wedding, the campaign to discredit the activists was carried out in unison by the far-right forces and the chairman of "Georgian Dream."

Leaders of "conservative movement/alt-info" called the protests "xenophobia" and "anti-Russian hysteria of radical, liberal forces". The leader of the "Conservative Movement" Irakli Morgoshia said: "The mission of externally funded forces is to create unrest in Georgia and use all kinds of leverage to create destruction." Vano Bibileishvili, a member of the "Conservative Movement," noted that the ongoing protests in Kvareli were puppeteered **by "ultra-liberal, radical forces" whose interest is "a violent change of government."** He drew a parallel with "Gavrilov's night" and added that the opposition forces were informed in advance about the wedding of Lavrov's relative.

Like far-right groups, the disruption of the wedding of a relative of the Russian Foreign Minister was assessed as a manifestation of xenophobia and an event incompatible with Georgian culture by the chairman of "Georgian Dream", who called the civil protest **a "liberal-fascist campaign."**

1.2. POLITICIZED HOMOPHOBIA

During the reporting period, the rhetoric of the government clearly showed signs of political homophobia, the main goal of which could be to mobilize conservative voters around the governing political force. The government, in unison with the far-right forces, tried to discredit the collective West by appealing to traditional and religious sentiments, where the LGBTQ movement can claim human rights and equality.

The clear contours of the political instrumentalization of homophobia were even apparent in the "conservative movement/alt-info" action agenda. During the reporting period, "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" submitted a package of draft laws to the Parliament of Georgia and demanded restrictions on the right to manifestations of LGBTQ people. This initiative is dictated by Russian influence - as in Russian legislation "LGBT propaganda" is prohibited.

Throughout the reporting period, the homophobic messages delivered by the Prime Minister of Georgia at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Budapest on May 4, 2023, were in complete alignment with the rhetoric of far-right groups. At the conference, the Prime Minister noted that **"concrete forces that oppose freedom, truth, are trying to achieve their goals by destroying traditional family values and embracing false freedom - for example, with LGBT propaganda, by trying to legalize sex change for minor children bypassing their parents."**

The Prime Minister's homophobic rhetoric, based on religious and national sentiments, exactly echoes the agenda of far-right groups. Guram Palavandishvili, chairman of the far-right group "Society for the Protection of Children's Rights" in "Alt-Info" program on April 30, assessed the Prime Minister's visit to Hungary as an important event: "against the background of the world being divided into pro-sodomist and anti-sodomist forces, Gharibashvili's visit to Hungary is very important." I hope that he will have the strength to tell the truth and condemn the Anti-Discrimination Law. Irakli Martinenko, the leader of the "conservative movement/alt-info", also positively evaluated the Prime Minister's visit. In the "Alt-Analytics" program of April 28, Martynenko said that this visit will not have any significant value if the foreign [European] course of the country is not reversed.

The homophobic rhetoric of far-right groups became particularly active in July, parallel to the "Tbilisi Pride" week. The leaders of the Conservative Movement/Alt-Info party have openly announced their intention to attack Pride Festival. Although the Ministry of Internal Affairs was informed of the violent intentions of far-right groups long before the final Pride event, the Ministry did not ensure the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of assembly and expression of the LGBTQ community. On July 8, violent groups were able to easily break through the police cordon and disrupt the Pride festival. 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 response of the law enforcement officers.



1.3. TRACES OF RUSSIAN SPIES IN GEORGIAN POLITICS

In September, the imposition [of sanctions](#) by the US State Department on the former Prosecutor General of Georgia, Otar Partskhaladze, emerged as a significant issue for far-right groups. This decision prompted strongly negative reactions from both the government and the "Georgian Dream" satellite political union, the "People's Power" faction, alongside other far-right groups. These entities collectively orchestrated an effort to shield the former Prosecutor General of Georgia, who had been implicated in activities benefiting the Federal Security Service of Russia.

On September 18, 2023 by the [decree](#) of the National Bank on banking assets and financial transactions, Otar Partskhaladze had his access restricted. Chairman of "Georgian Dream" Irakli Kobakhidze immediately responded to the decision of the National Bank and noted that the action of the National Bank contradicted the presumption of innocence and the Constitution of Georgia. In parallel with the mentioned evaluation, Natia Turnava, Acting President of the National Bank of Georgia (SEB), made changes in the procedure for the implementation of sanctions regimes. According to the amendment, international sanctions will not apply to Georgian citizens, if there is no conviction against them in the relevant case in the Georgian court. The change gave Otar Partskhaladze the opportunity to transfer part of the property to his son's name on the same day. Natia Turnava's actions, which led to the resignation of three SEB vice-presidents, were positively evaluated by the Georgian Dream satellite political association People's Power and the openly pro-Russian Conservative Movement/Alt-Info.

The chairman of "Georgian Dream," who in March 2023 actively supported the so-called "Transparency of Foreign Influence," the Russian draft law, **said that "a person cannot be called an agent until the court's decision."** His rhetoric was also acceptable to the presenters of the far-right, openly pro-Russian media platform "Alt-Info". In the "Comment of the Day" program, Tengo Omanidze reviewed the issue of sanctioning Otar Partskhaladze against the backdrop of anti-American sentiments and [noted](#): **"The representatives of the opposition, without a court decision, have already convicted a person and declared him a Russian spy, agent, traitor."**

The National Bank's decision on "transparency of foreign influence" was responded to by the so-called Co-author of the Russian bill, leader of "People's Power" Eka Sefiashvili. In the ["Post-Analytics"](#) program, the parliamentarian positively evaluated Natia Turnava's decision: "It is very good that the National Bank issued such a resolution that is in full compliance with the Constitution and recognizes the presumption of innocence."

Aleksandre Palavandishvili, the leader of the far-right organization "Society for the Protection of Children's Rights", also approved the changes implemented by the SEB [and noted](#) in a Facebook post:

"When the National Bank, instead of America, obeyed the Constitution of Georgia, the spies started to leave SEB as a sign of protest!"



Rather than implementing fundamental reforms aimed at neutralizing the influence of a hostile state in the security sector, the Government made an attempt to obscure the traces of the Russian spies in collaboration with far-right forces. This suggests that, in certain instances, the "Georgian Dream" is utilizing far-right forces in Georgia as a political tool.

2. ANTI-WESTERN AND ANTI-AMERICAN NARRATIVES OF FAR-RIGHT GROUPS

The discourse of far-right groups regarding anti-Western messages underwent a transformation against the backdrop of current political events in the country. The issue of granting candidate status for EU membership to Georgia remained pertinent throughout the reporting period. Initially, representatives of extremist groups asserted that Georgia would not obtain candidate status, attempting to foster Euroscepticism within society. This narrative evolved in December after the European Council publicly announced Georgia's candidate country status. Subsequently, far-right groups initiated an aggressive, anti-Western campaign, marked by the widespread destruction of EU flags.

Noteworthy similarities between the anti-Western messages of the governing party and far-right groups were observed on several issues. Two resonant instances were: 1) the September visit of Josep Borrell, Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; 2) and the State Security Service of Georgia's statement implicating USAID in possible destabilization and a coup attempt in the country.

It is significant that the mentioned statement of the State Security Service became the basis for the initiation of the "Anti-Maidan" violent organizational entity. In October, it became apparent that the "conservative movement/alt-info" was trying to mobilize supporters through regional meetings, both to strengthen the "anti-Maidan" movement and to gain political dividends before the elections. Since October, the renewed military conflict after the Hamas attack on Israel has noticeably strengthened anti-American sentiments in the anti-Western rhetoric of far-right groups.

2.1. TEMPORAL TRANSFORMATION OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES, IN THE WAKE OF THE GAINING CANDIDATE COUNTRY STATUS

During the entire reporting period, the issue of granting Georgia the status of a candidate country for the European Union occupied a central place in the public and political discourse. Therefore, for the openly pro-Russian far-right groups, the issue of the status of the EU candidate country, which formally determines the foreign policy orientation of the country, was under special focus.

Before Georgia was granted candidate status, violent groups tried to stir up Eurosceptic sentiments in the society and tried to marginalize Western institutions in unison with the government groups.

The [official visit](#) of the Vice President of the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to Tbilisi on September 7, 2023 proved to be resonant in this issue. During the visit, Josep Borrell clearly confirmed his support for the European future of Georgia. However, at the same time, he [expressed dissatisfaction](#) with the restoration of direct flights between Georgia and Russia and spoke about the progress of the implementation of 12 recommendations developed by the European Commission for Georgia. According to Borrell, Georgia fulfilled three recommendations, but additional efforts from the government were deemed necessary for the remaining recommendations. This assessment was met with a negative response from the government, the satellite political union of "Georgian Dream" known as "People's Power," and the far-right groups.

"Georgian Dream's" Reaction

Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili responded to the statements of the EU High Representative and [noted](#) that "not a single sanctioned airline and not a single sanctioned plane flies in Georgia." According to Irakli Gharibashvili, the decision of the European Union to grant candidacy to Moldova and Ukraine was [unfair](#), as they received the candidate status as an advance. Mamuka Mdinardze also assessed the decision of the European Union in 2022 [as unfair](#).

"People's Power"

Davit Kartvelishvili, a [member](#) of the government's satellite "People's Power" movement, used Borrell's assessments to demonize the European Union and incite anti-Western sentiments. According to him Borrell's assessments were false and hypocritical. Kartvelishvili revived the disinformation narrative of the "opening of the second front" and noted that if Georgia is dragged into the war against Russia, then the country will no longer have a problem with receiving candidate status.

"Conservative Movement/Alt-Info"

Borrell's visit to Georgia was actively discussed on the air of "Alt-Info". On September 7, in the "[Comment of the Day](#)" program, Zurab Zukakishvili, a member of "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info", criticized the culture of democracy in the European Union and accused it for its colonialist past. According to him, "the European Union created its "garden" through the genocide and looting of other countries, not through the implementation of correct policies and democracy." Another pro-Russian propagandist and "conservative movement/alt-info" member, Ilia Megrelishvili claimed in the "Comment of the Day" program that the European Union's high-level visit was aimed at launching attacks on conservative patriots.

Borrell's visit in the far-right online media

On September 12, the openly pro-Kremlinist website "Georgia and the World" published an article titled: "Europe knows that confrontation with Russia can cost Georgia dearly, but they still tell us to do as they dictate it," which evaluates Josep Borrell's visit to Georgia and notes that the real interest of the West it represents a change in Georgia through a government revolution. The article emphasizes that it is in the interest of the West for Georgia to open a second war front against Russia.

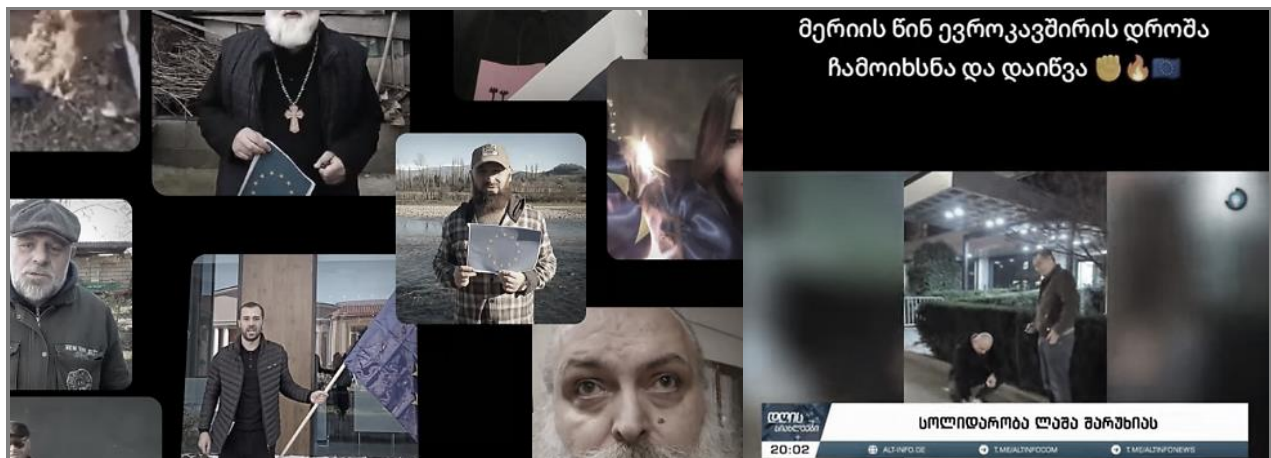
In this way, pro-Kremlin forces and far-right groups are trying to introduce nihilism about the European Union in society and to establish such a narrative that Georgia has no development perspective in the Euro-Atlantic space. Therefore, it has nothing to do with European identity. The anti-Western rhetoric of far-right groups created a basis for the government representatives to indirectly discredit Euro-Atlantic institutions. Unlike violent groups, "Georgian Dream" tried to maintain a doubly beneficial political position in the process of acquiring the candidate status. In case of a negative decision by the European Commission, the anti-Western campaign supported by the government should have already created a skeptical mood and negative attitude towards Euro-Atlantic institutions in the society, and in case of a positive answer, "Georgian Dream" would consider the candidate's status as its own political achievement.

Simultaneously with Josep Borrell's visit, an intensified propaganda and discrediting campaign regarding the perceived "injustice" of the European Union highlighted the dual political interests of the government. This process revealed the implicit use of extreme right-wing violent groups as a political tool. This approach became even more apparent after the European Council granted Georgia the status of a candidate country in December. Authorities openly linked this decision to their own successful political activities, while far-right groups attempted to demonize the European Union and portray the futility of integrating Georgia into its space.

On December 15, the mayor of Tbilisi Kakhi Kaladze [addressed](#) the citizens gathered at the celebration event of obtaining the status of a candidate of the European Union and expressed his special thanks to Bidzina Ivanishvili, whom he mentioned as the main creator of this historical event. Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of "Georgian Dream", [declared](#) that it was his team's political achievement that Georgia got a candidate status.

Unlike the government, the ultra-right groups transformed Eurosceptic messages into aggressive rhetoric after Georgia was granted candidate status. On December 20, 2023, the [police](#) arrested Lasha Sharukhia, a member of the "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" on the charge of burning the EU flag erected on the Mtskheta administration building. The mentioned fact was followed by the anti-Western campaign "Burn the flags of the European Union" of the extremist groups, which was joined by the supporters and leaders of the radical group. In support of Sharukhia, several priests also burned the flags of the European Union, the video material confirming which was [spread](#) on social networks. "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" leaders Irakli Martynenko and Zurab Makharadze also joined the campaign, and on December 22 they [burned](#) the European Union flag raised in front of the Tbilisi City Hall, however, unlike Lasha Sharukhia, Makharadze and Martinenko were soon [released](#) by the law enforcement officers. At this stage, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Irakli Martinenko has been fined under the first part of Article 174¹⁸ of the Code of Administrative Offenses, while administrative proceedings have been initiated against Zura Makharadze in accordance with the second part of Article 174¹⁸ of the Code.

The leader of "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" Konstantine Morgoshia [responded](#) to the arrest of Lasha Sharukhia: "As long as such people exist, no "European Unions" and others will be able to bring this country to its knees!" Everyone should take an example from Lasha. Lasha, you are a hero and soon we will celebrate a great victory together!" Even the [accused](#) Lasha Sharukhia himself thanked the supporters and issued a written appeal from prison: "I burned the flag of the European Union, which brings me all immorality, depravity and corruption." Sharukhia expressed special thanks to Konstantine Morgoshia for his support and solidarity.



2.2. STATE SECURITY SERVICE'S STATEMENTS REINFORCED THE ANTI-WESTERN RHETORIC OF THE "CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT/ALT-INFO"

On October 2, 2023, the [statement](#) of the State Security Service on USAID sponsored event on training a group of activists to prepare for "violent overthrow of the government" drew anti-American and anti-Western backlash from openly pro-Russian far-right radical groups.

Initially, the State Security Service published a similar [statement](#) on September 18, 2023, which became the basis for the creation of the violent organizational unit "Anti-Maidan" by the "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info". On September 25, 2023, party leaders Zura Makharadze, Giorgi Kardava, Shota and Irakli Martynenkos held a briefing, where, based on the statement of the State Security Service, they spoke about the need to mobilize "like-minded forces" against the coup attempt in Georgia. **"We need**

to organize organized, cohesive groups throughout Georgia, to have the opportunity to transport tens of thousands of people from the regions in a few hours" - Shota Martynenko said.

The founder of "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info", Konstantine Morgoshia responded to the statement of the State Security Service in a Facebook post and noted: "It seems that the fate of our country will be decided in the streets of Tbilisi instead of offices and administrative buildings, and it is strategically important that a healthy, conservative part of this country, is ready for this scenario." In order to mobilize supporters, the information was spread on the "Alterinfo" Facebook page: "Join Anti-Maidan! Be ready for battle! Let us save Georgia from war and coup!"

"Anti-Maidan" is actively discussed by the leaders of "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info": Shota Martynenko, Zura Makharadze, on the personal telegram channels of Giorgi Kardava and Irakli Martynenko, which in many cases are accompanied by violent appeals in the form of subscribers' comments. The leaders of the violent group call on their supporters to be active and try to instill fear in the society by appealing to the issue of a coup d'état. It is for this purpose that the leaders of the "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" broadcast a video appeal on the Telegram channel, where they call on their supporters to "join the anti-Maidan movement" in order to protect the country from "Western revenge."

Despite indications that the organizers' calls may have constituted a criminal offense, law enforcement authorities did not respond appropriately. This apparent neglect, coupled with the State Security Service's emphasis on the alleged attempt by Western forces to destabilize the country, raised suspicions that the government might be inclined to pursue an anti-Western course actively involving violent groups as a political tool.

In response to the statement of the State Security Service, the Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, charged USAID with the responsibility for the coup attempt: **"USAID should explain why the money of the American people is going to another country to inspire riots, to train groups that should plan riots and provoke violence. This is a dark day in the history of American aid to Georgia."**

Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of "Georgian Dream" once again invoked the "second front" to intimidate the public and accused "Western forces" in trying to drag Georgia into the war: **"Clarifications are essential concerning the financing of training by USAID, especially when its direct purpose appears to be the preparation for a revolution in Georgia."**

The leaders of the "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" continued to organize the "Anti-Maidan Movement" with similar rhetoric and anti-Western sentiments of the government. They started holding regional meetings and mobilizing supporters in the wake of the announcement of the State Security Service with the manipulative motive of "preventing a coup".

During the reporting period, "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" held seven meetings in the regions of Georgia, which indicates a clear political interest of the violent political group.

The first organizational meeting was held by "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" in Telavi. The meeting was held in Vazha Pshavela Telavi State Professional Drama Theater. The theater is a legal entity under public law and is financed by the state. At the meeting held in Telavi, the representatives of the pro-Russian forces openly talked about the importance of "Anti Maidan" and the parliamentary elections of 2024. Shota Martynenko confirmed that the openly pro-Russian group is preparing to participate in the 2024 parliamentary elections. "Now we have two immediate tasks. One is effective organization for "Antimaidan" and second, elections are planned for next year. The events that will be held now will be a very important basis for building that unity, which will help us achieve a very important result in the elections next year."

The leaders of "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" held the [second](#) regional meeting in Rustavi on October 7. At the meeting, Irakli Martynenko said: "We are confronting the West. They are organizing a coup so that their agents can seize power and plunge our country into war."

"Alt-Info" met the residents [of Gori](#) on October 14. The organizational meeting [in Mtskheta](#) was held on October 21, which, unlike other regional meetings, was attended by Konstantine Morgoshia. "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" leaders met with experts and political scientists. [According to](#) Shota Martynenko, one of the main goals of the event was the formation of the "Anti-Maidan" Council and an alternative political and ideological platform, which will be a counterweight to the liberal agenda.

The next organizational meeting [was held](#) on October 29, 2023 in Kutaisi. At the meeting, the leaders of "Alt-Info" [talked](#) about the "Antimaidan" plan and the 2024 parliamentary elections. According to Shota Martynenko, strategic tasks will no longer be limited to the next 2 months. "Strategic tasks are no longer limited to the threats of riots in the next 2 months, but we must provide a kind of shield in the form of a political vector that should prevent the country from overturning the political agenda, not only through riots, including elections."

The sixth regional meeting "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" [was held](#) on November 11, 2023 in Batumi. At the meeting, Shota Martynenko noted that the goal of the West was to drag Georgia into the war in the Maidan scenario.

The next organizational meeting [was held](#) in Zugdidi on November 18, 2023. At the meeting, the leader of the radical group, Irakli Morgoshia, [spoke](#) about the importance of the 2024 parliamentary elections: "2024 elections will not be just elections. This is a battle where it will be decided which way Georgia will choose and the elections for saving Georgia as a nation. I say this with full responsibility."



2.3. ANTI-AMERICAN RHETORIC OF FAR-RIGHT GROUPS AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE ISRAELI-HAMAS MILITARY CONFLICT

The anti-American rhetoric of far-right groups, heightened during the Israel-Hamas military conflict, portrays the West as an unreliable partner. It taps into fears of war and positions Russia as the guarantor of Georgia's security, directly conflicting with Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. This rhetoric aims to instill irrational fears in society.

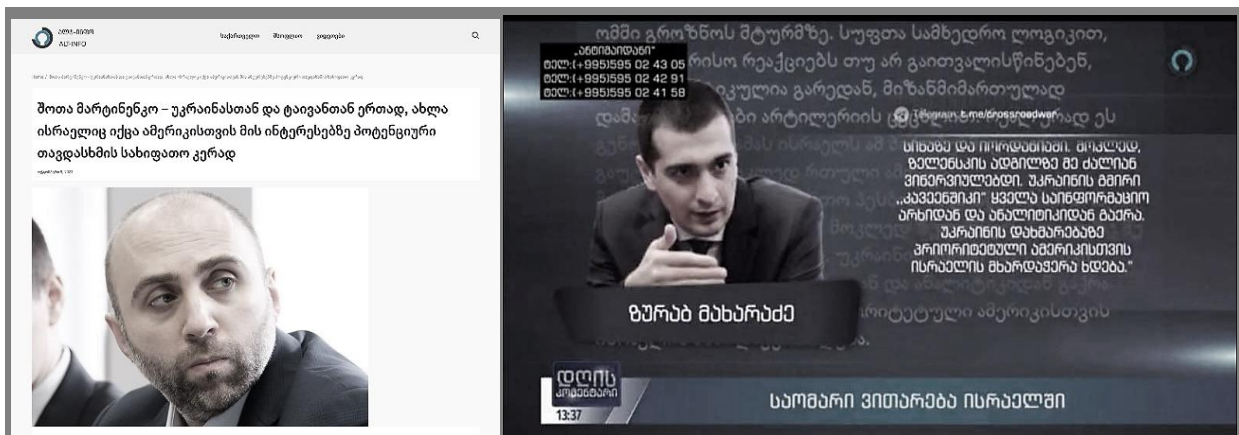
The renewed military conflict following the Hamas attack on Israel has fueled the anti-American rhetoric of openly pro-Russian far-right groups. The "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" exploited the Israel-Hamas conflict to depict the West as an unreliable partner and the US as a force instigating conflicts, with Israel now being their main priority. This narrative also suggests that international support for

Ukraine is diminishing in the backdrop of the assistance provided to Israel.

On October 10, 2023, in the "Realpolitika" program of the "Alt-Info" TV, the leader of "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" Zura Makharadze pointedly pointed out that the situation in Ukraine is becoming increasingly critical against the background of the war raging in Israel: **"In short, in Zelensky's place, I would be very worried. Hero of Ukraine "Kaveenshik" disappeared from all news channels and analytics. America's priority over helping Ukraine is to support Israel."** With this statement, the far-right leader attempted to depict Ukraine as a forsaken country by Western partners. This narrative is intertwined with the notion that, similar to Ukraine, Georgia would stand alone in the event of a Russian attack. Such statements contribute to the amplification of anti-American sentiments and nihilism, serving as a significant informational tool for the pro-Kremlin campaign. This campaign has long sought to construct the myth of Russia's influence and invincibility in the region. This misinformation is notable and cautionary, as it underlies the widespread propaganda message that asserts, "Maintaining a peaceful and close connection with Russia is necessary, as Georgia would lack support in case of a confrontation with it."

In Georgia, far-right actors develop anti-American rhetoric, as a rule, against the background of pro-Russian sentiments. Their propaganda media usually use methods of exaggerating and demonizing the facts. In this regard, it is worth noting [the statement](#) of Giorgi Papunashvili, an active member of "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" on October 9, 2023 in the program "Comment of the Day". There, he reviews the Israel-Hamas conflict as a disturbing signal for Georgia and tries to establish the opinion that America, as a strategic partner, is unreliable and dysfunctional. **"The current events in Israel should serve as a signal for us. When you align yourself with a geopolitical power that is geographically distant, you inevitably create natural enemies in the region. Our ally is across the ocean, and relying on their interests and assurances means that if something were to happen here, the collective West might struggle with fundamental military logistics tomorrow."**

Against the backdrop of the ongoing military conflict, the leaders of the far-right group actively continued their anti-American rhetoric in November. The presentation of Ukraine as a country abandoned and doomed by the West was still an actual issue. The leader of the far-right group, Shota Martynenko, [said](#) in the "Alt-Analytica" program on November 4, 2023, that the West will be exhausted in the light of the current international processes and economic aid to Ukraine will become unpopular. "If they give 200 billion in total, this is the result. Ukraine lost two Georgia-sized territories. What is the plan? America will get tired; its spirits will be exhausted. Economic problems will make the continuation of aid unpopular." On November 6, 2023, Irakli Martynenko continued the same rhetoric in Alt-Analytica, [saying](#) that the Ukrainian people were killed at the request of America. "Didn't Ukrainian people ever want war? The Ukrainian people have always wanted to negotiate, but they refused. Forced to fight at the request of America. The American-appointed government attacked the Ukrainian people."



3. ANNOTATIONS OF PROTEST RALLIES OF FAR-RIGHT GROUPS

During the reporting period, the organization's observers documented two gatherings organized by far-right groups in various locations across Tbilisi. Information about the planned events on July 1 and 8 became publicly known through social media, which serves as the primary platform for disseminating information and mobilizing supporters for far-right groups and their leaders.

In the initial stages of our observation, we developed a specialized form for monitoring gatherings and demonstrations. This form helped us systematically collect pertinent information during the events, enabling subsequent gender-based analysis. Aligned with the project's goals and objectives, our focus during the monitoring of gatherings and manifestations was 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?

During the reporting period, far-right groups organized two events. On July 1, 2023, a neo-fascist group named "National Unity of Georgia" staged a protest against a draft law aiming to simplify the procedure for granting Georgian citizenship. Approximately 40 demonstrators, holding neo-fascist and homophobic posters along with various symbols, participated in the small rally. The organizer of the event was Giorgi Chelidze.

The second protest demonstration, which took on a large-scale violent character, was marked by strong homophobia, and it was organized by the "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info." A strike was planned to disrupt the festival announced by Tbilisi Pride on July 8. Observers from the Democracy Research Institute closely monitored the rally throughout the day. On July 7, the Ministry of Internal Affairs [issued a statement](#) assuring that the closed Tbilisi Pride event would take place in a peaceful environment, with law enforcement officers ensuring security and maintaining law and order at all locations.

Despite the mentioned guarantees, demonstrators of the violent action, near the Lisi Lake easily [broke through](#) the police cordon of the festival and broke in in the territory. Instead of an effective, preventive and immediate response to the violation, the police [drove the festival](#) participants away from the area. Despite the fact that the organizers of the rally at the starting location of the meeting at the Vaja-Pshavela monument, openly declared that they would disrupt the Pride festival at all costs, the police did not put up any resistance to the demonstrators marching towards Lisi Lake. Moreover, several hundreds of law enforcement officers [led the procession](#) with a car escort. As the police itself led to the territory of the failed festival to convince the leader of the "conservative movement/alt-info" Zura Makharadze and the founder of the violent organization "Georgia First" Vato Shakarashvili that the festival organizers indeed had been removed from the area. 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.

4. THE RESULTS OF THE MONITORING OF "CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT/ALT-INFO" FINANCES

"Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" is a far-right and openly pro-Russian political group that first appeared in public in the form of television. In November 2021, the radical group applied to the public registry for registration as a party, but the application was [rejected](#). The applicant was given a 10-day period to eliminate the identified [defect](#). On December 7, 2021, the National Public Registry Agency [satisfied](#) the request of the radical group and "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" was registered as a political party.

4.1. "CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT/ALT-INFO" DONATIONS

After registering as a party, the ultra-right and openly pro-Russian extremist group started political activities. From January 2022, "Conservative Movement" opened offices across the country. It started, although the first donation was received only in February 2022, more specifically on February 16. During one day, 37 individuals made donations, and the total amount of donations was 43,000 GEL.

In total, "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" received 560,964 GEL in 2022.

Amount of money donated in 2022 by month:

months	amount donated
February	47.775
March	56.360
April	61.633
May	50.476
June	65,840
July	62.437
August	23.380
September	34.965
October	66.480
November	40.083
December	51.535
Sum	560.964

However, in comparison to 2022, there has been a significant decrease in the amount of money donated to the "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" in 2023. While the declared donations amounted to 560,964 GEL in 2022, the officially reported donations by the "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" from January to November 2023 have decreased substantially to 33,132 GEL.

Amount of money donated in 2023 by month:

months	amount donated
January	12.640
February	7.834
March	1.250
April	2.960
May	2.090
June	1.500
July	1.443
August	550
September	992
October	933
November	940
December	*

The Democracy Research Institute sought to understand the significant change in the donated amount and addressed this question to the leader of the radical group, Konstantine Morgoshia. According to Morgoshia, the drastic reduction is attributed to their donors experiencing repression by banks. He remains the primary financier of the party.

"Banks have created problems for our supporters regarding credits and overdrafts. They claim that people financially supporting the 'Conservative Movement/Alt-Info' should not be served. It is repression, nothing more," - Morgoshia explained.

The Democracy Research Institute also inquired about whether the leader of the radical group engages in talks with Russian businesspeople and if the "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" receives funding from Russia. Morgoshia clarified that they have discussions with Georgian emigrants residing in Russia, but not with Russian businesspeople.

"We have daily conversations with Georgian emigrants living in Russia. However, we do not engage in negotiations with Russian businessmen."

4.2. HOW MANY DONORS DOES THE "CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT/ALT-INFO" HAVE?

From February 2022 to October 2023, "Conservative Movement / Alt-Info" had 102 donors. 101 of them are individuals and one is a legal entity. From January to October 2023, only two donors were added to the radical extremist group: [Nana Gergaia](#) and [Teona Brunjadze](#). Only 33 out of 101 donors own real estate.

Like the amount donated, the number of donors has also decreased dramatically. From January to November 2023, "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" received donations [43 times](#). For comparison, during the year 2022, the extremist group received donations [558 times](#).

Number of donations by 2022:

months	Amount of donations
February	42
March	55
April	60
May	57
June	63
July	64
August	17
September	32
October	65
November	45
December	58

Number of donations by 2023:

months	Amount of donations
January	12
February	11
March	2
April	2
May	4
June	3
July	3
August	1
September	1
October	2
November	2
December	*1

4.3. IS KONSTANTINE MORGOSHIA THE MAIN FUNDER OF THE "CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT/ALT-INFO"?

Konstantine Morgoshia is **not among the 101 physical persons/donors of the far-right political group "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info"**. Nevertheless, in an interview with the Democracy Research Institute, Konstantine Morgoshia stated that he is the party's and "Alt-Info" television's main financier.

The Democracy Research Institute was interested in what real estate Konstantine Morgoshia and his family members own. According to the data of the public register, **only two companies** are registered in the name of Konstantine Morgoshia. He owns a 51% share of "[Magnus Design](#)" LLC and "[Kem Construction](#)" LLC. The activity of "Magnus Design" LLC is related to construction, design and projecting, and "Kem Construction" LLC is an investment company.

In a conversation with the Democracy Research Institute, Konstantine Morgoshia noted that "Magnus Design" LLC has not been under his ownership for several years and he has given the share to his partners. However, according to the last [extract](#) from the public register, dated February 25, 2022, the owner of 51% of the company's share is still Konstantine Morgoshia; Giorgi Harshened owns 45% of the company, and Zurab Nasalize owns 4%.

"I have not been the founder of Magnus Designs LLC for five years; I have given my share to partners 5-6 years ago. "Kem Construction" LLC is a 10-year-old company that we planned to start a business with, but then we did not do it anymore. There is no movement at all."

Morgoshia's companies are registered to his brothers, wife, and aunt's name. [TV Company "Alt-Info"](#) is registered in the name of Morgoshia's aunt Tsiala Morgoshia. [According](#) to the analytical website of the Communications Commission, the main financier of the television is its owner Tsiala Morgoshia. Morgoshia has registered seven companies in the name of his aunt, including "[Alt-Info](#)" LLC. However, the main financier of the TV Company is Konstantine Morgoshia, and he confirmed this fact in a conversation with the Democracy Research Institute.

¹ Information is not available as of January 15, 2024.

Income of "Alt-Info" TV:

Quarter	income
<u>1st quarter of 2022</u>	225.927
<u>2nd quarter of 2022</u>	237.540
<u>3rd quarter of 2022</u>	287.220
<u>4th quarter of 2022</u>	234.220
<u>1st quarter of 2023</u>	208,500
<u>2nd quarter of 2023</u>	152.400
<u>3rd quarter of 2023</u>	114.465

In 2022, the financing of the "Alt-Info" TV company amounted to 984,887 GEL. Of this sum, 776,971 GEL was allocated for broadcasting services throughout the year. After subtracting service costs, the TV Company's remaining budget for one year stands at a mere 211,916 GEL, which is insufficient even to cover employees' salaries.² In 2022, Konstantine Morgoshia informed the Democracy Research Institute that approximately 80 people are employed at the television company. According to the Democracy Research Institute, the company's driver receives a salary of 1,000 GEL. If the average salary for employees working in television is assumed to be 1,000 GEL, the total annual salary expenditure for at least 80 employees would be 960,000 GEL.

According to the data of the first, second and third quarters of 2023,³ the expenses incurred for services are 502,563 GEL, and the income of television is 475,365 GEL. The television budget, excluding service costs, is only **27,1983** GEL. If the average salary for employees working in television is 1,000 GEL, and there are 80 employees, the total salary expenditure for the TV company from January 2023 to September 2023 would likely amount to 720,000 GEL.

4.4. WHO ARE THE LARGEST AND MOST FREQUENT DONORS TO THE "CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT/ALT-INFO"?

The biggest donor to "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" is Kakhaber Elizbarashvili. He has donated 42,295 GEL to the group. Zurab Kobakhidze is in the second place. The amount of money donated by him is 41,693 GEL. The third place is taken by Goga Tukhareli, the fourth by Giga Kobakhidze, and the fifth by Merab Gigani.

Among the biggest donors of the radical movement, only Kakhaber Elizbarashvili and Merab Gigani own real estate. Elizbarashvili is the owner of 50% of Dabo LLC. Two companies are registered under the name of Merab Gigan, LLC "Technometals" and LLC "Gigan-007". Gigan is also the head of the violent group's Rustavi regional office.

From February 16, 2022 to December 31, 2023, "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" received donations 560 times. As a rule, the donors of the "conservative movement" are the same people. Only 21 people have donated a one-time amount. The remaining 81 donors have donated several times.

² Services provided for broadcasting include Internet, other administrative costs, lease, audit, utility, digital terrestrial multiplex, Security service costs.

³ From January to September 2023.

1. [Giorgi Khatiashvili](#) donated money to "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" the most, 17 times. Khatiashvili is the head of the regional office of the extremist movement Tsnori. The total amount donated is 10,625 GEL.
2. [Kakhaber Elizbarashvili donated](#) to the group sixteen times. The total amount is 42,295 GEL.
3. [Gocha Khutsidze](#) has transferred money to "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" fourteen times. He donated 7,750 GEL to the radical group.
4. [Giorgi Ratian made](#) thirteen donations. He is also the head of the Mestia office of the extremist movement. The amount of donated money is 5,900 GEL.
5. Donations [made by Roman Gogiberidze](#) is thirteen. He donated 4,040 GEL to the radical movement.

Only three persons own real estate, [Kakhaber Elizbarashvili](#), [Gocha Khutsidze](#) and [Roman Gogiberidze](#).

4.5. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES OF "CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT/ALT-INFO"

"Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" began its activity in the regions in January 2022 and in a short period of time opened 64 offices throughout Georgia. Later, in August 2022, it was reported⁴ that 10 regional offices were closed. The Democracy Research Institute asked how many regional offices are currently operational. According to Konstantine Morgoshia, about 5 offices are closed and some have simply changed locations. According to Morgoshia, the number of regional offices is about 59.

After the official [statement](#) of the State Security Service on September 18, 2023, Zurab Makharadze, Giorgi Kardava, Irakli and Shota Martynenko [announced](#) that they have started the "Antimaidan" movement for mobilization of associates.

On October 1, 2023, the group [started](#) the meetings. It held meetings in seven cities - Telavi, Gori, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Mtskheta, Batumi and Zugdidi.

[The meeting](#) in Telavi was held on October 1, 2023, in the Vazha Pshavela State Professional Drama Theater. **The theater is a legal entity under public law and is financed by the state.** The head of the theater Paata Guliashvili [has been holding](#) this post since 2012. Since 2019, he has [received 77,309](#) GEL from the state through simplified purchases. In the 2018 presidential elections, Paata Guliashvili [took](#) part in events held within the framework of the election campaign of Salome Zurabishvili, the candidate supported by "Georgian Dream."

[At the meeting](#) held in Telavi, the representatives of the pro-Russian forces openly talked about the importance of "Anti Maidan" and the 2024 parliamentary elections. Shota Martynenko confirmed that the pro-Russian group is preparing to participate in the 2024 parliamentary elections.

"Now, we have two tasks at hand. The first is the effective organization for the 'Anti-Maidan,' and the second pertains to the upcoming elections next year. The events scheduled to take place will serve as a crucial foundation for fostering unity, which, in turn, will aid us in achieving significant results in the elections next year."

The weekly regional meetings held from October 1, 2023, raise questions about whether the income of the radical movement is significantly higher than what is apparent in open sources. For instance, for the initial meeting, the "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" rented a hall at the aforementioned Telavi Theater. Documentation obtained from the theater indicates that the hall's rent amounted to 2,200 GEL. Subsequently, on October 22, 2023, a meeting was hosted at the "Gino Wellness" hotel in Mtskheta, with the hotel manager confirming that the rent for the conference hall was 700 GEL.

⁴ radiotavisupleba.ge, "Conservative Movement" to 10 the office Closes - has If Not " alt - info " financial Problem?", 10 August 2022, available at:

<https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/31982341.html>

KEY FINDINGS

- The rhetoric of ultra-right groups in Georgia is marked by strong homophobic sentiments, directly tied to appeals to religious-national sentiments.
- A concerning trend is emerging, showing alignment between the official positions of far-right groups and the Georgian government in instrumentalizing homophobia. This trend not only renews violent practices against vulnerable groups but also contributes to the polarization of society.
- Far-right groups frequently disseminate disinformation and create fake media content in online media using pro-Kremlin methods to influence public opinion.
- The current discourse of far-right groups in social and online media is characterized by anti-American sentiments and robustly pro-Russian messages.
- Anti-Western messages persist in the discourse of far-right groups, undergoing transformation amidst the current political events in the country. The issue of granting Georgia the status of a candidate for EU membership holds particular significance in the current discourse.
- Ultra-right groups actively utilize social networks to mobilize supporters and organize protests, with their primary focus being on online platforms at this stage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is crucial for the government to cease the political instrumentalization of homophobia and discontinue any indirect or direct support of violent groups.
- In light of the government's passivity, the civil sector should proactively inform the public about the potential threats arising from the violent agenda of far-right groups.
- Research organizations play a vital role in investigating the primary factors that contribute to the growth of extremist groups.
- Government bodies need to develop an effective action plan to counter the dissemination of disinformation and hate speech by far-right groups through social networks and media.
- Special attention should be given by the government to scrutinizing the origin and transparency of finances associated with political groups declaring a goal of cooperation with a hostile state.

Appendix #1.
Annotations of ultra-right actors in Georgia

"NATIONAL UNITY OF GEORGIA"

Ideology:	fascism, integral nationalism ⁵
Symbol:	Arm flag and cross of the Georgian battalion of the Wehrmacht ⁶ 
Slogan:	"Glory to the nation! Glory to victory!"
Leader:	Giorgi Chelidze
Date of establishment:	November 2, 2016
Official channels:	https://www.youtube.com/@GeoNationalUnity https://t.me/GeoNatUnity https://www.tiktok.com/@geo.national.unity

Initially, "National Unity of Georgia" was registered in the public register on November 2, 2016. At the initial stage, it was led by Tornike Kiviladze, however, according to publicly available sources, Kiviladze [left](#) the organization in 2018 due to ideological incompatibility, and Giorgi Chelidze took over the leadership. According to the charter, the main goal of the union is *"demographic, territorial integrity, cognitive, spiritual, cultural, economic, ecological, military, legal protection of the Georgian nation and the Georgian state."* The governing structure of the organization is also determined by the charter. In particular, the organization is headed by a "Commander", whose functions and duties are described as leading sectoral groups, local units, and their leaders; the governing body is the "command hall."

After Giorgi Chelidze [announced](#) the transformation of "National Unity of Georgia" into a political party, the organization's [14-point](#) action plan "From Survival to Revival" was distributed, in which the task of the organization is indicated in the implementation of the decision of the March 31, 1991 referendum, prevention of physical and cultural genocide of the Georgian nation and transfer of land and power to the nation. To realize this goal, "National Unity of Georgia" has developed three main programs: 1) agricultural; 2) military-industrial; 3) demographic-cultural.

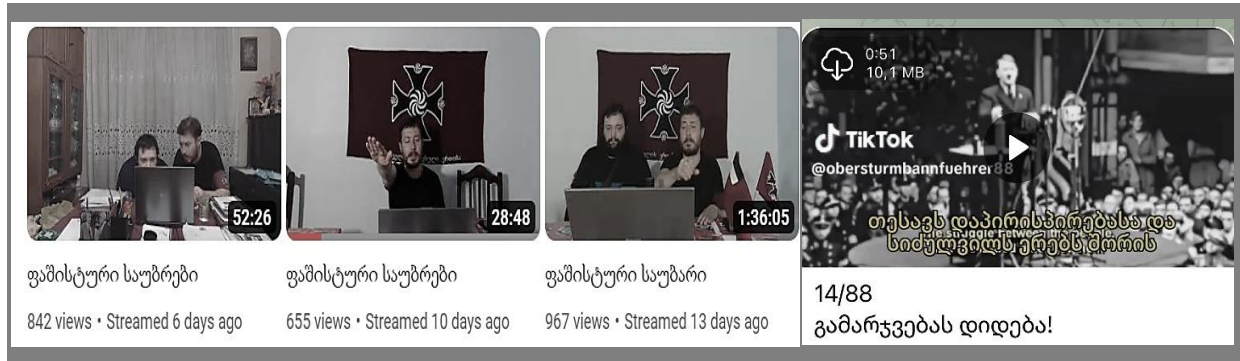
With the agricultural program, "National Unity of Georgia" aims to declare Georgian lands and natural resources as the national property of the Georgian nation, ensured by the constitution's prohibition of foreigners owning land or natural resources. The primary focus of the military-industrial program is to develop a high-tech military industry and provide education for young people in educational spaces through military and physical training. The main priority of the demographic-cultural program is to strengthen the Georgian worldview and gene pool. In the action plan of the openly neo-fascist organization, there is a significant emphasis on the military direction, including the creation of a total

⁵ Integral nationalism - characterized by illiberal approaches. It presents the nation as an organic whole and requires the complete obedience of the individual to the national interests.

⁶ Georgian battalion of the Wehrmacht - a Georgian military formation that fought on the side of the Third Reich during the Second World War.

defense mobilization system and mandatory military service for all citizens of Georgia, regardless of gender.

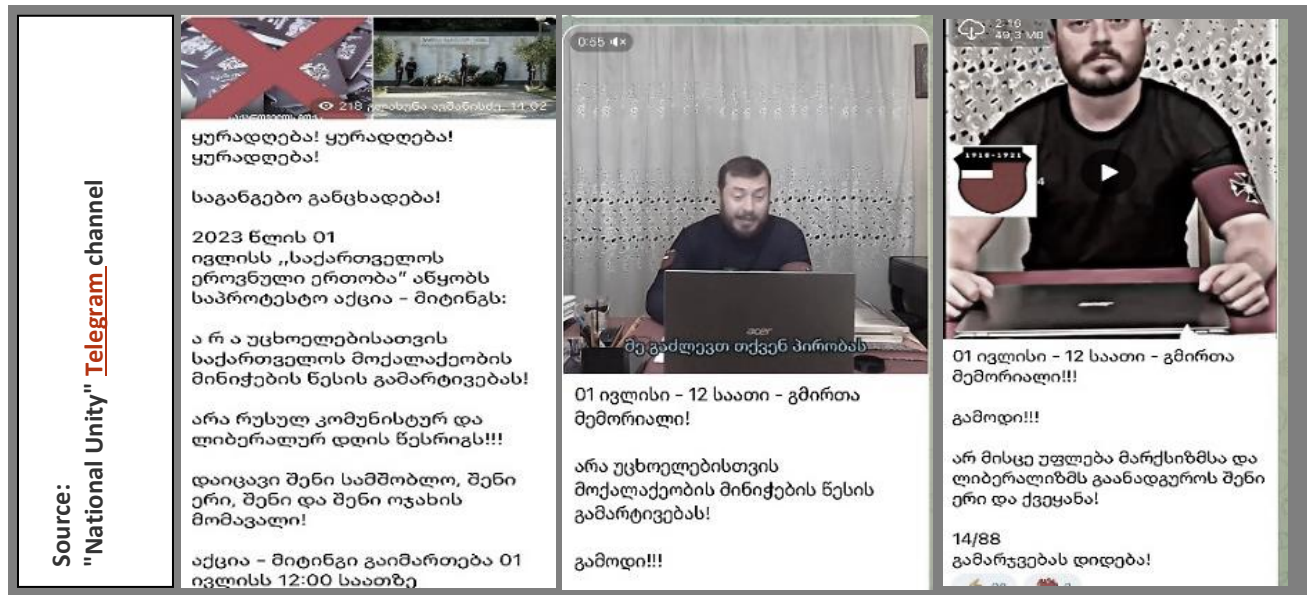
Members of the "National Unity of Georgia" often use Nazi symbols on social networks and quote fascist/Nazi ideology leaders [Adolf Hitler](#) and [Benito Mussolini](#).



Source: "National Unity" [YouTube Channel](#) Source: "National Unity" [Telegram channel](#)

The past experience of the openly neo-fascist "National Unity of Georgia" is related to such violent activity as the counter-demonstration of the action held on May 13, 2018 demanding the change of the drug policy. According to Chelidze, the said contravention was directed against "drug use" and "gay propaganda". He called on his associates to form a vigilante guard at the mentioned [rally](#) and noted that if necessary, he himself would ensure the protection of public safety.

At this stage, the neo-fascist organization "National Unity of Georgia" is active in the anti-immigration direction. Their dissatisfaction was caused by the government's [initiative](#) regarding the simplification of obtaining Georgian citizenship.





"National Unity of Georgia" actively mobilizes support using various social networks and channels. In particular, it positions itself through Facebook, Telegram, TikTok and YouTube. According to current data, "National Unity of Georgia" has 3,500 subscribers on the YouTube channel, 116 on TikTok, and 1,213 subscribers in the Telegram group. Through these channels, the organization actively disseminates information about its action plan, protest actions and ideological narratives.

"Georgian National Unity" channels on social networks and platforms

Telegram	"Arian Kortu"	1 213 subscribers
YouTube	"Geo National Unity"	3 500 subscribers
TikTok	"Georgian National Squad "	116 subscribers
Facebook group	National Socialist Movement "National Unity of Georgia "	404 members

"GEORGIAN IDEA"

Party ideology:	ethnocentrism ⁷
Political election number:	N44 
Symbolism:	the logo has the shape of a shield, on which ten crowns are depicted on a circle and the unity of the three historical alphabets of the Georgian script is imprinted. 
Slogan:	With faith and love, for a dignified future
Party leader:	Levan Chachua
Date of establishment:	December 16, 2014
Facebook page:	https://www.facebook.com/qartuliidea

According to the official data of the public registry, on February 21, 2014, Levan Chachua registered the public movement "Georgian Idea" as a non-entrepreneurial legal entity. Based on his own statement, on March 31, 2014, the public registry declared the public movement "Georgian Idea" liquidated. On December 16 of the same year, "Georgian Idea" was registered as a political party. Levan Chachua informed the public about the establishment of a political entity at a press conference held in the Tbilisi press center of "Rianovosti."

⁷ An ideology based on the exaggeration of one's own nation and cultural values, and characterized by strongly negative and tendentious reasoning towards other ethnic groups. It perceives its own national values as a benchmark, has a preconceived idea of what is right, acceptable, moral and healthy.

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რეგისტრაციის თარიღი	21 თებერვალი 2014
სტატუსი	ლიკვიდირებულია

The "Georgian Idea" party participated [in the 2016 parliamentary elections](#) under #18 and received 2,019 votes (0.17%). Sandro Bregadze, the leader of "Georgian March", was presented as the second number of "Georgian Idea" in the list delivered [to CEC](#). For the 2016 parliamentary elections, the party received [14,459](#) GEL as a donation. The "Georgian Idea" party took part in the parliamentary elections of October 2020 with the number [44](#). Levan Chachua was nominated as the first number of the party, and [Guram Falavandishvili](#), the chairman of the "Society for the Protection of Children's Rights", known for his homophobic speeches, was nominated as the second in line. The party received 8,263 votes in the elections.

The leaders of "Georgian Idea" are distinguished by homophobic and xenophobic rhetoric. They often appeal to national identity protection issues and religious sentiments. For the parliamentary elections of 2024, the leader of the party, Levan Chachua, called the "conservative wing" to unity and came up with [the initiative](#) to create "national-church unity", in which membership will be based not on party, but on personal characteristics. According to Levan Chachua, the Orthodox Church of Georgia should give blessing and political legitimacy to the mentioned unity.⁸

[The political priority](#) of the "Georgian Idea" party is the establishment of the national economic direction, which includes the nationalization of strategically important objects and minerals. The party favors the development of a strict immigration policy and, in this direction, the establishment of strict controls on the settlement of migrants, citizenship and residency. The representatives of the "Georgian Idea" constantly emphasize the importance of the involvement of the church [in the educational process](#) and note that the quality of the education system should be improved with the help of the church.

The leaders of "Georgian Idea" openly support the participants of the violent protest on July 5, 2021, [refer](#) to the people arrested for this issue as "prisoners of conscience." "Georgian Idea" also joined the protest actions organized by "Alt-Info", the main demand of which was the release of people arrested in the case of July 5, 2021.

"Georgian Idea" channels on social networks and platforms

Telegram	https://shorturl.at/dgiqj	18 subscribers
YouTube	https://shorturl.at/pzJRY	291 subscribers
TikTok	https://www.tiktok.com/@qartuliidea?lang=km-KH	13 000 subscribers
Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/qartuliidea	38 000 members

⁸ Facebook page of Georgian Idea

"CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT/ALT-INFO"

Political ideology:	far-right national-conservatism ⁹
Symbolism:	 
Chairman of the party:	Giorgi Kardava
General Secretary:	Shota Martynenko
Date of establishment:	December 7, 2021
Website:	https://conservativemovement.ge/

"Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" is a political creation of the far-right and openly pro-Russian "Alt-Info." Irakli Martynenko, Irakli Morgoshia, Giorgi Kardava and Vasil Gvalia are members of [the political council](#) of the party. **The** leaders of the "conservative movement/alt-info" are the organizers of the mass violence of July 5, 2021, although their criminal responsibility has not yet been established. According to the excerpt from the public register, "Conservative Movement" was registered on December 7, 2021. Initially, the chairman of the party was Zura Makharadze, and the general secretary was Giorgi Kardava. Both are the face of "alt-info." With the changes reflected in the register of political associations of citizens in April 2022, the name of the party was defined as "Conservative Movement/Alt-Info", the chairman of the party - Giorgi Kardava, and the general secretary - Shota Martinenko. One of the founders of the party is Konstantine (Koka) Morgoshia.

At the party congress, the leaders [stated](#) that their main priority will be the country's security, territorial integrity, elimination of "extreme poverty" and improvement of the demographic situation. They see the way to achieve the set goals in cooperation with the Kremlin and point out that it is in Russia that the issue of territorial integrity of Georgia is resolved.

2022 to June 2023, the party has 102 donors. 101 of them are natural persons and one legal entity. The Institute for the Study of Democracy examined each donor's data. Only 33 of them own real estate. 30 donors are heads of regional offices of political groups.

"Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" started opening regional offices in January 2022 and in a short period of time **opened 64 regional offices across Georgia**. However, in August 2022, it was [reported](#) that the radical group closed up to 10 offices. The Democracy Research Institute asked how many regional offices were in operation as of the summer of 2023. In a telephone conversation with us, Konstantine Morgoshia stated that about 5 offices are closed and some have changed their locations. According to Morgoshia, the number of regional offices is 59.

"Conservative Movement/Alt Info" stands out for its highly homophobic discourse. The leaders of the aforementioned group organized large-scale violent actions against the festival planned by Tbilisi Pride on [July 5, 2021](#) and [July 8, 2023](#).

⁹ An umbrella term that combines radical, ultranationalist and extremist ideologies. He uses xenophobia, homophobia and misogyny as an instrument of action.

"Conservative Movement/Alt-Info" channels on social networks and platforms

Telegram	https://shorturl.at/ntuFM	45 subscribers
YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/@infonews_alt4	6 031 subscribers
TikTok	https://www.tiktok.com/@conservativegeorgia	1 485 subscribers
Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/Conservativemovement1	76 000 members