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## THE SPREAD OF ANTI-WESTERN NARRATIVES COMING FROM AUTHORITIES ON FACEBOOK

Social media analysis  
2024



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## CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Executive summary .....   | 4  |
| Introduction.....   | 6  |
| Brief overview: anti-Western rhetoric coming from authorities from June 2022 to June 2023   | 8  |
| Phase 1: The period before the start of discussions on the law on the transparency of foreign influence (June-October 2022) ..... | 14 |
| Phase 2: The period from November 2022 to mid-February 2023, before the initiation of the law .....                               | 20 |
| Phase 3: The period from the initiation until the revoking of the law, from mid-February to March 10, 2023 .....                  | 25 |
| Phase 4: The period after revoking the law (from March 10 to June, 2023).....   | 31 |
| Conclusion .....  | 37 |
| Annex 1 – Characteristics of posts and their disseminators, actors mentioned in posts .....                                       | 41 |
| Peculiarities of dissemination of posts.....  | 41 |
| Characteristics of pages and groups disseminating posts.....  | 42 |
| Actors mentioned in posts.....  | 44 |
| Annex 2 – Anti-western narratives .....   | 47 |



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since summer 2022 signs of anti-western rhetoric coming from the authorities emerged. In 2023 for the first time and in 2024 for the second time the “Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence” or ‘foreign agent law’ was initiated in Parliament. In May 2024, the law was adopted. In September 2024, a legislative package limiting LGBT rights was also adopted by Parliament. In the months before the October 26, 2024 elections discussions on the threat of war in Georgia became more frequent; reflected by the ruling party’s pre-election posters and advertisements. Taking this context into consideration, the study on the spread of anti-Western narratives coming from authorities on Facebook from June 2022 to June 2023 is of particular importance and interest.

During the initial stage of the study, statements from government leaders and parliament members for a one-year duration from June 2022 were analyzed. Based on that anti-Western narratives were formulated and keywords identified. The keywords were used to select Facebook posts. Overall, 6,280 Facebook posts were selected; however, after the initial analysis only 2,243 posts were considered relevant and were further analyzed.

The study found the following main findings:

- During the entire year, consistent discrediting of non-governmental organizations, opposition, and the West were identified in Facebook posts.
- The top five most frequently mentioned actors in the analyzed posts were: the United National Movement (UNM), Russia, the West, the United States, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Aside from Russia, the tone of the messaging, in a large majority of cases, were negative. In the case of UNM and NGOs any mention of them in a positive context did not occur at all.
- During the first stage of the monitoring, anti-Western rhetoric was observed. The main targets of criticism were NGOs. Western organizations or countries were only identified as their funders.
- In the coming months, specific countries and representatives of these countries emerged in anti-Western narratives: the United States and its ambassador to Georgia, Europe and specific EU parliamentarians. They were criticized for supporting such powers in the country and accused of attempting to organize a coup d’état and overthrow the government forcefully, in order to destabilize the country; additionally, for trying to bring UNM back to power, who will allegedly obey the West’s will without protest.
- During the entire period of monitoring there was discussion in the threat of war. References to that were made when interpreting goals of “radical powers” (the opposition and NGOs) and their

donors (Western countries and organizations), as well as with regards to such topics as not receiving EU candidacy status as a punishment for not engaging in war, or not joining sanctions imposed on Russia.

- In the second phase of monitoring the phrase “global war party” emerged and was used actively in coming months. It sometimes denoted UNM, which was also labeled the “local war party” or “war and betrayal party”, or some a collective of anti-Georgia forces from the US, Ukraine, and the EU.
- Ukraine was often represented in a negative scope, sometimes as part of the global effort to drag Georgia into a war, and sometimes as an example of the situation, in which Georgia will find itself if it obeys the instructions of the West.
- Also, there were frequent discussions on the West and Georgian organizations/opposition funded and supported for its fight against Georgian values and trying to impose values on the country such as same sex marriage and LGBTQI+ propaganda.
- Since the second phase, the “two-faceted Europe” narrative was spread. One the one hand, a Europe, in which Georgia has been aspiring to for many years; and on the other hand, a weak Europe, which is run by foreign powers and will not protect Georgia’s sovereignty or national values, and which confronts Georgian religion and traditions.
- The law on foreign transparency was discussed as a guarantor of the country’s sovereignty, which will protect Georgia, including Georgian values and religion, from outside threats and would reveal malignant forces active within the country.
- Young people opposing the ‘foreign agent law’ were represented as a misled group, which protested against the law without reading its contents and reflecting on it. Also, as “gender-diffused anarchists”, ruled by foreign powers and used to pursue their own interests. With the latter meaning to overthrow the government and drag the country into war.
- Anti-western narratives in the beginning of the monitoring period were mostly based on statements from the “People’s Power” party. Western criticism took a specific shape and targets were identified after the formation of this movement.
- After the initiation of the law, content based on statements from ruling party leaders became frequent.
- Authors of Facebook posts were often political powers and individual politicians, as well as supporting ‘experts’ and media outlets, which endorsed the statements of government representatives with various interpretations and discredited the West with more intensity.

- Anti-Western narratives were often shared by private individuals with their own profile, which sometimes raised doubts on the accounts authenticity, and raised question on the profile owners' motivations as they were sharing the same content in various public groups.
- Public groups were one of the main spaces where anti-Western rhetoric was spread and these were groups openly supporting the government, as well as thematic groups, which far diverted from the theme of the groups in which they were posted.

## INTRODUCTION

As a part of the project “Supporting the accountable and human rights oriented security sector through research, advocacy and inclusive dialogue”, implemented by the Social Justice Center together with partners; the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association and CRRC-Georgia, CRRC-Georgia conducted the following study on Anti-western narratives and their spread on Facebook from June 2022 to June 2023. During this period, government authorities were voicing consistent anti-Western narratives, which then moved to social media and often were not only spread completely unchanged but with clear motivation and intent. Regarding the war in Ukraine, anti-Western narraitves were often highlighting the threat of war in Georgia and, therefore, were addressing the military and the country's territorial integrity.

During the study period, from June 2022 to June 2023, certain events influenced anti-Western narratives. Such events include the following: Georgian Dream members' foundation of the “People's Power” party, Georgia received recommendations from the European Council instead of the EU candidacy status, and in February the Parliament of Georgia initiated the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence. The latter, and the protests which it inspired, were a culmination of the one-year period of the study. Following this, the study analyzed Facebook posts for an additional two months.

Nonetheless, the study has not lost its relevance, as after 2023, several important events linked to the issues discussed in the study took place and influenced the rhetoric of authorities. On [December 14, 2023](#), Georgia received EU membership candidacy status. On [April 3, 2024](#), the leader of the parliamentary majority, Mamuka Mdinardze, announced the reimplementatation of the ‘foreign agent law’. According to him, the contents of the law were the same, but in the new version of the draft law the term “agent of foreign influence” was replaced with the term “organization pursuing the interests of a foreign power”. Despite [long-term and mass protests](#) and calls and criticism from European and American partners, on [May 14, 2024](#), during the third hearing, Parliament adopted the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, and further overcame the veto of the president. In September 2024, the parliament adopted the

legislative package on “Family Values and Protection of Juveniles” limiting LGBT rights.<sup>1</sup> The trends revealed by the study and anti-Western narratives that stood out in 2022-2023, continued.

During the initial stage of the study, statements and written announcements from government leaders and parliament members during a one-year period from June 2022 were analyzed.

The study focused on the following members of the authorities:

- Irakli Gharibashvili, Prime Minister
- Shalva Papuashvili, Chairman of the Parliament
- Irakli Kobakhidze, leader of the parliamentary majority
- Mamuka Mdinaradze, parliament member, former leader of the parliamentary majority and deputy chairman of the Parliament
- Kakha Kaladze, Secretary General of the ruling party, Mayor of Tbilisi
- The party “People’s Power”, of the parliamentary majority, and its leaders: Sozar Subari, Dimitri Khundadze, and Mikheil Kavelashvili. This group initiated of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence.

Based on that anti-Western narratives were formulated and keywords identified. The keywords were used to select Facebook posts. Overall, 6,280 Facebook posts were selected; however, after the initial analysis only 2,243 posts were considered relevant and were further analyzed.<sup>2</sup>

For the sake of comparison and analysis, the one-year period of study is divided into four phases:

- Phase 1: The period before discussions on the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence (June-October 2022)
- Phase 2: From November 2022 to the initiation of the law (mid-February 2023)
- Phase 3: The period between the initiation of the law until its introduction (mid-February-March 10, 2023)
- Phase 4: The period after the introduction of the law (March 10-June 2023).

Following this arbitrary division into four phases, the report briefly discusses the anti-Western rhetoric coming from authorities for the one-year period from June 2022. It serves as an introduction to the report and provides information on the context. Afterwards comes the analysis on public posts on Facebook

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33123114.html>

<sup>2</sup> Information on the main characteristics of Facebook posts is provided in Annex 1.

selected through keywords derived from rhetoric on the following: the most frequent narratives, how much the posts mirror the rhetoric of authorities, what are its interpretations, who are the actors mentioned most frequently in Facebook posts, who spreads what and where, and how do the Facebook users react in comments.

## **BRIEF OVERVIEW: ANTI-WESTERN RHETORIC COMING FROM AUTHORITIES FROM JUNE 2022 TO JUNE 2023**

From the summer of 2022, statements from authorities showed signs of anti-Western rhetoric. Anti-Western rhetoric intensified in August when four MPs of the Georgian Dream founded the People's Power party on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. According to them, the goal of the movement was [“equipping public with the truth”](#). In their very first statements they spoke about “foreign powers” and the threat of dragging Georgia into war. They addressed the US Ambassador to Georgia with questions on trying to gain influence over the judiciary, returning UNM to power, dragging Georgia into a war, and blackmailing, billionaire and Georgian Dream founder, Bidzina Ivanishvili.

### ***Discreditation of non-governmental organizations and the opposition***

From September, TV Company Imedi released news stories discrediting the non-governmental sector. The sector was referred to as [“the clan of rich NGOs”](#), which served interest of its donor organizations and the UNM. On TV Imedi journalists, experts, politicians spoke about the illegitimacy of non-governmental organizations. The main narrative spread by them was that money is not spent purposefully, the non-governmental sector is an informal player in politics, it is serving the interests of donor organizations/funders along with the opposition, and through election fraud attempts it is trying to create instability, a political crisis, and drag the country into war. Representatives of the non-governmental sector were presented as the traitors to the country, traitors, enemies, and actors against the Orthodox Christian religion and national identity, which smear Georgia's reputation and damage its interests in Europe and in the world through their malpractice, inflammatory, and deceptive campaigns.

### ***Criticism of the United States/European Union***

Parallel to the discreditation of NGOs in autumn 2022, authorities began criticizing particular EU parliament members, US senators, and the American ambassador to Georgia. This criticism and discreditation was expressed when discussing the following topics: the law on deoligarchization, the 12-point resolution of the European Union, and demands to free Mikheil Saakashvili and Nika Gvaramia. Based on the statements of the then chairman of the Georgian Dream and parliament member Irakli



Kobakhidze, the opposition did not support the law on deoligarchization because it wanted to ensure that oligarchs (Saakashvili, Kezerashvili, Tsereteli) regained power. The demand to free Mikheil Saakashvili and Nika Gvaramia meant supporting radicalization and those who fought against Bidzina Ivanishvili fought against peace. Irakli Kobakhidze introduced the following concepts: “Global war party” and “local war party”, which were frequently used afterwards.

According to messages coming from authorities, senators, ambassadors and EU parliament members were igniting polarization in the country and wanted to arrange a coup d'état in agreement with non-governmental organizations and UNM, while the government wanted to maintain peace and stability. People's Power repeated a similar narrative. Leaders of the People's Power mentioned funding from the United States, which was spent not on the country but on agents (NGOs, UNM), which were involved in the coup. Statements of the People's Power leaders included discreditation of the US and European ambassadors, references that American officials, NGOs, local radicals are waging a campaign in Georgia. That the then US Ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan, was a political side. That they were hiding under the mask of friendship, interfering into the country's internal affairs, and wanted to drag Georgia into a war. People's Power noted in its letter that in 2004-2012 the government of Georgia was comprised of foreign agents and all the misfortunes (torture, monopolization of media, repression of businesses, handing territories to Russia) took place not only through the silent support of foreign partners of the regime, but by their direct order.

***Discreditation of non-governmental organizations and their donors based on the church and the fight against traditions***

In January-February 2023, discreditation of NGOs continued and religious leaders and historians were also involved in the process. The focus was on rich NGOs not being church-oriented and there were indirect hints that interference into the work of the church was in the interests of donors. Several days before the initiation of the law, People's Power spread the statement, which implied that membership in the European Union meant the loss of stability and traditional values for Georgia (LGBT propaganda was mentioned as well). “...When we see how they are imposing LGBT propaganda on us and how they are countering traditional values; when we see how the EU-funded Georgian NGOs are hostile against the church and the state... Naturally, the question arises, has the European Union crossed to line, which principally refutes its civilizational charm?” ([February 10, 2023](#)).

### ***Initiation of the law and the narrative of dragging Georgia into war***

On February 14 2023, People's Power announced the law on foreign influence and media space. The law on the transparency of foreign influence was initiated in the Parliament of Georgia on [February 20](#). Representatives of People's Power pointed out that similar laws operate in the United States and in other democratic countries. According to them, EU parliament members (partners of the National Movement) were blocking the money of Bidzina Ivanishvili because he did not open the second front in Georgia. They were saying that non-governmental organizations together with UNM were calling on people to illegally change the government, and after adopting this law the non-governmental sector would not be able to organize a revolution with money from abroad. They were using the phrase "funded from abroad" but did not mention the West per se. They were also criticizing the EU resolution and particularly highlighted the part, which concerned the demand to free Mikheil Saakashvili. They named transparency as the only goal of the law. They considered negative assessments of the law by foreign actors as superficial and claimed that the law would not hinder Georgia's EU integration.

### ***Transparency and the double-faceted game of the west***

On March 2, after the first hearing of the law, authorities were underlining transparency once again. They were saying that people should know what donor funds are spent on. Funding received from the West and from Russia was discussed at the same level. They were claiming that funding of the non-governmental sector resulted in campaigns against energy independence. [Irakli Kobakhidze](#) underlined the "double-faceted" game of the European Union: You cannot fund radical organizations ("Droa", "Sirtskhvilia") and demand depolarization at the same time. Kobakhidze was mentioning the desire for non-governmental organizations to fight against the church, and said people had the right to know who funded those who admonish the church.

Mamuka Mdinardze's statements indirectly indicated an anti-Western narrative as well, in which he spoke about the need to regulate grants from both the West and Russia. His statements were confusing to a certain extent because, on the one hand, he mentioned foreign funding, funding received from partner countries, and thereby he discussed Russian interest. According to Mdinardze's statement, NGOs receiving foreign funding wage campaigns against the Patriarch's Office and the Patriarch, and want to plunge the Georgian church and state into chaos, ignite revolution, and drag the country into war. This is why they are opposing the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence.

A leader of People's Power, [Sozar Subari](#), focused on security. Adoption of the law was a way to avoid foreign threats. According to him, after the adoption of the law, the non-governmental sector would not be able to "brainwash people" and spark a revolution with the money received from abroad, like in 2003 during the Rose Revolution.

### ***Mass protest against the law and continuation of the anti-western rhetoric***

Discussion of the law on the transparency of foreign influence was followed by a large protest wave. On [March 7-9](#) the protest reached its culmination. Parallel to that, anti-Western rhetoric continued. Leaders of the Georgian Dream and People's Power still claimed that the non-governmental sector and the opposition are foreign agents. They continued focusing on criticism of the church, "LGBT propaganda", revolution, attempts to rig elections, and weakening of energy independence. "Sirtskhvia" and "Droa" were referred to as Russian interest bearers. "People's Power" said that the United States wanted to organize a second "Maidan" in Georgia. They spoke about molotov cocktails, armament, illegal actions, and the manipulation of young people, which was funded from abroad. "It's a fact that yes, the US Embassy and in this case the United States gave the green light to these processes, which, unfortunately, developed in our state. I have no doubts along with those illegal actions that there is one goal – organize a second Maidan in Georgia." (Tamta Megrelishvili, "People's Power").

In the same period the phrase "to Europe with dignity" was spread; authorities were actively reiterating that phrase in their statements. Members of "People's Power" and the authorities pointed out that we do not want a "single-legged, slavish attitude". We want to join Europe with dignity.

### ***The law revoked to protect young people and continuation of criticism of NGOs and the West***

[On March 10<sup>th</sup>](#), the Parliament of Georgia revoked the law. Afterwards, the focus of the authorities switched to young people, their security, and welfare. However, the next day it continued with highlighting the advantages of the law and the similarities with American legislation. According to the statement of People's Power, the law revealed agents in the country without being adopted, and the government revoked the law in order to avoid unrest and to protect young people. They said that calling the law "Russian" was a deceptive campaign, through which foreign donors sidestepped transparency. Their statements were controversial as sometimes they opposed specific individuals and not the European Union; however, at the same time they criticized the EU resolution and European values.

During this period they used the terms "fascism" and "bolshevism". They said that demonstrators and opposers of the law followed tactics characteristic of "liberal fascism" and bolshevism. One of the leaders

of People's Power, Davit Kartvelishvili, tried to discredit the West using examples of fascism, the Ku Klux Klan and the Black Lives Matter movements. Parallel to that, along with anti-Western messaging, the Prime Minister was making anti-Ukrainian statements as well. He accused the West of disrespecting the sovereignty of Georgia. He was saying that labeling the law "Russian" and people's sensitivity towards the occupation, caused unrest.

Statements of the then Prime Minister, [Irakli Gharibashvili](#), were of interest as, besides the anti-Western narrative, they carried anti-Ukrainian elements as well: "When a person in war finds time and responds to a destructive rally of several thousand people in Georgia, it is already direct evidence that this person is engaged, motivated to make something happen here as well." According to him, the ongoing processes was an attempt of hostile foreign powers to ignite destabilization and bring war to Georgia.

### ***The desire of the United States to gain hold of the Georgian judicial system***

On April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the US State Department imposed visa restrictions to three acting and one former [judge](#), as well as their family members. According to statements in April from authorities and People's Power, the United States' sanctioning of Georgian judges was not in the essence of partnership. The statements mentioned "Ukrainization" of the judicial system. They claimed Americans worked constantly to recruit their own agents in the court. They actively used privileges as study visits to the United States, participation in trainings and other events, various paid activities, which posed a serious threat to the sovereignty of Georgia. If Georgia would not be able to maintain independence of court, it would fully lose sovereignty and return to the "grave past" of 2004-2012 when the court system was one of the main repressive instruments of the "bloody agentocracy".

### ***Sanctions against Russia and the attempt of the 'global war party' to drag the country into the war***

On May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Russia [abolished its visa regime](#) with Georgia and removed its ban on direct flights. In that period, along with this topic, sanctions imposed on Russia by the West became relevant and the issue of Georgia joining or not joining in the sanctions. According to authorities, by imposing sanctions against Russia would tarnish its relations with the country and this was the main goal of the foreign actors. "...The practically declared goal of the global or regional war party is to drag Georgia into war", as phrased by [Mamuka Mdinaradze](#) on foreign actors and specifically the "global war party".

A leader of People's Power [Sozar Subari](#) called the US Ambassador, EU parliament members, and the European Commission “bitter friends”<sup>3</sup> and said that they acted with double standards, they were using Russia’s resources themselves and asking Georgia to impose sanctions. They put on national dress and called upon Georgia to accept LGBT propaganda.

### ***Preparing for a revolution***

At the same time, the chairman of the parliament [Shalva Papuashvili](#) spoke about trainings on how to use weapons funded by foreign money, which served the ultimate goal of encouraging people to take up weapons and become violent, for example throwing molotov cocktails. “There is no place for foreign money in Georgian politics and all donor organizations involved in this should immediately stop.” as said by Papuashvili.

Despite the fact that the given study concluded with the period before June 2023, several important events took place after that, which influenced the rhetoric of authorities. On [December 14, 2023](#) Georgia was granted EU membership candidate status. On [April 3, 2024](#) the leader of the parliamentary majority Mamuka Mdinardze announced reinitiation of the law on ‘foreign agents’. According to him, the content of the law was the same. In this version of the draft law the term “agent of foreign influence” was replaced with “organization acting upon the interests of a foreign power”. Despite [the long term mass protests](#) and calls of the European and US partners and criticism, Parliament adopted the law on the transparency of foreign influence on [May 14](#) on the third and final hearing; and afterwards it overrode the veto of the president, Salome Zourabichvili.

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<sup>3</sup> In Georgian, the word “friend” replaces a common phrase “დაუძინებელი მტრები,” which means bitter enemies or sworn enemies, referring to the ‘fake’ friendship.



## PHASE 1: THE PERIOD BEFORE THE START OF DISCUSSIONS ON THE LAW ON THE TRANSPARENCY OF FOREIGN INFLUENCE (JUNE-OCTOBER 2022)

*In the first phase of the study, which includes the period from June to the end of October, 2022, and especially during summer, anti-Western rhetoric was relatively covert. The main emphasis was made on discrediting NGOs and the opposition, and Western organizations or countries were mentioned indirectly as their funders. It is confirmed by the most frequent narratives of this period, which state NGOs along with the opposition are trying to support instability, to create a political crisis, to replace the government, and to bring political processes to the streets. And that a group of rich NGOs receive millions from donor organizations and serve their own interests.*

*Three non-governmental organizations were subject to particular discrediting: Transparency International – Georgia, ISFED, and the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association. Along with frequent narratives spread on Facebook during that period, from time to time there were references to these NGOs opposing Georgian values and the church, and generally agreeing to fulfill any demand from their funders.*

*In the same phase it was common to see NGOs and opposition, specifically the UNM, linked with each other and identifying them as the same or similar, mostly in statements from Irakli Kobakhidze.*

*In the second half of phase one, since August, especially after the establishment of "People's Power", anti-Western rhetoric became more specific and addressed particular actors. One of the main targets of criticism was the US Ambassador Kelly Degnan, labelled "void of ideology", and "a monster". The concept of a "global game" emerged, and "People's Power" started talking about the main goal of the West more openly, which was dragging Georgia into war and Georgia opening a "second front".*

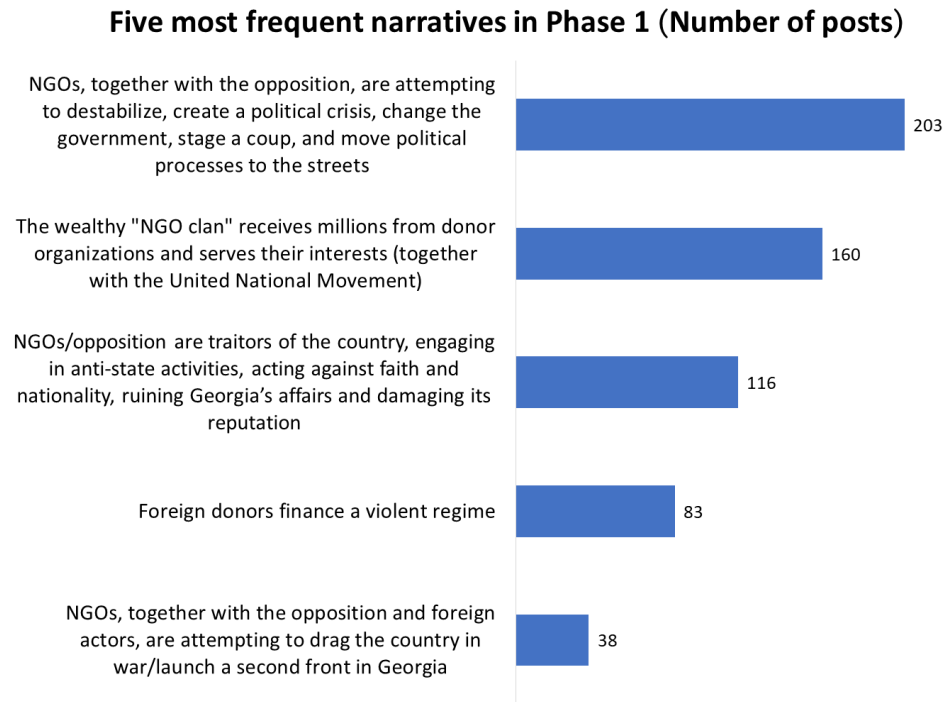
*In phase one, authors of the post often were news media outlets: TV Imedi, media holding Kvira, InterPressNews, Pos TV, Ongo.ge, and the Georgian Times. Contentwise, discreditation of non-governmental organizations and the opposition was often from various authorities and members of "People's Power". However, the main ones to spread the information were often specific individuals, such as Ghia Abashidze, Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, also anonymous poster, which appeared to be middle-aged and elderly women, and in which case was often impossible to verify the profiles' authenticity. Often, posts spreading anti-Western narratives were shared in public groups. The majority of such groups were pro-governmental groups and groups supporting the conservative movement.*

In phase one of the study, which continued from June to the end of October 2022, several main narratives shaped the statements of authorities. They spoke of "a clan of rich NGOs", which receives millions from foreign organizations and serves their interests. NGOs were mentioned in connection with UNM and they stated that, together with the opposition, they are trying to create instability, to create a political crisis,

and to replace the government through a coup. Along with that, non-governmental organizations and the opposition were jointly represented as traitors of the country, as subjects acting against the Orthodox religion and the Georgian nation, which ruined the reputation of the country. Also, an important narrative concerned foreign donors funding the violent regime and all three together (non-governmental organizations, the opposition, and foreign actors) trying to drag the country into war, and to open a “second front” against Russia in Georgia.

The top five narratives most frequently discussed in Facebook posts during that period are displayed in Chart 1. Facebook posts frequently spoke about NGOs and the opposition trying to create a political crisis in the country and to organize a coup.

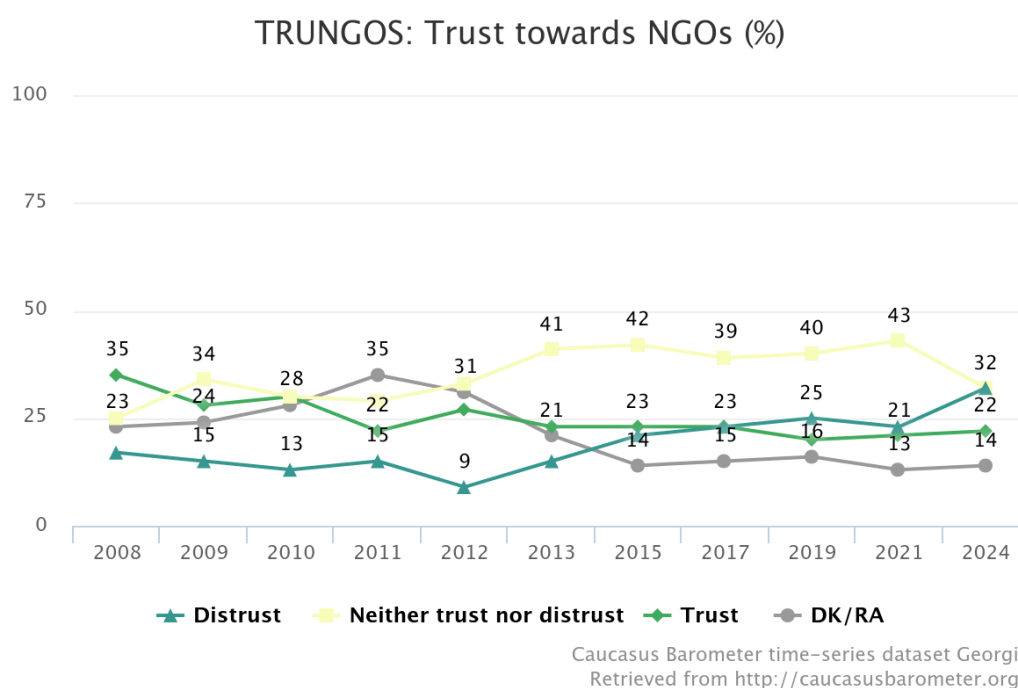
Chart 1: Five most frequent narratives of phase one



Qualitative analysis of Facebook posts reveals that at the beginning of the one-year period of the study, phase one, which includes the period from June 2022 to October 2022, is characterized with more covert and indirect anti-Western narratives, which mostly criticized and aimed to discredit the opposition and NGOs, and only briefly mentions their funders, organizations and countries representing the West. This phase began by preparing the ground for anti-Western attitudes, which became more intense towards the end of phase one, and criticism and discreditation of particular foreign actors, such as, the American ambassador to Georgia, for example, became more severe.

Interestingly, anti-Western narratives take place based on and parallel to the discreditation of non-governmental organizations. The civil sector does not enjoy high public trust. Only slightly more than a fifth of the Georgian population ([22%](#)) trusts NGOs, and this has not changed much for the last ten years. Based on the data from 2024, trust towards NGOs is not much different from public trust towards state institutions such as Parliament ([22%](#)) or the judicial system ([23%](#)). Nevertheless, notably, in 2024 distrust towards NGOs has grown to [32%](#) and is the highest in the last 15 years.

*Chart 2: Public trust towards non-governmental organizations, Caucasus Barometer 2024*



In Facebook posts, primarily, the legitimacy of NGOs is questioned. They are represented as organizations that receive legitimacy not from the Georgian people, but from abroad. At the same time, the private and non-democratic structure of the organizations is highlighted. Parallel to that, Facebook posts point out the wealth and elitism of NGOs, which, in the context of poverty and high levels of inequality in the country, presents them as out-of-touch from regular people.

Several non-governmental organizations are the main subject of criticism and attacks. These are: Transparency International – Georgia, International Society of Free Elections and Democracy (ISFED), and the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA). They are accused of lacking of transparency, receiving millions of dollars which they spend indiscriminately, and this raises doubt, suggesting funds are used to incite political instability and crisis in Georgia. According to narratives being spread, they are sharing

disinformation, distorting Georgia's image abroad, and want to obtain influence over the judiciary, in order to free Mikheil Saakashvili and Nika Gvaramia. Aside from this, they are against Georgian values and the church, and generally, they are ready to accept any order of from their funders.

Parallel to these narratives, the non-governmental sector and civil society are being associated and equated with UNM, while the positions of the Georgian Dream party are aligned with state interests. Posts that spread information from pro-government television stations, Imedi TV and PostTV, often rely on statements from Irakli Kobakhidze, according to which, "the boundary between the National Movement and the richest NGOs operating in Georgia has disappeared." Along with emphasizing the connections between NGOs and UNM, some videos feature footage of protests being dispersed during UNM's rule, which aims to further discredit both opposition parties and NGOs.

Along with NGOs, the target of attacks was the then Public Defender, Nino Lomjaria. From the opposition, the UNM, as well as within the frame of Russian funding, are also targeted: Elene Khoshtaria and the "Droa" party. Sometimes there is an interpretation that non-governmental organizations and the opposition "are doing Russia's (FSB's, Russian Security Services') work with America's money," and under the guise of pro-Europeanism, they are trying to create political chaos and damage the country's reputation.

This phase is characterized by references to the civil society sector using terms like: "big-shot NGOs," "the clan of rich NGOs", "monopolist NGOs", "radical opposition", "foreign influence agents", "war party", "nomenclature nazis", wordplay with the short form of "national" in from the United National Movement's name, which in Georgian resembles the English word, "nazi", "NGOs with zero popular support", "NGOs - American agents", "Aunt Kelly" [referring to the then US Ambassador to Georgia], and "Captain Gigauri" [Eka Gigauri, head of Transparency International Georgia]. Some posts, which are in the form of videos, feature dollar bills to emphasize the greediness of non-governmental organizations.

This is followed by mentions from government representatives of the "great global game," about whom representatives of the "Georgian Dream" refrain from speaking in detail. However, the group "People's Power," which split from "Georgian Dream," speaks more directly about it, claiming that the West "reveals its true intentions" — which is war in Georgia and the opening of a "second front". Their main narrative is as follows: The West, as before, is financing the UNM and its "violent regime" and wants to change the government through violent-revolutionary means to drag Georgia into war. In the context of the global "great game," the billionaire and philanthropist George Soros is occasionally mentioned.

The narrative about the West dragging Georgia into war is contrasted with statements by then-Prime Minister Gharibashvili and other government representatives about peace, stating that the country is doing everything to maintain peace and does not allow NGOs and radicals to open the second front in the country. This is implicitly criticism of the West, the United States, and other partner countries, as they are blamed for this very pressure. In this context, phrases like "American agents", "global American scenario", "radical war party", "the West lobbies morally bankrupt Nazis" and "the Soviet Union was a delicate emotions organization compared to this alliance" are heard.

*"The Chairman of the "Georgian Dream" referred to the European People's Party as a criminal group, and quite justly. During the period of Mikheil Saakashvili's rule, this party of cruel people used to take a lot of money from Georgia under the pretext of lobbying, with the case being handled by Giga Bokeria. From the autumn of 2012, "undeserved" financing stopped, and since then, they started barking like hungry dogs at the end of a remote village, as dogs tend to do. The dogs attacked Bidzina Ivanishvili, saying, "we must sanction him," claiming he is hindering democratic governance in Georgia. Kubilius has said, we are taking care of the Georgian people in this case. Did you hear that? Kubilius and Marketa are taking care of the Georgian people, not Bidzina Ivanishvili, who, on the contrary, is posing a threat to the democratic order. And yet, he is not opening the second front. If he's an honest man, why doesn't he declare war on Russia?" (["Saerto Gazeti" \[Joint Newspaper\], July 21, 2022](#))*

In the second half of the first phase, the US and the American Ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan, become another prominent target of anti-Western narratives. She is particularly criticized by representatives of "People's Power", who accuse her of attempting to overthrow Georgia's legitimate government through a coalition with the opposition and of trying to drag Georgia into war. Kelly Degnan is referred to as the "disoriented" American Ambassador to Georgia, who openly violates Georgia's constitution and interferes in judicial decisions, is biased towards the "radical opposition", and, towards NGOs, and intervenes in electoral processes. The following phrases appear in posts and comments about her: "monster", "usurper", "to be expelled from the country". They also question the aid provided by the US to Georgia, accusing America of turning a blind eye to all violations of the law during the rule of UNM, because that government was fully serving their interests. In the context of criticism of the US, there is also a narrative claiming that the United States has "occupied" Georgia for 30 years and now it is time to cease their rule.



The authors of posts were often media outlets such as Imedi TV, the media holding Kvira, InterPressNews, PosTV; also, Gia Abashidze, and Nikoloz Mzhavanadze. The spread of these narratives on Facebook rarely relies on any initial information source. When a source is cited, it refers to news/media pages (Imedi, PosTV, Ongo.ge, Georgian Times). Most of the time, unknown individuals spread the narratives of People's Power or the ruling party in various groups. Among these unknown individuals, there were often middle-aged and elderly women, whose true identities were not verifiable. Also, among these unknown individuals were "Taso Xunturi" and "Qeta Saakadze," who shared the same anti-Western narratives in many different groups attempting to discredit the opposition and NGOs. A common feature of these two private profiles is that their biographic information is filled out, and they have posted photos. It is hard to tell whether these photos belong to the actual profile owners. However, the photos are often displayed in a sexualized manner or in-line with mainstream feminine beauty-standards, likely aimed at catching the attention of male users on social media, who tend to make-up much of the profiles' friends lists, while spreading their desired narrative among them. However, among the individuals spreading anti-Western narratives, there were also profiles that are likely inauthentic, as they had very few photos and friends (e.g., Kotik Gigin, Marina Ganiashvili, Alexandre Lomtadze, Gela Gurgenidze).

During the first phase, we encountered fewer photo-video manipulations. However, it is worth noting the page "[Sinamdvileshi](#)" [In Reality], which is similar to fact-checking pages, but is explicitly aimed at criticizing and discrediting the opposition and NGOs. Their style is to post black-and-white photos of opposition or NGO representatives with red stamps saying phrases such as "anti-Georgian propaganda", "party NGO", "false narrative", "disinformation", among other phrases meant to discredit them.

Posts that developed anti-Western narratives were often presented in public groups. These were mostly pro-government and conservative movement supporter groups, such as: "Bidzina Ivanishvili - Positive and Negative", "Bidzina Ivanishvili's Friends on Facebook", "Corona Mafia", "Conservative Movement - Mestia", and "Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Future Generation #official."

In the comments of the posts, people mostly shared the opinions of the post, which was not surprising, as these posts mostly spread in government-supporting groups. However, there was little substantive discussion in the comments. The language used by the authors of the comments, the key words, and sometimes the style of writing, closely resemble each other, both in the text itself and in their level of radicalism, raising suspicion that they may be part of an organized group.

## PHASE 2: THE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 2022 TO MID-FEBRUARY 2023, BEFORE THE INITIATION OF THE LAW

*From November 2022 to February 2023, the discrediting of the non-governmental sector and the portrayal of the West as a force protecting criminals became more active. The discussion, which started in the previous phase, that local organizations, funded by the West, are fighting against Georgian values and the church, became more pronounced in this phase, particularly in the context that EU membership would mean the loss of freedom for people and the establishment of an “agentocracy” devoid of traditional values. The West was attempting to impose its own values, and among these values were same-sex marriage and LGBT parades, which were opposed by the church and the state, making a morally crisis-stricken Europe less appealing to Georgians. On [December 14](#), the European Union granted Georgia the status of a candidate for membership. However, part of the anti-Western rhetoric was that the status did not necessarily mean future membership.*

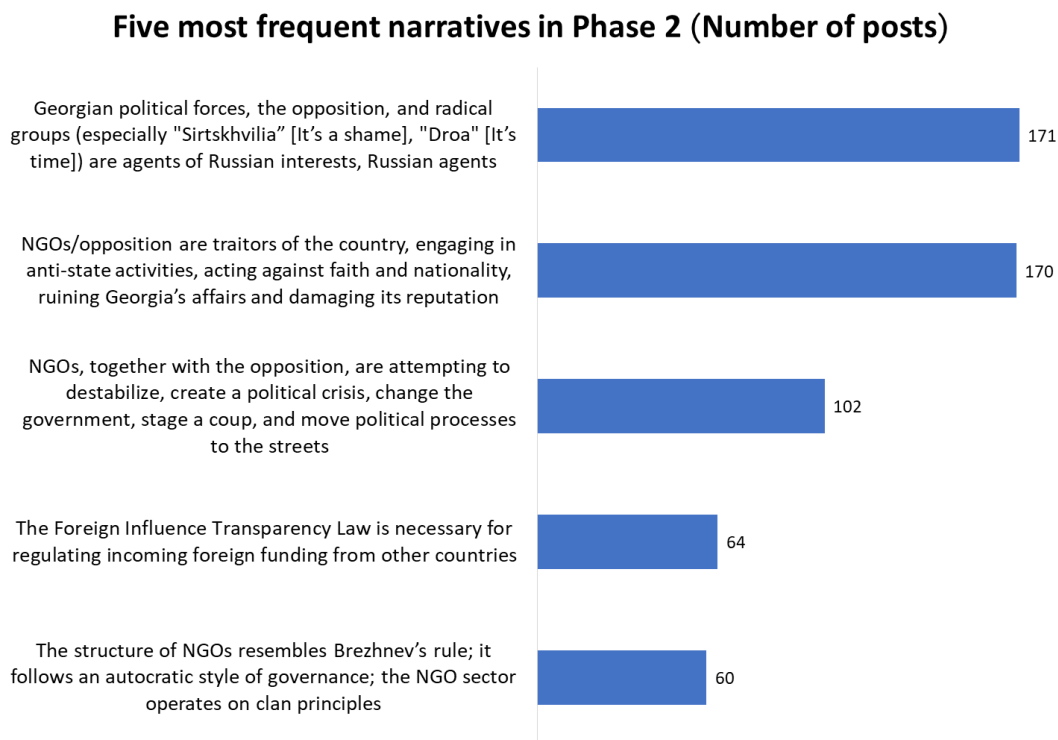
*Agentocracy and agents were among the top key terms during this period, used to show that the West, specifically the USA, wanted to bring its agents into the Georgian government. A parallel was also drawn with the government of the UNM, which was seen as subservient to the West and brought war to the country, and with the Ukrainian government, which was embroiled in war for the same reason. Therefore, the narrative of Georgia’s involvement in the war remained relevant during this period. In the second phase, the terms “war party” and “global war party” became more frequent, sometimes referring to UNMt and at other times to a non-partisan global alliance. The US was often considered the main financier of the radical war party. Occasionally, these “external forces” were represented as the ruling powers of the US and the European Union.*

*While in the first phase of the monitoring the main target of anti-Western narratives among foreign actors was the US and the American ambassador in Georgia, after October, the negative wave intensified towards European parliament members, especially after the European Commission gave Georgia a 12-point recommendation. Specific European MPs were accused of being agents, being friends of the radical opposition, and of unjustly persecuting Bidzina Ivanishvili.*

*Posts containing anti-Western narratives were often based on statements from People’s Power. Their main disseminators were either media outlets, official pages of politicians, or private profiles that created an impression of being fake. Among the media outlets, the posts from PosTV and its pages were distinctly anti-Western and critical, while Imedi’s posts were somewhat more measured. Among private individuals, during this period, members of the ruling party such as Vladimir Bozhadze, former member of Georgian Dream Vato Shakarashvili, and Zaza Shatirishvili were particularly active. The latter shared long analytical texts, highlighting negative aspects of the West, and his posts were often shared both by media outlets and private profiles. One of the main spaces for the spread of anti-Western narratives were public groups.*

In the second phase, which lasted from November 2022 to February 2023, that is, until the initiation of the "Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence," narratives begin to appear in the statements of government representatives that, on one hand, portray the West as a corrupt and a criminal-protecting force or group, and on the other hand, aim to discredit specific Western politicians or organizations. Additionally, there is an open suggestion that Western politicians and organizations are fighting against Bidzina Ivanishvili, who is equated with fighting for peace and stability in the country. Government representatives emphasize that by imposing sanctions, the West is stripping the Georgian people of their independence and demanding obedience to Western orders. They also argue that EU membership would mean a loss of freedom and the establishment of an agentocracy devoid of traditional values and principles. The West (European Parliament, European Union, and US) is also fighting against traditional values in that it promotes LGBT propaganda and opposes both the church and the state.

*Chart 3: Five most frequent narratives of phase two*



In Facebook posts, during the second phase, the main focus remains on the narratives of instability and political crisis, as well as the involvement of the country in war, which are attributed to NGOs and the opposition. To some extent, these narratives overlap and complement each other. This rhetoric is sometimes followed by the continuation that NGOs and the opposition do not want stability, according

to the wishes of their “masters,” i.e., the West. In this phase, ISFED (the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy) is frequently mentioned as an election-rigging NGO.

In the second phase, most of the narratives were anti-American, with a local focus on the US Embassy. Criticism and accusations against the United States focused on its attempts to drag Georgia into war, to hinder Georgia's unification and economic stability, to destroy Ukraine, and to bring its managed “agentocracy,” i.e., the United National Movement back to power. The United States was also accused of fighting against Christianity and nationalism. Some posts claimed that America supports the gender-neutralizing everything, with examples including the “lords prayer”, and generally seeks to erase the identity of people and society.

Overall, in the second phase, one of the main key terms in the narratives was “agents” and “agentocracy”, mostly in the sense that the West, and specifically the US, seeks to bring its own agents to power in Georgia. The West finances NGOs, its own agents, which means that this money is directed not to Georgia, but to their agents. It was pointed out that such governance existed during Mikheil Saakashvili's time and ended in war, and that this is the same kind of governance in Ukraine, where there is also war. Rarely, it was also mentioned that the European Union is also an agentocracy and is controlled by the United States. The narrative repeated that being an agent means slavery, agents are slaves of the West, and for a slave, the most important thing is to please the master; they do not care about their homeland or values. In connection with this, the phrase “homelandless” [people who have no homeland] was used.

In addition, the words “radicals,” “radical opposition”, and “radical forces” were frequently used. This referred to the opposition, the United National Movement, opposition media, and NGOs. When the government mentioned the opposition, it was mostly accompanied by the word “radical”. The terms “war party” and “global war party” were also used repeatedly. Based on the context, these were likely referring to UNM at times and other times to a non-partisan global alliance. Occasionally, the US and the EU were depicted as countries/unions governed by such “foreign forces”.

The UNM was considered the center of the radical opposition, with other parties, television channels, or NGOs seen as its satellites. When discussing the “radical war party”, it was noted that it was managed from the US, and the financier was often the US. In the context of financing, sometimes Davit Kezerashvili was mentioned as an oligarch funding the “radical war party”, which was the reason why the opposition didn’t want the anti-oligarchic law to be passed, so they wouldn’t lose their source of funding. In general, during the second phase, Davit Kezerashvili was one of the main targets of criticism, with frequent

references to how he became rich "at the expense of the Georgian army" and was "[one of the main creators of the business extortion system](#)" during Saakashvili's government.

Accusations against the radical opposition were multifaceted, not only related to dragging Georgia into war but also to their fight against the church. One of the pieces of evidence cited was posts from NGO representatives on social media, who wished people a Merry Christmas on December 25th, not January 7th, when the Georgian Orthodox Church celebrates Christmas. "Rich NGOs did not wish Merry Christmas to Orthodox Christians" (TV Imedi).

During the second phase, anti-Western narratives often mentioned Ukraine, usually in a negative context, though sometimes neutrally. Criticism of Ukraine took several directions: it was undeservedly granted candidate status because it fell short of the EU compliance criteria compared to Georgia; Ukraine was sheltering Saakashvili and around ten other Georgian criminals; Ukraine's government was seen as a US agent and a puppet regime; and Ukraine was attempting to stir up trouble in Georgia and drag it into a devastating war with Russia.

In the first phase of monitoring, the main figures of anti-Western rhetoric were the NGOs, the USA, and the US Ambassador in Georgia, Kelly Dignan. However, from October onwards, negative discourse towards European Parliament members intensified, especially after the European Commission recommended that Georgia fulfill a 12-point plan to obtain candidate status. One of the key points of this recommendation was de-oligarchization, with indirect references to Bidzina Ivanishvili. A cascade of accusations against European Parliament members appeared on social media. Specific MEPs were named (Fotyga, Kubilius, Juknevičienė, Gregorová, Agramunt), who were accused of either being agents, being friendly with radical opposition, making inappropriate assessments, or unjustly persecuting Bidzina Ivanishvili. The following phrases were heard: "The Embassy's favorite, alongside the radical opposition and NGOs", "Soros affiliates in the Caucasus", "Using the Western slave political elite", "European agentocracy", "Georgia's inveterate friends", "Hiding behind the mask of friendship", "Pushing towards Ukraine's fate".

Similar to the US, the main line of criticism towards European Parliament members and, in general, the West, was their perceived threat to traditional values and religion. MEPs were accused of imposing LGBT propaganda, opposing Georgian traditional values, and the West was accused of imposing its values by force. In this context, discussions centered on the notion that gender transition for children was allowed and supported in the West, and that they were attempting to make same-sex marriages and LGBT parades



legal in Georgia as well. In general, Europe was often portrayed as an entity in moral and spiritual crisis, having lost the values that were important for Georgia. It was now seen as a unit dependent on and controlled by the USA, or "America's agentocracy". Consequently, such a weak Europe could no longer defend Georgia. EU membership was seen as leading to the establishment of agentocracy in Georgia, which would bring the United National Movement and its criminal regime back to power, and opening a second front would become inevitable. On the other hand, it was argued that the EU candidate status was not powerful and did not necessarily mean that Georgia would join the EU. Turkey was cited as an example, as it had held this status for many years.

Such narratives and posts expressing negative sentiments towards European Parliament members and the United States were often based on the views of members of the People's Power. The disseminators of these narratives were either verified sources: media outlets, official pages of politicians, or private profiles that gave the impression of being "trolls" and spread these narratives across various groups. Among the media outlets, the posts of PostTV, PostTV Analytics, and PostTV News were shared most frequently, and these were more sharply anti-Western and critical compared to, for example, Imedi's posts, which were rarer and more moderate. Among real, verified individuals, Vladimir Bozhadze, a member of the Tbilisi City Council from the "Georgian Dream", stands out, as he frequently shared anti-Western and anti-American posts from his official page. Also, Vato Shakarashvili and Zaza Shatirishvili were involved, with the latter writing extensive analytical texts to explain why the West is "bad" and unnecessary. His posts were then shared by both various media outlets and private profiles. Posts from People's Power and Georgian Idea were frequently repeated.

As for private profiles that raise doubts that these might be "trolls", the same pattern from the first phase repeats. Unrealistic profiles of young girls with many friends, who only share political posts in various groups, are common. At the same time, open groups in which these posts were shared had strange names and content, such as: Anti-Masonry. Anti-Christ' New World Order (NWO); Anti-Ecumenism; Anti-vax; Doctors / Advice (despite the description that the group was for medical questions and advice, anti-Western and political texts were often shared there), etc.

An interesting observation about the authors of the comments in the second phase is that they were mostly middle-aged or elderly people, with women being more frequent.

### PHASE 3: THE PERIOD FROM THE INITIATION UNTIL THE REVOKING OF THE LAW, FROM MID-FEBRUARY TO MARCH 10, 2023

*The third phase covers the period from the initiation of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence to its revoking, from mid-February to March 10, 2023, which is the period when mass protests were taking place in the country. The most common narrative in this phase was that this law is similar to the American one, its goal is transparency, and it is a lie that it threatens the country's Euro-Atlantic future. NGOs and the opposition are manipulating the public when they call this law "Russian". When discussing the law, the narrative often repeated, based on Irakli Kobakhidze's statement, that the law is Georgian and differs from similar American and Russian analogs in that it does not violate human rights standards. Also, frequently mentioned in connection with this narrative was the idea that NGOs oppose the law so intensely because they do not want their finances to be exposed, and they do not want it to become apparent that they are conduits for Western interests and Western propaganda, fueling polarization and extremism.*

*Alongside the emphasis on the transparency of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, the narrative also stressed that Georgia should move toward Europe with dignity, without losing its sovereignty and religion. Similarly to the second phase, the narrative of the so-called two Europes was common. One Europe, toward which Georgia is striving, has values, and these are the values that led the country to choose Europe. The second Europe, on the other hand, is weakened, devoid of these values, and wants Georgia to be its submissive executor. This "second Europe" is also, through the hands of NGOs, propagating LGBT ideals and fighting against the Orthodox Church and the Patriarch's Office.*

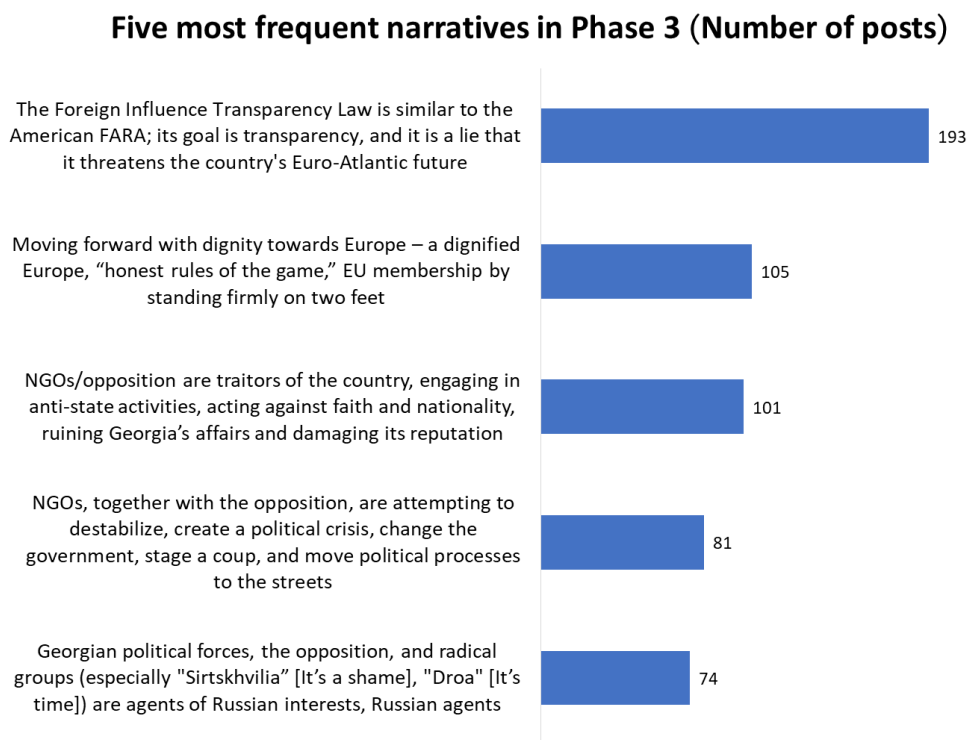
*In this phase, the war narrative was again subtly spread, suggesting that Georgia was not granted EU candidate status because it refused to open a second front. The NGOs and opposition were again equated, and the narrative discussed their desire for disorder, regime change through revolution, and the return of Saakashvili and the United National Movement. Western powers stand behind them, and this will eventually lead to the country being dragged into a war, putting it in a situation similar to Ukraine. In this context, phrases like "global war party", "local war party", and "party of war and betrayal" were used. In the same context, there was increased discrediting of the Georgian president, connecting her, on one hand, to the UNM, and on the other, to the West, whose influence she supposedly represented according to these narratives.*

*Unlike in previous phases, in this phase, anti-Western narratives mostly came from the government leaders. Posts based on the statements of Irakli Kobakhidze and Kakhaber Kaladze were frequent. People's Power and its representatives remained active, as well as Nikoloz Mzhavanadze with his show on Season TV, along with government-supporting experts and political analysts. Private profiles, often by unknown individuals, were also active, sharing the same content across various groups, raising doubts about whether they had a particular interest.*

The third phase covers the period from the initiation of the law until its revoking, from mid-February to March 10, 2023. During this time, [mass protests](#) were taking place in the country. In this phase, a great deal of attention was given by government representatives to the similarity of the bill with the American Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), and the argument that the goal of the law is transparency. Therefore, it could not be harmful and would not hinder Georgia's Euro-Atlantic path. The law would also protect the country's security and its traditions by preventing the NGO sector from using foreign funds to "brainwash" people and foment revolution. Officials from the US and European countries were said to be against financial transparency because they have things to hide, while the law was necessary to regulate foreign funding. Opponents of the bill were portrayed as enemies of the Church, faith, Georgian mentality, and ancestral traditions.

One of the anti-Western narratives was that the financiers of NGOs are fighting against the country's energy independence and that Georgian political forces, the opposition, and radical groups are agents of Russian interests. In response to those who emphasized that the law on foreign influence transparency would hinder Georgia's Euro-integration, government representatives voiced and shared phrases like: "Towards Europe with dignity," and EU membership while standing firmly on two feet.

*Chart 4: Five most frequent narratives of phase three*



During this period, one of the most common narratives on Facebook was that the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence was similar to the American *Foreign Agents Registration Act* (FARA). The narrative emphasized that the goal of the law was transparency and that it was a lie to claim it posed a threat to the country's Euro-Atlantic future. In this context, there was frequent repetition of the idea that the law initiated by People's Power had nothing in common with the Russian law, and that the opposition and NGOs were spreading false information, labeling it as a Russian law, and manipulating the public. The narrative promoted that they want to pass the law so that the people could know where NGOs and media outlets get their funding and how they spend it. Often, there was reference to the public's right to know "[who funds anti-Orthodox Bolshevik propaganda against the Church, who funds the obstruction of the country's energy development, and so on.](#)" Additionally, the narrative that followed from Irakli Kobakhidze's statement was that the law was Georgian and differed from the American version, which supposedly violates human rights standards. The Russian law was similar to the American one, while the Georgian law was considered superior because it did not involve imprisonment, only fines, and the process of registering foreign influence agents was much simpler. In a sense, the American and Russian laws were placed on the same level. It was also argued that this law could not be Russian because similar laws operate in many democratic countries, and they do not hinder the enforcement of democracy, citing examples like Australia and Israel. Also, the European Parliament was planning on passing a similar law. Moreover, it was emphasized that the law had been sent to the Venice Commission for review, and its conclusion was eagerly awaited.

Along with discussions about the main goal of the Law on the Transparency of Foreign Influence, which is transparency, there was frequent talk about how Georgia is moving towards Europe and should continue moving towards Europe with dignity, without losing its faith and sovereignty. "With dignity towards Europe" became a kind of slogan. This was discussed by both government officials, such as Irakli Kobakhidze and Kakhaber Kaladze, as well as groups or individuals associated with them: People's Power, and Nikoloz Mzhavanadze with his show Season TV. The narrative of "with dignity towards Europe" sometimes appeared with slight variations: "with Christianity towards Europe", "with sovereignty towards Europe". These texts generally created the impression that Europe is against Georgia's dignity, religion, or sovereignty. In connection with this narrative, it was also often said that Georgia should enter Europe with both feet firmly standing, that is, with dignity: "We cannot enter Europe walking on one foot". The phrase about standing on one foot refers to a statement made by the Deputy Public Defender, Giorgi Burjanadze, during the parliamentary discussion of the Law on the Transparency of Foreign Influence,

where he mentioned that a country that has applied for EU membership must do everything to achieve it, even if it has to [stand on one foot](#).

Interestingly, like in the second phase, in the third phase, we also encounter the “two Europes’ narrative”. Europe is Georgia’s goal, and the country is moving in that direction, however, the values for which Georgia chose Europe have weakened or no longer exist there. Today’s Europe wants Georgia to “stand on one foot”, “not on two”. A narrative also circulated actively, stating that the West, through non-governmental organizations, is promoting LGBT propaganda and fighting against the Orthodox Church and the Patriarch (“Those who insult the Church will never join the European Union”). The fact that [non-governmental organizations](#) criticized the increased funding for the Patriarchate and demanded transparency was used as evidence to support this claim.

Despite the fact that the main narratives during the third phase were directly revolving around the bill, the narrative of war was also spreading indirectly, claiming that EU candidate status had not been granted to Georgia because the country did not get involved in the war and did not open a second front. The narrative of punishing Georgia for not participating in the war was linked to the fact that Georgia was constantly the subject of criticism – both for the adoption of the deoligarchization law, also adopted in Ukraine, and for the attempt to pass the American law. As in previous phases, in the third phase, there was frequent discussion that the opposition and non-governmental organizations actually represent one force, that they want chaos, a forced change of government, and revolution. Behind them stands the West, which wants the return of Saakashvili and the UNM, and the ultimate result of this will be Georgia’s involvement in the war and finding itself in a situation similar to Ukraine’s. Ukraine was still mostly portrayed negatively, as being controlled by the US and serving its interests, and also as an example of what might happen in Georgia if it gets involved in the war. In this context, phrases like “global war party”, “United National Movement is the local war party”, and “party of war and betrayal” were heard. Also, in the same context, posts appeared discrediting the President. The President, who was elected with the support of the Georgian Dream, was associated with the UNM and portrayed as a person holding office under Western influence.

To a lesser extent, but still, there was continued manipulation with the theme of agents. Opposition groups, such as Droa, Sirtskhvilia, and Shetsvale were called foreign agents alongside non-governmental organizations. Donors were criticized for funding these groups, as it was claimed that this contributed to polarization and the escalation of extremism. Non-governmental organizations were accused of being carriers of Western interests and Western propaganda, and it was claimed that they criticized the



F'foreign agent law' simply because they were against financial transparency, as it would reveal corruption.

One example of the discrediting of non-governmental organizations and media outlets, which contains several main narratives discussed in the third phase, is a [post](#) shared by Davit Chubinidze in the public group "People's Army". This post, written in Russian, hints to the group members that this material is of interest to them and shares a post from Arno Khidirbegishvili, accompanied by a photo grouping international and local non-governmental organizations or opposition parties under the title of "Foreign Agents" in Georgia. In this post, non-governmental organizations and media are accused of taking millions, attempting to stage a coup in the country, bring back the previous government, and involve the country in war against Russia. A [video blog](#) from "Nemsadze David official" in the public group "Cinematography and Georgia as an Experimental Country", shared by Goga Gio Akhaladze, has similar content and pathos, also serving as an example of manipulation. The video shows old footage taken out of context, aiming to discredit opposition members and non-governmental organizations.

After being mentioned several times by Irakli Kobakhidze, the narrative about obstructing Georgia's energy independence occasionally appeared, stating that the people should know who stands behind the protest against the Namakhvani Hydro Power Plant (HPP). This alludes to both Russia, which does not want Georgia's energy independence, and Europe, as a Finnish parliamentarian criticizes the construction of the Namakhvani HPP.

In the third phase as well, there were posts shared by media outlets (Season TV, Imedi, Georgian Times, PostTV), official pages of politicians, or pro-government experts and political scientists (e.g., Soso Manjavidze, Ramaz Sakvarelidze, Nodari Nemsadze, Davit Kartvelishvili), but the authors of the posts were often profiles of unknown individuals. Most did not leave the impression of "trolls", and were more likely to be real people's profiles. However, the question arises regarding the author's interest in sharing the same posts across different groups.

As in previous phases, there were posts in the third phase whose authors resembled "trolls". For example, "Ioseb Besarionovich Stalin," who shared anti-Western posts in conservative groups. Also continuing from previous phases was the trend where young girls' profiles, filled with information and sexualized photos, with Georgian names and surnames, but with photos that depicted women with non-Georgian features. These profiles attracted friends through their photos and shared political posts. Examples of these profiles were Taso Xunturi and Nina Dzagania.

As in previous phases, most of the commentators here are middle-aged people (in the case of real profiles). More women than men. Their occupation is almost always hidden, and it is unclear whether they are public servants. The photos often show them with their families. One characteristic related to the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence is that opponents of the law are mostly younger individuals, while supporters are typically middle-aged. These young individuals and supporters often have Ukraine and EU "frames", while the opponents sometimes have the Georgian flag or "frames" like "I love my Patriarch" or "Gareji is Georgia."

#### PHASE 4: THE PERIOD AFTER REVOKING THE LAW (FROM MARCH 10 TO JUNE, 2023)

*Phase Four, which included about two months after the revoking of the law, somewhat continued the main narratives of the previous phases. On the one hand, it focused on the law's goals, transparency, and its similarities to laws in the USA and other Western countries. On the other hand, it addressed the funding of certain groups (NGOs and opposition) by the West, claiming they were attempting to organize a coup and discussing weapons and revolution.*

*Given that young people, or "Gen Z", actively participated in the March 2023 protests, the government focused particularly on them. On one hand, it was emphasized that the government revoked the law in order to protect young people and ensure their safety, suggesting that the young protestors had been misled. On the other hand, these young people were being discredited. They were referred to as "gender-confused," "anarchists," and sometimes "Satanists", who were "poisoned by Bolshevism, neoliberalism, and club drugs". In both cases, the rhetoric was accompanied by discussions about how the youth were being consciously or unconsciously used by the radical opposition and the West.*

*In this phase, terms like "liberal fascism" and "neobolshevism" emerged, both directed at opponents of the law. It was argued that these individuals, under the guise of democratic values, were fighting against their own nation and using Bolshevik methods to persecute those with differing opinions. They were accused of bullying law-supporting MPs, their family members, children, professors, and teachers. In the context of mobilizing the youth and brainwashing them, Girchi - More Freedom and Franklin Club, as well as Iliuni and Free University, were frequently mentioned.*

*As in the third phase, there was continued criticism and discrediting of President Salome Zourabichvili. She was an active opponent of the law. She was portrayed as a supporter and leader of the radical opposition, as well as an agent of the West and its plan.*

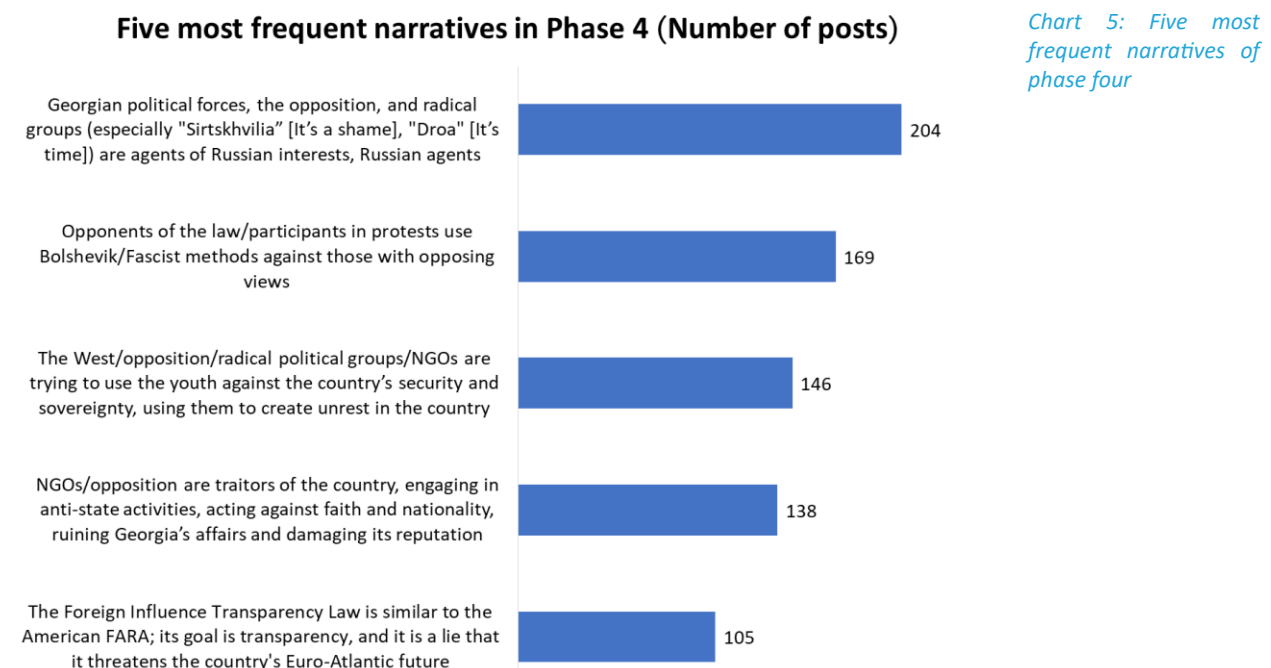
*The war threat narrative continued in the fourth phase as well. In this case, the theme of Western sanctions against Russia was used, arguing that a demand from the West for Georgia to join these sanctions would lead to military escalation with Russia, which meant that the West wanted to drag Georgia into a war.*

*Similar to the third phase, anti-Western posts in this phase were primarily based on the statements of government leaders, Irakli Kobakhidze and Irakli Gharibashvili. Also relevant were the statements of David Kartvelishvili, a member of the People's Power group. As in all phases, the disseminators of these posts included media outlets (both well-known and less-known), political organizations, and official pages of politicians, as well as familiar faces like Gia Abashidze and Nana Kakabadze, and unknown private individuals, some of whom gave the impression of being internet "trolls".*

In Phase Four, which covers the period after Parliament revoked the law, government representatives developed several narratives. On one hand, they emphasized the government's achievement in avoiding a deliberate provocation and unrest in the country, as well as protecting the lives and health of young people. On the other hand, when discussing the same youth, they claimed that the West, the opposition, and radical groups, including NGOs, were using these young people to stir up chaos in the country. Protesters were accused of using Bolshevik and fascist tactics and engaging in bullying against those with opposing views.

At the same time, government representatives criticized the West for being involved in a propaganda campaign, printing false articles in American and European media against the Georgian people. They also accused the West of illegally financing political parties in Georgia that were discussing weapons and revolution. The government members referred to the law's label as "Russian" as a phrase imported from abroad, aimed at repeating the Maidan Revolution and orchestrating a coup. They accused Western officials of acting with double standards, as they themselves were planning to begin working on a similar law within weeks.

One of the directions of the government representatives' rhetoric continued to focus on the threat of war. In this case, they referred to the pressure from the West to impose sanctions on Russia and to tighten the visa regime, claiming it put Georgia's security at risk and would harm the economy. The West's goal, they argued, was to bring a government to power in Georgia that would obey their commands, including opening a second front against Russia.



Phase Four covers the period after the revoking of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, from March 10 to June 1, 2023. In this phase, the rhetoric of government representatives, including anti-Western narratives, mainly followed the line of legitimizing the law. On one hand, it was argued that the law functions in Western countries and is accepted by them; therefore, it could not be Russian, and the West is not treating Georgia equally. A narrative emerged here stating that Georgia did not need external legitimacy and that its sovereignty should not be violated. There was also a strong emphasis on transparency, aiming to highlight the corruption and elitism of the NGO sector.

Even after the failure of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, there was frequent discussion about its similarity to the American analog and efforts to prove its non-Russian nature. It was argued that labeling the law as Russian was "[the scam of the century](#)", a PR fraud of the century, or a planted PR campaign backed by the US and its representatives in Georgia. However, now, the main purpose of raising this topic was often to accuse Western actors of playing a double game: "[What is allowed to Jupiter is not allowed to the bull](#). Georgia does not have the right to pursue its own interests". In this case, government leaders softly and indirectly stated that the bill initiated in Georgia was a direct translation of the American law, which also functioned in Canada, and that the EU was planning to adopt a similar law. However, representatives of the People's Power directly accused the West of fighting against agents and not allowing Georgia to know for what purposes they were financing "agent" and "traitor" NGOs.

In addition, in Phase Four, one of the most frequent narratives still revolved around the idea that NGOs, together with the opposition, wanted to create instability and change the government, organizing a coup in the country. This narrative was reinforced by calls heard during protests against the 'foreign agent law', where demands were made for the "Russian government" to resign. It was also emphasized that the protesters were confronting the police. Pro-government media outlets used this to spread the narrative that the opposition, labeled as "radical", "extremist", and "anarchist", sought to violently overthrow the government. The March protests were referred to as "[three-day street battles](#)", where there was an attempt to "Maidanize" the processes, and the real goal was revolution and a change of government. Occasionally, this rhetoric was combined with the narrative that behind all this was the West, seeking to restore the "old regime" to power and place their agents, as they would not resist or open a second front with Russia, similar to the current government. In Phase Four, there emerged an approach where US and EU representatives and specific politicians were less frequently mentioned, and references to a united West and the "global war party" became more common. Georgia's Western partners were accused of using double standards and violating Georgia's "rule of law and [sovereignty](#)".

When talking about NGOs, their connection to the 2003 Rose Revolution was emphasized, which allegedly brought torture, business racketeering, authoritarianism, media capture, and the loss of 20% of the country's territory. There was frequent reference to the so-called "Bakuriani trainings", which were one of the main sources behind getting young people to protest in the streets, and the activities like dancing to sirens, jumping over water jets, and handing flowers to riot police, were said to be learned from the materials discussed during these trainings.

Due to the opposition to the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, the rhetoric also included criticism of Salome Zourabichvili. Pro-government propaganda referred to President Zourabichvili as a supporter and leader of the radical opposition. "The President of Georgia supports the opposition, claps for them, and encourages the aggressors (which [casts doubt on her loyalty to Georgia](#))." She was portrayed as part of the West's plan, an agent, just like Mikheil Saakashvili. Zourabichvili's statement in Vilnius and her call to NATO to take effective steps for Georgia's membership was interpreted as a risk of turning Georgia into a military polygon. One such post was shared in the public group "NEWS – Georgia & World" by Mariam Dzarguashvili, a video excerpt, and the full link to a broadcast from "Solidarity for Peace", where international relations specialist Mikheil Zghenti draws parallels with Saakashvili and the August War and considers Salome Zourabichvili as another agent and weapon of the West: "Now they have activated, probably one of the last options is to use this lady, no matter what it costs, no matter what the price, so that we end up in the storm called Ukraine and get [dragged into the war with Russia](#)."

Due to the active participation of young people in the protests, a significant focus of the rhetoric in Phase Four was on the youth. On one hand, there was a softer approach, stating that the protesters were angry, honest young people who either didn't understand something or were misled. It was especially emphasized that students and young people hadn't even read the law and were made to protest against it without having read it. Several universities, particularly Alasania University, which, they claimed, hosted the Franklin Club, as well as Free University and Ilia University, were referred to as "Mikheil Saakashvili's liberal centers", "[liberal factories](#)", and brainwashing machines for the youth. "These universities practically represent a liberal factory where any critical thought is suppressed. While the number of critical-thinking lecturers is in serious deficit, they are under attack. This means there is an attempt to establish liberal fascism. They can no longer tolerate different opinions and are trying to erase them," it was stated in the "PostTV - Analytics video", shared by Gia Abashidze in the public group "[Protest](#)". The video compares the ongoing protest wave in Georgia to the Chinese Cultural Revolution of years past,

particularly the Hung Wei Ping movement, but this movement is described as one where students and schoolchildren fought against lecturers they considered “ideological enemies.”

In contrast, with the radical approach, the young protesters were described as brainwashed groups from the West and local radical organizations, who allegedly intended to burn police officers alive, threw Molotov cocktails at the parliament, etc. They were referred to as “gender-mazed”, “anarchist”, and sometimes even “Satanist” individuals, “poisoned by the venom of Bolshevism, neoliberalism, and club drugs”, “mentally clouded, gender-mazed, confused and lost [youth](#)”. Sometimes, Lazare Grigoriadis was implied as a collective figure under these epithets, although he was not directly named. In both cases, the rhetoric was accompanied by the idea that the youth were either directly or unknowingly used by the radical opposition and/or the West. In this context, the government cited its [concern for the youth](#) and their potential for engaging in any provocation from the opposition as a reason for revoking the ‘foreing agent law’.

There was also a narrative that the opponents of the law were acting in the best traditions of fascism and Bolshevism, masking all of this under the name of European values. In the public group “Kakha Kaladze - Georgian Dream,” the admin Nuka Arveladze shared a post from Nana Kakabadze on March 15, 2023, where she accused socially active citizens of being “liberal fascists” as a result of the neoliberal opposition’s propaganda: “A shadow is walking in Georgia, a shadow of ‘liberal’ fascism... Today, precisely under the name of these [democratic] values and the manipulation of noble slogans, irreparable scoundrels are trying to implant ‘[liberal’ fascism](#) into people’s minds and hearts, which is just a form of ordinary fascism. The only difference is that our fascists, unlike their counterparts abroad, hate their own nation and show the most cruelty towards Georgians.” The West was seen as an instigator of this narrative.

Statements were made about youth and, in general, the participants of the protests, claiming that they were bullying MPs who supported the law and were using Bolshevik methods to attack those with differing opinions: MPs, their family members, children, their professors, and teachers. Phrases like “liberal fascism” and “neobolshevism” were often heard. Irakli Kobakhidze’s statement was frequently repeated, where he pointed out that these individuals had been bullying the captain of the national basketball team, Tornike Shengelia, and footballer Khvicha Kvaratskhelia. In this context, and regarding the mobilization and brainwashing of the youth, frequent mention was made of “Girchi” and the “Franklin Club”.



Despite the fact that other issues and narratives seemed more important in the fourth phase, the threat of war narrative remained active. This was linked to the radical opposition's attempt to overthrow the government, open a second front, and the refusal to the West to open a second front, which would result in punishing the government. Also, discussions about imposing sanctions on Russia were part of this narrative. The government leaders stated that imposing sanctions on Russia would disrupt the country's economic development, leading to a "double-digit decline," and that Georgia would face the threat of war. They also argued that imposing sanctions on Russia would escalate the situation between Georgia and Russia, potentially leading to war, and would have severe economic consequences for the Georgian population, while Russia would not be damaged much more. In connection with the West, it was pointed out that the demand for sanctions indicated that the West didn't want Georgia's economic development and was attempting to pressure the government, which could lead to military escalation with Russia. Additionally, there was an emphasis on the fact that the West itself continued trading with Russia: on one hand, reducing the purchase of natural gas but increasing the purchase of liquefied gas; on the other hand, reducing the purchase of oil products from Russia but increasing the purchase of processed Russian oil products from third countries like India and Tunisia. Moreover, sanctions were not imposed on Russian diamonds because it would harm Belgium's diamond exchange.

In the fourth phase, the authors of posts, on whose statements the narratives were based, were most often Irakli Kobakhidze, Irakli Garibashvili, and David Kartvelishvili.

The post authors were mainly official media outlets (such as Imedi, PostTV, etc.), lesser-known ones (such as Exclusive Media, iNews, Nation Georgia, Applaud), political organizations and politicians, official pages of parties and groups (most frequently People's Power), familiar faces like Gia Abashidze and Nana Kakabadze, and relatively rarely, private individuals. Among the private individuals, some raised suspicions of trolling, and others seemed to have been assigned the task of sharing such posts, as their pages appeared disconnected from the posts they shared.

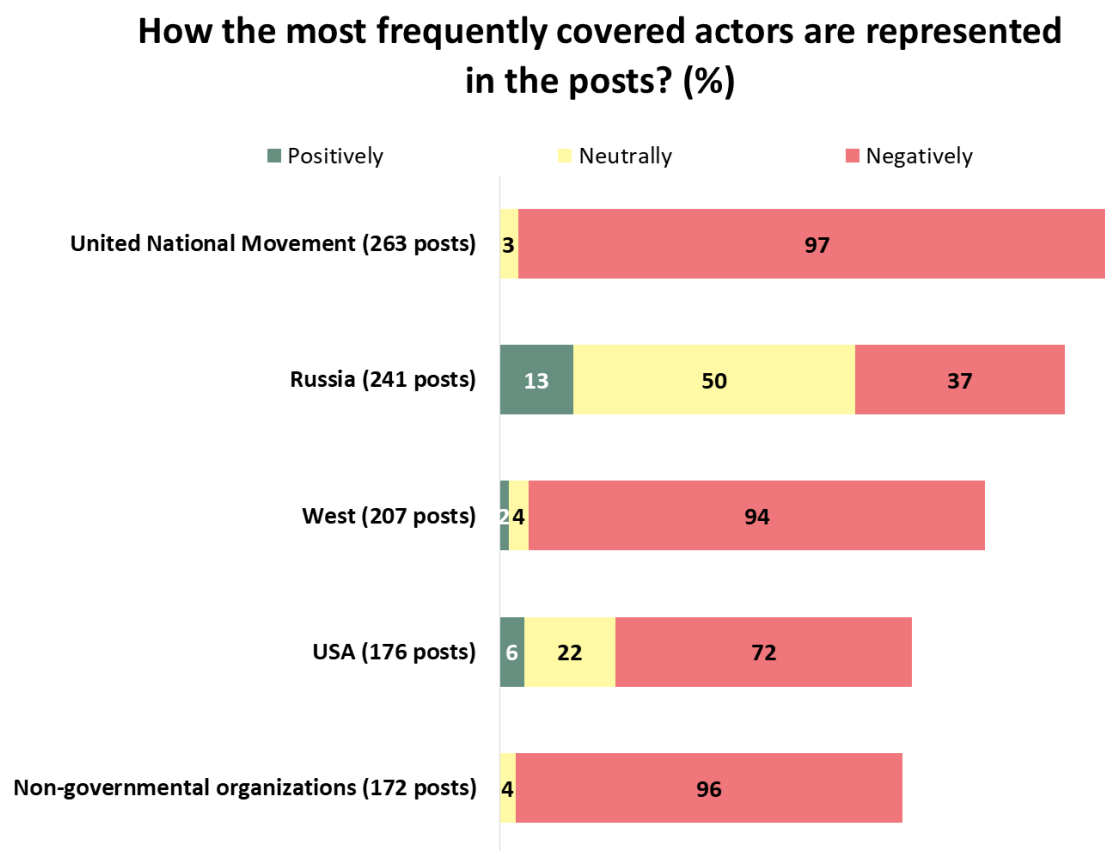
Similar to previous phases, the comment authors were mostly middle-aged or older, with women being more frequent. The authors from this age group predominantly held anti-Western and pro-government sentiments, while younger individuals had the opposite stance. Pro-government comment authors often had frames with the Georgian flag, "I love the Patriarch", and "Gareji is Georgia", while critics of the government often had frames with the Ukrainian flag and the EU flag. Comments rarely discussed the issue at hand, mostly consisting of either simple praise or, on the contrary, insults. In the fourth phase, there were more comments opposing the posts, which may be related to the level of protest mobilization.

## CONCLUSION

From June 2022 to June 2023, an analysis of anti-Western narratives promoted by the government and their spread on the social network Facebook revealed that the government was systematically discrediting non-governmental organizations, the opposition, and the West.

This is confirmed by the quantitative data collected during the research, which shows that the five most frequently mentioned actors are: the UNM, Russia, the West, the US, and non-governmental organizations. Excluding Russia, the tone of the mentions for all of them is negative in the vast majority of cases. There is no positive mention for the UNM and non-governmental organizations (see the chart).

*Chart 6: Five most frequently mentioned actors and the tone of their mentioning (number of posts)*



As for the anti-Western narratives themselves, during the first stage of the monitoring period, the anti-Western rhetoric was indirect. The main target of government criticism was non-governmental organizations, the so-called "rich NGO clan", while Western organizations or countries were only indirectly targeted, as they were seen as their financial backers.

In the following months, specific countries or representatives of these countries appeared in anti-Western narratives, such as the US and its ambassador to Georgia, Europe, and specific European parliamentarians. They were criticized as supporters of forces within the country that were attempting to overthrow the government through force and destabilize the situation, with the goal of bringing a force to power (restoring the previous ruling party) that would unquestioningly obey them and open a second front in Georgia.

The emphasis on the threat of war remained relevant throughout the entire monitoring period. This was mentioned both in the interpretation of the intentions of radical forces (opposition and non-governmental organizations) and their donors (Western countries and organizations), as well as in connection with topics such as the failure to obtain EU candidate status, seen as a punitive measure for not entering the war, or for not joining sanctions against Russia.

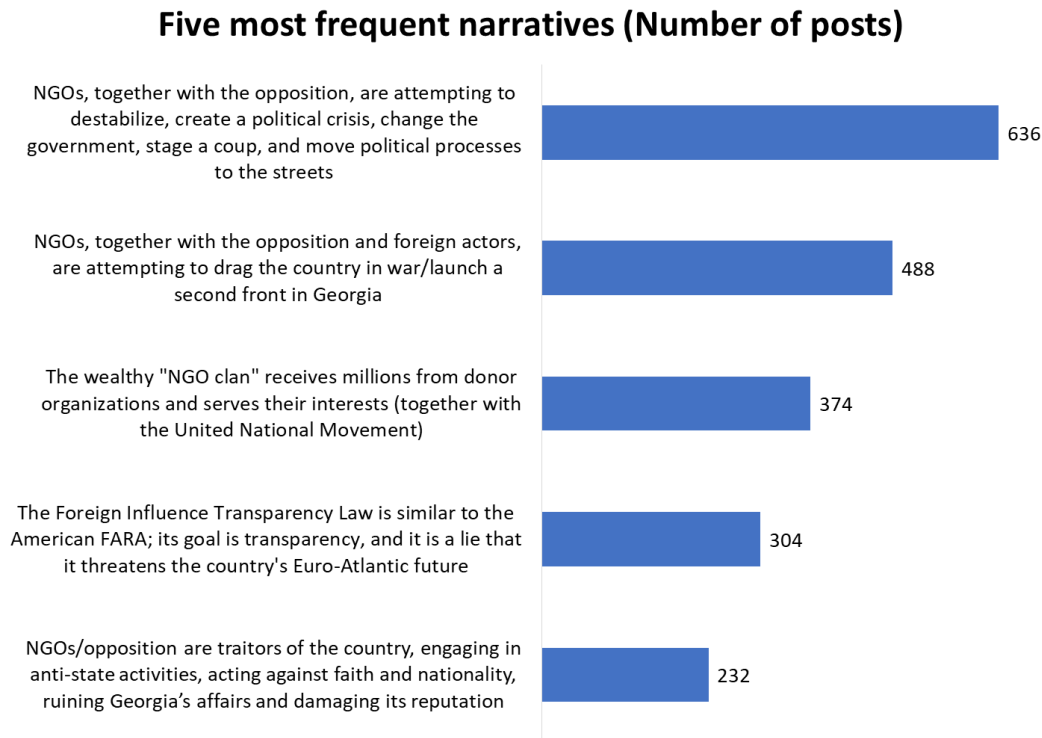
In the second phase of the monitoring period, covering the period from November 2022 to mid-February 2023, the phrase "global war party" emerged, which was used actively in the following months. This referred both to the United National Movement, which was also called the "local war party" or "party of war and betrayal", and to a non-partisan coalition, which included specific forces from the US, Ukraine, and the European Union. Ukraine was often portrayed as an example of the situation a country would find itself in if it obeyed Western instructions.

A narrative emerged claiming that the West was fighting against Georgian values and religion, attempting to force values such as same-sex marriage upon Georgia, and generally spreading "LGBT propaganda".

Starting from the second phase, the narrative spread that Europe was no longer the entity Georgia aspired to join. It was portrayed as weak, manipulated, and devoid of morality. This was Europe, which only wanted to accept Georgia "on one leg" into its ranks and would not defend its sovereignty or national values, Europe that opposed Georgian religion and traditions.

These findings are also confirmed by quantitative data. Below are the five most frequent anti-Western narratives (see chart).

Chart 7: Five most frequent anti-Western narratives (number of posts)



Notably, the initiation of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence and rhetoric surrounding it represented a culmination of the anti-Western narratives that had been voiced since the beginning of the monitoring period. This law was described as a guarantee of the country's sovereignty and security, one that would protect Georgia, including its Georgian values and religion, from external threats. It was neither American nor Russian, but Georgian, and unlike the latter two, it was not infringing on human rights.

Since young people played a special role in the wave of protests against the law, they became a major focus of rhetoric during and after the protest period. On one hand, they were portrayed as misled individuals who had been encouraged to protest the law without reading it, and on the other hand, as anarchists and sexual deviants who were allegedly being manipulated from the outside. In parallel with the discrediting of youth, previously existing targets, such as the entire civil sector, certain NGOs, and the opposition, were supplemented by two universities.

An interesting trend is that at the start of the monitoring period, anti-Western narratives were largely based on statements from the People's Power movement. It was only after the formation of this movement that the criticism of the West gained specific targets and forms. Since the initiation of the law, content based on statements from the ruling party's leaders has increased.

Regarding the authors of the posts, political party pages, individual politicians' pages, as well as those of their supporting experts and media outlets, were frequently cited. Anti-Western narratives coming from the government were often shared by private individuals through their personal profiles, which sometimes raised suspicion on of the authenticity of such profiles. At other times, questions arose about their motives, as they shared the same content across different public groups.

Public groups, in turn, became one of the main spaces for the spread of anti-Western rhetoric. It is noteworthy that these included not only openly pro-government groups, but also thematic groups that were not related to political content shared by such profiles..

## ANNEX 1 – CHARACTERISTICS OF POSTS AND THEIR DISSEMINATORS, ACTORS MENTIONED IN POSTS

### *Peculiarities of dissemination of posts*

As part of the research, a narrative analysis was conducted to identify search keywords. Using these search keywords and the CrowdTangle tool, a total of 6,280 posts were downloaded. Since the research period was divided into four phases, the narrative analysis, and consequently the search keywords, were also divided into four groups. The table below shows how many posts were downloaded using the online tool during each respective period.

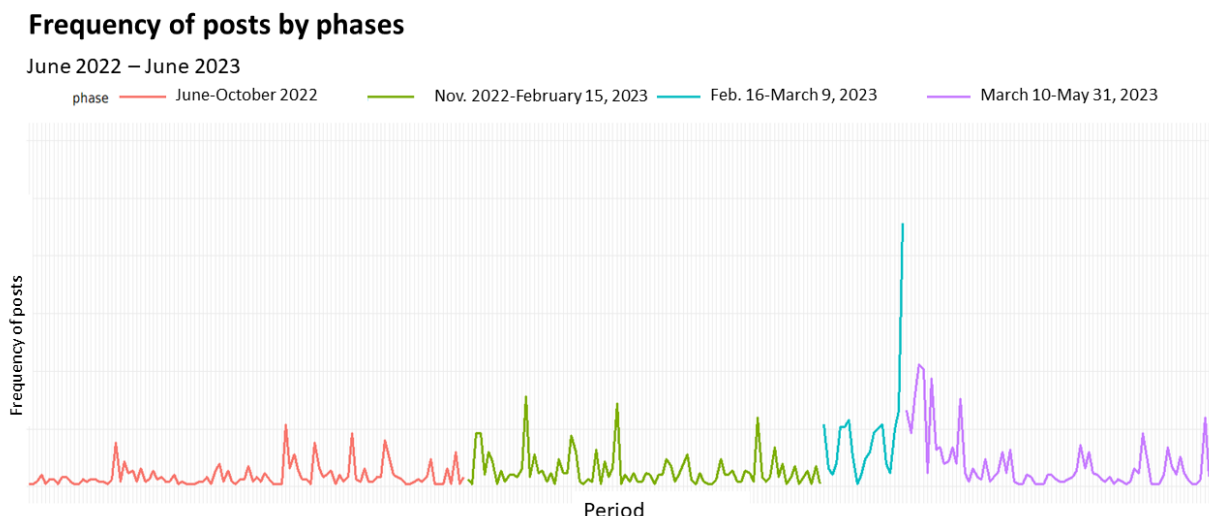
*Chart 8: The number of downloaded posts by periods (N):*

|   | Downloaded posts (N) | Relevant posts (N) |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| June-October, 2022                                      | 1557                 | 477                |
| November 2022-February 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2023          | 1584                 | 602                |
| February 16 <sup>th</sup> -March 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 | 1466                 | 440                |
| March 10 <sup>th</sup> -May 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2023     | 1673                 | 724                |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>6280</b>          | <b>2243</b>        |

Each downloaded post was individually analyzed and evaluated by media monitors for its relevance to the research topic and narratives. It was found that some posts containing the search keywords did not address the topic at all. The data analysis revealed that a total of 2,243 posts, approximately 30-40% in each phase, were relevant. The highest proportion of relevant posts was found in the last phase (43%), which is likely related to the transition to a critical phase of the issue.

This is also supported by the dynamics of post distribution. The spread of relevant posts fluctuated periodically across the four phases, with a notable peak (mode – peak) occurring at the end of the third phase (February 16, 2023 - March 9, 2023) and at the beginning of the fourth phase (March 10, 2023 - May 31, 2023) (see next diagram).

Chart 9: Frequency of post dissemination by periods (N)



It is noteworthy that the highest number of posts associated with search keywords was recorded on March 8, 2023, with particular emphasis on a video shared by Kakha Kaladze, in which the mayor of Tbilisi discusses the actions taken by the "Georgian Dream" government for European integration and the specifics of the European integration process. Additionally, a quote by Irakli Kobakhidze, which spread across various pages in the form of "cards," was frequently shared: "We will move forward to Europe with Christianity—we will move forward to Europe with dignity."

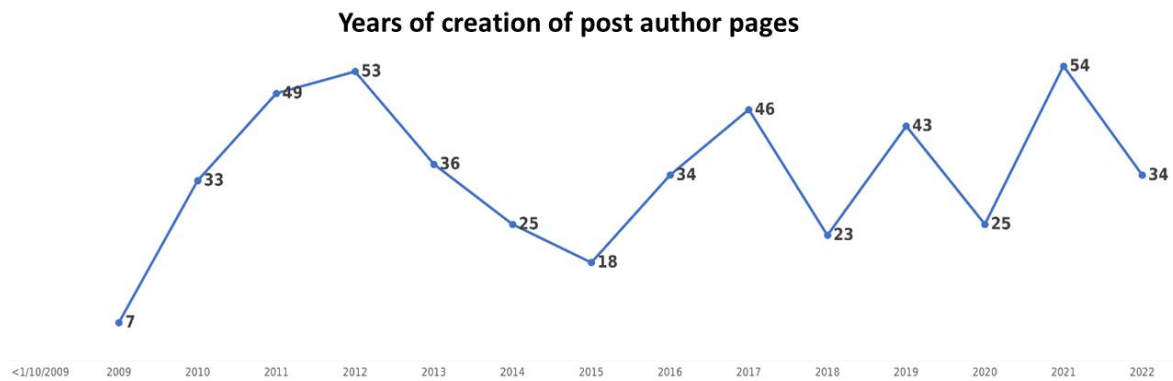
In addition to March 8, the highest number of posts were shared on March 12, 13, 14, and 16. It is significant that on March 7, the Foreign Influence Transparency Law was adopted by the parliament in the first reading, which was followed by a surge in activity on social media, both from critical perspectives and government actors.

### ***Characteristics of pages and groups disseminating posts***

Using CrowdTangle, posts were downloaded from Facebook (META) public groups, pages, and profiles. Notably, the majority of the pages that shared posts related to the topic were created in 2012, 2017, and 2021. These years are significant as they were election years, and it is possible that the creation of these pages/groups was linked to these events.



Chart 10: Years when pages spreading the posts were created



The pages/groups that posted the most content related to the research topic were: PosTV-News, People's Power, and TV Imedi. It is noteworthy that both PosTV and TV Imedi<sup>4</sup> are considered pro-government television channels, and their content develops government-friendly narratives (see Table 3). Additionally, the political party People's Power had the most frequent posts among the top three pages. This party was the one that initially initiated the aforementioned law.

Table 1: The pages with the highest number of posts related to the search keywords during the observation period, listed by the number of posts (N) (only those pages that had at least 20 posts on the topic during the research period).

| Names of pages/groups   | Number of posts |
|---|-----------------|
| PosTV - News  | 118             |
| PHPeople's Power  | 78              |
| TV Imedi  | 76              |
| PM media holding Kvira  | 57              |
| Front News - Georgia  | 39              |
| Protest   | 39              |
| PosTV - Analytics   | 32              |
| For.ge – Mews and analytical platform                           | 29              |
| Guria Times   | 28              |
| Bidzina Ivanishvili and Society                                 | 25              |
| Anti-Masonry. Anti-Christ New World Order (NOW); Anti-ecumenism | 24              |

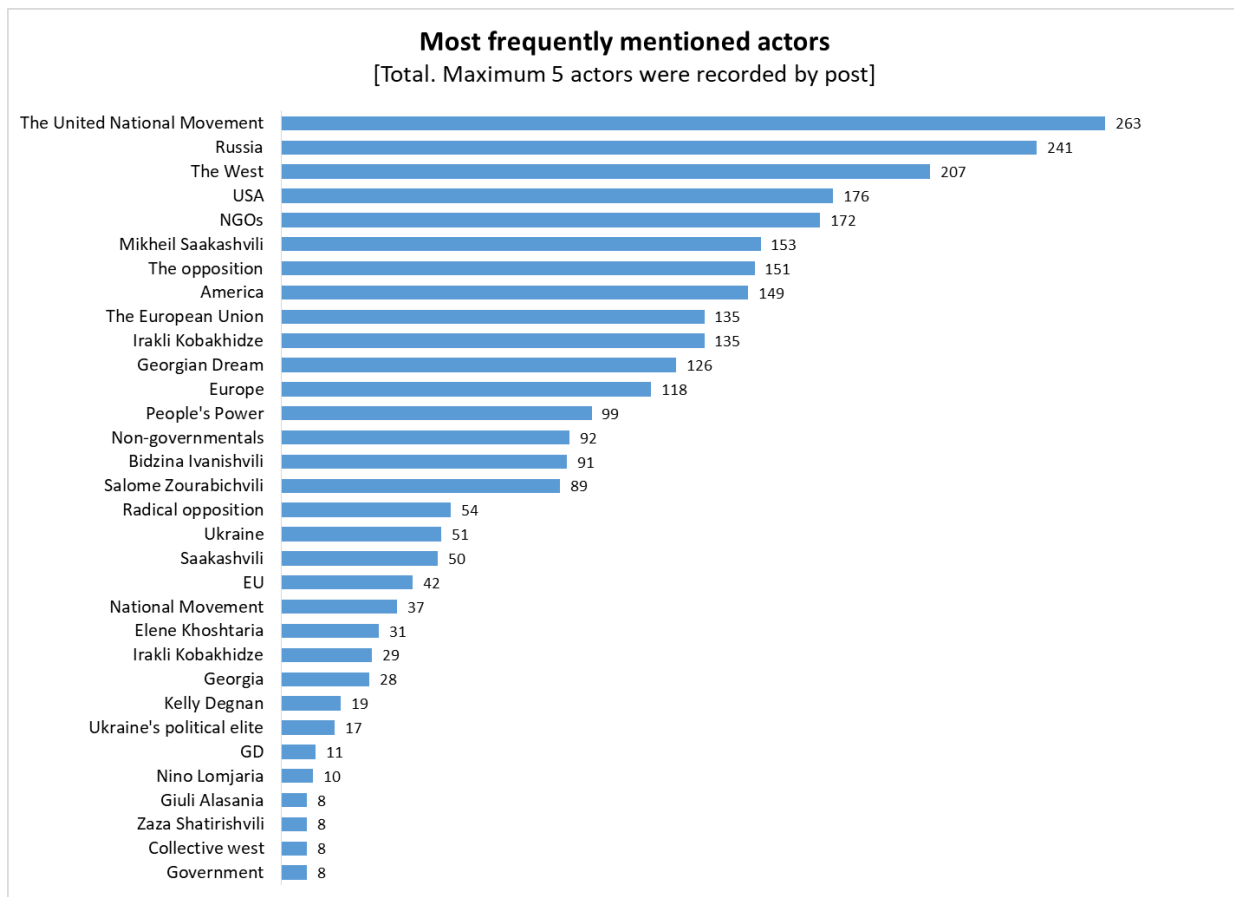
<sup>4</sup> <https://civil.ge/archives/610806>

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Kakha Kaladze – Georgian Dream | 24 |
| Radio Imedi                    | 24 |
| Most important is freedom      | 24 |
| Georgian Times. GTTV           | 23 |
| News paper                     | 22 |
| Radio Georgian Times           | 20 |
| Reporter                       | 20 |

### ***Actors mentioned in posts***

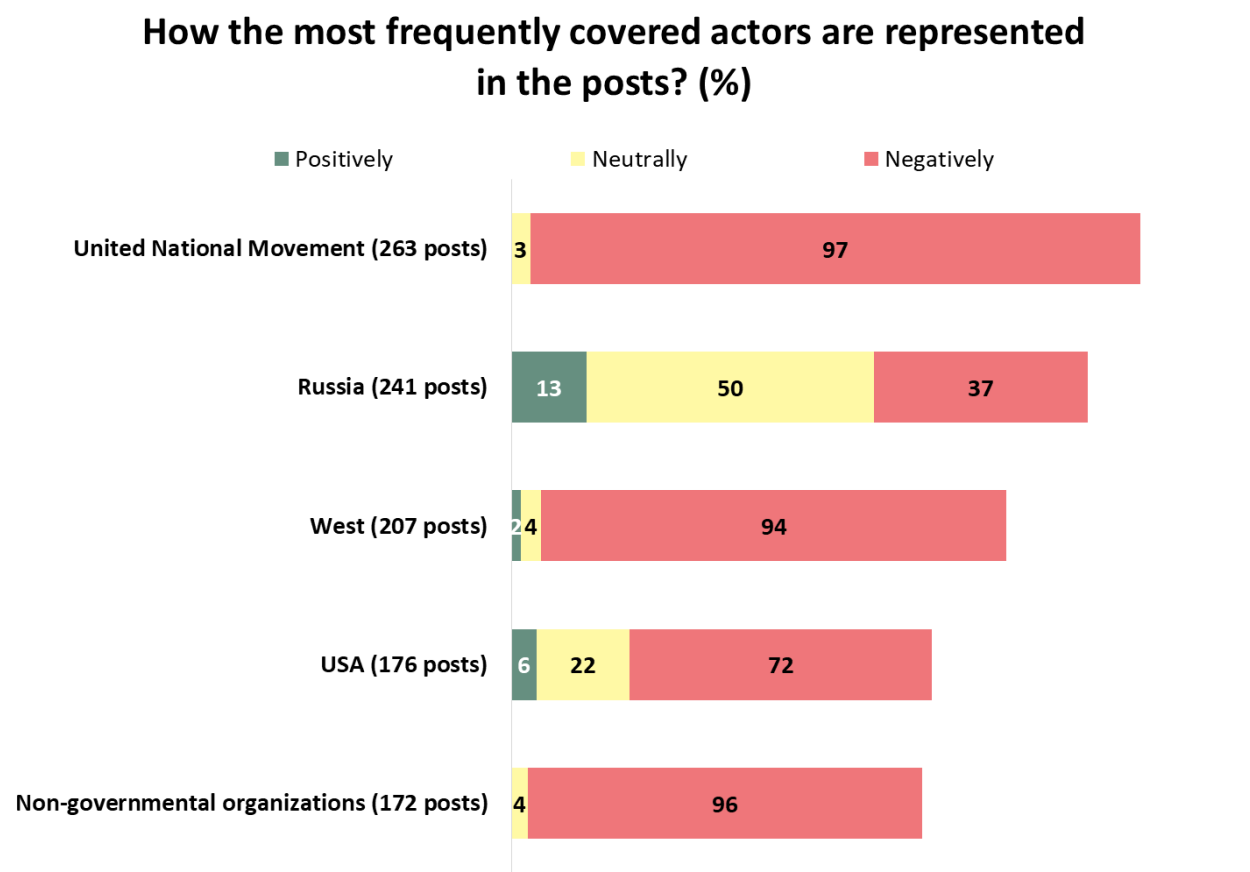
During the media monitoring process, the actors mentioned in the posts were recorded. The monitoring specialist was instructed to record a maximum of five actors per post. The diagram below shows that the most frequently mentioned actors in the posts were "the West", "the United National Movement", "the USA / America", "Russia", and "NGOs" (see the diagram below).

*Chart 11: Actors mentioned in posts, max. 5 actors. Top 20 (N):*



It is noteworthy that, among the main actors mentioned, with the exception of Russia, all were most often referenced in a negative context. The "United National Movement" was mentioned 263 times in posts, and in no instance was this actor mentioned positively; 97% of the posts that referenced it were negative. The same result was observed in relation to NGOs. Among the 172 posts mentioning NGOs, 96% referred to this actor negatively. With regards to the West, there were a few instances where it was mentioned positively, but still, 9 out of every 10 posts portrayed the West negatively. Regarding the USA, negative sentiment decreased, yet the majority of posts (72%) still depicted it in a negative light, with every fifth post mentioning it neutrally. The only exception was Russia, which appeared neutrally in more than 50% of the posts. It is noteworthy that 13% of posts portrayed Russia positively, which is the highest level of positive mention among the top actors (see Chart 5).

Chart 12: The tone of mentioning the most frequently mentioned actors (%):



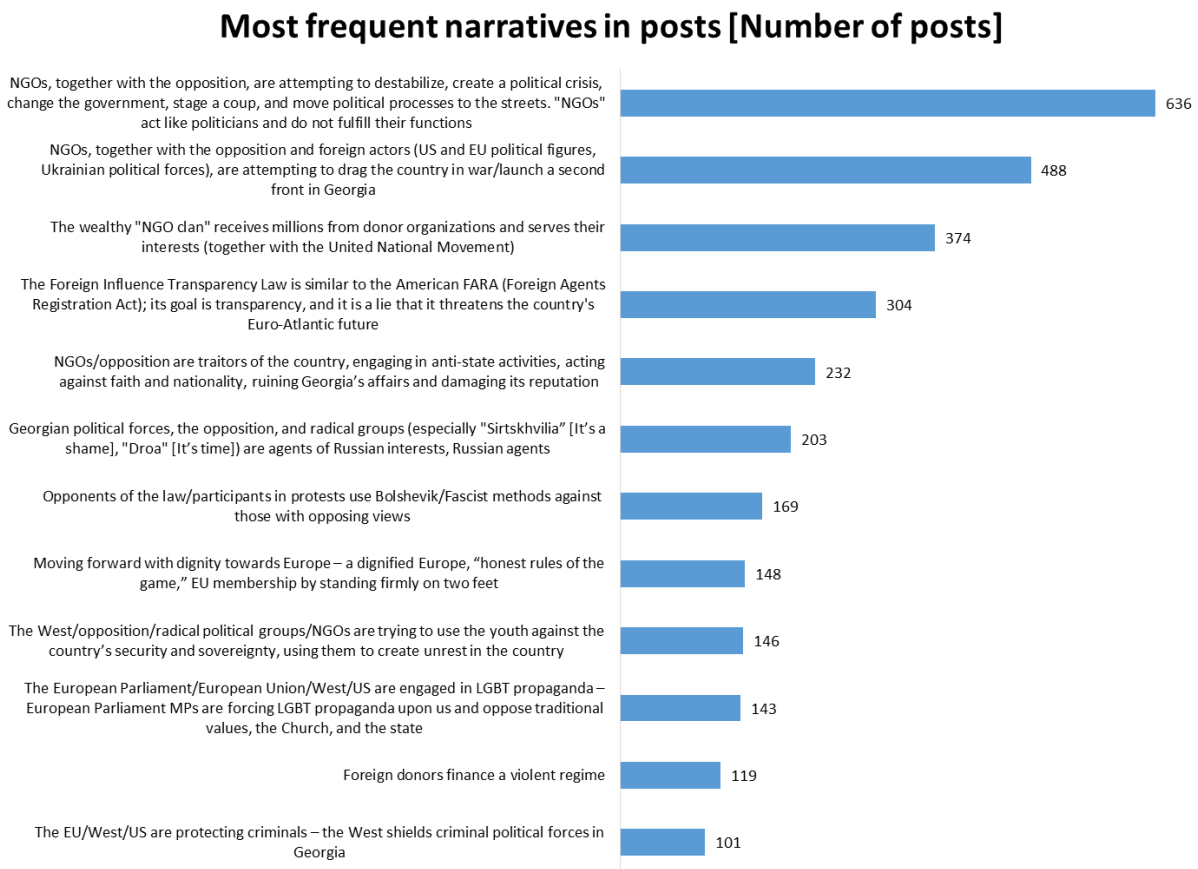
In addition to the mention of specific actors, it is interesting to note which narratives were most frequently repeated (see Chart 6). The most common narrative was that NGOs, together with the opposition, were attempting to destabilize the country, create a political crisis, change or overthrow the government, and

transfer the political process to the streets. "NGOs" were depicted as acting like politicians and failing to fulfill their intended roles. This narrative appeared in 636 posts during the monitoring period.

The second most frequent narrative referred to the threat of war and argued that NGOs, along with the opposition and foreign actors (political figures from the USA and the EU, Ukrainian political forces), were trying to drag the country in a war and/or open a second front in Georgia. This theme was repeated in 488 posts.

In third place (374 posts) was the narrative aimed at discrediting NGOs, asserting that the wealthy NGO clan was receiving millions from donor organizations and serving their interests, alongside the United National Movement.

*Chart 13: Most frequently mentioned narratives, which came up in more than 100 posts (N):*



## ANNEX 2 – ANTI-WESTERN NARRATIVES

1. The wealthy "NGO clan" receives millions from donor organizations and serves their interests (together with the United National Movement);
2. Foreign donors finance a violent regime;
3. NGOs, together with the opposition, are attempting to destabilize, create a political crisis, change the government, stage a coup, and move political processes to the streets. "NGOs" act like politicians and do not fulfill their functions;
4. NGOs/opposition are traitors of the country, engaging in anti-state activities, acting against faith and nationality, ruining Georgia's affairs and damaging its reputation;
5. The structure of NGOs resembles Brezhnev's rule; it follows an autocratic style of governance; the NGO sector operates on clan principles; decisions are made based on clan principles;
6. NGOs, together with the opposition and foreign actors (US and EU political figures, Ukrainian political forces), are attempting to drag the country in war/launch a second front in Georgia;
7. Specific Western politicians are fighting against Bidzina Ivanishvili – specific Western politicians, organizations, and the opposition are using the deoligarchization law to fight Bidzina Ivanishvili, and thus, they are fighting peace and stability in the country;
8. Fighting the Georgian people with sanctions – Western politicians are trying to break the will of the Georgian people with sanctions and force them to give up their independence, national principles, and obey the orders of the West (this may also refer to sanctions imposed against Bidzina Ivanishvili, as well as arguments about why Georgia should not join sanctions against Russia and why the West is trying to force this);
9. Corrupt European Union/West/US – EU structures are corrupt;
10. The EU/West/US are protecting criminals – the West shields criminal political forces in Georgia;
11. The European Parliament/European Union/West/US are engaged in LGBT propaganda – European Parliament MPs are forcing LGBT propaganda upon us and oppose traditional values, the Church, and the state;

12. Joining the European Union means losing freedom and falling into agentocracy for the Georgian people (it implies the sacrifice of media freedom, the rule of law, economic stability, and traditional values, leading to an agentocracy devoid of values);
13. The Foreign Influence Transparency Law is similar to the American FARA (Foreign Agents Registration Act); its goal is transparency, and it is a lie that it threatens the country's Euro-Atlantic future;
14. The Foreign Influence Transparency Law protects the country's security and traditions – NGOs will no longer be able to brainwash the people with foreign funds and stage a revolution. US and European officials do not want financial transparency because they have much to hide;
15. Opponents of the law are fighting against the Mother Church, faith, and Georgian mentality, against family traditions;
16. Europe and the West are waging a hybrid war against Georgia; they do not want the growth of democracy and security in the country;
17. The financiers of NGOs are fighting against the country's energy independence;
18. The Foreign Influence Transparency Law is necessary for regulating incoming foreign funding from other countries;
19. Georgian political forces, the opposition, and radical groups (especially "Sirtskhvilia" [It's a shame], "Droa" [It's time]) are agents of Russian interests, Russian agents;
20. Moving forward with dignity towards Europe – a dignified Europe, "honest rules of the game," EU membership by standing firmly on two feet;
21. Opponents of the law/participants in protests use Bolshevik/Fascist methods against those with opposing views (they pressure politicians and their family members, schoolchildren's parents who do not participate in protests against the law, calling them traitors, demand the dismissal of university lecturers who do not serve the interests of the National Movement. Western politicians turn a blind eye to the destructive actions of the protesters);

22. The withdrawal of the law is a victory for the government, as it avoided a deliberate provocation, prevented chaos in the country, and protected the lives and health of the youth;
23. The West/opposition/radical political groups/NGOs are trying to use the youth against the country's security and sovereignty, using them to create unrest in the country;
24. The West (US, EU, Europe) interferes with the independence of the Georgian judiciary (by bribing judicial staff and other associated persons, forming an agent network, and other methods, the West is trying to seize control over the judiciary/ gain influence over it, which poses a threat to the country's sovereignty. There is a personal attack on Georgian judges);
25. Imposing sanctions on Russia and tightening visa regimes pose a threat to the country's security (Western political forces urging Georgia to join sanctions against Russia are deliberately putting the country at risk);
26. Refusal to grant candidate status is a political decision and is unfair;
27. Election-related research fraud aims at destabilizing the country (by falsifying parallel vote tabulation, the NGO sector and opposition tried to shift political processes to the streets, destabilizing the country, with US and European ambassadors not distancing themselves);
28. The West spreads disinformation, conducts propaganda campaigns – fake articles are published in American and European media, involving fake doctors, fake politicians, fake officials in a campaign against the Georgian people;
29. The West illegally finances political parties in Georgia – US State Department, the US Ambassador, and EU Commission heads opposed the Foreign Influence Transparency Law because they violate Georgian law for their own interests (through circumventing methods, they finance political parties like Girchi–More Freedom, It's Time–European Georgia. They discuss weapons and revolution);
30. "The Russian law" stigma was imposed from abroad with the aim of organizing an anti-state coup, the so-called "Maidan scenario";
31. Opponents of the law (US Ambassador, Press Spokesperson, specific EU representatives, European Commission, European Parliament, Georgian opposition) act with double standards: on



the one hand, they call the Foreign Influence Transparency Law "Russian" and then a few weeks later, they start working on a similar law themselves (this specifically refers to the context of the law's passage);

32. The diplomatic demarche against the restoration of direct flights between Russia and Georgia is not objective: in 2019, when Russia imposed a unilateral ban on flights, US and European partners called for the lifting of the sanctions, but now they oppose direct flights. This demarche is not objective. Imposing sanctions on Georgia is dangerous. The global war party and radical opposition want this. This will harm the country economically and carry risks (against the background of the war in Ukraine);
33. The West/US/EU wants to bring to power forces that serve their interests/who will carry out their orders;
34. The West adopted an illegal resolution regarding the release of Mikheil Saakashvili and Nika Gvaramia.