CRRC-Georgia

ANTI-WESTERN RHETORIC AND VISUAL MANIPULATION ON FACEBOOK

One-Year Monitoring Findings

BLOG

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Anti-Western Rhetoric and Visual Manipulation on Facebook:

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ANTI-WESTERN RHETORIC AND VISUAL MANIPULATION ON FACEBOOK: ONE-YEAR MONITORING FINDINGS

What is the rhetoric of Facebook pages and groups that spread anti-Western content? To what extent does it contain fake information and methods for manipulating information?

The answers to these questions are provided by a one-year monitoring of Facebook, conducted by CRRC-Georgia with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). A portion of the project "Countering Anti-Democratic Propaganda Through Engagement" included a study that analyzed posts published on 16 selected pages and groups between November 29, 2024, and November 29, 2025, identifying anti-Western narratives and studying the actors mentioned in them and information disseminators.

In total, 4,017 posts were analyzed in-depth within the framework of the study. The study covered Georgian-language posts (including those focused specifically on the Adjara region), as well as content intended for Georgia's Azerbaijani and Armenian-speaking populations.

However, according to the results of this research, a variety of cases of information manipulation, including manipulated photos and videos were more frequent on pages and groups intended for Georgian-language audiences; therefore, this blog focuses on pages and groups intended for Georgian-language audiences (10 pages and groups).

According to the general trend identified in the study, clearly false information was provided in only 2% of Georgian-language pages. Most of these posts included a disclaimer from a third party indicating the information provided was not reliable.

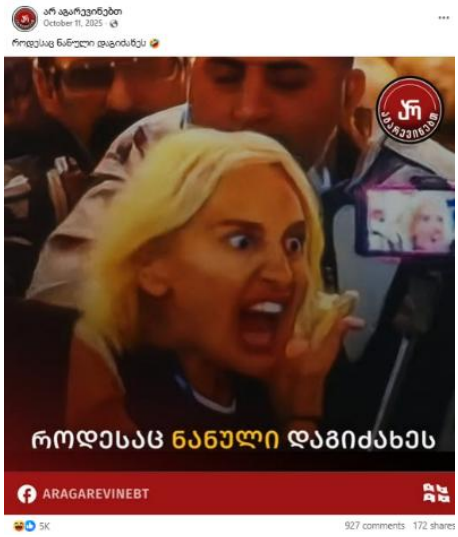
However, beyond fake information, among a significant portion of the posts (47%), it was difficult to assess how reliable the information presented in them was, because these posts represented some form of information manipulation:

1. Partial presentation of reality
2. Distortion of context or quotes taken out of context
3. Generalization from a single case
4. Framing within a conspiracy narrative
5. Presenting an opinion as a fact
6. Slander and mockery

Slander, mockery, and humiliation were often done through photo and video manipulation, including through the use of artificial intelligence. Slightly less than half (47%) of the analyzed posts in the selected Georgian-language Facebook pages and groups had a photo or video.

In the case of photos, 6% were manipulative; in the case of videos, 21%. The high rate of manipulation in videos (more than a fifth) points to a deliberate visual strategy. Such material is often used not to convey information, but to evoke an emotional reaction.

This is demonstrated through visual (photo and video) manipulation in which posts almost always addressed pro-Western protests or Georgia's domestic politics and opposition parties. This manipulation was used to mock and diminish the protests and its activists, or opposition parties and politicians (see sample photos of posts).



The use of artificial intelligence for manipulating photos and videos increased over time during the one-year monitoring period; while only one case was recorded in the first months of monitoring, it increased to eight in the monitor's last few months. The increase in material created by artificial intelligence points to the adaptation of technological tools and the evolution of methods of manipulation.

In the case of visual material created with artificial intelligence, only rarely was there a note indicating that a photo or video was created using artificial intelligence. However, this note was a small English-language inscription, which many users might not even see or understand. Photo and video material created by artificial intelligence again concerned protestors or opposition politicians, and even sometimes Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Regarding visual manipulation, the following monitored pages were the most active: “არ აგარევინებთ”, “შიგ ევროპაში”, which is currently deactivated, “Gogaggg”, “POSTV - ანალიტიკა”, “ანტი-მაიდანი”, which was also deactivated during the monitoring period, “პატრიოტული გვერდი”, and “ლიდერი 41”.

The results of the one-year monitoring of selected Facebook pages and groups demonstrate that openly fake information is relatively rare among Georgian-language and anti-Western content. However, various forms of information manipulation are widely spread, especially through the use of visuals. Photo and video material, including images created by artificial intelligence, are systematically used to discredit pro-Western protests and opposition actors. This indicates that the disinformation ecosystem relies more on distorting reality and context and subjectivity than on direct lies, only making the identification and critical evaluation of such content all the more difficult.