Research of Media Coverage of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections

TV News Monitoring Report

February 1 - March 31, 2021

This report was prepared with the assistance of the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Its contents are the sole responsibility of its authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views or positions of the EU and the UNDP.
About the Project

The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, within the frameworks of the UNDP project “Research of Media Coverage of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia”, with the financial support of the European Union, monitored the coverage of political processes in the country by television news from February 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021. During the monitoring, 12 TV channels were monitored: First Channel, Adjara Public Broadcaster, Mtavari Arkhi, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Formula, TV Pirveli, Maestro, Obiektivi, Kavkasia, Palitra TV, POSTV

Methodology

The purpose of the TV news monitoring was to determine the extent to which political parties were covered in the post-election period on equal terms and in accordance with journalistic standards.

Media outlets selected as part of the media monitoring were monitored for both quantitative and qualitative components. Quantitative research was focused on the frequency and tone of coverage of this or that subject in the selected media. Qualitative observation was focused on the extent to which the selected media outlet adhered to the standards of journalistic ethics, such as: accuracy of facts, diversity of sources, balanced coverage, encouragement of discrimination on any grounds, replication of gender stereotypes, any kind of manipulation, and so on.

In the course of the monitoring the focus also was on the coverage of issues in TV news and the use of terms that directly or indirectly reinforce gender stereotypes rooted in the society.

During the monitoring, the parties and politicians participating in the 2020 parliamentary elections were observed. In particular, the monitored subjects were both the parties that won parliamentary seats in the October 31, 2020 elections, as well as those political unions that are actively involved in the post-election processes.

Due to the ongoing political processes in the post-election period, the monitoring made special focus on the following topics: parliamentary boycott, electoral system reform, election administration reform, financing political parties, re-election of parliament, local self-government elections, rallies / protests, Nika Melia’s case, government change, political dialogue / negotiations.

The report covers the results of the TV news monitoring period from February 1 to March 31.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the materials revealed the following.
Key Findings:

- According to the data of all channels selected for monitoring in the post-election period, among political parties most of the time was dedicated to the Georgian Dream; followed by the National Movement and European Georgia;

- During the post-election period, the TV news most actively covered political talks mediated by EU representatives and issues related to the arrest of Nika Melia;

- During the monitoring period, it was revealed that the media environment was sharply polarized. One part of the broadcasters was biased towards the government and the other towards the opposition;

- “Georgian Dream” was covered most positively on POSTV. 22% of the time was dedicated to positive evaluation;

- “Georgian Dream” was covered most negatively on “Mtavari Arkhi”. 56% of the time was dedicated to negative evaluation. The most critical stories about the Georgian Dream were often aired on this channel;

- “National Movement” was covered most positively by “Formula”. 15% of the time was dedicated to positive evaluation. This party was covered most negatively by “Obiektivi”. 61% of the time was dedicated to negative evaluation;

- Mtavari Arkhi has a biased editorial policy towards the National Movement and Mikheil Saakashvili.

- First Channel has an uncritical, loyal editorial policy towards the government;

- “Imedi” and POSTV are characterized by partiality towards the government. The ruling team is presented absolutely positively, while the opposition is maximally discredited on these channels;

- POSTV dedicated the most time to Mikheil Saakashvili. Mikheil Saakashvili was covered the most negatively on this channel and the coverage in negative tone was 88%.

- Bidzina Ivanishvili received the most negative coverage on the Mtavari Arkhi. 85% of the time was dedicated to negative evaluation.

- During the monitoring period, it was revealed that the pre-election media environment was pluralistic, although sharply polarized. One part of the broadcasters was biased towards the government and the other towards the opposition. The biasness was manifested in the negative coverage of an undesirable election subject.
Similar to the results of media monitoring conducted in the pre-election period, cases of violation and manipulation of professional ethics are still frequent in the post-election period. There are frequent facts of imbalance and dissemination of unverified information.

There were almost no cases of using hate speech and discriminatory terminology in journalists’ texts.

No sexist statements were reported during the monitoring period.
ANNEX. Charts.

Georgian Public Broadcaster

Coverage of subjects by tone (%)
Public Broadcaster
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- Georgian Dream 07:45:19
  - Positive: 11
  - Neutral: 78
  - Negative: 11

- United National Movement 04:38:12
  - Positive: 69
  - Neutral: 28

- European Georgia 01:18:04
  - Positive: 83

- Strategy Builder 00:47:53
  - Positive: 99

- Lelo for Georgia 00:45:09
  - Positive: 96

- Girchi 00:43:45
  - Positive: 92

- Citizens 00:38:24
  - Positive: 92

Coverage of topics (%)
Public Broadcaster
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- The case of Nika Melia: 34
- Political dialogue / negotiations: 19
- Boycott of Parliament: 19
- Rallies and protests: 19
- Change of government: 9
- Electoral system reform: 9
- Re-election of Parliament: 7
- Electoral administration reform: 6
- Local self-government elections: 5
- Other: 5

The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics
### Ajara TV (GPB).

#### Coverage of subjects by tone (%)

**Adjara TV**  
**February 1 - March 31, 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgian Dream</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United National Movement</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Georgia</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lelo for Georgia</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Party</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Builder</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Coverage of topics (%)

**Adjara TV**  
**February 1 - March 31, 2021**
Mtavari Arkhi

Coverage of subjects by tone (%)
Mtavari Arkhi
February 1 - March 31, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgian Dream 07:32:02</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United National Movement 04:48:24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Georgia 02:03:32</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidzina Ivanishvili 01:38:43</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lelo for Georgia 00:52:47</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikheil Saakashvili 00:35:51</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Builder 00:30:33</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coverage of topics (%)
Mtavari Arkhi
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- The case of Nika Melia: 6
- Political dialogue / negotiations: 7
- Rallies and protests: 9
- Change of government: 12
- Boycott of Parliament: 61
- Local self-government elections: 5
- Electoral system reform: 4
- Re-election of Parliament: 3
- Other: 0
Rustavi 2

Coverage of subjects by tone (%)
Rustavi 2
February 1 - March 31, 2021

Positive Neutral Negative
Georgian Dream 06:01:32 6 83 11
United National Movement 02:59:22 82 13
European Georgia 01:13:12 97
Girchi 00:54:33 94
Lelo for Georgia 00:48:35 99
Strategy Builder 00:44:14 97
Citizens 00:19:47 92

Coverage of topics (%)
Rustavi 2
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- Political dialogue / negotiations
- The case of Nika Melia
- Boycott of Parliament
- Change of government
- Electoral system reform
- Rallies and protests
- Electoral administration reform
- Re-election of Parliament
- Local self-government elections
- Other
Coverage of topics (%)  
Imedi  
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- **Political dialogue / negotiations**: 53
- **The case of Nika Melia**: 17
- **Boycott of Parliament**: 10
- **Change of government**: 7
- **Rallies and protests**: 5
- **Electoral system reform**: 4
- **Electoral administration reform**: 3
- **Other**: 2

Coverage of subjects by tone (%)

**Imedi**  
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- **Positive**:  
  - Georgian Dream 12:32:18: 12
  - United National Movement 03:55:02: 55
  - Mikheil Saakashvili 01:43:21: 84
  - European Georgia 01:08:47: 77
  - Citizens 00:30:20: 87
  - Girchi 00:26:07: 91
  - Lelo for Georgia 00:22:16: 98

- **Neutral**:  
  -  

- **Negative**:  
  -  

TV News
TV Pirveli

Coverage of subjects by tone (%)
TV Pirveli
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- **Georgian Dream 07:48:39**: 43 Positive, 55 Negative
- **United National Movement 03:31:10**: 93 Positive, 5 Neutral
- **European Georgia 01:17:52**: 99 Neutral
- **Bidzina Ivanishvili 01:00:41**: 80 Neutral
- **Lelo for Georgia 00:40:00**: 97 Neutral
- **Strategy Builder 00:16:14**: 97 Neutral
- **Labor Party 00:15:15**: 99 Neutral

Coverage of topics (%)
TV Pirveli
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- Political dialogue / negotiations: 64%
- The case of Nika Melia: 3%
- Rallies and protests: 8%
- Boycott of Parliament: 9%
- Change of government: 12%
- Re-election of Parliament: 12%
- Electoral system reform: 3%
- Local self-government elections: 9%
- Electoral administration reform: 3%
- Other: 9%

The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics
Maestro TV

Coverage of subjects by tone (%)

Maestro
February 1 - March 31, 2021

Positive Neutral Negative

Georgian Dream 06:36:23 11 83 6
United National Movement 02:22:24 70 22
European Georgia 00:45:26 86
Citizens 00:33:40 79
Mikheil Saakashvili 00:28:41 69
Girchi 00:43:45 83
Strategy Builder 00:19:27 97

Coverage of topics (%)

Maestro
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- Political dialogue / negotiations
- The case of Nika Melia
- Rallies and protests
- Boycott of Parliament
- Electoral system reform
- Change of government
- Electoral administration reform
- Local self-government elections
- Re-election of Parliament
- Other
ObiekTV

Coverage of subjects by tone (%)
Obiektivi
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

Georgian Dream 04:20:43
- 7 Positive
- 64 Neutral
- 29 Negative

Alliance of Patriots 01:34:18
- 95 Neutral

United National Movement 01:14:43
- 60 Positive
- 40 Neutral

Lelo for Georgia 00:33:50
- 99 Neutral

Strategy Builder 00:20:22
- 100 Neutral

European Georgia 00:14:09
- 80 Neutral

Mikheil Saakashvili 00:12:51
- 86 Neutral

Coverage of topics (%)
Obiektivi
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- Political dialogue / negotiations
- The case of Nika Melia
- Boycott of Parliament
- Rallies and protests
- Re-election of Parliament
- Electoral system reform
- Change of government
- Electoral administration reform
- Funding political parties
- Local self-government elections
- Other

58
13
9
6
4
Kavkasia TV

Coverage of subjects by tone (%)
Kavkasia
February 1 - March 31, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgian Dream 03:42:48</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United National Movement 02:10:42</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Georgia 01:07:31</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lelo for Georgia 00:29:45</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Builder 00:27:39</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens 00:21:18</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidzina Ivanishvili 00:11:22</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coverage of topics (%)
Kavkasia
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- Political dialogue / negotiations
- Rallies and protests
- The case of Nika Melia
- Boycott of Parliament
- Electoral administration reform
- Electoral system reform
- Local self-government elections
- Change of government
- Other
Palitra TV

Coverage of subjects by tone (%)
Palitra TV
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- **Georgian Dream 02:59:48**: Positive 9%, Neutral 82%, Negative 9%
- **United National Movement 01:33:48**: Positive 77%, Neutral 19%
- **European Georgia 00:53:16**: Positive 94%
- **Lelo for Georgia 00:43:38**: Positive 98%
- **Citizens 00:24:24**: Positive 81%
- **Strategy Builder 00:23:07**: Positive 97%
- **Republican Party 00:10:40**: Positive 100%

Coverage of topics (%)
Palitra TV
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- The case of Nika Melia: 45%
- Political dialogue / negotiations: 15%
- Boycott of Parliament: 14%
- Rallies and protests: 11%
- Electoral system reform: 7%
- Change of government: 6%
- Electoral administration reform: 5%
- Local self-government elections: 3%
- Other: 2%
PosTV

Coverage of subjects by tone (%)
Pos TV
February 1 - March 31, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgian Dream 07:10:19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United National Movement 03:02:45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikheil Saakashvili 02:09:04</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Georgia 01:06:55</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girchi 00:31:15</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lelo for Georgia 00:29:23</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Builder 00:29:01</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coverage of topics (%)
Pos TV
February 1 - March 31, 2021

- Political dialogue / negotiations: 18%
- The case of Nika Melia: 8%
- Boycott of Parliament: 8%
- Electoral system reform: 8%
- Rallies and protests: 8%
- Change of government: 6%
- Local self-government elections: 6%
- Other: 53%