

MID-TERM REPORT OF

PRE-ELECTION MONITORING:

SEXISM AND

GENDER STEREOTYPES

IN SOCIAL MEDIA





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INTRODUCTION

“Gender Barometer – Monitoring sexist speech during pre-election period” is implemented with support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project is implemented by Media Development Foundation (MDF) in partnership with the Union Sapari. The aim of the project is to expose sexist hate speech and gender stereotypes as well as gender-based campaigns against women politician and representatives of various public institutions.

Within the framework of the project, Sapari has conducted focus groups involving media experts, politicians and gender specialists and formulated sexist hate speech indicators adjusted to international experience and Georgian political reality. Based on these indicators and using a Facebook tool, Crowdtangle, the MDF developed a social media monitoring methodology. Mid-term findings of the monitoring is provided in this report.

This mid-term report covers the results of a three-month monitoring – from 4 August through 4 November. It consists of the following parts: monitoring methodology and key findings, which are followed by Part I covering quantitative data by topics, typology of violation, sources and targets of sexist hate speech, terminology; Part II providing results of qualitative analysis, in particular, typical examples by categories of gender-based violations and several cases that have stood out from the total material by their orchestrated and misinformative nature.

PREFACE

The 21st century is called the century of women. Significant steps have been taken towards gender equality and women empowerment. Women play an increasingly active role in politics, including in election processes. Nevertheless, representation of women in politics remains low worldwide, while in Georgia it comprises a mere 16%. Political environment is neither friendly nor safe for women politicians and the more visible women in politics are, the more often they become targets of discriminatory campaigns.

Violence against women in elections online¹ is an umbrella term that captures a broad range of abusive discourse – from sexist slurs to direct threats of physical harm. This violence targets women in public or political life specifically because they are women. Such violence is used to uphold traditional female roles in society and may be motivated by a desire to repress and control women, deter the realization of their political rights. The aim of such violence is to discourage women from being politically active and participating in public life.

Functions of social networks, such as posting, sharing, liking or commenting, make it easy to discriminate women during elections. Social media provides a forum for numerous people to engage in sharing misogynic posts, rumors, fake news or manipulated photos and videos while the speed the information travels on social media, deepens hate against a target and enhances its influence on society.

¹ VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ELECTIONS ONLINE: A SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS TOOL <https://www.ifes.org/publications/violence-against-women-elections-online-social-media-analysis-tool>

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SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING METHODOLOGY

The study is conducted by mixed methodology, using both quantitative and qualitative data processing methods.

A Facebook analytical tool, Crowdtangle, has been used for the monitoring of social media to observe pre-selected monitoring subjects. The Crowdtangle database has been regularly updated with newly identified social media accounts. In addition to social media monitoring, findings of traditional media monitoring (TV, online and print media) have been considered too.

The monitoring is focused on gender discrimination/stereotyping by:

- Topics,
- Typology of violation,
- Sources,
- Targets,
- Terminology.

The quantitative component includes data on categories of violation, topics and sources (monitored media, political parties, society, government, etc.) as well as targets of sexist hate speech and terms used.

The qualitative part includes the typology of messages, examples of sexist hate speech and types of visual (video and photo) manipulations.

The typology of violations was defined according to Gender Barometer indicators formed by Sapari on the basis of expert focus groups. Sapari identified 18 forms of sexist hate speech with corresponding indicators that are characteristic of Georgian reality.²

SELECTION OF SUBJECT. Subjects of monitoring are social media accounts that include:

- **Facebook pages:** Facebook pages of political parties and their supporters, pages directed against opponents, several media and other thematic pages.

² The report of the study conducted by Sapari is available at www.Genderbarometer.ge.

- **Public Facebook groups:** Facebook groups in which posts are published or shared by various pages or individual profiles.
- **Individual Facebook accounts.**

Initially, some 117 FB accounts were selected for the monitoring of sexist hate speech/stereotypes, but this database have been periodically updated by new platforms. Selected FB accounts cover a wide political spectrum: accounts supporting the ruling party Georgian Dream (GD) and discrediting opponents of the government; supporters of the United National Movement (UNM) and discrediting the government; accounts associated with the political parties the Alliance of Georgia, the Labor Party, the Georgian March as well as with anti-liberal groups; propagandist accounts and accounts linked to the Kremlin. The list of monitoring subjects is updated with newly identified FB accounts.

KEY FINDINGS

This report reflects the results of a three-month monitoring (4 August – 4 November).

Findings of the reporting period are provided below:

- **SEXIST HATE SPEECH AND STEREOTYPING:** the total of 213 cases of sexist hate speech and stereotyping have been identified throughout the reporting period.
- **SOURCES:** The highest number of cases accounted for FB accounts discrediting opponents of the government (75), followed by FB accounts linked to anti-liberal groups (33);
- FB accounts discrediting opponents of the government were in the lead by the number of attacks on the ground of moral criteria (33);
- FB accounts associated with anti-liberal groups had the highest number of cases of misogyny/sexism (18);
- Accounts affiliated with the Alliance of Patriots led by the number of offences on the ground of gender stereotypes (8);
- Accounts discrediting the government were distinguished for the highest number of offences on the ground of appearance (7);
- **TYPOLOGY OF VIOLATIONS:** most frequently, women politicians were attacked on the ground of moral criteria (68) and gender stereotypes (44), followed by offence/ridicule on the ground of appearance and intellectual abilities (38 each);
- **TARGETS:** targets of sexist hate speech and gender discrimination included representatives of GD and government (7), representatives of the UNM (6) and European Georgia (5);
- By the number of cases of offence, most frequent targets of sexist attacks were representatives of European Georgia (60), UNM (56) and GD (27).
- **DISCREDITING CAMPAIGNS:** attacks were mostly spontaneous, though several orchestrated attacks were observed during the monitoring period against Helen Khoshtaria, a single-seat candidate from European Georgia, and Eka Beselia, the founder of the political party For Justice;
- There were also observed two cases of discrediting President Salome Zourabichvili;
- Several politicians were offended mainly on the ground of one characteristic, for example, age or behavior not fitting into gender stereotypes;
- Texts (posts) and manipulated photo and video material were used to discredit women politicians;

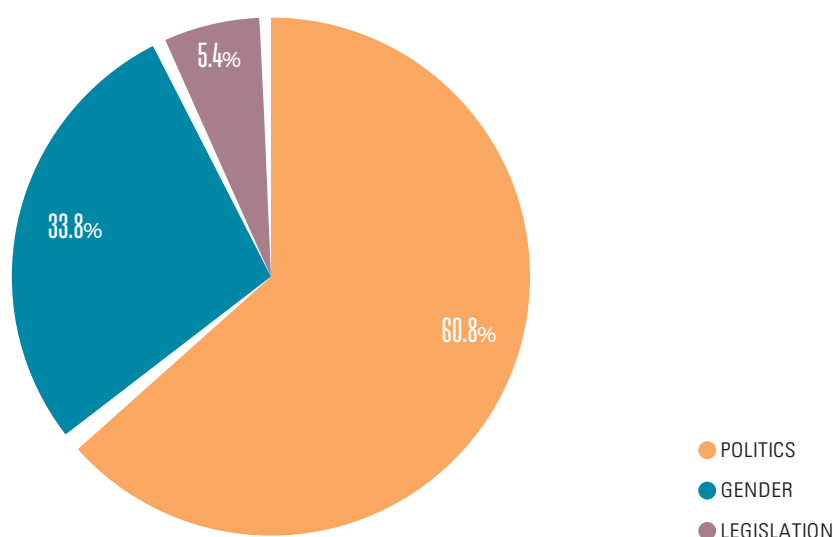
- **TERMINOLOGY:** terminology ranged between ordinary words used with a sexist connotation to abusive, derogatory vocabulary. Same abusive words were rarely repeated. Most frequent was the use of same words in combination with other words, or synonyms;
- **CRITICISM OF LEGISLATION:** a tendency of criticizing the legislation conducive to empowering women, protecting women against violence and in general, to achieving gender equality was observed in the monitoring period.

I. QUALITATIVE DATA

1.1. TOPICS

During the monitoring period from 4 August through 4 November, the total of 213 cases of sexist hate speech/ gender stereotyping were revealed. These cases related to three topics – politics, gender and legislation. The highest number of cases (136) related to politics and largely concerned the ongoing election campaign and candidates running for the election. These were the cases where women politicians have been targeted for their political affiliation and activity. The second by the number of cases was gender (75) where women have become targets of sexism because of their gender, while the third was the legislation (12) which includes the cases of criticism of regulations that concern gender equality issues. The percentage shares by topics were, respectively, 60.8%, 33.8% and 5.4%.

CHART 1. CASES OF SEXIST HATE SPEECH / STEREOTYPING BY TOPICS (%)

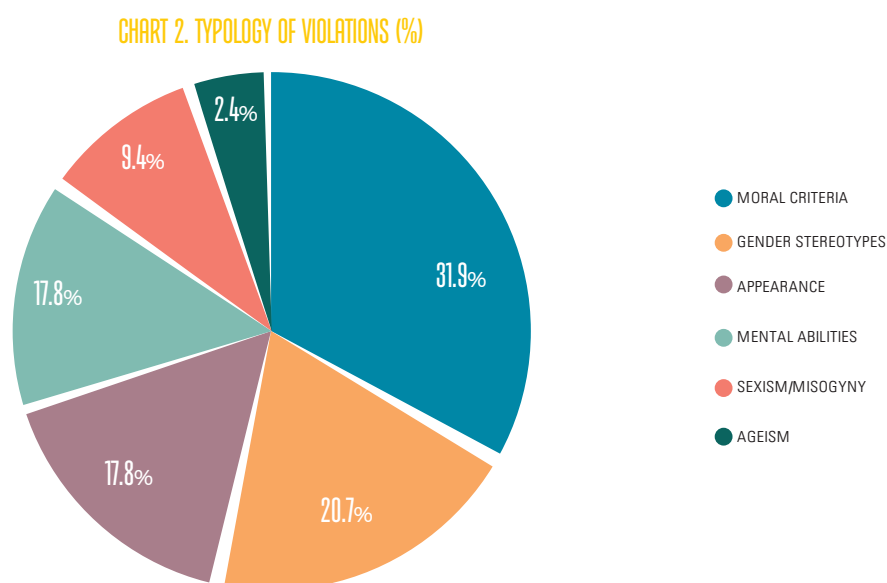


1.2. TYPOLOGY OF VIOLATIONS

Cases of sexist hate speech/stereotyping that were identified during the monitoring period based on Gender Barometer indicators, were grouped into the following categories:

1. Misogyny/sexism – attacking women, in general, and women’s rights;
2. Offence/ridicule on the ground of appearance – offending and ridiculing on the ground of body, appearance, manner of talk, clothing;
3. Ageism – discriminating on the ground of age;
4. Offence/ridicule on the ground of mental abilities – diminishing intellectual capacity, skills, experience, competences;
5. Attacks based on moral criteria – attacking on the ground of moral values;
6. Criticism on the ground of gender stereotypes – attacking on the basis of stereotyped perceptions of women’s role, behavior, function, activity or other traits.

Women are most frequently attacked on the ground of moral criteria (68 cases) and gender stereotypes (44). These are followed by equal number of cases of offence/ridicule on the ground of appearance (38) and mental abilities (38), sexism/misogyny (20) and ageism (5). Percentage shares are provided in the Chart 2 below.



1.3. SOURCES OF SEXIST HATE SPEECH / STEREOTYPING

During the reporting period (4 August – 4 November), the total of 72 FB accounts used sexist hate speech/ gender stereotypes.

Based on earlier studies and information available on FB accounts themselves, the social media accounts were grouped by their political, ideological affiliation or other traits:

1. FB accounts supporting the ruling party;
2. FB accounts discrediting opponents of the government;
3. FB accounts supporting the UNM;
4. FB accounts discrediting the government;
5. FB accounts associated with the Labor Party;
6. FB accounts associated with the Alliance of Patriots;
7. FB accounts associated with the Georgian March;
8. FB accounts associated with anti-liberal groups;

- 9. Propaganda FB accounts which include those platforms that, according to various studies, spread disinformation on issues of foreign and domestic politics;
- 10. FB account linked to the Kremlin;
- 11. Miscellaneous.

TABLE 1. SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS BY THEIR POLITICAL, IDEOLOGICAL AFFILIATION / OTHER TRAITS

THE RULING PARTY AND ASSOCIATED ACCOUNTS	GD / SUPPORTERS	DISCREDITING OPPONENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT
	<p>FB pages ლიდერი 41 ირაკლი კობახიძე / Irakli Kobakhidze</p> <p>FB groups ჩვენ გავიმარჯვებთ 41 /we will win 41 პრემიერ-მინისტრი გიორგი გახარია ბიძინა ივანიშვილის მეგობრები „ფეისბუქზე“ დარეჯან ლიპარტელიანის პოსტი ჯგუფში კახა კალაძე თბილისი მერი</p> <p>FB individual profiles Sopiko Kikacheishvili ლაშა გვასალია David Akhrakhadze</p>	<p>FB pages ქვეყნის მტრები ერთიანი ნაციონალური დევიჟენია მიხეილ უკრაინოლოგი საქართველოს ოკუპირებული ტერიტორიები რეჟიმი გიყურებს ტერენტი გლდანელი სექტა სირცხვილის კორიდორი რეალობა მეხუთე რეიხი ნაცი კლავს</p> <p>FB groups ნაცების დასაცინი ოფიციალური სააგენტო „სიმართლის გზა“ გასამართლდეს ნაციონალური მოძრაობა! დავასრულოთ ნაცები – Davasrilot Nacebil</p>
OPPOSITION	UNM / SUPPORTERS	DISCREDITING THE GOVERNMENT
	<p>FB pages Alli Babaa (ტროლი) გააზიარა ჯგუფებში ხატია დეკანოიძე-ისნის მაჟორიტარად მიხეილ სააკაშვილის შტაბი</p> <p>Individual FB profiles Mikheil Saakashvili Kakhaber Adamia მე შენ ლელა Ani Tsitlidze</p>	<p>FB groups ქოცების დასაცინი ოფიციალური სააგენტო ექვთიმე ბიძინაშვილი ჯალათი მამის ცივისსხლიანი შვილი ქვეყნის არაფორმალური მმართველი ლურჯი ვირი What the fuck is that Annual events ყოველწლიური მოვლენები (ოპოზიციასთან დაკავშირებული) ყოველდღიური მოვლენები</p> <p>FB groups LIVE GEORGIA</p>

LABOR PARTY	ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS / SUPPORTERS /ASSOCIATED	ASSOCIATED WITH THE GEORGIAN MARCH
<p>FB pages Shalva Natelashvili – შალვა ნათელაშვილი</p> <p>Individual FB profiles Shalva Natelashvili</p>	<p>FB pages Tinp.ge – დღეს პოლიტიკაში³ Memeატურები⁴ პოლიტიკური სარკაზმი პოლიტიკოსები 1 ლარიდან BS Info მედია საშუალების FB გვერდი მედია-კავშირი ობიექტივი⁵</p> <p>FB groups პატრიოტთა ალიანსის მხარდამჭერები!!! ირმა ინაშვილის მხარდამჭერები POLITIKO</p> <p>Individual FB profiles ნინო კვარაცხელია</p>	<p>FB pages ანტილიბერალური დოქტრინა⁶</p> <p>FB groups „ქართული მარში – ეროვნული მოძრაობის“ მხარდამჭერთა ჯგუფი „ქართული მარში – ეროვნული მოძრაობის“ მხარდამჭერთა ჯგუფი Ermile Nemsadze ერმილე ელგუჯას-ძე ნემსაძე Sandro Breg</p>
	PROPAGANDA	ASSOCIATED WITH ANTI-LIBERAL GROUPS
	<p>Online media FB pages iNews. აინიუსი⁷ საერთო გაზეთი⁸ მარშალ პრესი⁹</p>	<p>FB pages ალტ-ინფო¹⁴ Geo Pepe</p>
	LINKED TO THE KREMLIN	MISCELLANEOUS
	<p>FB groups კოტე ჩიკვილაძის და გულბაათ რცხილაძის თანამოაზრეების ჯგუფი: Россия и Грузия¹⁵</p>	<p>FB groups რუსთავი 21 / RUSTAVI 21 პროტესტი! Protest! Протест</p> <p>Individual FB profiles Tamaz Chikhladze Gela Zedelashvili ბესიკ ჩუბინიძე</p>

³ The page is not available on Facebook now. Facebook removed accounts associated with the Alliance of Patriots. Facebook (5 November 2020). October 2020 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report. <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/11/october-2020-cib-report/>; <https://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/usd-1000-1500-spent-ad-against-ndi-and-iri-tinpge>

⁴ Myth Detector, “Connect to real opposition!” – FB accounts with close links to Alliance of Patriots and other anti-Western groups. <https://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/connect-real-opposition-fb-accounts-close-links-alliance-patriots-and-other-anti-western>

⁵ Obieqtivi, profile. Source: Myth Detector. <https://www.mythdetector.ge/en/profile/obieqtivi>

⁶ ISFED, 26 October, 2020. Social Media Monitoring – II Interim Report <https://isfed.ge/geo/angarishebi/201026065446sotsialuri-mediis-monitoringi-meore-shualeduri-angarisshi>

⁷ Fake news published by Inews. Source: Myth Detector. <http://mythdetector.ge/ka/search?keyword=inews>

⁸ Fake news published by Saerto Gazeti. Source: Myth Detector <https://bit.ly/2GLjXtY>

⁹ Marshalpress, profile. Source: Myth Detector. <https://www.mythdetector.ge/en/profile/marshalpress>

¹⁰ TI Georgia, Who owns Georgia’s media; <https://www.transparency.ge/en/post/report/who-owns-georgia-s-media>

¹¹ Fake news published by Kartuli Azri. Source: Myth Detector’. <https://bit.ly/38MqcsY>

¹² თვალსაზრისის პროფილი. წყარო: მიტების დეტექტორი. <http://mythdetector.ge/ka/profile/tvalsazrisige-tvalsazrisige>

¹³ Myth Detector, 11 June, 2020. What do Иракли Иракли, Antiliberal Doctrine, News Front and Tvalsazrisi.ge Have in Common?

<http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/what-do-irakli-irakli-antiliberal-doctrine-news-front-and-tvalsazrisige-have-common>

¹⁴ October 2020 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report Facebook, October 2020, <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/11/october-2020-cib-report/>

¹⁵ Myth Detector, 1 November, 2019. News Front Georgia – Kremlin’s New Information Front in Georgia. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/news-front-georgia-kremlins-new-information-front-georgia>

The highest number of cases accounted for FB pages and groups (160; 69%), followed by representatives of society (65; 31%) and politicians (22; 10%).

1. FB pages and groups include the cases where sources of discrimination were FB accounts themselves;
2. Representatives of society include cases in which individual profiles were sources themselves or shared posts of discrediting FB accounts in various FB groups;
3. Politicians include posts and comments of politicians or government officials published on their individual accounts or party accounts or shared on these accounts by other platforms.

The cases of violation by politicians are distributed as follows: the government – 7 (including GD – 2 and the executive government – 5); Georgian March – 6, UNM – 3, Labor Party – 2, Georgian Idea – 2, Alliance of Patriots – 1 and Georgian Roots – 1.

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF CASES BY POLITICIANS

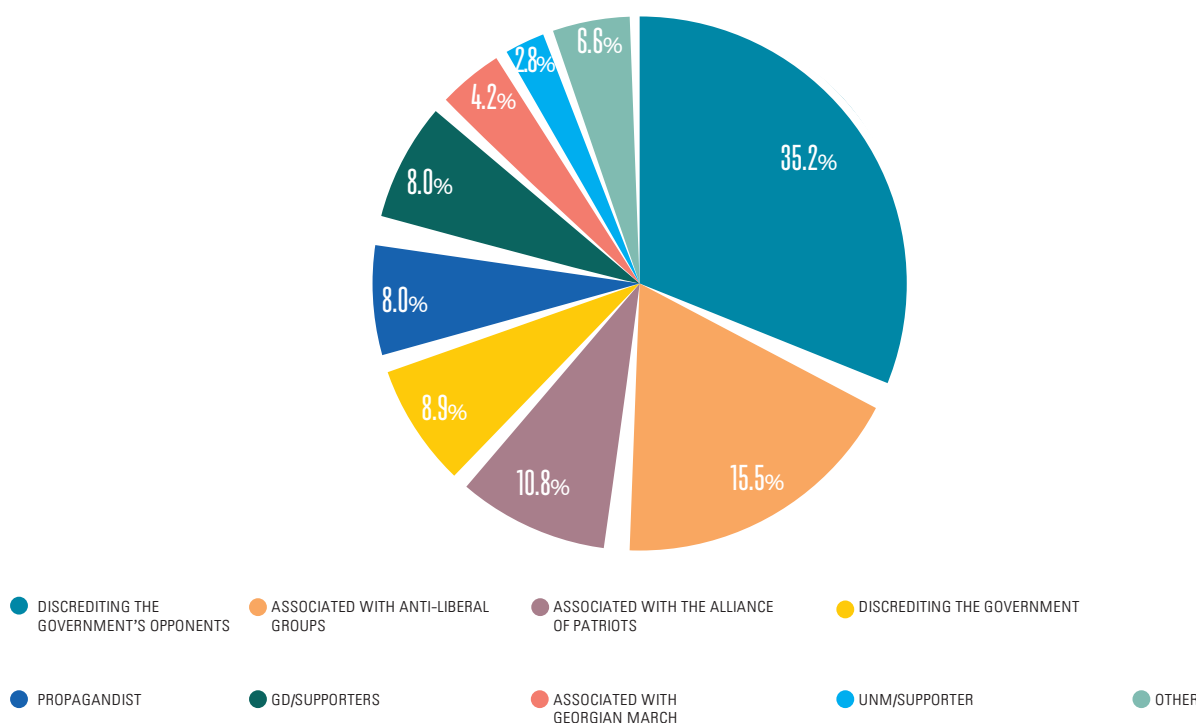
PARTY AFFILIATION	STATUS	NUMBER OF CASES
GEORGIAN DREAM		
Lasha Gvasalia	Head of State Representative's Office of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region	4
Irakli Kobakhidze	GD executive secretary	1
Mamuka Mdinardze	Chairman of GD political council	1
Sifiko Kikacheishvili	Governor of Melani village, Samtredia district	1
GEORGIAN MARCH		
Ermile Nemsadze	Head of wester Georgia office of Georgian Dream, single-seat candidate from Kutaisi	3
Sandro Bregadze	Leader of Georgian March	3
UNITED NATIONAL MOVEMENT		
Mikheil Saakashvili	UNM leader	2
Ani Tsitlidze	Member of Zugdidi city council, chairperson of UNM faction	1
LABOR PARTY		
Shalva Natelashvili	Leader of Labor Party	2
GEORGIAN IDEA		
Aleksandre Lortkipanidze	Candidate from Georgian Idea	2

ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS		
Irma Inashvili	Leader of Alliance of Patriots	1
GEORGIAN ROOTS		
Besik Chubinidze	Candidate from Georgia Roots	1

The highest number of cases among the groups of social media accounts was identified on the FB accounts discrediting the government’s opponents (75); the second was the group of accounts associated with anti-liberal groups (33), followed by accounts associated with the Alliance of Patriots (23). The accounts discrediting the government and accounts of GD/supporters had equal number of cases (19 each), which were followed by accounts associated with Georgian March (9), the UNM (6), Labor Party (2), and the total of 10 cases by various FB accounts.

The percentage shares of cases by grouped FB accounts is provided in Chart 3.

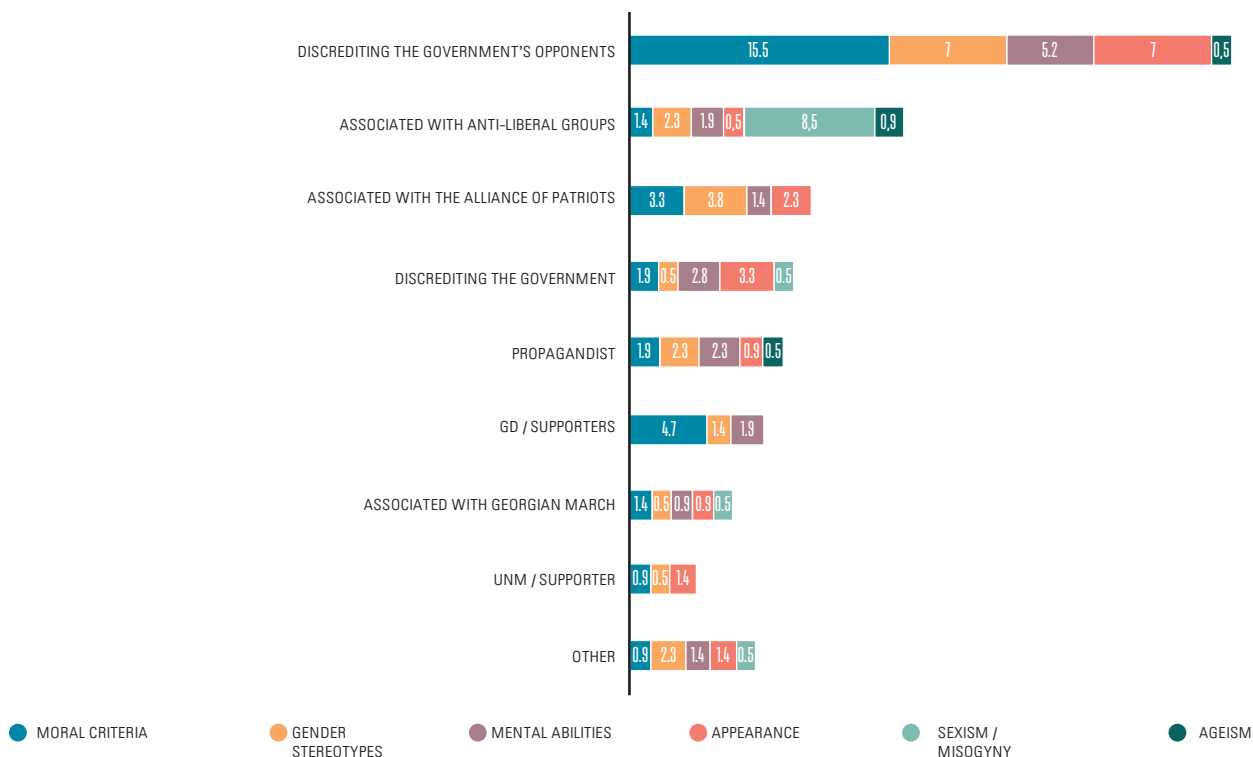
CHART 3. TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES BY GROUPS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS (%)



By typology of violations, the picture is the following:

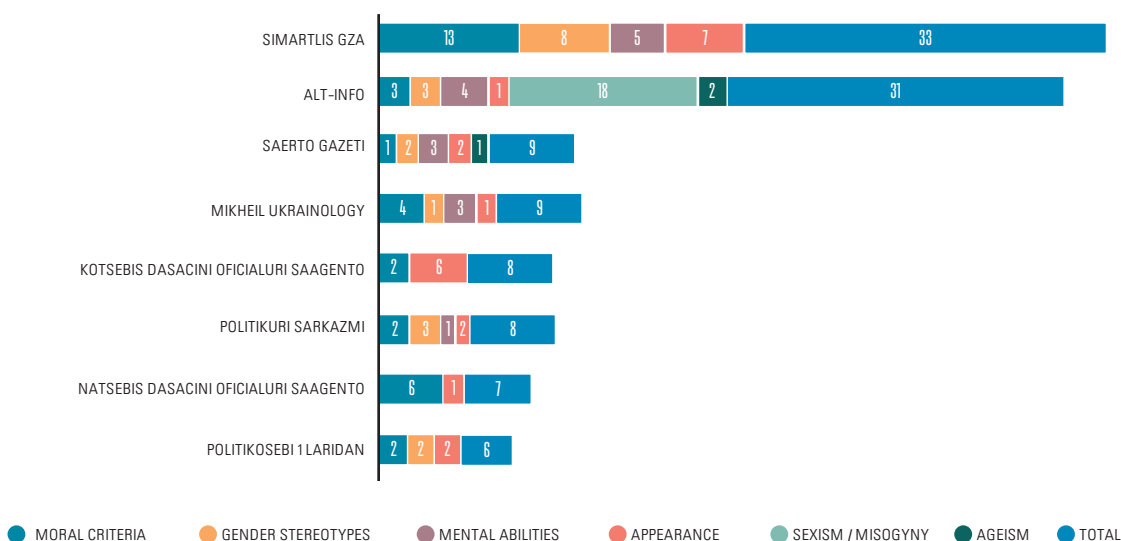
- Moral criteria were most frequently applied for attacks by FB accounts discrediting the government’s opponents (33) and those associated with GD (10);
- Leaders in sexism/misogyny were FB accounts associated with anti-liberal groups (18);
- Gender stereotypes were most frequently used by FB accounts associated with the Alliance of Patriots (8);
- Appearance was most frequently used for offending/ridiculing by FB accounts discrediting the government (7).

CHART 4. TYPOLOGY OF VIOLATIONS BY GROUPS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS (%)



As regards violations by concrete accounts, the leader was Simartlis Gza¹⁶ (33 cases) of which offences on the ground of moral criteria were most frequent (13). The second was Alt-Info¹⁷ – 31 cases of which 18 belonged to the category of sexism/misogyny. This was followed by Saerto Gazeti and Mikheil Ukrainology (9 cases each) with the former prone to offend women on the ground of mental abilities (3) while the latter on the ground of moral criteria (4). The chart below shows top eight FB accounts by typology of violations. They accounted for the total of 102 cases while the remaining FB accounts for 111 cases.

CHART 5. TYPOLOGY OF VIOLATIONS BY FB ACCOUNTS



¹⁶ During the monitoring period this account has changed its name from Gasamartldes Natsionaluri Modzraoba – Simartlis Gza into the Simartlis Gza.

¹⁷ Alt-Infor is not accessible now.

1.4. TARGETS

Targets of discriminatory and offensive attacks are mainly politicians – MPs, candidates for single seat constituencies as well as from party lists, high officials as well as activists engaged in election campaign and several staunch party supporters. The data on the editor-in-chief of online media outlet Tabula, Tamar Chergoleishvili, was included in the data of European Georgia because she was engaged in the election campaign of this political party. Targets also include women leaders of Belarussian political opposition, the President of Estonia and the US Ambassador to Georgia.

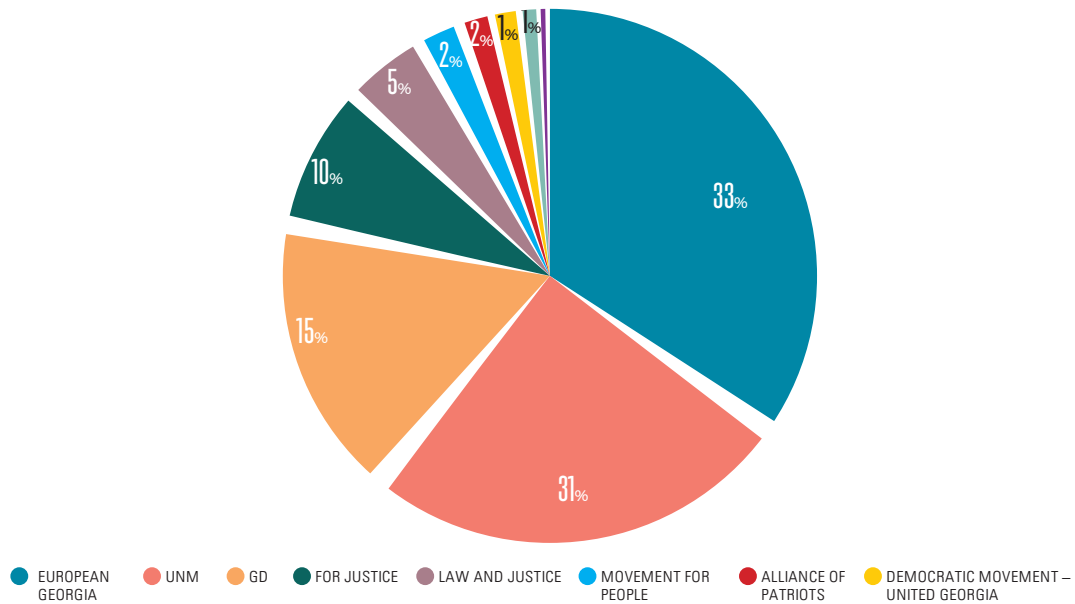
As seen from the list below, the highest number of targets was from the ruling party GD (7), with representatives of the opposition parties UNM (6) and European Georgia (5) trailing. Two women were targeted each from the Alliance of Patriots and Lelo. Six women of various political affiliation were grouped under “Other.”

TABLE 3. POLITICAL AFFILIATION OF TARGETS OF ATTACKS

GEORGIAN DREAM	UNM	EUROPEAN GEORGIA	ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS	LELO	OTHER
1. Salome Zourabichvili, President of Georgia	1. Tina Bokuchava	1. Helen Khoshtaria	1. Irma Inashvili	1. Sesili Chitanava	1. Tako Charkviani Law and Justice
2. Tea Tsulukiani, former Justice Minister	2. Salome Samadashvili	2. Khatuna Gogorishvili	2. Tamar Kodoshvili	2. Tamar Belkania	2. Nino Burjanadze Democratic Movement – United Georgia
3. Ekaterine Tikaradze, Health Minister	3. Khatia Dekanoidze	3. Irma Nadirashvili			3. Ana Dolidze Movement for the People
4. Sopo Kiladze, Chairperson of Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights	4. Nanuka Zhorzholiani	4. Nino Gogvadze			4. Eka Beselia For Justice
5. Maya Tskitishvili, Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure	5. Megi Gotsiridze	5. Tamar Chergoleishvili			5. Khatuna Samnidze, republican Party
6. Guguli Maghradze, MP	6. Sandra Roelofs				6. Tsira Javakhishvili, Georgian March
7. Rima Beridze, member of Tbilisi City Council					

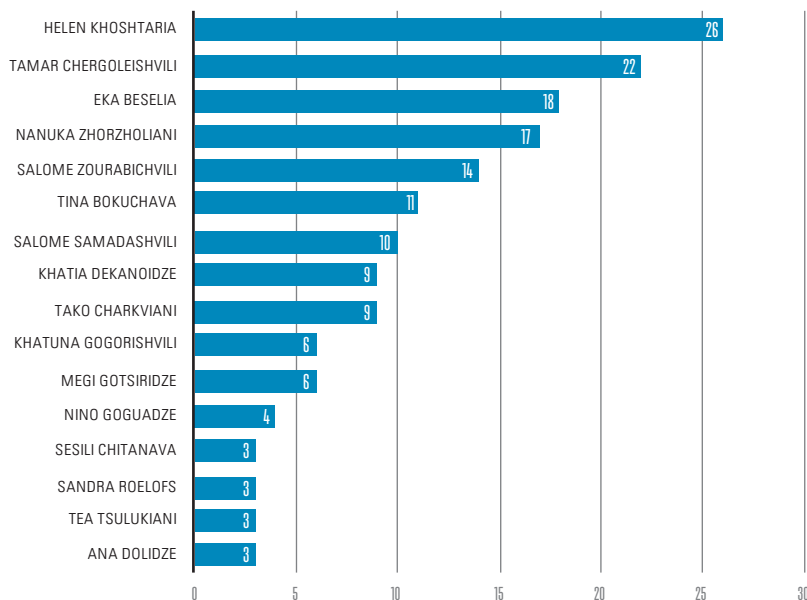
However, by the number of attacks, in terms of political party affiliation, the most frequent targets were representatives of European Georgia (60), followed by the UNM (56) and the GD (27). The founder of the political party For Justice, Eka Beselia, became a target of attacks 18 times, while the founder of Law and Justice, Tako Charkviani nine times. These are followed by Lelo (4), the Movement for People and the Alliance of Patriots (3 each), the Democratic Movement – United Georgia and the Republican Party (2 each), and the Georgian March (1).

CHART 6. POLITICAL AFFILIATION OF TARGETS BY THE NUMBER OF VIOLATIONS (%)



As for concrete targets, the most frequent targets of sexists hate speech and stereotyping were representatives of European Union: Helen Khoshtaria (26 cases; 16%) and Tamar Chergoleishvili (22; 13%). They were followed by the founder of For Justice, Eka Beselia (18; 11%), and UNM representative, Nanuka Zhorzholiani (17; 10%). From among representatives of government, the most frequently targeted was President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili (14; 9%). The chart below shows the targets by the number of attacks.

CHART 7. NUMBER OF CASES BY TARGETS



By categories of offences, Helen Khoshtaria was most frequently offended on the ground of moral criteria (11) while Tamar Chergoleishvili on the ground of gender stereotypes (16). The absolute majority (17) of attacks against Eka Beselia were on the ground of moral criteria. Offence on the ground of mental abilities was most frequently used against Nanuka Zhorzholiani (9) and Salome Zourabichvili. The table below shows the typology of offences by targets. The table does not include those women politicians who were targeted less than three times as well as those cases that did not have a concrete target, but were directed against women, in general.

TABLE 4. TYPOLOGY OF VIOLATIONS BY TARGETS

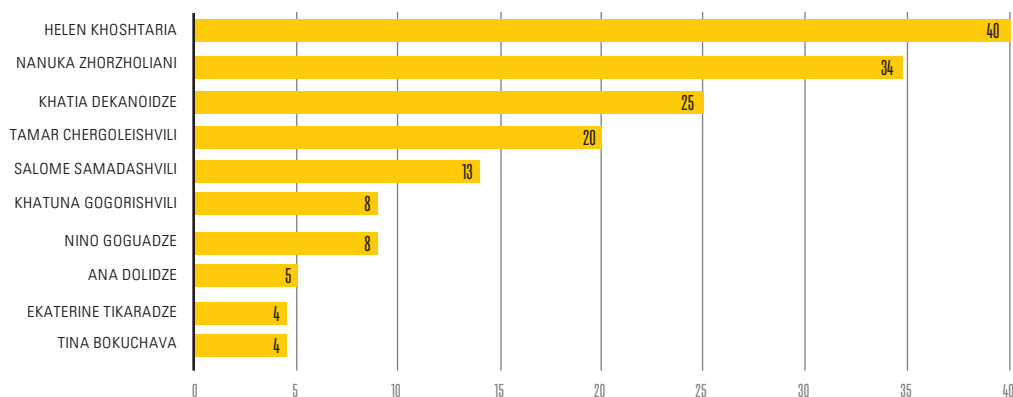
TARGETS	ATTACKS BASED ON MORAL CRITERIA	CRITICISM ON THE GROUND OF GENDER STEREOTYPES	OFFENCE /RIDICULE ON THE GROUND OF MENTAL ABILITIES	OFFENCE / RIDICULE ON THE GROUND OF APPEARANCE	SEXISM /MISOGYNY	AGEISM	TOTAL
Helen Khoshtaria	11	7	5	3			26
Tamar Chergoleishvi	1	16		3	1	1	22
Eka Beselia	17	1					18
Nanuka Zhorzholiani	4	2	9	2			17
Salome Zourabichvili	4		6	4			14
Tina Bokuchava	5	1	1	4			11
Salome Samadashvili	2	2		5	1		10
Tako Charkviani	2	3	3	1			9
Khatia dekanoidze	6	1	2				9
Megi Gotsiridze	2			4			6
Khatuna Gogorishvili				4		2	6
Nino Gogvadze			1	2	1		4
Ana Dolidze	2			1			3
Tea Tsulukiani		1		2			3
Sandra Roelofs	2	1					3
Sesili Chitanava	3						3
Other	20	17	9	10	24	1	81

1.5. TERMINOLOGY

Offensive terms used against women during the monitoring period ranged between ordinary words applied with sexist connotation (such as, for example, girl or grandma to offend on the basis of age) to highly abusive terms.

The targets of such terms were: Helen Khoshtaria of the European Georgia (40 cases, 25%); Nanuka Zhorzholiani of the UNM (34; 21%); Khatia Dekanoidze of the same party (25, 16%), followed by an active member of election campaign of European Georgia, Tamar Chergoleishvili (20; 12%); Salome Samadashvili of the UNM (13; 8%) and Khatuna Gogorishvili of the European Georgia (8 5%). The chart below reflects the number of abusive terms used by targets. The chart does not reflect those targets that were offended with less than four such terms.

CHART 10. USE OF OFFENSIVE TERMS BY TARGETS



Some abusive words were not frequently repeated in the material collected through the monitoring. More frequent were the instances of using those words in combination with other words as well as the use of synonyms. For example, the word “slut,” independently, is used once, but it is used in combinations such as: “barren slut,” “woman slut,” “Dutch slut;” the same holds true for “whore” which is used in combinations such as: “Soros’ whore,” “founder whore,” “whore from head to toe”; or in case of “housewife” – “desperate housewives,” “madam housewife.”

The table below provides discriminatory/offensive words and phrases identified during the monitoring period.

TABLE 8. DISCRIMINATORY / OFFENSIVE TERMS BY TYPOLOGY OF VIOLATIONS

TYPOLGY OF VIOLATION	TERMS
Attacks based on moral criteria	Slut, traitor, founder whore, Soros’ whore, whore from head to toe, abominable; Komsomol activist, Gavrilov’s informant, of unidentified orientation, GIMO-graduate, pro-Russian politicians, dangerous for the country, girls, liberast [the combination of liberal and pederast], LGBT lobbyist, barren slut, woman slut, Dutch slut, women-typhoon, deranged women, immoral, degraded, majorka [diminutive for majoritarian], prostitute, bastard, shameless, one of Shkhuila’s [Saakashvili] women, butcher, trash, non-woman, slave woman, “saint,” indecent, flirtatious, UNM’s woman, seasoned lesbian, Badri Esebua’s women, android, bred in incubator, dishonest, Satan, serial, soulless, Shkhuila’s [Saakashvili] woman in Ukraine.
Offence/ridicule on the ground of appearance	Cinderella, trio, fairies, hysterics of agitated woman, ugly, long-neck, unlovely, delicious slice, gorgeous slice, dirty, big-head buffalo, ugly snake, girl, rolling, queen of devils’ land, untidy, cawing like a crow, crow, how dare you with this appearance!! Despicable, Zezva’s offspring, Shrek’s cousin, hideous, scarecrow
Criticism on the ground of gender stereotypes	Housewife, desperate housewives, insane, devil, squatting women, tomboy, woman running with whistle in the street, whistler, ladies with nice bottoms, Armenian pretty woman with augmented lips, purity of virgin, Takoia, manly, one of leader’s wife, psychic laugh, somewhat virtuous, womanly, womanish, dames, our sister-in-law, non-political lady, housewife lady, weak woman, faceless, flexible
Sexism/misogyny	Heroines, Pussy Riot, cunt, quota-allocated idiots, female squad, cunt feminosaur, Soros’ crew, feminists. Wife of one of the leaders
Offence/ridicule on the ground of mental abilities	Smooth and fold-less brain, uneducated, dim fool, total stupid, ignorant, madwoman, dummy, dull creature, idiot, moron, stupid, dim-witted
Ageism	Old donkey, grandma, exemplar, menopausal woman, crow, girls

II. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

A qualitative analysis of cases identified in the reporting period (4 August – 4 November) has revealed that most frequently women politicians are targeted on the ground of moral criteria (68 cases; 31.9%). They are also frequently chastised from the standpoint of gender stereotypes (44; 20.7%). The following two large categories of abuse are offence/ridicule on the ground of appearance and on the ground of mental abilities (each 38 cases and 17.8%). Diminishing women politicians through expressing hate against women in general is also a frequent exercise, categorized as sexism/misogyny (20; 9.4%). The least frequent were the instances of offence on the ground of age (5; 2.4%).

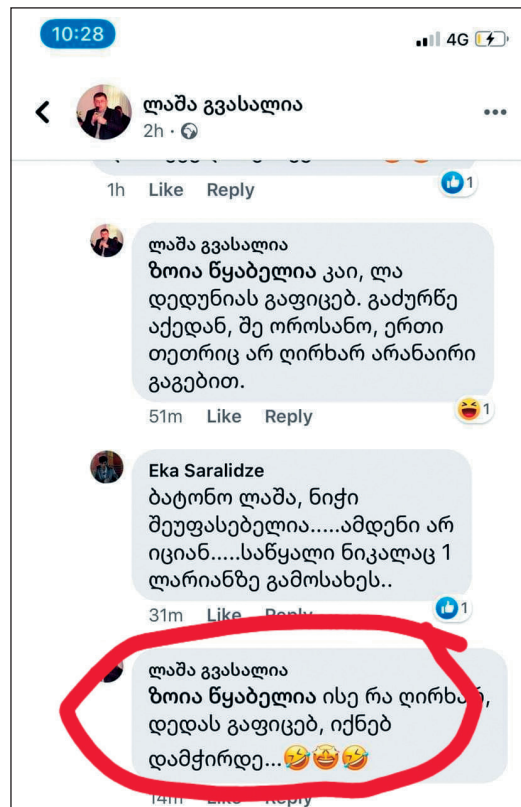
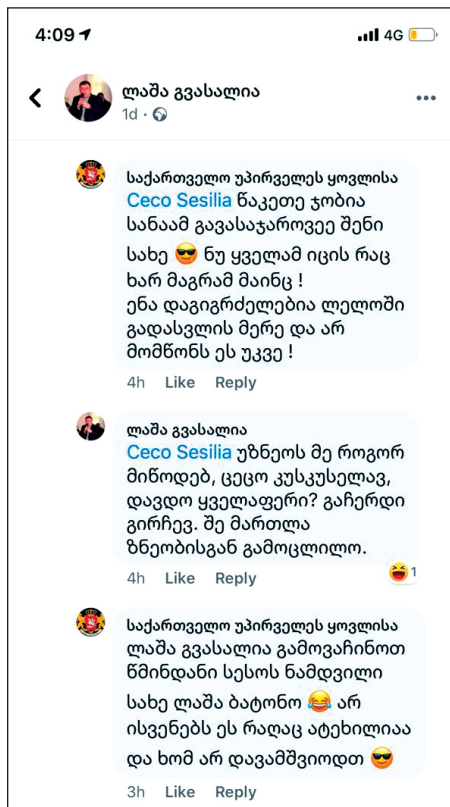
2.1. ATTACKS BASED ON MORAL CRITERIA

Among the categories of violation, most numerous were attacks based on moral criteria. The monitoring revealed 68 such cases. These attacks aim at shaming and discrediting targets on the ground of moral values. Orchestrated attacks on this ground were seen against Helen Khoshtaria and Eka Beselia; these cases are discussed separately in subchapters 3.1 and 3.2.

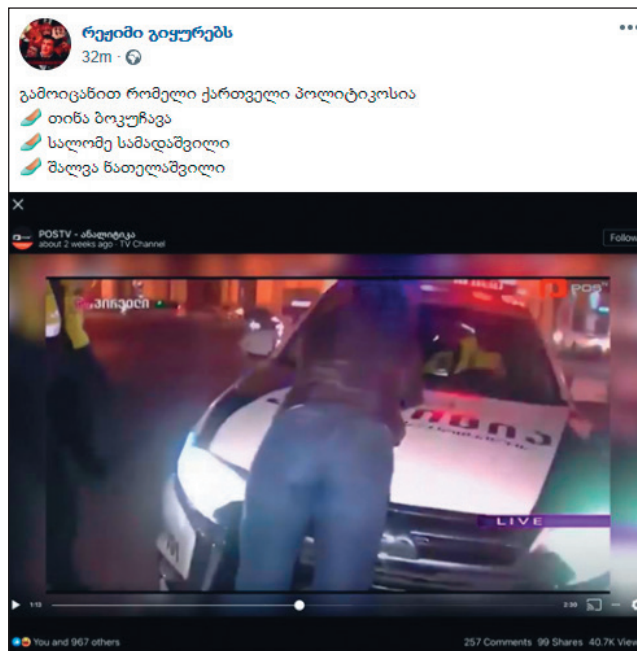
Cases identified in this category include:

BLACKMAILING. The Zugdidi Office of the political party Lelo released information about blackmailing and threatening. The FB account **Lelo Zugdidi**¹⁸ posted a screenshot of comments by the Head of State Representative's Office of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region, Lasha Gvasalia, and a FB page Sakartvelo Upirvels Kovelisa, in which they offended members of the youth wing of Zugdidi Lelo organization, threatening them with the release of information about their private lives:

¹⁸ Archived link: <https://archive.ph/nT3N0>



USE OF PHOTO MATERIAL. A FB page discrediting the government’s opponents, **Rezhimi Gvikurebs**, posted a photo featuring a rear part of a person bending over a patrol police car; in an accompanying post, FB users were asked to guess which politician was depicted on the photo by choosing the right name from the three listed politicians from opposition parties. This post has been removed.



Rezhimi Gikurebs, 17 August: “Guess which of the Georgian politicians is this [in the photo]: Tina Bokuchava, Salome Samadashvili, Shalva Natelashvili.”

SLUT-SHAMING. To shame targets on the ground of moral criteria, offenders often use a form of sexist hate speech called slut-shaming. Slut-shaming means criticizing people, especially women and girls, for not conforming to gender norms and stereotyped expectations of behavior, appearance or clothing.¹⁹

This form of sexist hate speech was used against an UNM single-seat candidate Nanuka Zhorzholiani by Rezo Amashukeli, published on FB account **iNews**,²⁰ and a representative of Samtredia municipality **Sopiko Kikacheishvili**²¹:



iNews, Rezo Amashukeli, 4 October: “I want to ask you one thing, Nanuka: you never wear underpants to not waste time and will you wear them when you get into the parliament?”



Sopiko Kikacheishvili, governor of the Melauri village in Samtredia district, 27 October: “Nanuka, you slut, make sure I do not run into you; you’d better hurry away from Samtredia, you slut, where”²²

SOMEONE’S WOMAN. Slut-shaming in the sphere of politics is based on stereotyped and discriminatory attitude whereby politics is not a field of activity for women because they lack necessary skills and if any woman is in this sphere, it is because she is a favorite of a male politician. The word “favorite” here means a relative, a friend or, most frequently, a mistress. Based on such stereotypes, Sapari developed a Georgia-specific indicator – “someone’s woman” which means “any form of referring to a woman politician as a property of a male politician.”

This form of sexist speech is applied by the FB account **Sofia Sofia**²³ against UNM candidates Khatia Dekanoidze and Salome Samadashvili as well as against the leader of Republican Party, Khatuna Samnidze, in its post shared in the FB group Simartlis Gza on 9 October:

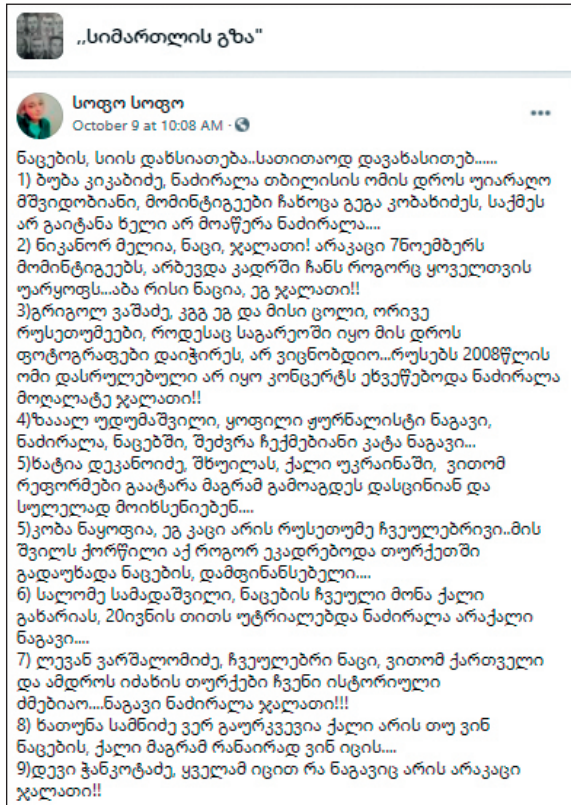
¹⁹ Slut-shaming is the practice of criticizing people, especially women and girls, who are perceived to violate expectations of behavior and appearance regarding issues related to sexuality. Examples of slut-shaming include being criticized or punished for violating dress code policies by dressing in perceived sexually provocative ways, requesting access to birth control, having premarital, casual, or promiscuous sex, or when being victim blamed for being raped or otherwise sexually assaulted. Slut-shaming is used to shame, stigmatize women.

²⁰ Archived link: <https://archive.ph/LZ08j>

²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009009964984>

²² Archived link: <https://archive.ph/e3Gmq>

²³ Archived link: <https://archive.ph/t1cwG>



Sofia Sofia, Simartlis Gza, 9 October: “Characterization of candidates on the UNM list... I will characterize them one by one....”

- 5) Khatia Dekanoidze, Shkhuila’s [meaning, Mikheil Saakashvili] woman in Ukraine, who pretended to have implemented reforms, but she has been kicked out [from Ukraine], ridiculed and referred to as stupid....
- 6) Salome Samadashvili, an ordinary UNM’s slave woman; this trash non-woman was pointing fingers to [Prime Minister] Gakharia on 20 June...
- 8) Khatuna Samnidze cannot decide who she is a woman or UNM’s woman....”

SOMEONE’S WOMAN AND DISCREDITATION ON THE GROUND OF MENTAL ABILITIES. Similar sexist hate speech is used in a post by the FB account discrediting the government’s opponents, **Simartlis Gza**,²⁴ in which the former Deputy Foreign Minister, Nino Kalandadze, is additionally offended on the ground of mental abilities. Hence, this case is included in two categories.

²⁴ Archived link: <https://archive.ph/g2h3h>



Sofia Sofia, Simartlis Gza, 12 October: “Nino Kalandadze, born on in Tbilisi 11.03.1977, is one of Shkhuiła’s [Mikehil Saakashvili] women. This idiot said that Davit Gareji is not Georgia. Do not forget that she worked at the Foreign Ministry. This ignorant, shameless woman. Shkhuiła had only such morons, such shameless, dumb women, butchers!!! And this non-woman, trash, butcher!!!”

HATE SPEECH. A user shared a post in the FB account discrediting the government’s opponents Davasrulot Natsebi!!! – Simartlis Gza,²⁵ showing an election poster of Sandra Roelofs from 2019 local elections when she ran for Mayor of Zugdidi. In this post, the user applied abusive language and xenophobic hate speech against her.

²⁵ During the monitoring period, this FB account changed the name into Simartlis Gza. Consequently, Davasrulot Natsebi!!!-Simartlis Gza and Simartlis Gza are counted as one FB account in the quantitative data.



Davasrulot Natsebi!!! – Simartlis Gza, Ana Chankotadze, 14 September: “This Dutch bitch. No one needs a foreigner here; we feel fine without them.”

Comments under this status contain offensive phrases such as: Dutch cow, whore, blind butcher, shameless cow; slut, refugee from Amsterdam’s brothel, leader of whores, etc.

UNPRINCIPLED. Women politicians are portrayed as people seeking gain. A FB account associated with the Alliance of Patriots, **Politikosebi 1 Laridan**, uploaded a video clip of a young woman singing and dancing, who looks like Tako Charkviani, the founder of the political party Law and Justice:

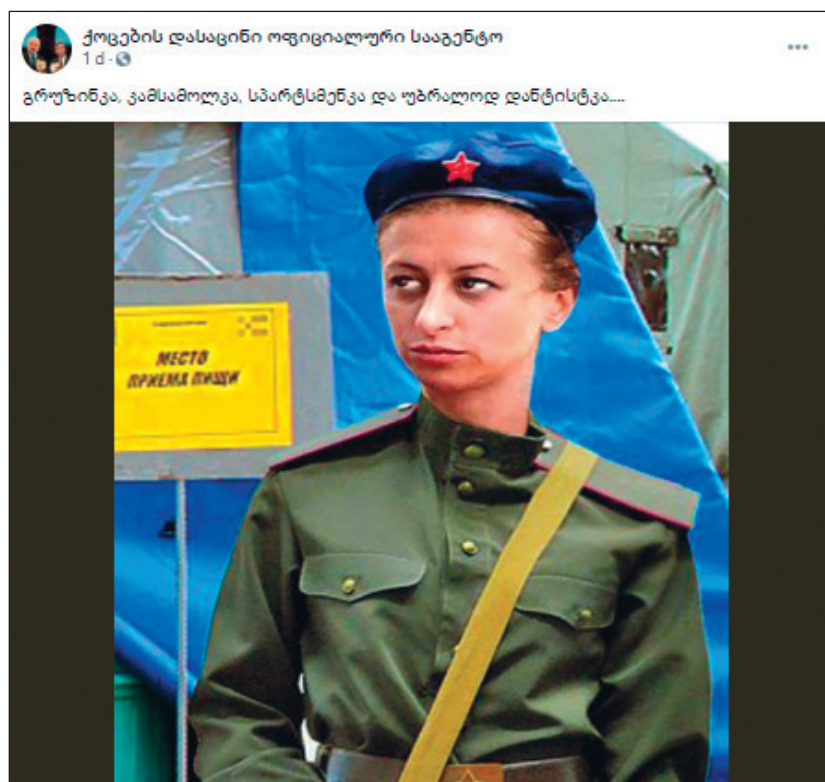
Politikosebi 1 Laridan, 14 August: “Having found no gain in politics, Tako Charkviani moved to the sphere of music.”

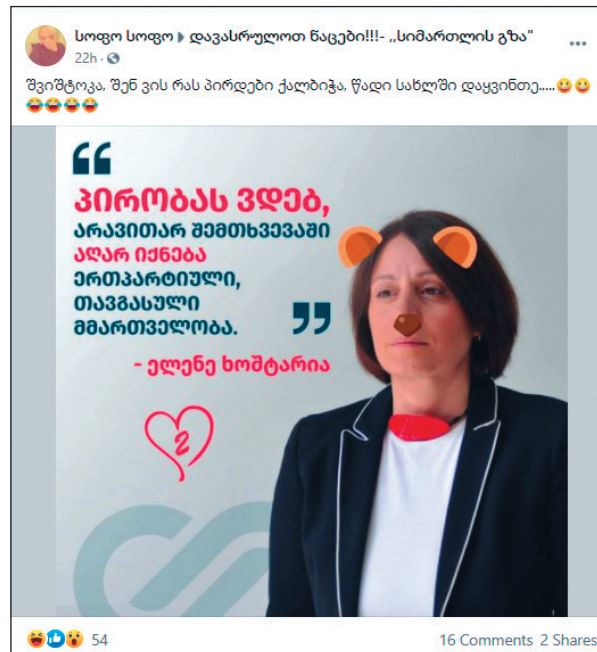
OFFENSIVE CARTOON. Two cases of offending representatives of government were identified under this category during the monitoring period. One is a photoshopped offensive cartoon featuring President Salome Zourabichvili, MP Sopo Kiladze and the Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Maya Tskitishvili, sitting in a room furnished with antique furniture and objects while MP Gia Volski and the president’s son, Teimuraz Gorjestani, bringing in a statue of phallus. This photo was shared by **Kotsebis Dasatsini Oficialuri Saagento**, an account discrediting the government.



Kotsebis Dasatsini Officialuri Saagento, 3 September: “A new present to Madam Salome.”

PHOTOMANIPULATIONS. A photoshopped image of Health Care Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze was published by the account discrediting the government, **Kotsebis Dasatsini Officialuri Saagento**, with an ironical post saying “Georgian, Komsomol activist, sportsmen, dentist.” These words were written with Georgian letters but in a manner as pronounced in Russian – “Gruzinka, komsomolka, sportsmenka, dantistka”.





Sopo Sopo, Davasrulut Natsebi!!! – Simartlis Gza, 26 August: “Hey you, whistler, how could you, tomboy, promise anyone anything? go home and stay quiet...” 😊😊😊

An account associated with anti-liberal groups, **Geo Pepe**, shared a screen of news item from Daily Mail depicting a male clad in high-heel shoes and short dress. A Georgian caption on the photo: “single seat candidate in Vake constituency from European Georgia” contains a hint at Khoshtaria’s manlike appearance. This post has been removed.



Geo Pepe, 19 October: “Single seat candidate in Vake constituency from European Georgian”

The FB page discrediting the government’s opponents, **Kveknis Mtrebi**, ridicules Tamar Chergoleishvili for non-stereotypical behavior and to emphasize her “mannish” behavior, refers to her by using a male name and a male form of patronymic.



Kveknis Mtrebi, 30 September: “Boris, son of Joto, Chergoleishvili.”

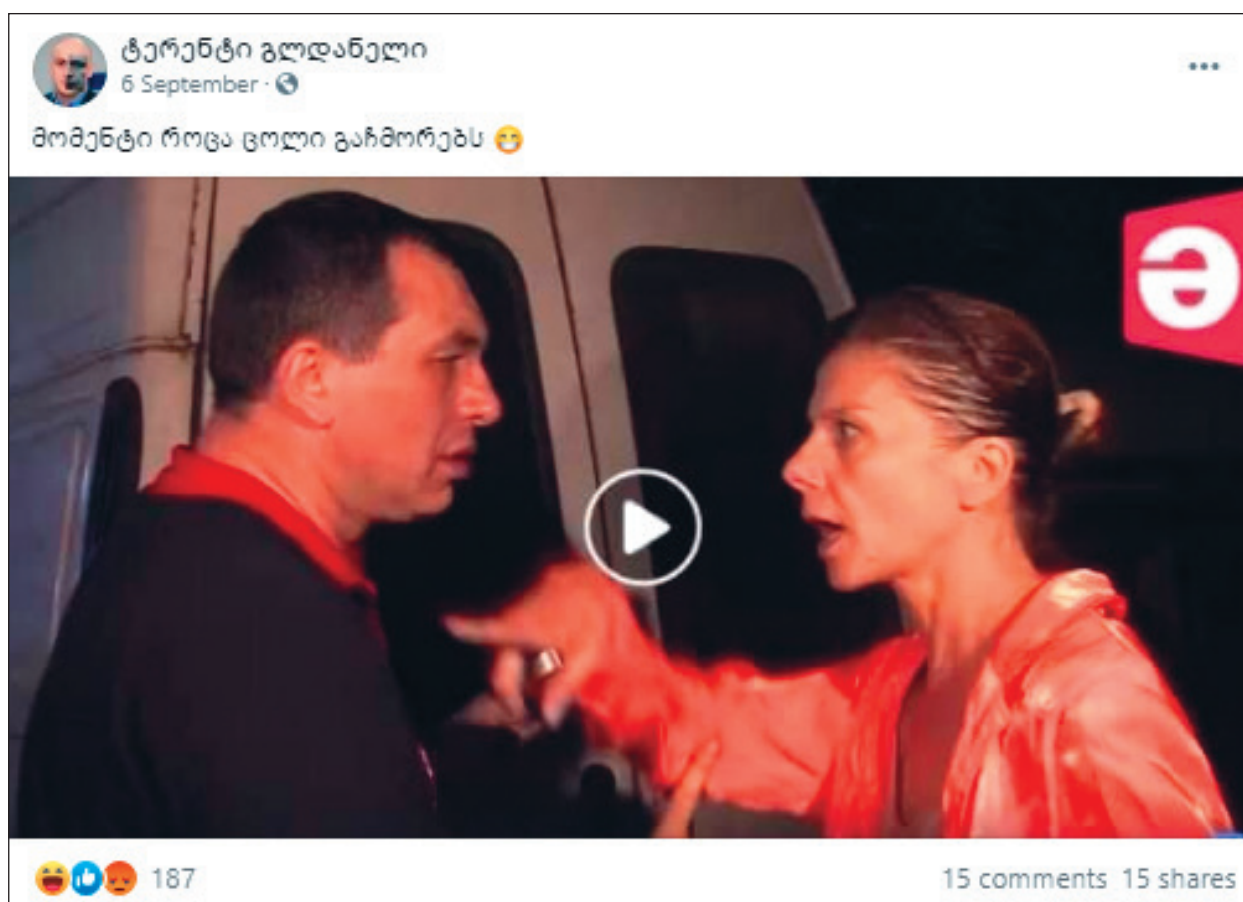
There was another example of such “disguised” gender discrimination by the same FB page in the monitoring period. In one of the posts of Kveknis Mtrebi, the UNM member, Salome Samadashvili, is referred to by the male form of patronymic in Russian manner – “Nestorich.”



Kveknis Mtrebi, 4 November: “Samadashvili has been diagnosed with coronavirus. Do not worry, Nestorich [son of Nestor]; did your president [Saakashvili] not tell you that coronavirus is not a dangerous disease and that he had it without any symptoms?”

Women politicians were often criticized for incomppliance with patriarchal perceptions about gender roles and a place of woman in a family. A frequent target of rebuke in this regard was Tamar Chergoleishvili who was engaged in the election campaign of her husband, a single-seat candidate from European Georgia, Giga Bokeria. This largely corresponds to a form of sexist hate speech developed by Sapari – “hate by using heteronormative family.”

Terenti Gldaneli, a FB page discrediting the government’s opponents, published a still from video:



Terenti Gldaneli, 6 September: “A moment when you are oppressed by wife.”

Gender stereotypes about women’s role in a family are also a cause of chastising women for their independent activity.

A meme shared by a user on Simartlis Gza, a FB page associated with the GD, features a poster of Leone and Matilda in which the faces of movie characters are swapped with the faces of Tako Charkviani, the founder of the Law and Justice party, and Giorgi Vashadze, the leader of Strategy Aghmashenebeli. In the accompanying post, Charkviani is rebuked for her independent activity; moreover, an attempt to question her reputation is seen in the use of pun – Tako-tako [the first is the name while the second means buttocks in Georgian; the first letter of the two sounds differently when pronounced in Georgian].



Sopo Sopo, Davasrulot Natsebi!!! – Simartlis Gza, 22 August: “Georgian alternatives of Leon and Matilda, builders... 🤔🤔 Tako, Is your family aware where you are?... 🤔🤔🤔”

A case of positive sexism was identified in this category, which means any such evaluation that may appear positive to a person who is evaluating but in reality, is damaging to gender equality. The total of two such cases were identified in the monitoring period. One of them belongs to this category, while another falls under the category of offence on the ground of appearance.

The FB page associated with the Alliance of Patriots, BS Info, shared a post about Irma Inashvili, in which the author of the post, Davit Okitashvili, praised Inashvili for being oriented on a cause – something that is unusual for women.

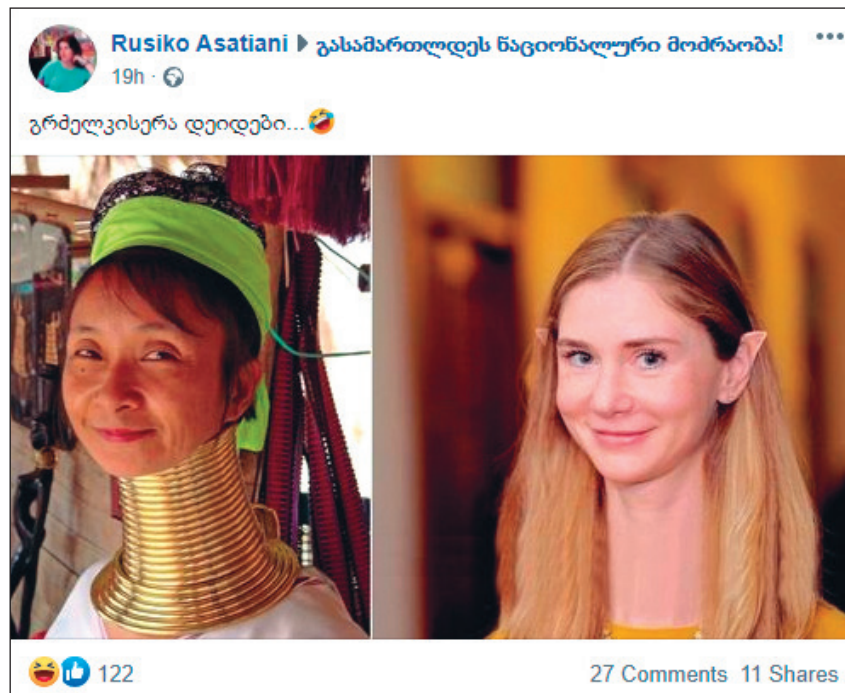
Davit Okitashvili, 20 August: “Abkhazia is my pain, I love Abkhazia and I want to go to Abkhazia and I will support anyone who makes progress in achieving this cause, especially if that anyone is a woman who has always been a source of changes, a woman who is oriented on a cause, not image, a woman, who has put her life to risk for this cause.”

2.3. OFFENCE / RIDICULE ON THE GROUND OF APPEARANCE

As many as 38 cases of offence/ridicule on the ground of appearance were identified in the monitoring period. Quite a big number of attacks on appearance may be explained by a wrong stereotypical opinion that the main virtue of a woman is her appearance and hence, a woman may be most severely hurt if she is ridiculed for appearance. Women politicians were ridiculed and offended for their face and body, manner of speech, even hygiene.

The hatred was demonstrated via text (statuses), discrediting or manipulative photo and video material, caricatures, memes.

In a FB group discrediting the government’s opponents, **Dasamartlides Natsionaluti Modzraoba**, a user shared a photo collage depicting, side by side, a woman wearing rings around the neck appearing to lengthen it, and Tina Bokuchava of the UNM with her neck lengthened and ears pointed with photoshopping tool.



A photoshopped election poster of Khatuna Gogorishvili from European Georgia was shared by a user shares in the FB group discrediting the government’s opponents, **Simartlis Gza**; devil’s horns were drawn to her head:

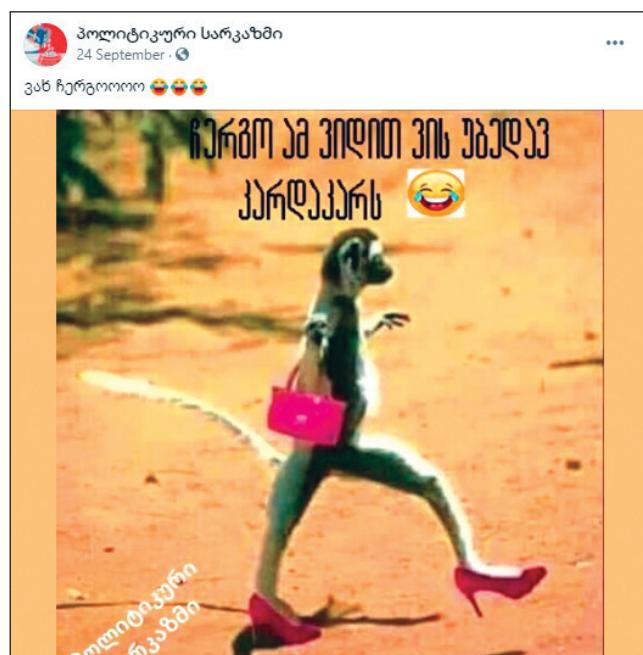


Sopia Sopia, Simartlis Gza, 26 August: “I count on you Gurians, do not cast votes for this scare-crow ... 😊😊😊?”

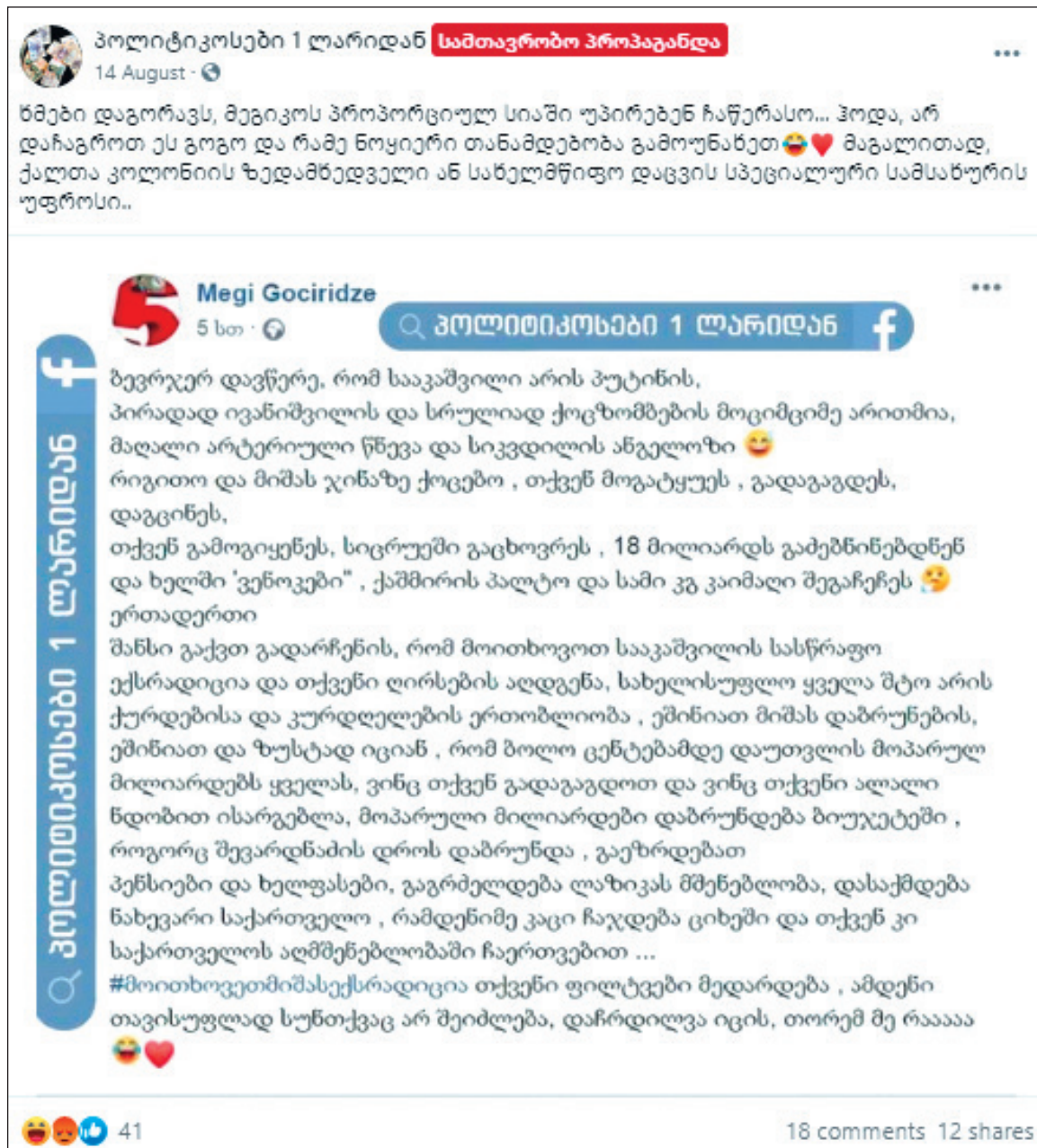
The FB group discrediting the government’s opponents, **Natsebis Dasacini Oficialuri Saagento**, published a photoshopped screenshot of faked exchange of comments between Salome Samadashvili of the UNM and Gia Volski of the GD. According to this fake screenshot, to Samadashvili’s comment “Georgian Dream has lost its face” Volski replies “How dare you [say this] with this look!!” and attaches Samadashvili’s photo.



The phrase “how dare you [do/say anything] with this look/appearance,” which became a catchphrase on the Facebook during a monitoring period, was also used by **Politikuri Sarkazmi**, a FB page associated with the Alliance of Patriots to ridicule Tamar Chergoleishvili, an active participant in election campaign of the European Georgia. It posted a photo of a monkey sporting red shoes and a handbag, and a post: “Wow, Chergooooo [shortened surname]”. The photo has an inscription: “Chergo, how dare you conduct door-to-door canvassing with this look.”



Body weight has also become a subject of ridicule. A FB page associated with the Alliance of Patriots, **Politikosebi 1 laridan**, posted a screenshot of a post by a UNM candidate, Megi Gotsiridze, in which she criticized the government. In the post of the FB page she is metaphorically ridiculed for her body weight:



Politikosebi 1 laridan, 14 August: “Rumors are rolling that Megiko will stand for election... Take good care of her and find her some nourishing position, for example, supervisor of women’s prison or head of special service of state security...”

Women politicians were derided for their clothing, accessories or taste.

A FB page discrediting the government’s opposition **Kveknis Mtrebi** published photos of Salome Samadashvili from UNM, outlining her accessories with a red circle in each photo.



Kveknis Mtrebi, 23 October: Look at “brooches,” oh, my!”

Nino Burjanadze was called “tasteless” by a FB page associated with the Georgian March, Antiliberaluri Doktrina.



Mikheil Saakashvili used an offensive term against Justice Minister Tea Tsulukiani. Having shared a news item about Tsulukiani's statement that Saakashvili fears he will lose a dispute in Hague, Saakashvili called her ugly. He removed this post shortly.



Mikheil Saakashvili, personal FB page, 18 August: “This ugly person dreams about Georgia being found guilty and spares no effort to this end.”

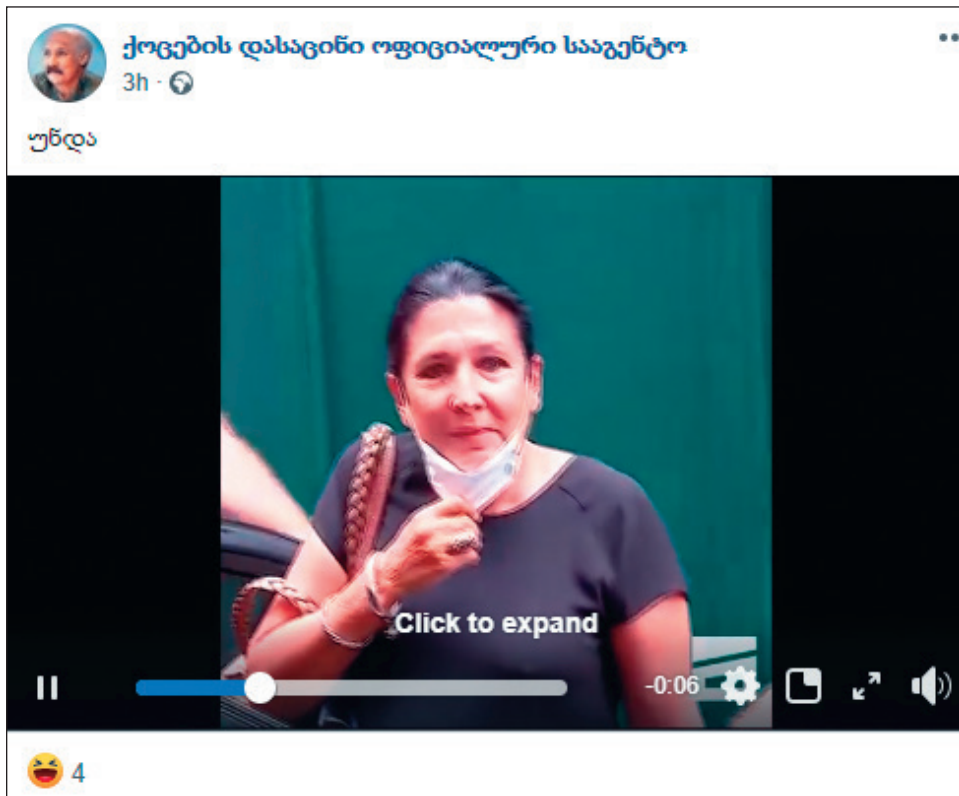
A supporter of the UNM, **Kakhaber Admia** posted a photo on his personal FB page, featuring Tea Tsulukiani wearing a face mask.



Kakhaber Admia, 2 September: “I have never seen a woman whom a face mask suited so perfectly... 😊😊”

Comments under this post (mainly by women, judging by their FB profiles) continue ridiculing Tsulukiani by using offensive words and ironic phrases such as: “it suits her perfectly; it’s her style; beauty; ugly, devil, Satan, monstrously ugly.”

Salome Zourabichvili’s clothing became a topic of criticism in August. During one of her TV appearances, her breasts were showing through her T-shirt.



A video uploaded by the FB page discrediting the government, Kotsebis Dasatsini Oficialuri Saagento, on 17 August, was made up of a fragment from Zourabichvili’s abovementioned TV comment followed by a fragment from a comedy show featuring an actor disguised as a baby who is continuously asking for breastmilk.



The same FB page, Kotsebis Dasatsini Oficialuri Saagento, offended President Salome Zourabichvili by pointing to hygiene. The page shared a video showing Zourabichvili coming out of the residence and making a brief comment for journalists while getting into the car.

Kotsebis Dasatsini Oficialuri Saagento, 17 August: “Has she gone to Minsk with this unwashed hair?”

The Labor Party leader, Shalva Natelashvili, discriminated against women candidates from the party list when nominating them. This case is another example of positive sexism – a seemingly positive but in fact, discriminatory evaluation. When nominating the women candidates, the party leader emphasized their look and age, rather than education, skills and experience.

Shalva Natelashvili, Labor Party, 26 September: “We have kept the most delicious slice, gorgeous slice for the ending [of the nomination of candidates]. We are nominating three prettiest young girls as candidates for city councils.”

2.4. OFFENCE / RIDICULE ON THE GROUND OF MENTAL ABILITIES

This category includes cases of offence/ridicule on the ground of intellectual abilities, experience, competences. During the monitoring period there were 38 cases identified in this category.

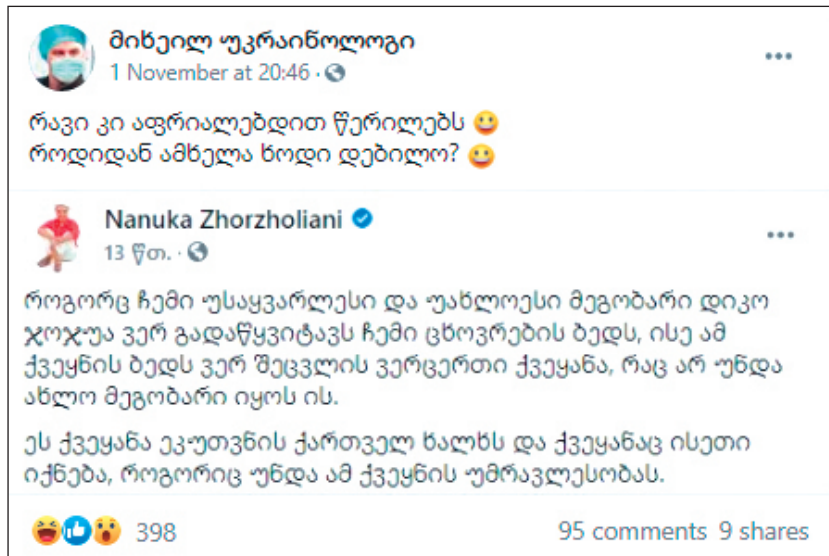
Women politicians were offended by words such as stupid, idiot, ignorant, moron, dull, dim-witted, using text as well as video and photo manipulations to this end.

In a FB group associated with the Georgian March, **Georgian March – Erovnuli Modzraobis Mxhardamcherta Jgufi**, a user shared a comment of Nanuka Zhorzholiani of the UNM, published on mix. Metronome.ge, calling it gibberish.



Marina Koranashvili, 29 October: “What a gibberish is this woman saying.”

Nanuka Zhorzholiani was also often offended by the FB page discrediting the government’s opponents, **Mikheil Ukrainologi**.



Mikheil Ukrainologi, 1 November: “[speaking about Nanuka Zhorzholiani] since when you, moron, have become so ambitious?”

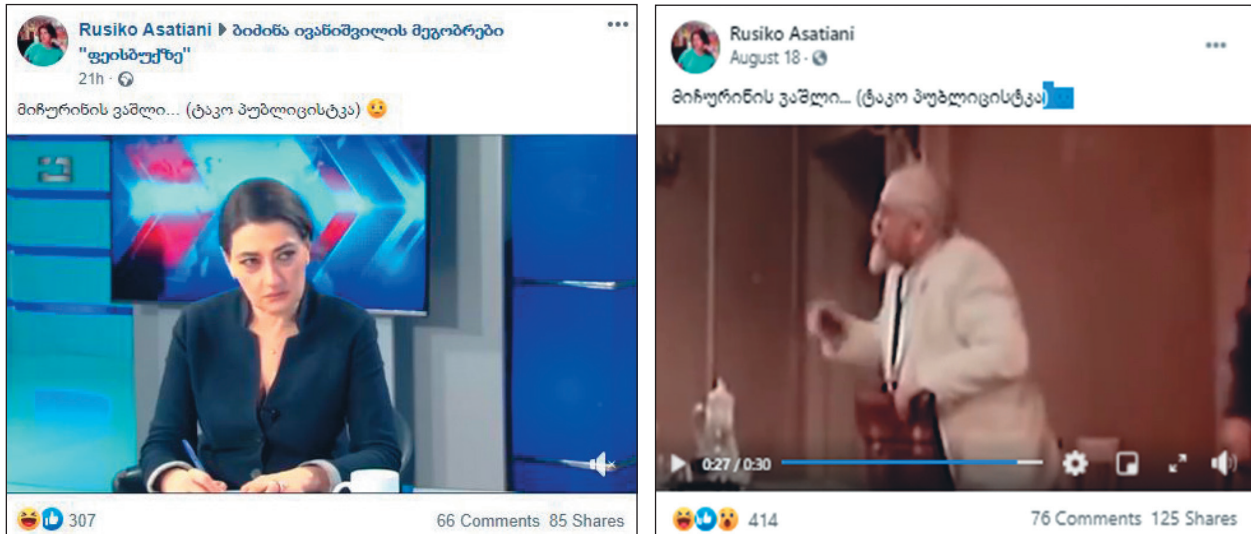
This post is removed now as well as two other posts of the same FB page (published on **29 October** and **1 November**) in which similar abusive terms are used against Zhorzholiani.

Yet another UNM single-seat candidate, Khatia Dekanoidze, is called idiot in a post shared by a user, Sofia Sofia, in a FB group discrediting the government’s opponents **Simartlis Gza**.



Sofia Sofia, Simartlis Gza, 21 October: “Khatia has sworn at her grandparents’ grave... Hey, you moron... Let the dead alone, you idiot; they must be turning in their grave for having such a shameless grandchild, you Satanic non-women... 😂😂😂😂”

In a GD supporter FB group, **Bidzina Ivanisvili's Megobrebi Feisbukze**, a user uploaded a video in which Tako Charkviani, being on a Kavkasia TV talk show, tries to recall politicians who have made a specific statement, but she fails to recall any politician save one. In the post, this episode is followed by an episode from a Georgian movie, Chrichina, featuring a professor advising a movie character who fails to answer a question at an exam: “calm down now, get better prepared and take the exam next year.”



In a FB group **Rustavi 21/Rustavi21**, a user shared a photomanipulation – a woman bodybuilder with the face of Nino Burjanadze, the leader of Democratic Movement–United Georgia. The photo has Burjanadze’s election slogan – Choose Power and Experience, and ironical question “can she stop Russia” and smile emojis.



In a long post of journalist Gela Zedelashvili, published by the FB page **Saerto Gazeti**, Nino Gogvadze, representing the European Georgia, is attacked and belittled not only on the ground of intellectual skills, but also on the manner of her speech:

Saerto Gazeti, Gela Zedelashvili, 13 August: “That woman who was in Irakli Alasania’s party and even entered the parliament owing to Bidzina Ivanishvili, what’s her name... Nino Gogvadze. This Nino Gogvadze cawed like a crow from a rostrum saying that a person is unique and she/he is tied to Western democracy. That’s why, she said, we should elect European Georgia. To tell the truth... I think this crow, sorry, woman sounded very ‘clever.’”

The FB page associated with anti-liberal groups, Alt-Info, questioned skills of the first 20 women from the GD party list, calling them girls:

Alt-Info, Giorgi Kardava, 11 September: “Who are, after all, these girls, these ladies, what skills or what political experience do they have?... According to what criteria are they selected?”-

2.5. SEXISM / MISOGYNY²⁶

Pre-election period saw a step-up in an antiliberal discourse against gender equality and the criticism of legislation that contributes to elimination of gender discrimination and inequality, protection of women’s rights, political empowerment of women. The total of 20 cases were identified in this category during the monitoring period. Ahead of the election this topic was discussed by ultranationalist, antiliberal and pro-Russian media and separate actors. Legislation promoting gender equality was portrayed as a result of liberal system, which was imposed by the West. A possible aim of such messages was to influence voters. This assumption was supported by a call of FB page Alt-Info on the audience to make the liberal system “pay a political and ideological price” in the forthcoming elections.

The Labor Party leader Shalva Natelashvili criticized the amended regulation toughening the criminal liability for rape as something drafted “for the sake of grants secured from abroad” which may be used by women “to force [men] into marriage or get some other benefit”:

Shalva Natelashvili, Labor Party, 4 August: “... for the sake of grants secured from abroad, a draft law was submitted to the parliament, whereby a partner will be punished for non-consensual sexual intercourse. This applies to married partners too... This new, ambiguous regulation (thank god, it does not require approval of a public notary) may encourage certain persons to resort to provocation in order to force [men] into marriage or get some other benefit...”

The FB page associated with anti-liberal groups, Alt-Info, spent quite a time on the criticism of legislation protecting women against violence and domestic violence. On 18 September, a member of the board of Alt-Info, Giorgi Kardava, called the criminalization of domestic violence “infantilism of liberalism” and threatened women with retaliation from those men who have been sentenced for this crime:

²⁶ Misogyny is the hatred of women and implies low evaluation of women’s political rationality, portraying women as inferior beings and only as sexual objects.

Sexism denotes a systemic and structural characteristic of a social order which is a basis of oppression of women by men, discrimination or prejudice based on sex. Sexism may manifest in evaluating a woman as physically or mentally inferior to a man, in a different attitude to a woman in public or private spheres, exclusion of women from certain spheres of activity, etc. Sexism is largely based on traditional stereotypes about gender roles.

Alt-Info, Giorgi Kardava, 18 September: “It speaks about the infantilism of liberalism to think that incarceration of men for three years for domestic violence will solve the problem. This will not only fail to solve the problem but will also increase the wrath in those men who after being released from jail will establish such a purely toxic masculine despotism that one can hardly imagine.”

A co-owner of Alt-Info, Shota Martinenko saw in the regulation protecting women against domestic violence an attempt to repress men and ruin families and called on the audience to make the liberal system pay a political and ideological price in the forthcoming elections.

Alt-Info, Shota Martinenko, 16 September: “I have to address now these men and their families: you must understand full well that repressions undertaken against you, which ruined your families and sent you to jail, is the agenda set by a liberal system and this government... Therefore, you must have the existing system, including the government, to pay a political and ideological price; the election is coming and bear this in mind.”

In a program on 15 September, discussing a killing of a woman by her husband, Alt-Info even justified femicide. Presenters of the program justified the killer because, according to their information, the wife had an affair with someone else.

Alt-Info, Zura Makharadze, 15 September: “There are moments in life when there is something that is unjustified legally but justified morally. Taking someone’s life is never justified legally but from a moral standpoint, there are instances when people commit it while fully realizing what this will entail.”

The Antiliberal FB page Alt-Info also tried to portray a regulation on the gender quotas²⁷ as “a manifestation of strict, inflexible, feminist interference” and promoted a stereotype that politics is not a business for women.

Alt-Info, Shota Martinenko, 4 September: “Politics is a sphere in which men are real leaders; women’s ordinary skills are not adequate in this topic... They are demanding quotas in such a sphere where this will worsen the quality.”

Women were portrayed as unmotivated people who are unable to fight and this was explained by “objective reality:”

Alt-Info, Emre Kuchuki, 25 September: “A woman does not naturally have a motivation to enter into hierarchical fight with men and therefore does not enter it; an objective reality is that few women have a motivation to enter into competition with men, because the politics is the toughest sport.”

2.6. AGEISM

Ageism means discriminating, stereotyping and marginalizing on the ground of age. This type of discrimination covers all age groups, but more frequently is against aged people.

There were five cases of ageism identified in the reporting period. Targets of all five were representatives of the opposition.

²⁷ According to the amendment to the Election Code, adopted on 2 July 2020, one in every four candidates from a party list running for parliamentary elections until 2028, must be a representative of an opposite sex, while thereafter, until 2032, every third candidate must be such. Election Code of Georgia, Chapter XX, Article 203. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1557168?publication=65>

The propaganda FB page **Saerto Gazeti** published a long post of journalist Gela Zedelashvili criticizing various representatives of political opposition. Among them was a single-seat candidate from European Georgia for Ozurgeti municipality, Khatuna Gogorishvili, who was offended on the ground of age. Age is a trait that has been more frequently used to discriminate against Khatuna Gogorishvili.

Saerto Gazeti, Gela Zedelashvili, 13 August: “Khatuna Gogorishvili amused me very much. Imagine her, with her background, along the Ozurgeti–Lanchkhuti–Chokhatauri highway, it will be a pleasure to see her. Other old donkeys will also be interesting, but this one is the best exemplar.”

The FB page discrediting the government’s opponents, **Sekta**, shared a screenshot of FB page advertisement of Khatuna Gogorishvili from European Union with a discriminatory comment.



Sekta, 25 August: “Go home, granny, cook beans, bake cornbread. Do you want to pass away on a plenary session?”

Comments under this post echoed the attitude of the post, but also contained offences on the ground of appearance: “I pity her, she grew so old that hardly stood on her feet; has she to fall apart in the parliament? Has she sworn to die in the parliament and nowhere else? go to hell, lady; cook beans and stay warm in a bed, winter is coming; she is so ugly ... I have never seen such an ugly creature.”

A statement of anti-liberal FB page Alt-Info was also discriminatory calling young women “girls” when recalling a legislative amendment of 2012, whereby the eligible age of parliament members was cut from 25 to 21 years. In that year, the then ruling party UNM, used this amendment for three women.²⁸ The comment by Alt-Info also included an offence on the ground of mental abilities and moral criteria.

Alt-info, Zura Makharadze, 11 September: “Let me say something unpleasant, some girls were also facilitated to enter the parliament during the government led by Misha [Saakashvili] and to this end, they even decreased the age of parliamentarians to have one girl enter it. A large segment of society had a suspicion why, owing to what skills one girl became an MP; but those are also the skills that help one achieve a desired aim.”

²⁸ <https://civil.ge/archives/122194>

III. DISCREDITING CAMPAIGNS

During the monitoring period two cases of orchestrated attacks to discredit targets on the ground of moral criteria were identified, namely against MP and single-seat candidate from European Georgia, Helen Khoshtaria, and MP and the founder of the political party For Freedom, Eka Beselia.

3.1. CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT HELEN KHOSHTARIA, A SINGLE-SEAT CANDIDATE FROM EUROPEAN GEORGIA.

A campaign against a single-seat candidate from European Georgia, Helen Khoshtaria to discredit her on the ground of moral values, was related to her political affiliation and activity. The attacks stepped up from 25 August, when she applied to the prosecutor's office to investigate an alleged funding of the Alliance of Patriots from Russia.²⁹ The application to the prosecutor's office was preceded by a journalistic investigation into the abovementioned issue.

Attacks that started on 25 August were in the form of counteraccusations and concerned Khoshtaria's higher education which she obtained in Russia. The messages posted on FB accounts apparently aimed at accusing Khoshtaria of harboring benevolent sentiments towards Russia.

According to her biography, published on the website of the parliament, Khoshtaria graduated from the Moscow State University of International Relations (the so-called MGIMO). The ruling Georgian Dream frequently employed this fact as a counteraccusation.^{30,31,32}

On 25 August, the online edition **reportiori.ge** published a comment of a film director, Goga Khaindrava, giving an advice to Khoshtaria to look at her own biography:

Reportiori.ge, Goga Khaindrava, 25 August: "It is a welcoming initiative to disqualify those political parties that are financed from Russia, but I would advise Ms. Helen Khoshtaria to start from her own contacts

²⁹ <https://netgazeti.ge/news/478288/>

³⁰ <https://netgazeti.ge/news/477408/>

³¹ <https://netgazeti.ge/news/427841/>

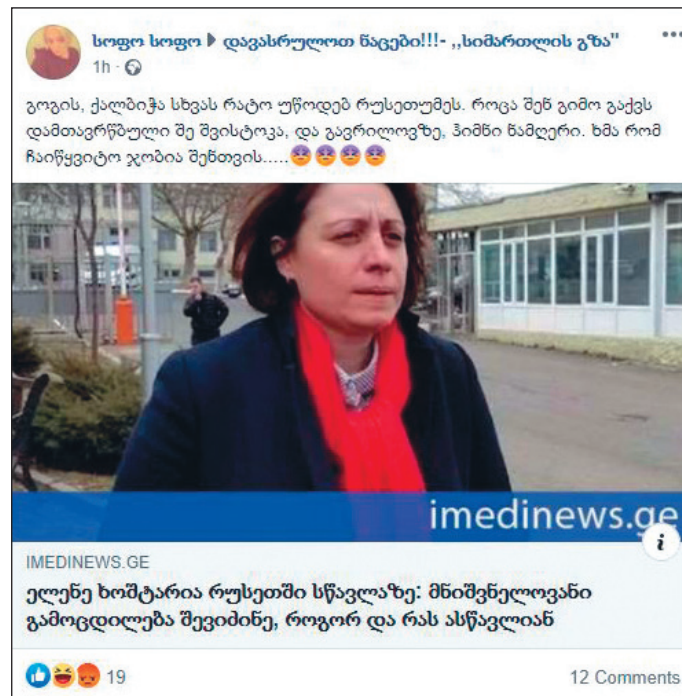
³² <https://bit.ly/3IEoNbF>

with Russian special services, to look at her own biography... I am not surprised that a Russian company is a reliable company for Helen Khoshtaria because Helen Khoshtaria has a Russian background, she obtained education in the institution that train KGB cadres – it is a Russian diplomatic educational institution and she knows full well what she was taught there by representatives of Russian security services.”

On 26 August, the above comment was published by **Tinp.ge-Dghes Politikashi**, an online edition associated with the Alliance of Patriots, on its **FB page** as well as webpage. The page was **removed** by Facebook for coordinated inauthentic behavior and the posts are no longer accessible.



Attacks continued in the following days: on 26 August, in a FB group discrediting the government’s opponents, **Simartlis Gza**, the user Sofia Sofia shared a news item of a similar content and in an accompanying post offended Khoshtaria not only for obtained education but also for non-womanish behavior. In this particular case, Khoshtaria was attacked not only for her political action, but also on the ground of gender; this case contains two categories of offence – those on the ground of moral criteria and on the ground of gender stereotypes and therefore, is included in both categories.



Sofia Sofia, Simartlis Gza, 26 August: “Gogi’s tomboy, why do you call others Russia-sympathizers when you yourself graduated GIMO, you whistler, and sang a hymn for Gavrilo. You’d better stay silent... 😊 😊 😊”

Yet another FB page associated with the Alliance of Patriots, Memeaturebi,³³ uploaded a **meme** portraying Khoshtaria as a person spreading lies. The last part of the compound word “supermarket” is stricken through and the word “lie” written over it.



In the comments under this post, Khoshtaria was called “Putin’s slave” and “liar.”

³³ <https://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/connect-real-opposition-fb-accounts-close-links-alliance-patriots-and-other-anti-western>

The FB page discrediting the government’s opponents, **Sirtskhvilis Koridori**, published Khoshtaria’s photo in which she is referred to as a pro-Russian politician while in the left corner the photo has a hashtag: #togetherforrussia.



Sirtskhvilis Koridori, 29 August: “Helen Khoshtaria obtained education in a Russian institution that trains KGB cadres, the Russian diplomatic educational institution.”

Irakli Jankarashvili³⁴ who administers several FB pages of pro-government and anti-liberal attitudes,³⁵ published a post on 31 August, ridiculing Khoshtaria’s intellectual abilities. The post is illustrated with a photo which has an inscription Helen humiliated. On the same day, this post was published by **tvalsazrisi.ge** while Jankarashvili himself shared it in a coordinated manner in FB group discrediting the government’s opponents **Simartlis Gza**, and FB groups associated with the Alliance of Patriots **POLITIKO** and **Supporters of Alliance of Patriots**. This case was categorized as ab offence/ridicule on the ground of mental abilities.

³⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100049087023385>

³⁵ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/what-do-irakli-irakli-antiliberal-doctrine-news-front-and-tvalsazrisige-have-common>



Irakli Jankarashvili, 31 August: “Helen Khoshtaria was turned back from the prosecutor’s office humiliated. A graduate of MGIMO, Helen Khoshtaria, rushed to the prosecutor’s office with unsubstantiated papers of Dossier and demanded the investigation into the Alliance of Patriots.

Helen’s smooth brain lacking folds failed to see that there is no legal ground for Dossier’s rubbish which was typed by an IT person and Helen was turned back humiliated. Many morons like her are in Bokeria’s cluster!!!”

The post had 219 likes, 22 shares and 41 comments. In the comments Khoshtaria was called, among others, “the most terrible diabolic woman, raised in the family of KGB spies, top enemy of the country and a shameful creature, this insane, slut, liberpederast, KGB agent,” etc.

ირაკლი ჯანყარაშვილი ► POLITIKO

Aug 31 · 🌐 · ჰელენე როშტარია ისე გამოხუნდულდა პროკურატურიდან როგორც მიხუნდულდა 😞 მგიმოელმა ჰელენ როშტარიამ პროკურატურაში მიაჭრა ამ თავის...

ირაკლი ჯანყარაშვილი's post
ჰელენე როშტარია ისე გამოხუნდულდა პროკურატურიდან როგორც მიხუნდულდა 😞 მგიმოელმა ჰელენ როშტარიამ პროკურატურაში...

6 1 Comment

ირაკლი ჯანყარაშვილი ► პატრიოტთა ალიანსის მხარდამჭერები !!

Aug 31 · 🌐 · ჰელენე როშტარია ისე გამოხუნდულდა პროკურატურიდან როგორც მიხუნდულდა 😞 მგიმოელმა ჰელენ როშტარიამ პროკურატურაში მიაჭრა ამ თავის...

ირაკლი ჯანყარაშვილი's post
ჰელენე როშტარია ისე გამოხუნდულდა პროკურატურიდან როგორც მიხუნდულდა 😞 მგიმოელმა ჰელენ როშტარიამ პროკურატურაში...

22 9 Comments

ირაკლი ჯანყარაშვილი ► „სიმართლის გზა“

Aug 31 · 🌐 · ჰელენე როშტარია ისე გამოხუნდულდა პროკურატურიდან როგორც მიხუნდულდა 😞 მგიმოელმა ჰელენ როშტარიამ პროკურატურაში მიაჭრა ამ თავის...

ირაკლი ჯანყარაშვილი's post
ჰელენე როშტარია ისე გამოხუნდულდა პროკურატურიდან როგორც მიხუნდულდა 😞 მგიმოელმა ჰელენ როშტარიამ პროკურატურაში...

6 1 Comment

Similar attacks continued in September too. A supporter of the Georgian Dream, Lasha Jugheli, who, according to his personal profile, works for the GD,³⁶ shared a post in a GD supporters' page, **we will win 41**, in which he offended Khoshtaria, including by using homophobic hate speech. Lasha Jugheli shared this post in FB groups discrediting the government's opponents **Gasamartides Natsionaluri Modzraoba** and **Davasrulot Natsebi**.

³⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/lasha.jugeli.50/about>



Lasha Jugeli, 20 September: “ЛЕНА ГАВРИЛОВНА ВРАГ НАРОДА; active supporter of LGBT community and participant of the bloody regime. Person of unidentified orientation and supporter of Nazi ideology.”

Yet another homophobic post which along with Khoshtaria targeted the leader of Republican Party, Khatuna samnidze, was shared by Sofia Sofia in the FB group Simartlis Gza.



Sofia Sofia, Simartlis Gza, 8 October: “This GIMO graduate and Gavrilov’s informer Khoshta [shortened from Khoshtaria] blocked me because I wrote to her and her seasoned lesbian that they are morons. 😊😊😊😊😊”

3.2. CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT EKA BESELIA, THE LEADER OF POLITICAL PARTY FOR JUSTICE

On 3 November, broadcasters released footage from a meeting of leaders of the opposition parties, which featured a private conversation between the Labor Party leader, Shalva Natelashvili, and the founder of the party For Justice, Eka Beselia. Beselia was praising Natelashvili for his speech while Natelashvili was smiling her back. This footage was dubbed as “flirt” between the two and was followed by series of video and photo manipulations. This wave that started with light humor degraded into a campaign of ridicule and took on the form of slut-shaming.³⁷

In a patriarchal society such attacks, even of humorous nature, cost a higher social price to a woman than to a man and its effect, often, manifests in silencing women, forcing them to contain themselves within certain frames and limit their political activity.

On 3 November, the FB page discrediting the government’s opponents, **Sekta**, uploaded a video featuring the conversation between Beselia and Natelashvili, with a comment “OOOh it’s becoming hot here 😊 is he trying to seduce her? 😊” Later in the day, the FB page discrediting the government’s opponents, **Mikheil Ukrainologi**, superimposed symbol of love, hearts, on the video and titled it “Natelashvili Beselia Lovestory.”



Sekta, 3 November: “OOOh it’s becoming hot here 😊 is he trying to seduce her? 😊”



Mikheil Ukrainologi, 3 November: “Natelashvili Beselia Lovestory. Ooooh, I am about to weep now.”

Yet another FB page discrediting the government’s opponents, **Natsebis Dasatsini Oficialuri Saagento** manipulated with the sound of the video replacing it with a dialogue from a Georgian movie where Eka Beselia seemed to be saying “Do you remember, Khirkhal, what a girl I was? Have I deserved being left alone like a wood mouse?”

³⁷ Slut-shaming is the practice of criticizing people, especially women and girls, who are perceived to violate expectations of behavior and appearance regarding issues related to sexuality. Examples of slut-shaming include being criticized or punished for violating dress code policies by dressing in perceived sexually provocative ways, requesting access to birth control, having premarital, casual, or promiscuous sex, or when being victim blamed for being raped or otherwise sexually assaulted. Slut-shaming is used to shame, stigmatize women.



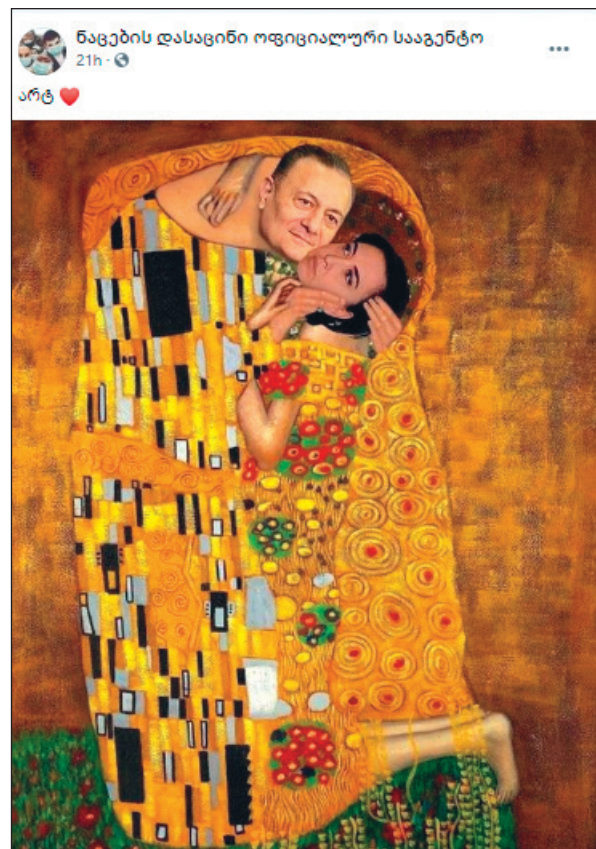
Natsebis Dasatsini Oficialuri Saagento, 3 November: “A new version.”

Similar videos were uploaded on 3 November by other FB groups and pages discrediting the opponents, such as **Gasamartides Natsionaluri modzraoba**, **Terenti Gldaneli**, **Realoba** and **Natsebis Dasacini Oficialuri Saagento**. These videos carried offending captions: “Bligh me, morons are flirting,” “Romeo Natelashvili and Julietta Beselia 😊😊” “what a lovely couple, you shameless,” and “Love Story, love in alcove.❤️”





On the next day, 4 November, the FB group discrediting the opponents, Natsebis Dasacini Oficialuri Saagento, was especially active in posting photomanipulations and memes throughout the day: Beselia and Natelashvili face swaps with characters from the film **Titanic**, painting by Gustav Klimt’s **Kiss**, Batumi statue of **Ali and Nino**, TV soap opera **Cassandra**.



Natsebis Dasacini Oficialuri Saagento, 4 November: „A la Titanic 🤪🤪🤪“

Natsebis Dasacini Oficialuri Saagento, 4 November: „Art ❤️“



Natsebis Dasacini Oficialuri Saagento, 4 November: „Yet another drawing.“



Natsebis Dasacini Oficialuri Saagento, 4 November: „A new soap opera in Georgian TV starts tomorrow....“

Similar visual material was also published by a GD supporter FB page, **Leader 41** and the FB group discrediting the opponents, **Mikheil Ukrainologi**.



Photo of Titanic, posted by the FB group discrediting the opponents, **Siimartlis Gza**, has a caption in Mengrelian language addressed to Natelashvili’s wife, Bela Alania: “Where are you, Bela! Look what is your husband doing. Honeymoon on board the Titanic.”



The FB group discrediting the opponents, **Mekhute Reikhi**, published a photomanipulation depicting Natelashvili and Beselia in a bed.



3.3. ATTEMPTS TO DISCREDIT BY SPREADING DISINFORMATION

The monitoring period saw instances of discrediting women by means of disinformation and photomanipulation. Among the targets were President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili, President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid and US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degan. These disinformation and manipulations were used to offend intellectual abilities (2 cases) and to question moral values (2 cases) of the targets.

FALSE INFORMATION AGAINST SALOME ZOURABICHVILI. On 22 October, a FB page discrediting the government, Koveldgiuri Movlენebi, published a photo of Salome Zourabichvili as well as a quote which, according to the page, was from a speech made by President of Georgia at the opening ceremony of Kutaisi International University. The quote contained a word “womb” which was not used by the president. In fact, she used the word “generation” which she mispronounced as “generotion”, but never the word “womb”. These two words sound alike in Georgian.



By manipulating the quote, the FB page ridiculed Salome Zourabichvili’s intellectual abilities.

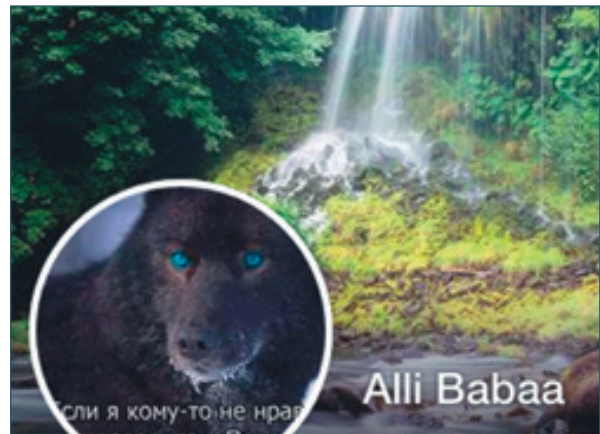
On 23 October, this post was shared in a coordinated manner by other pages discrediting the government,³⁸ including Annual Events and Lurji Viri. On 25 October, the FB page Koveldgiuri Movlენebi published this photo with an ironic comment attached, which said: “thank god, she did not say ovary.”



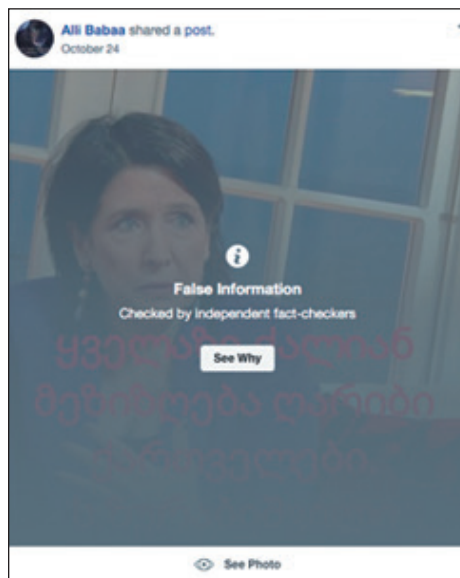
³⁸ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/what-wording-did-zurabishvili-use-thanking-ivanishvili>

The second fake quote assigned to Salome Zurabichvili aimed at rebuking the President of Georgia on the ground of moral values.

On 23 October, an individual FB account **Alli Babaa**, which is thought to be a troll,³⁹ shared a fake quote created in 2018 in several FB groups, according to which President Zurabichvili said that she despises poor Georgians. This post was shared in the following FB groups **Live Georgia**, **Khatia Dekanoidze-majoritarian for Isani**, **Danmark-Georgien დანია-საქართველო Denmark-Georgia Дания-Грузия**, **Mikheil Saakashvili’s Headquarter, Сухуми и сухумцы! ВСЕ КТО СЕБЯ СЧИТАЕТ ТАКОВЫМИ..., Wite and Black**.



After the fact-checking platform, Myth Detector, flagged this post as fake in Facebook, within the scope of cooperation with the Third Party Fac-Checking Program of Facebook, the first fake quote was removed by the FB account itself, while another post is accessible along with the Myth Detector material.



³⁹ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/alli-babaa-nigeria-and-others-disseminate-salome-zurabishvilis-fake-quotation>

AGAINST PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA / US AMBASSADOR. Two more cases of disinformation identified in the reporting period targeted President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid and US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degan. In both cases, sources of disinformation are representatives of ultra-nationalist group Georgian March.^{40,41}

On 24 August, one of the leaders of Georgian March, Sandro Bregadze, published a photo on his personal FB page,⁴² featuring the president of Estonia along with a male person clad in dress. Bregadze claimed that he was a homosexual head of security service of Estonia. Bregardze called the President “dummy” while the head of security service, the pederast.



Sandro Bregadze, Georgian March, 24 August: “Dummy Estonian president and pederast chief of security (to the right) – when they say that Georgian March is a destructive force, I feel that we are the most powerful!!”

Along the Estonian President the photo features Mikk Pärnits, an Estonian writer, translator and art critic, who is also an active defender of the right of victims of sexual violence.⁴³

Sandro Bregadze offends President of Estonia on the ground of mental abilities and by calling Mikk Pärnits the chief of security of Estonia is, probably, trying to further belittle the President of Estonia. This attack on the part of Sandro Bregadze is related to the 2019 report of the Estonian security service, in which Georgian March was named as an umbrella organization promoting antiliberal discourse in Georgia.⁴⁴

On 2 November, head of west Georgian office of Georgian March and a single seat candidate for Kutaisi, Ermile Nemsadze, published a **post** on his personal FB page, in which he spread disinformation about the US

⁴⁰ Georgian March which was created as a public movement in 2017, was registered as a political party in 2020 and ran for the parliamentary elections on 31 October 2020. <http://mythdetector.ge/en/profile/georgian-march>

⁴¹ <https://transparency.ge/en/blog/anatomy-georgian-neo-nazism>

⁴² <https://www.facebook.com/sandro.breg/posts/4960143127344510>

⁴³ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/whos-person-sandro-bregadze-passes-chief-intelligence-service-estonia>

⁴⁴ <https://netgazeti.ge/news/427239/>

Ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan. In this post Ermile Nemsadze tried to question the US ambassador's moral values.



Ermile Nemsadze, Georgian March, 2 November: “The current U.S. Ambassador to Georgia is among those 17 diplomats that demanded the impeachment of [Donald] Trump. She is a liberast and LGBT lobbyist!!!”

Nemsadze’s post is disinformation. Kelly Degnan is not listed among those who initiated the impeachment of Donald Trump. Nor is she among the diplomats that have been questioned in connection to this case. Trump nominated Degnan as the Ambassador on 4 September 2019.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ <http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/georgian-march-member-disseminates-disinformation-about-us-ambassador>



