



Center for Media, Information  
and Social Research



## **GEORGIAN DREAM'S PROPAGANDA NARRATIVES AGAINST MZIA AMAGLOBELI**

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## INTRODUCTION

January 12, 2026, will mark one year since the imprisonment of Mzia Amaglobeli, a journalist and the founder of the independent media organizations *Batumelebi* and *Netgazeti*. She is the first woman journalist in post-Soviet Georgia who has been described as a political prisoner by press freedom groups.

Amaglobeli was [detained](#) twice during the Batumi protests on the night of January 11, 2025. She was first taken into custody for affixing a protest sticker reading “Georgia is on strike” to a police facility wall. Following a brief release, she was detained a second time and charged after [slapping](#) the Head of the Batumi Police, Irakli Dgebuadze.

An investigation into the journalist was initiated under Article [353 Prime, Part 1](#) of the Criminal Code<sup>1</sup> of Georgia. Mzia Amaglobeli was initially remanded in

custody as a measure of restraint. On August 6, 2025, Judge Nino Sakhelashvili of the Batumi City Court reclassified the charges against Amaglobeli to Article 353, Part 1, and sentenced her to two years of imprisonment.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately following her arrest, Mzia Amaglobeli became the target of a smear campaign by the Georgian Dream party. Outlined below are the key narratives disseminated by Georgian Dream regarding her, as analyzed by the Center for Media, Information, and Social Research. The statements and evaluations from the Georgian Dream representatives concerning the case were sourced from the following online media outlets: [Netgazeti.ge](#), [Publika.ge](#), [On.ge](#), [Tabula.ge](#), [ipn.ge](#), [1TV.GE](#), [Resonansi](#), [Imedinews.ge](#), and [Ambebi.ge](#). The data was collected using search engines and relevant thematic tags. In total, 38 statements

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<sup>1</sup> [Article 353 Prime, Part 1](#) of the Criminal Code [of Georgia] pertains to an assault on a police officer, an employee of the Special Penitentiary Service, or another representative of authority, or an attack on a public institution.

<sup>2</sup> This article pertains to resisting a police officer, an employee of the Special Penitentiary Service, or another representative of authority, with the aim of obstructing the protection of public order, or terminating or altering their activities.

made by politicians were collected and analyzed.

The primary actors involved in disseminating disinformation against Mzia Amaglobeli were Shalva Papuashvili, Speaker of the Parliament; Irakli Kobakhidze, Prime Minister; and Mamuka Mdinardze, then-Executive Secretary of Georgian Dream and current Head of the State Security Service. In addition to these individuals, periodic statements were issued by the Mayor of Tbilisi, Kakha Kaladze, as well as Members of Parliament Nino Tsilosani, Davit Matikashvili, and Sozar Subari.

The "Georgian Dream" propaganda campaign against Mzia Amaglobeli relied on several core narratives:

- **Mzia Amaglobeli is a Criminal**
- **Mzia Amaglobeli is an [opposition] Party Activist**
- **Mzia Amaglobeli is a Foreign Agent Acting on Behalf of the West**
- **Mzia Amaglobeli is a Violent Offender**

In many instances, a single statement would incorporate multiple narratives simultaneously. Furthermore, several representatives of the Georgian Dream disseminated false information, alleging that Mzia Amaglobeli had placed stickers on the backs of police officers and/or that she had spat on an officer.

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## **PROPAGANDA NARRATIVES AGAINST MZIA AMAGLOBELI**

### **Mzia Amaglobeli is a Criminal**

Immediately following her arrest, leaders of the Georgian Dream party publicly labeled Mzia Amaglobeli a criminal. They emphasized that her actions took place in front of everyone during a live broadcast, presenting this as "evidence."

On [January 13](#), one day after Amaglobeli's arrest, the former Executive Secretary of Georgian Dream, Mamuka Mdinardze, called the incident an "extremely simple case" where "a woman hits a police officer on live television." He posed a "rhetorical" question: "When a person hits a police officer on live television, should they be

punished or not?" and answered it himself: "Yes... in that case, the person is legally detained, period!" Thus, the Georgian Dream representative declared Mzia Amaglobeli guilty immediately upon her arrest. On [January 15](#), Mdinardze further described any attempt to question the incident as "absurdity." He stated that it was unacceptable to speak "contrary to what was seen," because "Mzia Amaglobeli created the evidence against Mzia Amaglobeli on live television." Later, on [May 7](#), he reiterated: "Mzia Amaglobeli is an alleged criminal, which will ultimately be confirmed by a verdict." On [January 30](#), Prime Minister -Irakli Kobakhidze stated: "...a specific crime was committed in front of the cameras..."

Shortly after her arrest, the words "regret" and "remorse" appeared in the rhetoric of the Georgian Dream representatives. They implied they expected Mzia Amaglobeli to express regret and admit her mistake for her actions, thereby indirectly suggesting that her harsh punishment was justified by her lack of repentance.

"She does not even express regret, neither she nor her fellow party members from the collective United National Movement," Irakli Kobakhidze stated on [January 29](#). On [February 8](#), he again expressed dissatisfaction that "a police officer was hit in the face and there is zero regret regarding this." On [January 29](#), Tbilisi Mayor, Kakha Kaladze, stated: "I don't recall anyone having heard during all this time even a hint of regret, or her even coming out and saying humanly: I made a mistake, forgive me."

Later, Irakli Kobakhidze [referred](#) to Amaglobeli's behavior as an "anti-state act." He stated: "Georgia is a state, and the state will always have an appropriate response to any anti-state act."

### **Mzia Amaglobeli is an [opposition] Party Activist**

The representatives of Georgian Dream also sought to portray Mzia Amaglobeli as an opposition party activist. Irakli Kobakhidze was particularly prominent in disseminating this narrative:

"In reality, this person is not a journalist, but a party activist," Irakli Kobakhidze stated on [January 15](#). He repeated this claim during an interview on [January 29](#). He also spread disinformation alleging that Mzia Amaglobeli had affixed a sticker directly onto a police officer, asserting that she was acting in the role of a "party activist." Irakli Kobakhidze utilized this narrative again on [October 21](#); in response to a journalist's question, he claimed that no journalists are imprisoned in Georgia and that "only party activists are." He referred to Mzia Amaglobeli and other political prisoners as part of the "collective National Movement party's asset" and noted that they [including Amaglobeli and other Prisoners of Conscience] are being held specifically as party activists.

### **Mzia Amaglobeli is a Foreign Agent Acting on Behalf of the West**

The Georgian Dream representatives linked the events surrounding Mzia Amaglobeli to foreign actors, claiming she was "managed by the West" and that her actions were carried out under the

instructions of foreign "curators" to weaken the country's institutions. This narrative was most frequently voiced by the Speaker of Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili.

"I am appalled by the statements made by the EU Ambassador over these past few days; yesterday's statement was a direct incitement for the person to continue harming herself," Shalva Papuashvili stated on [February 18](#). He repeated this sentiment numerous times, particularly when Mzia Amaglobeli's trials were taking place, condemning the high level of interest from the diplomatic corps. "Everyone must understand that the only purpose of their [the diplomatic corps'] presence in the courtroom is to exert pressure on justice and intimidate the judges," he declared on [March 7](#).

Furthermore, in one comment, Papuashvili directly accused the ambassadors of allegedly encouraging Amaglobeli. "If Mzia Amaglobeli or her supporters are looking for those responsible for such a sentence, those culprits were sitting in that courtroom in

the form of ambassadors," he noted on [August 8](#).

"Let us not portray a woman acting on specific instructions as a hero..." Mamuka Mdinardze stated on [February 3](#). "No one except foreign agents and their patrons is protesting Amaglobeli's case," Irakli Kobakhidze noted on [March 20](#). He claimed that the agents' primary goal was to "weaken, diminish, and dismantle" Georgia's law enforcement structures. Similar messages acting in foreign interests, executing orders, and engaging in agent-related activities were disseminated by Kobakhidze repeatedly thereafter (e.g., [April 16](#), [July 10](#)).

Various representatives of the Georgian Dream sought to discredit the international support the journalist received immediately after her arrest. For instance, on [June 19](#), Member of Parliament, Nino Tsilosani, wrote on social media that the [European Parliament resolution](#) calling for Amaglobeli's release was "saturated with madness." After the International Press Institute (IPI) named Amaglobeli a World Press Freedom Hero,

Georgian Dream criticized this decision during a special briefing on [October 10](#), linking it to a [conspiracy theory](#). According to this theory, the so-called "Deep State" is harshly violating the interests of a sovereign state. The statement claimed that "declaring Amaglobeli a hero is not only an encouragement for her but a signal to agents that anyone who strictly follows the "Deep State's" orders will be joined to the ranks of heroes."

On October 23, the European Parliament's awarding of the Sakharov Prize to Mzia Amaglobeli further intensified the Georgian Dream's rhetoric. Shalva Papuashvili [called](#) the award an "incitement," while Irakli Kobakhidze [stated](#) that Amaglobeli had "executed orders" and that her award was nothing more than the "encouragement of radicalism and crime."

## **Mzia Amaglobeli is a Violent Offender**

In the Georgian Dream propaganda narrative, Mzia Amaglobeli and her supporters were frequently portrayed as "violent offenders" and/or "inciters of violence." The leaders of the Georgian Dream party claimed that Amaglobeli's actions constituted a "violent act against the state."

In a statement made on [January 29](#), Irakli Kobakhidze noted that "responsibility for Amaglobeli's imprisonment should be felt by those people who, throughout these weeks and months, have been encouraging violence in Georgia." Kobakhidze specifically mentioned opposition leaders, foreign officials, and diplomats who, according to him, "incited violence against the police."

On [May 20](#), Shalva Papuashvili published a post accusing the German Ambassador to Georgia of pressuring judges. This concerned an interview given by the Ambassador in front of a "Freedom for Mzia" banner. "By doing so, he clearly conveyed his disposition to the judge whose trial, by his own admission, he was

observing. Given that the Ambassador does not speak Georgian and no one was translating for him in the courtroom, it is clear that the goal of this 'observation' was not to understand the details of the proceedings, but to demonstrate to the judge that "Big Brother" is watching, and if a desirable decision is not reached, there will be consequences," Papuashvili wrote.

On [July 10](#), Shalva Papuashvili labeled a [statement](#) made by Member of European Parliament, Rasa Juknevičienė, regarding Mzia Amaglobeli as disinformation, stating that the European Union, which condemns violence, "is itself financing perpetrators of violence." Again in October, 2025, following the [awarding](#) of the IPI-IMS World Press Freedom Hero prize to Mzia Amaglobeli, Papuashvili [stated](#) that through this action, the West "is portraying perpetrators of violence as heroes."

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## **FALSE ACCUSATIONS REGARDING THE AFFIXING OF STICKERS AND FABRICATED INCIDENTS OF SPITTING AT POLICE**

Various representatives of the Georgian Dream party disseminated disinformation concerning an "incident of affixing a sticker to a police officer," which, in reality, never took place.

On [January 29](#), Irakli Kobakhidze stated that Mzia Amaglobeli was "affixing stickers to the backs of police officers." This claim was repeated on [February 1](#) by Davit Matikashvili, who remarked: "The public is well aware that this woman first attempted to directly affix stickers onto police officers." On [February 3](#), Mamuka Mdinaradze added: "The intent and result of these instructions [she follows] must be to damage the reputation of state institutions and the police as much as possible."

"We saw when she stuck a sticker on a police officer's back; I do not believe this was a normal behavior," stated the Deputy Speaker of Parliament Sozar Subari on [February 12](#).

Another false accusation spread against Amaglobeli involved her allegedly spitting at a police officer. On [October 23](#), MP Nino Tsilosani stated in an interview that Mzia Amaglobeli "spat at a police officer" in order to escalate the protest into "chaos and extremism."

The statements made by the Georgian Dream representatives clearly demonstrate that the party utilized propaganda to demonize and discredit Mzia Amaglobeli, thereby manipulating public opinion regarding the journalist. This highlights the party's policy toward press freedom and democratic values in general. Their attitudes and actions align directly with the logic of autocracy, where political leaders, instead of practicing accountability and relying on fact-based information, resort to manipulation and the restriction of independent media to maintain power.