



ევროკავშირი  
საქართველოსთვის  
The European Union for Georgia



# Study and Research on Election Media Coverage for the 2021 Municipal Elections in Georgia

## TV News Monitoring Final Report

5 July – 14 November 2021



THE GEORGIAN CHARTER  
OF JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

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## About the Project

As part of the UNDP and EU project entitled “Study and Research on Election Media Coverage for the 2021 Local Self-Government Elections in Georgia,” the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics has monitored the TV media coverage of the 2021 local elections. The monitoring began on 5 July 2020 and will continue until March 2022. The monitoring covers 14 TV channels (5 national, 9 regional): the 1st Channel of the Public Broadcaster, the Achara Public Broadcaster, Mtavari Arkhi, Rustavi 2, Imedi, TV Pirveli, TV 25, Trialeti, Channel 9, TV Odishi, Gurjaani TV, TV Guria, Rioni TV and TV 4.

## Methodology of the Monitoring

The monitoring consists of quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative monitoring determines indicators that can be counted and measured: time allocated to subjects, tone of coverage (positive, negative, neutral), direct or indirect reporting (whether subjects speak themselves or others speak about them) and gender (male or female).

The qualitative monitoring is focused on the aspects that cannot be measured qualitatively: timeliness of the coverage of facts, distortion of information, unbalanced coverage, bias, facts-based coverage, diversity of sources, manipulation of sound or music, adherence to ethical or professional standards, and any other factor that is important for the quality of information.

The monitoring is focused on the political parties and politicians participating in the 2021 municipal elections. Other entities monitored include: the Government (central, local, Achara Autonomous Republic), the President, Bidzina Ivanishvili (the former Prime Minister of Georgia in 2012-2013) and Mikheil Saakashvili (the former President of Georgia in 2004-2012).

The monitoring focuses not only on the news story about the elections but also all news stories that discusses monitored subjects.

# Key Findings:

## TV NEWS

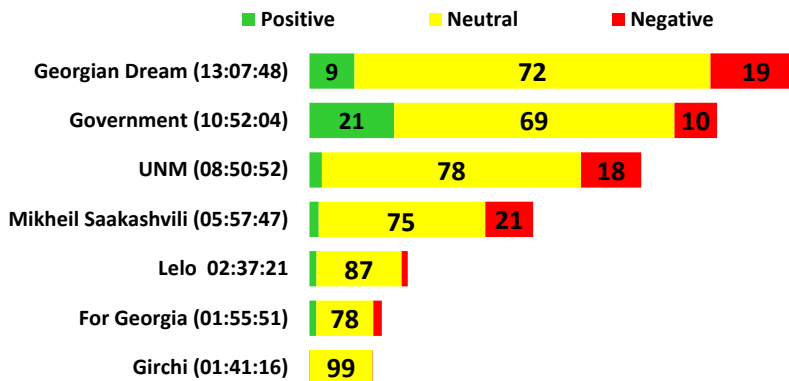
- Pre-electoral monitoring of coverage of the 2021 self-government election revealed a deeper polarization among broadcasters compared to the previous year. Broadcasters have been divided into two camps. Some TV channels pursue a pro-governmental agenda, whilst others adopted pro-opposition editorial policies;
- As a result of this political polarization, national broadcasters often breached the principle of fair and balanced coverage during the pre-electoral period. Some TV channels were biased towards the government, whilst others favoured the opposition. This bias was expressed in their negative coverage of the political entities that they disapproved of;
- The monitoring also revealed a scarcity of news stories about electoral topics that would have helped voters make an informed choice;
- TV news programmes often contained violations of professional ethics and instances of manipulation, and news programmes broadcast biased, unverified and unjustified information. There were also instances of the use of offensive or unethical terms and attempts to manipulate video and text materials;
- The 1st Channel of the Public Broadcaster continued to pursue a loyal editorial policy towards the government;
- The 1st Channel of the Public Broadcaster was the most positive in its coverage of the government (21%) and the most negative in its coverage of the third president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili (21%);
- The Adjara Public Broadcaster was the most positive in its coverage of the local government (21%);
- On the second anniversary of the change of its ownership, Rustavi 2 has joined the team of those broadcasters that cover the opposition in an extremely negative light and the Georgian Dream and the government in a positive light;
- During the monitoring period, TV Pirveli's broadcasting was marked by a sharp confrontation with and protest against the government. The channel's editorial policy was prompted by the events of 5 July 2021;
- Since 6 October, Mtavari Arkhi has broadcast with the hashtag #FreeMisha displayed on the screen;

- Mtavari Arkhi adopted a selective approach in its coverage of political entities during the pre-electoral period, allocating most of its airtime to coverage of the activities of the United National Movement;
- On 18 October, Imedi openly declared that it would switch to 'emergency broadcasting' in order to squash the United National Movement party's revanche in Georgia, having made a similar statement in the run-up to the 2018 presidential run-offs;
- The bias of TV channels towards specific subjects was evident in their coverage of important topics such as 'the events of July 5', 'the [government's] decision to turn down EU macro-financial assistance', 'the annulment of the Charles Michel Agreement', 'materials allegedly leaked from the State Security Service', and 'the arrest of Mikheil Saakashvili';
- Compared to previous years, the quality of news programmes on regional channels has deteriorated, both technically and in terms of content. Some regional channels were not even able to broadcast on a daily basis, and news programmes on some channels ran according to an unspecified schedule. There were also breaks in programming for several days, sometimes even for a month;
- Some regional channels often used materials prepared by the press offices of government agencies without clearly referring to them as such;
- Superficial reporting and a lack of analytical materials continue to be problems in regional broadcasting;
- The viewers of most regional channels could not obtain comprehensive information about electoral processes nor even about current national events;
- The news programmes of some regional channels contained reports that smacked of advertising, which is unacceptable;
- TV 25 was critical in its coverage of the activities of the Georgian Dream and the government;
- The editorial policies of Channel 9 and TV Guria were critical of the government and Georgian Dream;
- Gurjaani TV is biased towards the ruling party. During the monitoring period it covered the activities of the local and central government in an exclusively positive light;
- The monitoring of Trialeti, TV4 and Rioni TV revealed their bias towards the government and the ruling party.

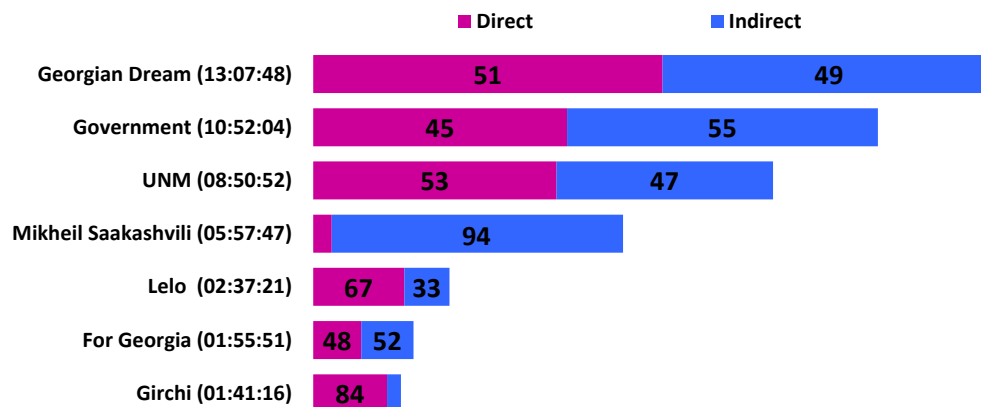
# ANNEX. Diagrammes.

## 1. Channel One (GPB)

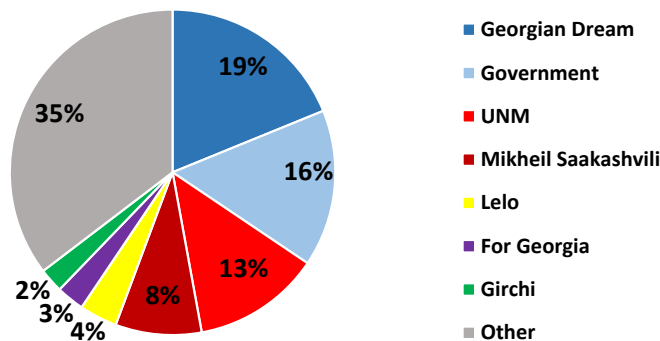
**Tone of Coverage (%)**  
**Channel One (GPB)**  
5 July - 14 November, 2021



**Direct / Indirect Speech (%)**  
**Channel One (GPB)**  
5 July - 14 November, 2021

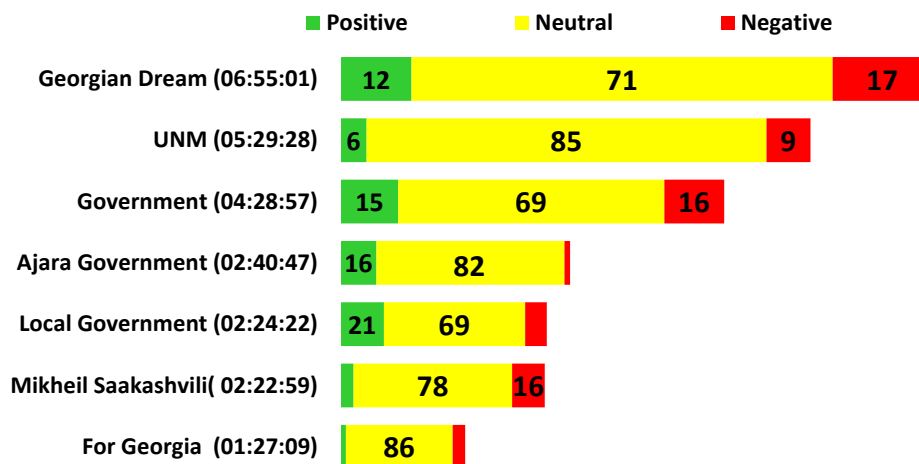


**Coverage of Subjects (%)**  
**Channel One (GPB)**  
5 July - 14 November, 2021

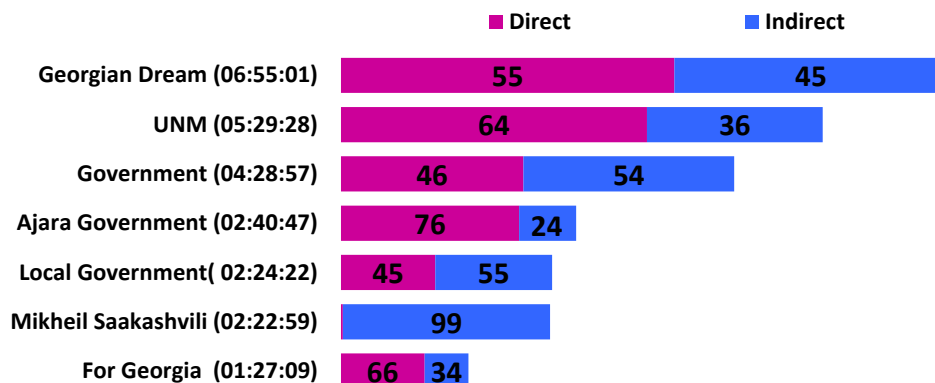


## 2. Ajara TV (GPB)

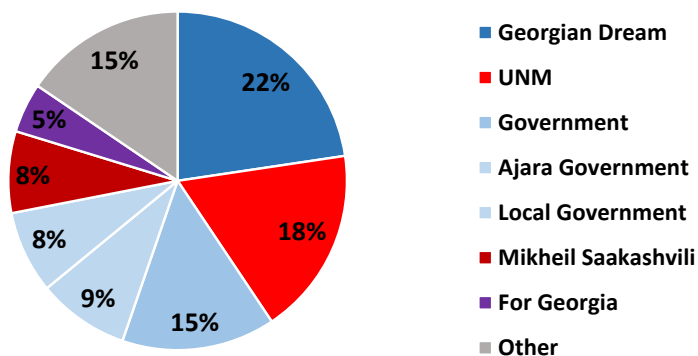
**Tone of Coverage (%)**  
**Ajara TV (GPB)**  
5 July - 14 November, 2021



**Direct / Indirect Speech (%)**  
**Ajara TV (GPB)**  
5 July - 14 November, 2021



**Coverage of Subjects (%)**  
**Ajara TV (GPB)**  
5 July - 14 November, 2021

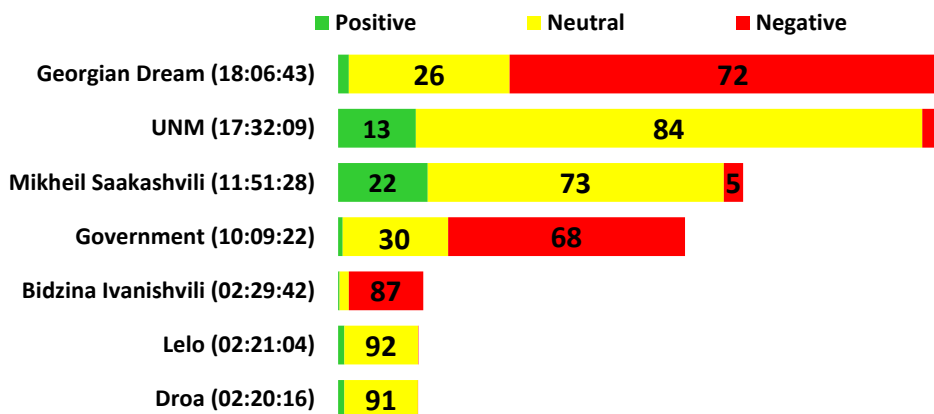


### 3. Mtavari Arkhi

#### Tone of Coverage (%)

##### Mtavari Arkhi

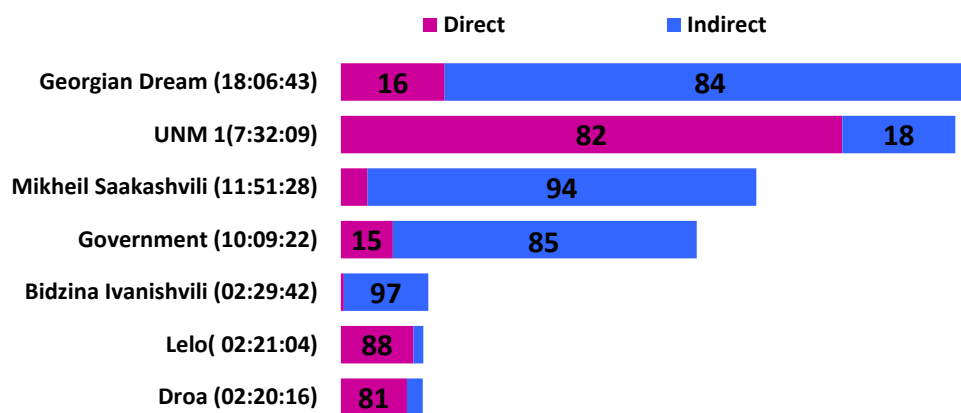
5 July - 14 November, 2021



#### Direct / Indirect Speech (%)

##### Mtavari Arkhi

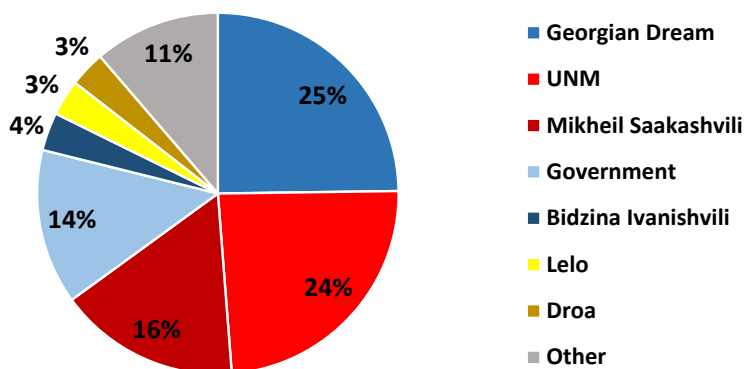
5 July- 14 November, 2021



#### Coverage of Subjects (%)

##### Mtavari Arkhi

5 July - 14 November, 2021



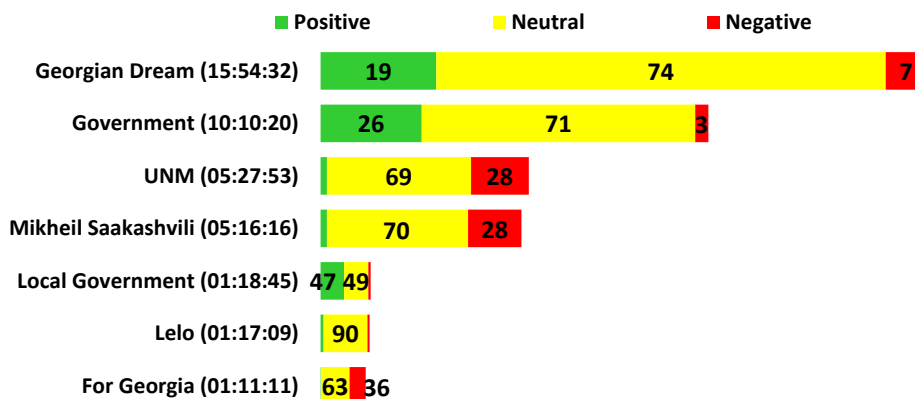


#### 4. Rustavi 2

##### Tone of Coverage (%)

##### Rustavi 2

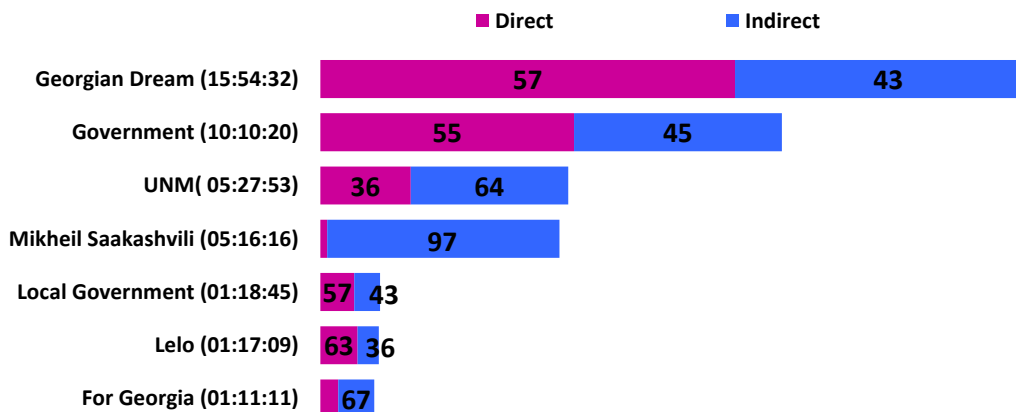
5 July - 14 November, 2021



##### Direct / Indirect Speech (%)

##### Rustavi 2

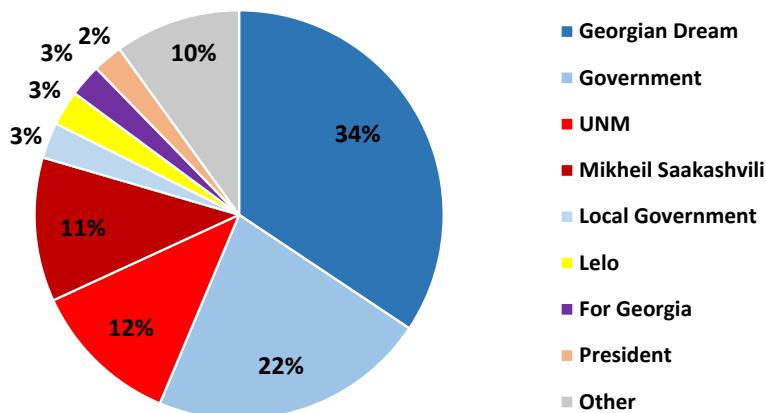
5 July - 14 November, 2021



##### Coverage of Subjects (%)

##### Rustavi 2

5 July - 14 November, 2021

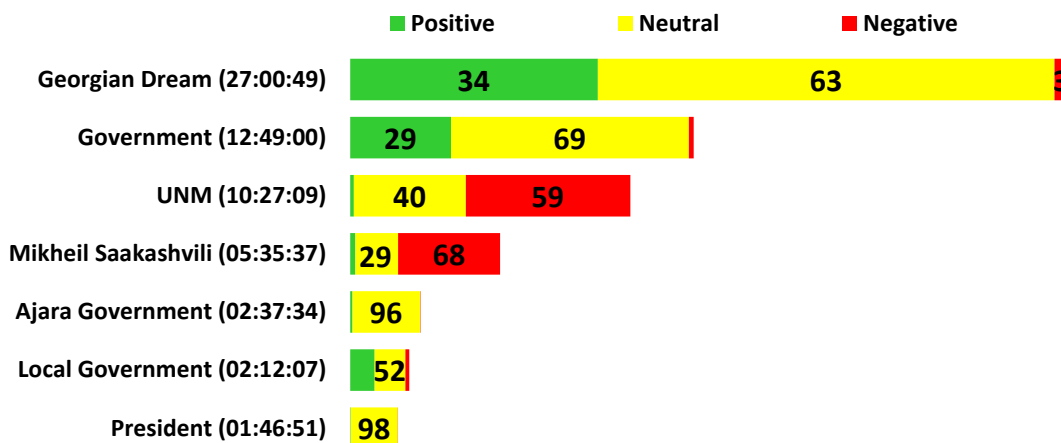


## 5. Imedi TV

### Tone of Coverage (%)

Imedi TV

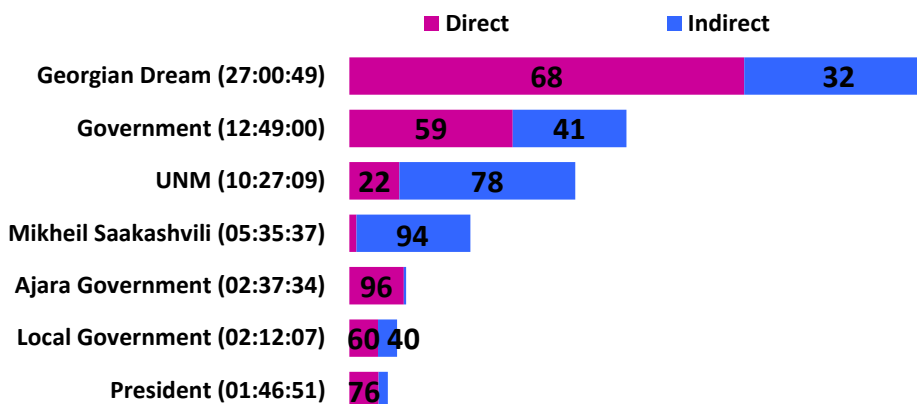
5 July - 14 November, 2021



### Direct / Indirect Speech (%)

Imedi TV

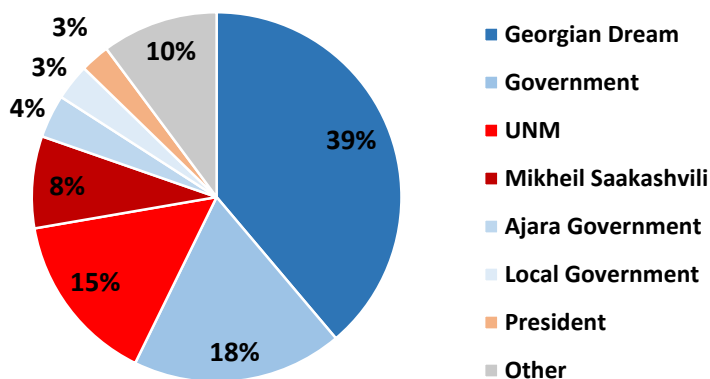
5 July - 14 November, 2021



### Coverage of Subjects (%)

Imedi

5 July - 14 November, 2021

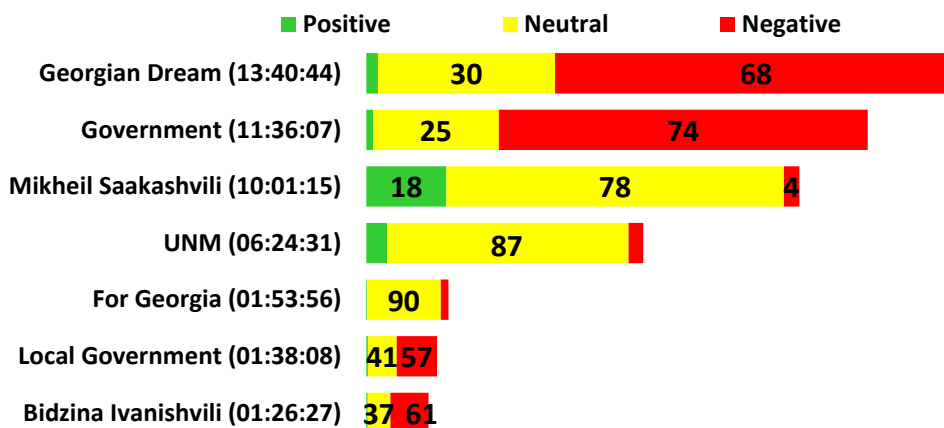


## 6. TV Pirveli

### Tone of Coverage (%)

#### TV Pirveli

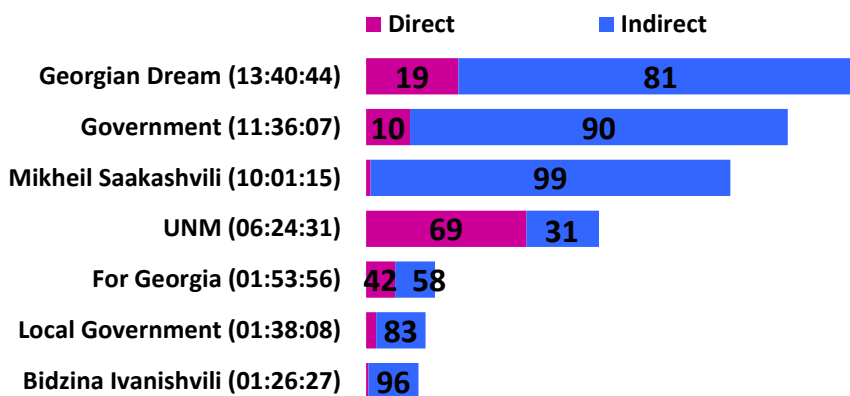
5 July - 14 November, 2021



### Direct / Indirect Speech (%)

#### TV Pirveli

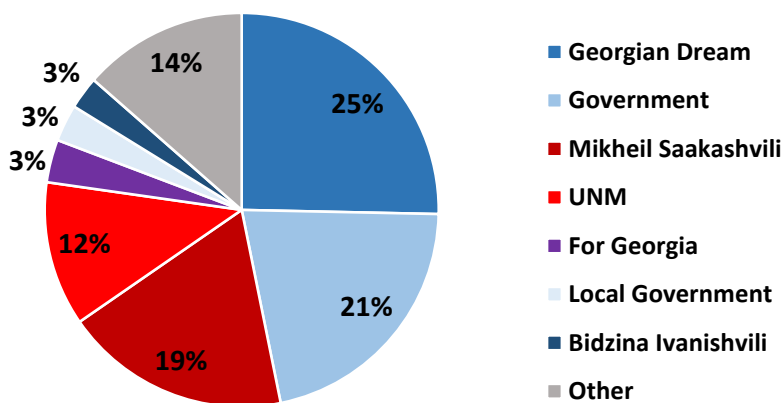
5 July - 14 November, 2021



### Coverage of Subjects (%)

#### TV Pirveli

5 July - 14 November, 2021

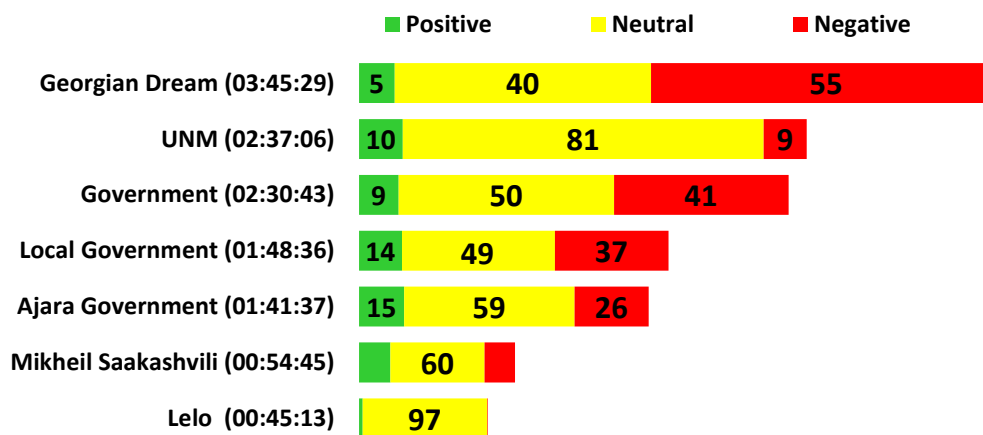


7. TV 25

**Tone of Coverage (%)**

TV 25

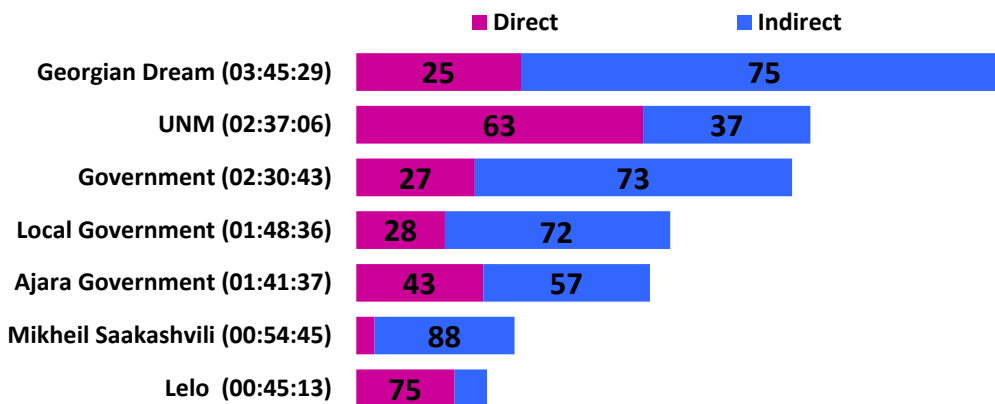
5 July - 14 Nov , 2021



**Direct / Indirect Speech (%)**

TV 25

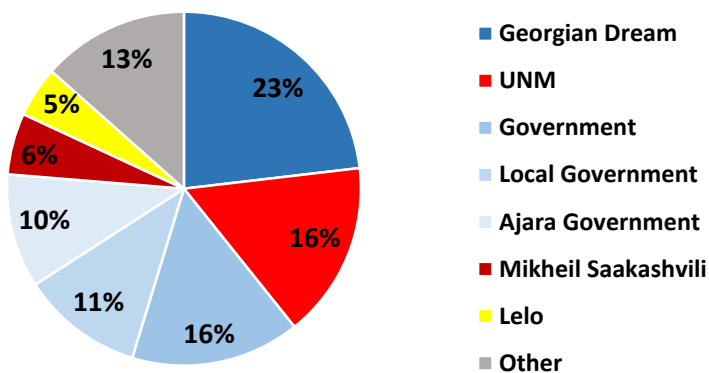
5 July - 14 November, 2021



**Coverage of Subjects (%)**

TV 25

5 July - 14 November, 2021

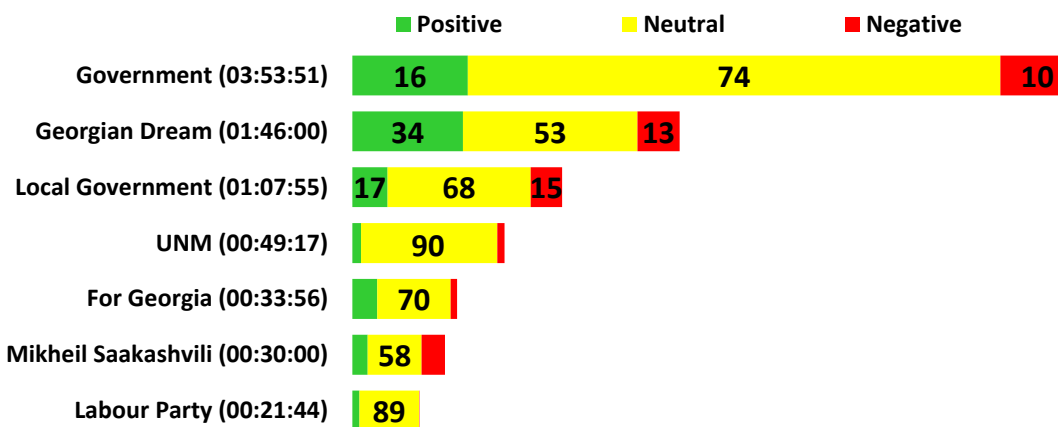


## 8. Rioni TV

### Tone of Coverage (%)

#### Rioni TV

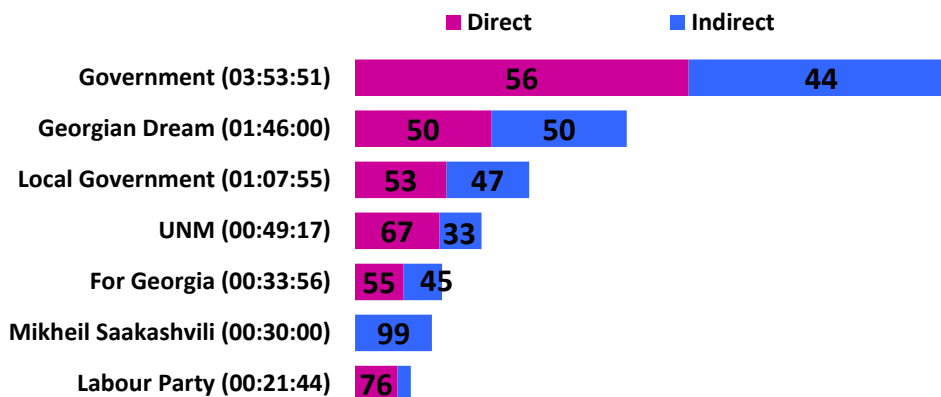
5 July - 14 November, 2021



### Direct / Indirect Speech (%)

#### Rioni TV

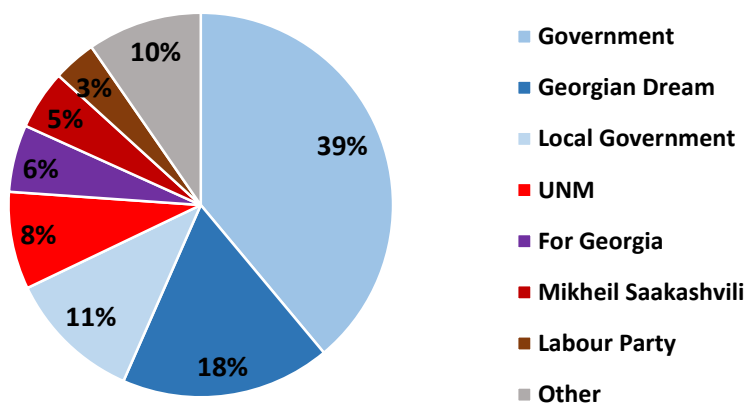
5 July - 14 November, 2021



### Coverage of Subjects (%)

#### Rioni

5 July - 14 November, 2021

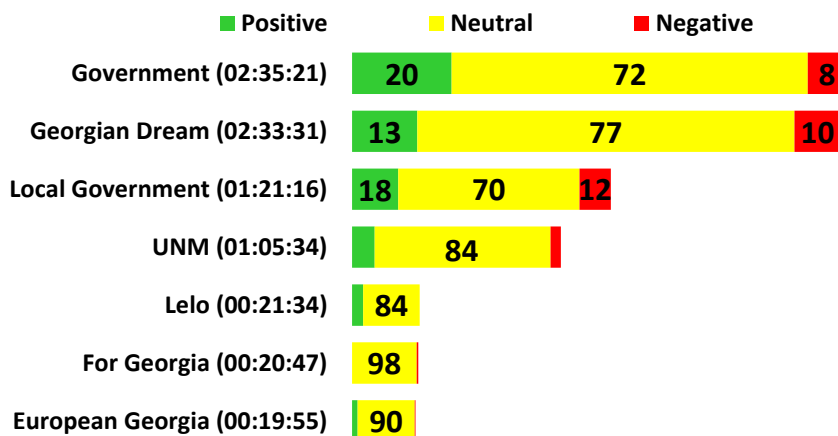


## 9. Trialeti TV

### Tone of Coverage (%)

#### Trialeti TV

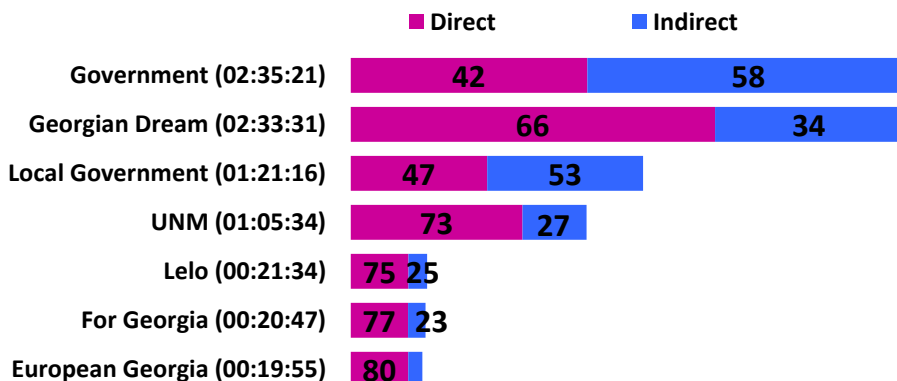
5 July - 14 November, 2021



### Direct / Indirect Speech (%)

#### Trialeti TV

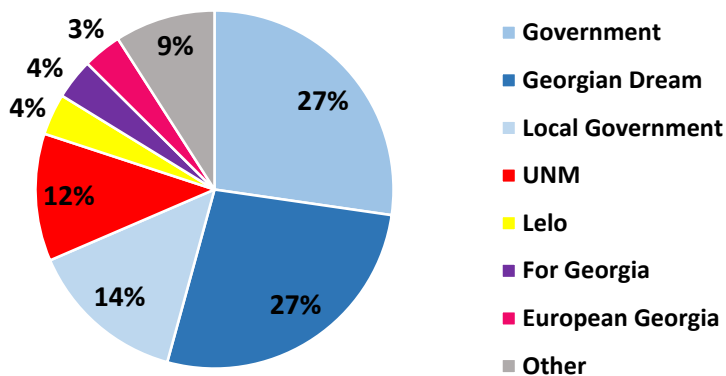
5 July - 14 November, 2021



### Coverage of Subjects (%)

#### Trialeti

5 July - 14 November, 2021

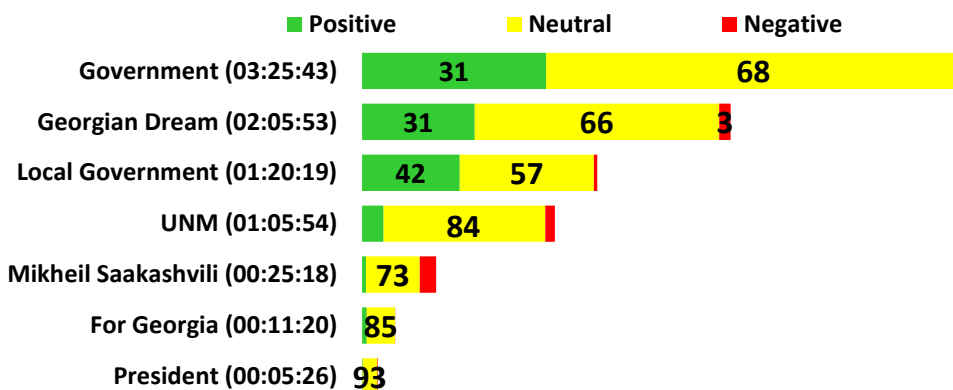


### 10. Gurjaani TV

#### Tone of Coverage (%)

##### Gurjaani TV

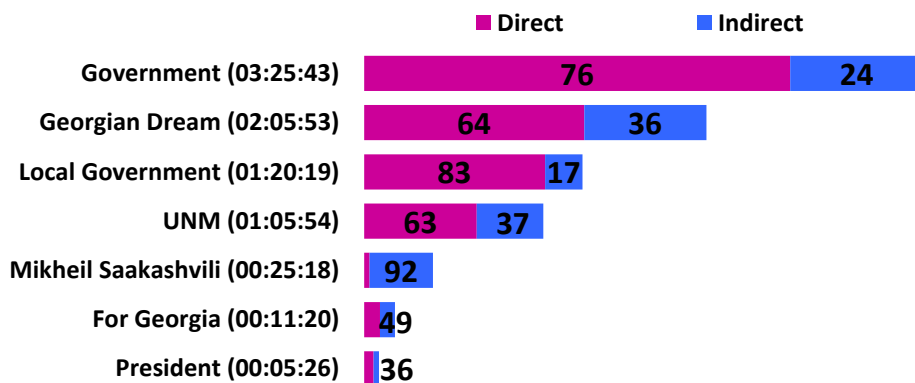
5 July - 14 November, 2021



#### Direct / Indirect Speech (%)

##### Gurjaani TV

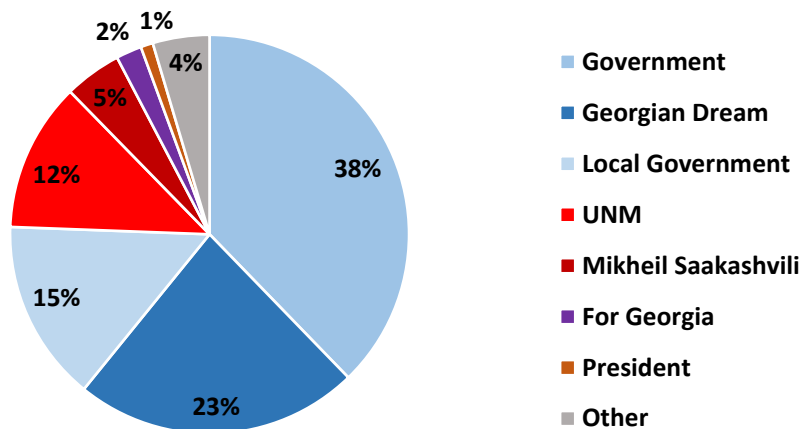
5 July - 14 November, 2021



#### Coverage of Subjects (%)

##### Gurjaani TV

5 July - 14 November, 2021

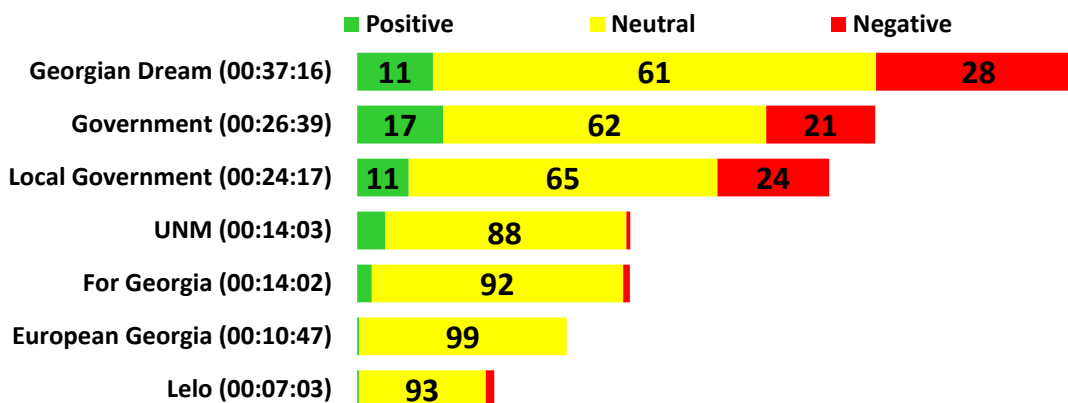


### 11. Channel 9

#### Tone of Coverage (%)

##### Channel 9

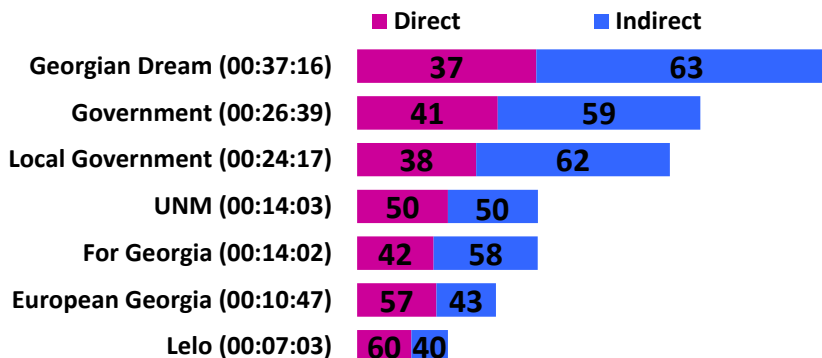
5 July - 14 November, 2021



#### Direct / Indirect Speech (%)

##### Channel 9

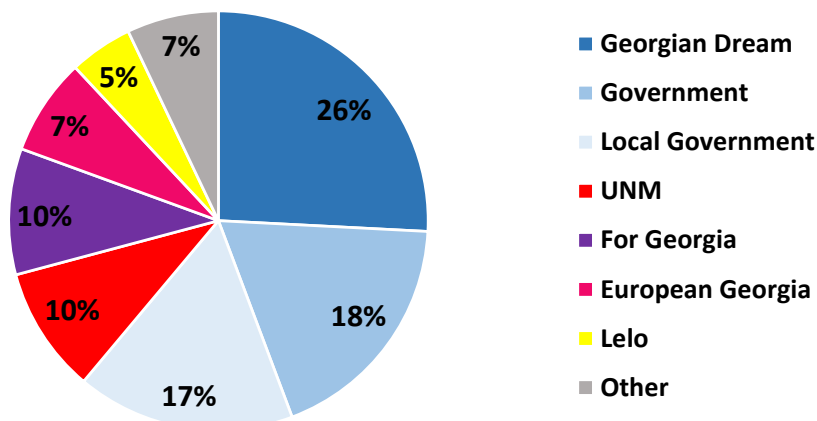
July - 14 November, 2021



#### Coverage of Subjects (%)

##### Channel 9

5 July - 14 November, 2021



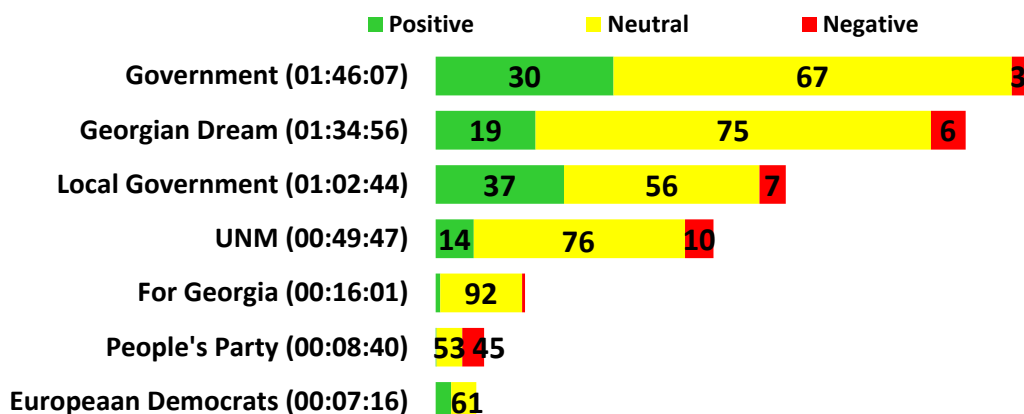


12. TV 4

Tone of Coverage (%)

TV 4

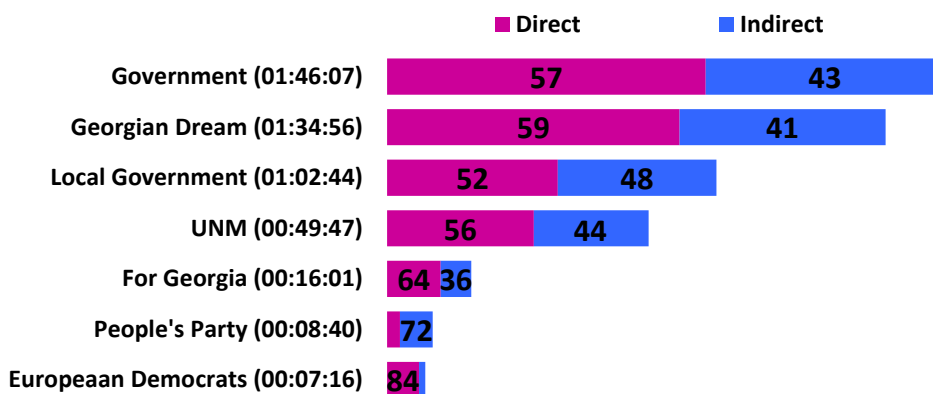
5 July - 14 November, 2021



Diredct / Indirect Speech (%)

TV4

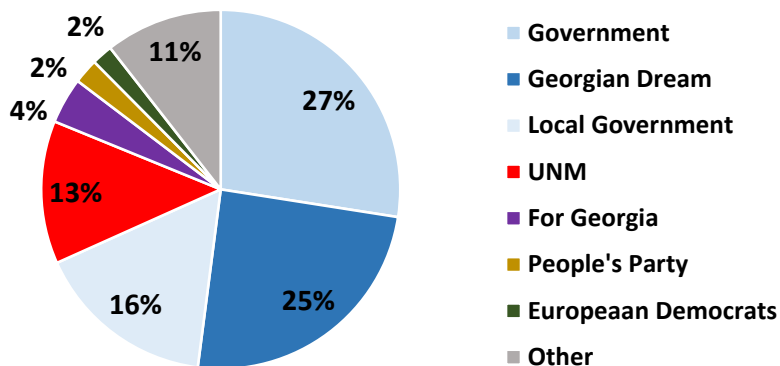
5 July - 14 November, 2021



Coverage of Subjects (%)

TV 4

5 July - 14 November, 2021

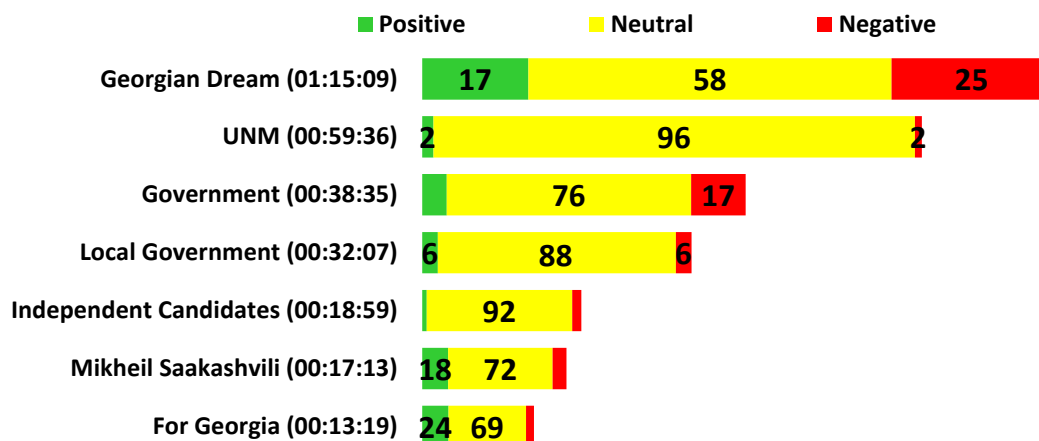


### 13. Guria TV

#### Tone of Coverage (%)

##### Guria TV

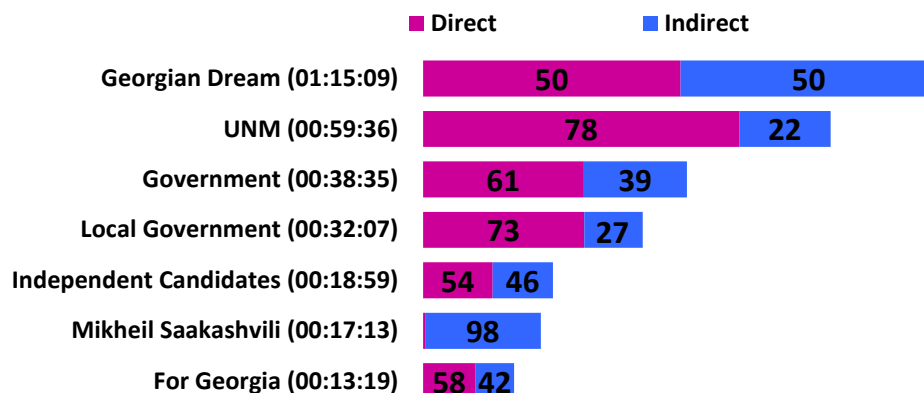
5 July - 14 November, 2021



#### Direct / Indirect Speech (%)

##### Guria TV

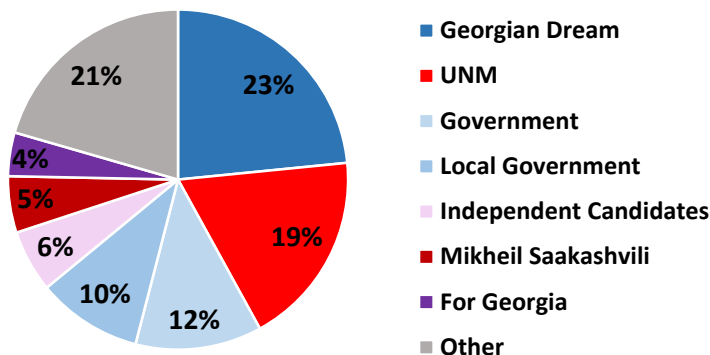
5 July - 14 November, 2021



#### Coverage of Subjects (%)

##### Guria TV

5 July - 14 November, 2021

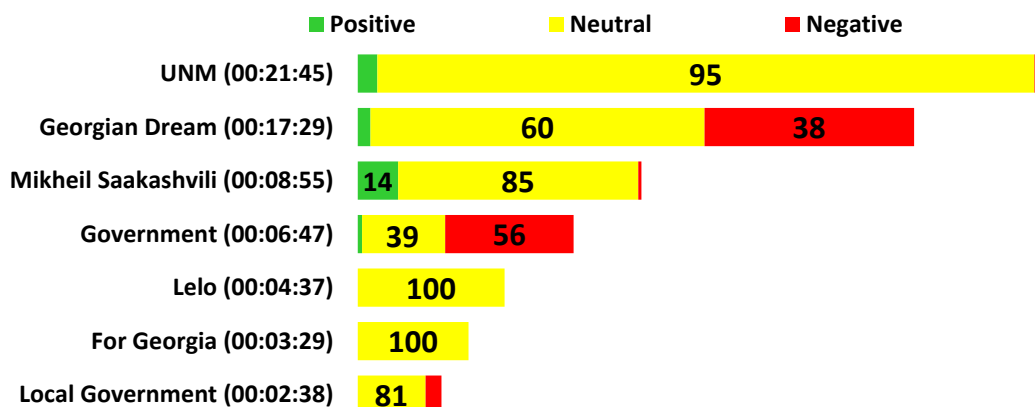


### 14. Odishi TV

#### Tone of Coverage (%)

##### Odishi TV

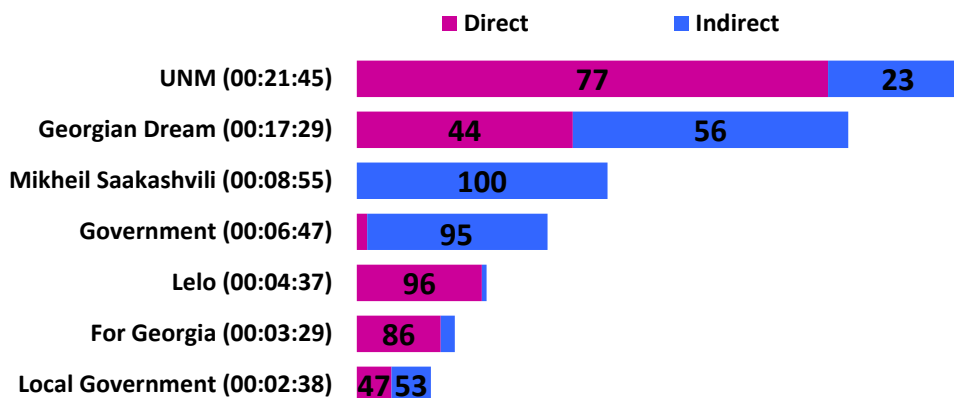
5 July - 14 November, 2021



#### Direct / Indirect Speech (%)

##### Odishi TV

5 July - 14 November, 2021



#### Coverage of Subjects (%)

##### Odishi TV

5 July - 14 November, 2021

