

“RUSSIAN WORLD” IN GEORGIA



“Russian World” in Georgia

Author: Mariam Pataridze

Editor: Tamar Kintsurashvili

www.mdfgeorgia.ge

Media Development Foundation, 2019



Introduction

The aim of this research is to examine the actions of the Russian soft power in Georgia and the information about the actors involved in this process.

The research was carried out using open sources and is mainly based on studying the website of the Russkiy Mir Foundation (Russian World Foundation, Фонд «Русский мир»)¹ which was created by the decree of the president of the Russian Federation, as well as open source information about the organizations mentioned in the list of partners of Russkiy Mir. The document analysis included the review of the public registry data as well as the media coverage of the activities of these organizations.

¹ <https://russkiymir.ru/>

Table of Contents

- Main Findings.....4
- About Russkiy Mir Foundation.....5
- Russkiy Mir Foundation’s Partner Organizations in Georgia.....8
- I. The Kremlin’s Political Projects in Georgia.....10
 - 1.1. The Immortal Regiment’s March in Georgia.....11
 - 1.2. St. George Ribbon Rally17
 - 1.3. Activities Implemented With Regard to “Liberation of Adjara”18
 - 1.4. Celebrating Russia Day.....18
 - 1.5 Other Georgian Actors Supporting Kremlin’s Projects.....19
 - 1.6. Media Partners.....22
- II. Cultural and Educational Activities.....23
 - 2.1 Assistance in Receiving Education in Russian Higher Education Institutions.....23
 - 2.2. Free Russian Language Study Project „Русский уголок”24
 - 2.3. Community Publications (Russian Club).....24
- Profiles.....27

Main Findings

The following trends have been identified by the research:

- Russkiy Mir Foundation (Russian World Foundation, Фонд «Русский мир») was created on the basis of Russian President **Vladimir Putin's** decree and there are high-ranking political officials of the Russian Government involved in its governance.
- Russkiy Mir Foundation indicates 46 entities from Georgia as its partners, however, several educational institutions are not involved in institutional cooperation with the Foundation: their individual staff members attend events organized by the Foundation of their own accord.
- Russkiy Mir Foundation's partner organizations in Georgia are mostly involved in two types of activities: supporting/organizing the Kremlin's political projects and educational and cultural projects.
- Russkiy Mir Foundation's partner organizations in Georgia mainly participate in organizing and carrying out the following kinds of the Kremlin's political projects: the march of the Georgian "division" of the Russian Immortal Regiment marking the victory over fascism on 9 May in Georgia, handing out St. George ribbons in various cities, events marking "liberation of Adjara from the Ottoman Empire".
- The Immortal Regiment's marches are held not only in various cities of Georgia but also on the territory of Abkhazia and Samachablo occupied by Russia. The Immortal Regiment's website lists Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent countries on its list of countries where the marches are held.
- The organizer of the 2019 march of the Immortal Regiment is Gulbaat Rtskhiladze, founder of the Eurasian Institute. Temur Pipia, chairman of the New Socialist Movement, and Taras Gagnidze, founder of Historical Heritage who owns the anti-Western outlet Georgia and the World, joined the march.
- Other organizations in five different cities also announced they would be joining the 9 May march, including National Congress of Slavic Peoples of Georgia and Anti-Fascist Coalition of Multinational Georgia.
- There is also evidence of cooperation of Russkiy Mir Foundation's partner organizations with other Kremlin-backed actors, such as Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center, Eurasian Institute, Historical Heritage, as well as with ethno-nationalist groups (Georgian Idea Political Union), which indicates that there is a connection between the Kremlin-backed actors and ultra-nationalist groups.
- The organization Historical Heritage (media outlet Georgia and the World) and its Public Council Member Aleksandr Chachia, Moscow-based political analyst whom Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded with the Order of Honor, feature actively in the process of the implementation of the Kremlin's projects in Georgia.
- The **educational/cultural** activities carried out by Russkiy Mir Foundation mostly involve opportunities to receive education in the Russian higher education institutions, organization of free Russian language courses, cultural and literary evenings and conferences, publishing newspapers and magazines and other events.
- According to pro-Kremlin media outlets, approximately 500 students from Georgia are studying in the Russian higher education institutions. There are 120 places allocated for Georgia for the 2019 academic year.
- Apart from Russkiy Mir Foundation, the publications of Russian community organizations in Georgia are also funded by Cartu Bank founded by Georgian Dream Party Chairman Bidzina Ivanishvili.

About Russkiy Mir Foundation

Russkiy Mir Foundation (Russian World Foundation, Фонд «Русский мир») was established by Russian President **Vladimir Putin's** decree² on 21 June 2007. High-ranking political officials of the Russian Government as well as the representatives of the Russian Patriarchy are involved in its governance circles.

On behalf of the Russian Federation, the founders of the Foundation are:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation;
- Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

Among the members³ of the Board of Trustees, there are Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, Russian Patriarchy Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev, Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the Russian Federation [Council], and others. The Foundation chairman is Vyacheslav Molotov's grandson, Vyacheslav Nikonov⁴, chairman of the Russian Federation Duma Committee on Education and Science. The Foundation receives its funding from the Russian Federation budget and the members of its Board of Trustees are appointed by the president of the Russian Federation.

² 21 июня 2007 года № 796, УКАЗ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ О СОЗДАНИИ ФОНДА «РУССКИЙ МИР»
<https://www.ruskiymir.ru/fund/the-decree-of-the-president-of-the-russian-federation-on-creation-of-fund-russian-world.php#1>

³ <https://www.ruskiymir.ru/fund/the-board-of-trustees/>

⁴ <http://v-nikonov.ru/>

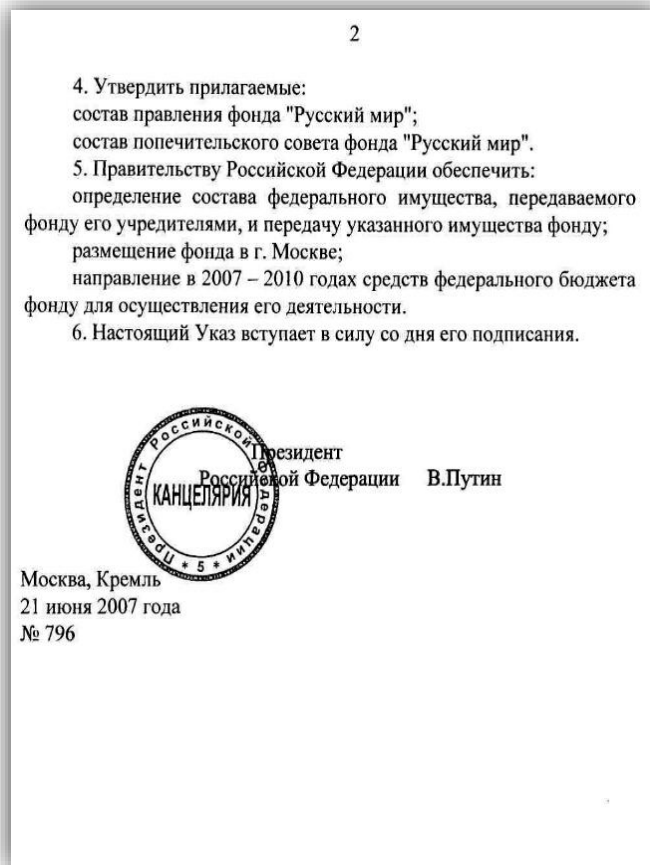
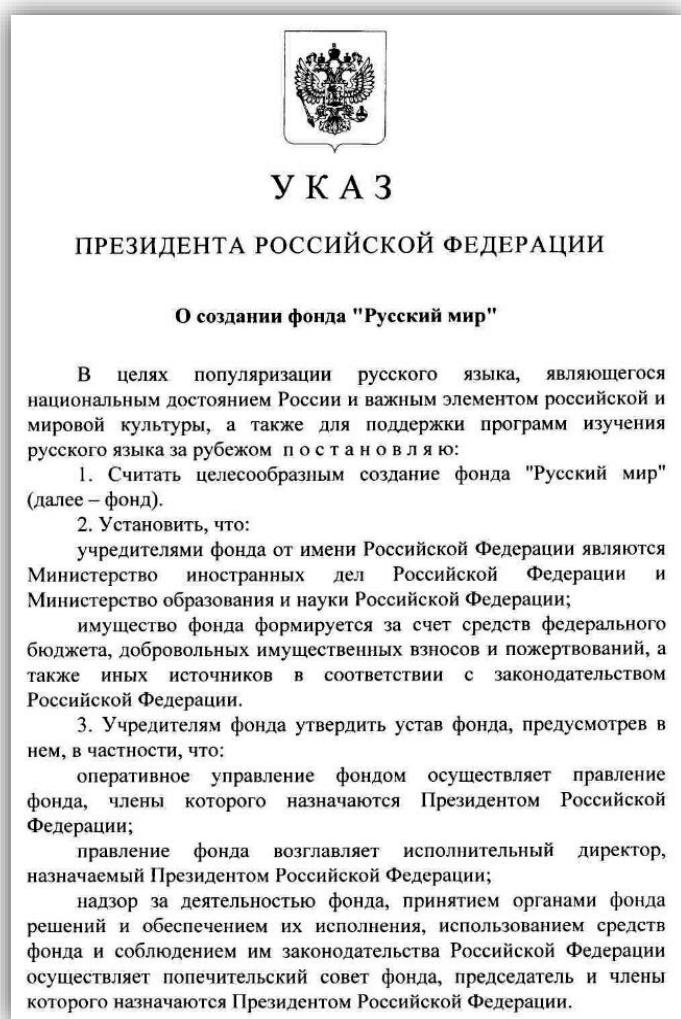


Board of Trustees



Foundation Chairman





The name of the Foundation is connected to the concept of the “Russian World” (Russkiy Mir) which has two meanings in the Russian foreign policy. According to Anton Shekhovtsov’s explanation⁵, on the one hand, all Russian speakers who live outside Russia’s borders in the Western countries and are important agents of the Russian soft power there are part of the Russian World. On the other hand, Russian World is a geopolitical concept which considers the countries of Eastern Europe to be subject to the Russian influence and on its orbit and envisages the right to interfere for Russia in the event these countries choose a foreign policy course which Russia finds unacceptable. Within Russia, the Russian World concept emphasizes the unique nature of the Russian civilization.

The Russian World concept is part of the Russian policy which aims to influence political processes through cooperation between the state and the church. In the process of this cooperation, values significant affect the policy formation. The Russian Orthodox Church and Russian World are spiritual and intellectual components of the Russian soft power.⁶

⁵ Anton Shekhovtsov, August 28, 2015, *The Russian World will destroy Russia* <http://anton-shekhovtsov.blogspot.com/2014/08/the-russian-world-will-destroy-russia.html>

⁶ Nicolai N. Petro, March 23, 2015, *Russia's Orthodox Soft Power* https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/articles_papers_reports/727

Russkiy Mir Foundation mobilizes the diaspora in various countries by means of educational and cultural projects, trying to influence neighboring countries through these diaspora “tentacles”. Using the Russian money, the Foundation is distributing Russian politics in various countries and is trying to turn the “existence” of the Russian diaspora abroad into the Russian “influence”.⁷

According to Russkiy Mir’s mission statement⁸, the aims of the Foundation include:

- Promotion of the Russian language as Russia’s national treasure and an important element of the Russian and global culture.
- Support to the Russian language study programs in Russia and abroad.
- Support to the associations of Russian language and literature teachers at the national as well as international level.
- Facilitation of dissemination of objective information about contemporary Russia and Russian compatriots and, to this end, formation of the public opinion friendly towards Russia.
- Support to the activities of the Russian diaspora abroad with the aim of maintaining cultural identity and learning the Russian language.
- Support to foreign Russian-language and Russian media and mobilization of information resources with the aim of achieving the Foundation’s goals.
- Cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church and other confessions to promote the Russian language and culture.

According to the 2017 report⁹, the Foundation has 110 active centers open throughout the world, most of which – 47 – are working in Europe.

Russkiy Mir Foundation's partner organizations in Georgia

The list of partners from Georgia indicated by the website of Russkiy Mir Foundation (Фонд «Русский мир») established by Vladimir Putin in 2007 contains 46 entities¹⁰, six them – private individuals. It has been established that two of them are Russian language and literature teachers¹¹.

In its list of partners, Russkiy Mir mentions organizations which are not involved in institutional cooperation with the Foundation. These include Akhaltsikhe State University, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and the Department of Slavic Studies of Kutaisi State University. The letter from the Department of Slavic Philology of Akaki Tsereteli State University in Kutaisi said that the department, as a teaching and academic unit of the university, is not a partner of Russkiy Mir Foundation although individual members of the department do cooperate with the Foundation in its individual activities. The activities include international academic conferences, international competitions for Russian language and literature teachers, compiling and publishing a Russian language textbook and others.

⁷ Mikhail Suslov, July 2017, *"Russian World: Russia's Policy towards its Diaspora"*, https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/suslov_russian_world_2017.pdf

⁸ Фонд «Русский мир» <https://www.russkiymir.ru/fund/>

⁹ https://russkiymir.ru/events/docs/report_2017.pdf

¹⁰ <https://russkiymir.ru/catalogue/catalog.php?country=76>

¹¹ 1. Berelidze Lolita – Russian language teacher; 2. Kochladze Natalia – Russian language teacher; 3. Koberidze Megi; 4. Mamedova Leila; 5. Nestorova Inna; 6. Lortkipanidze Irina.

The information about the activities of the organizations that feature on Russkiy Mir's list of partners is mostly found in the media outlets either directly founded by the Russian Government (Sputnik-Georgia) or those with pro-Kremlin editorial policy (Georgia and the World, Sakinform, Patriot TV). Based on the media coverage, we have identified five most active organizations mainly involved in two types of activities:

- Political projects of the Kremlin;
- Educational and cultural projects.

Infographic 1. Five partner organizations of Russkiy Mir and media outlets supporting their activities



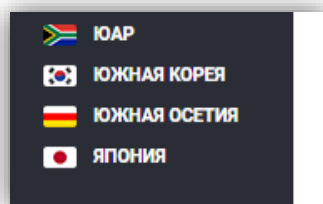
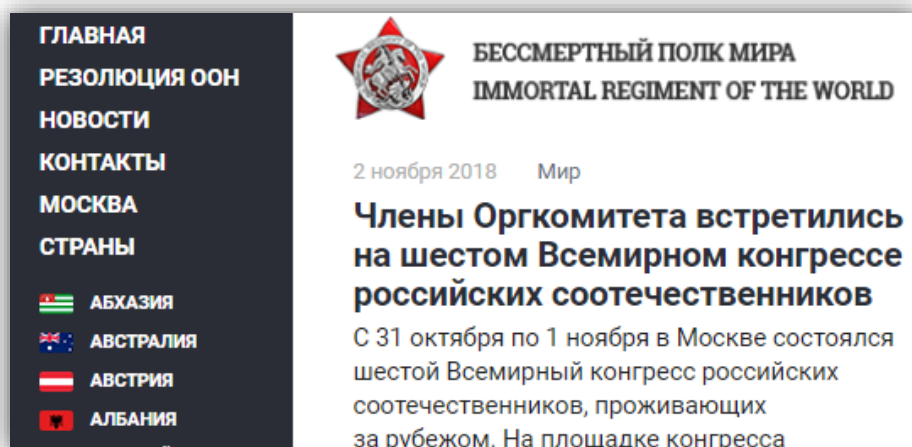
I. The Kremlin's Political Projects in Georgia

Russkiy Mir's partner organizations in Georgia are mainly involved in organizing and implementing the Kremlin's political projects, such as the march of the Georgian "division" of the Russian Immortal Regiment celebrating the victory over fascism in Georgia on 9 May, handing out St. George ribbons in various cities, events marking "liberation of Adjara from the Ottoman Empire".

1.1. Immortal Regiment's March in Georgia

In 2019, the day of victory over fascism in Georgia is celebrated by the Immortal Regiment's¹² march.

The idea of creating the Immortal Regiment appeared in Russia in 2007¹³; since 2015, such marches started being held in other counties as well. Traditionally, the march has also been held in Abkhazia and Samachablo occupied by Russia. The Immortal Regiment's website¹⁴ contains a list of countries where the march is held; on this list, Abkhazia and South Ossetia are featured as independent countries.



In 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin also participated¹⁵ in the Immortal Regiment's rally, holding his father's portrait. Funded by Moscow, this movement, according to the Russian president himself¹⁶, "represents an enormous potential for international cooperation to protect historical truth and common memory, to bring peoples closer together and strengthen bilateral trust."

¹² Officially, the idea of the Immortal Regiment aims to pay homage to the memory of the fighters perished in the World War II. The march participants organize it, holding photos of their relatives who were killed in the World War II.

¹³ <https://www.moypolk.ru/ustav-polka>

¹⁴ <https://iregiment.com/>

¹⁵ <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54473>

¹⁶ <https://www.pravda.ru/news/society/1331410-putin/>



The main political activity of Russkiy Mir’s partner organizations operating in Georgia is “Бессмертный полк Грузии” – the Georgian Immortal Regiment’s march, which will be held in Georgia for the third time in 2019.¹⁷ A preliminary meeting on organizational issues was held on 2 May in Tbilisi and the march from the Turtle Lake to Vake Park was announced for 9 May 2019. The organizer¹⁸ of the march is Gulbaat Rtskhiladze, founder of the Eurasian Institute. Temur Pipia, chairman of the New Socialist Movement, and Taras Gagnidze, founder of Historical Heritage, who owns the anti-Western publication Georgia and the World, are joining the march. According to the organizers, compared to the previous years, the event will be a real march rather than an imitation.

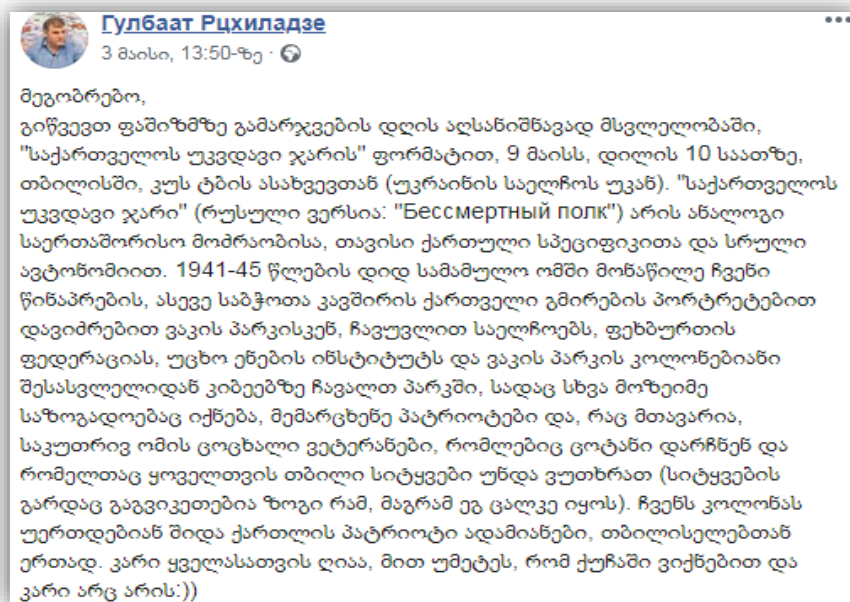


Photo: Sputnik-Georgia¹⁹

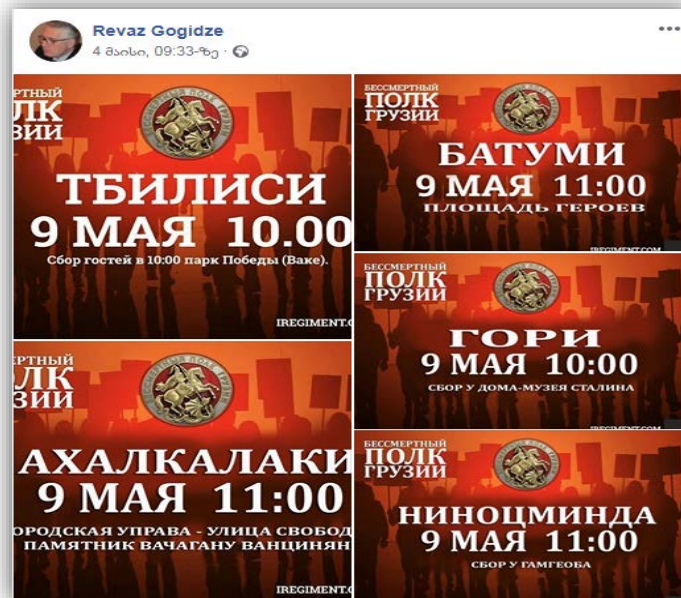
¹⁷ <https://bit.ly/2VJtoj7>

¹⁸ <https://bit.ly/2YghAT5>

¹⁹ <https://bit.ly/2J5NqOS>



In turn, Anzhelika Zakharova, director of the National Congress of Slavic Peoples of Georgia, and her husband, Revaz Gogidze, member of the Board of the same organization and director of the Anti-Fascist Coalition of Multinational Georgia, have been actively announcing the 9 May 2019 march in five different cities (Tbilisi, Batumi, Gori, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda). Anzhelika Zakharova and Revaz Gogidze held the first march of the Georgian division of the Russian Immortal Regiment in 2017.²⁰



According to the reports in the media²¹, Our Homeland party member Tristan Tselashvili²² will be joining the 9 May march too.

²⁰ <https://bit.ly/2LwjIVf>

²¹ <https://bit.ly/2Yh1gBr>

²² <http://mythdetector.ge/ka/profile/citelashvili-tristan>



Photo: Patriot TV²³

²³<http://patrioti-tv.ge/sazogadoeba/666--.html>

On 9 May 2018, the Immortal Regiment's march was held in Tbilisi, Batumi and Gori. The Regiment members were carrying portraits of relatives perished in the World War II, St. George ribbons and flags with St. George emblem and an inscription "Georgian Immortal Regiment" in Georgian and Russian.



The International Union of Russian Compatriots "Otchizna" and the National Congress of Slavic Peoples participated in the 2018 march. The event was announced by Sputnik-Georgia²⁴.



Photo by Sputnik-Georgia: Valeriy Svarchuk, Revaz Gogidze

²⁴ <https://sputnik-georgia.com/pressclub/20180501/240289545/aqcia-ukvdavi-polki.html>



Photo by Sputnik-Georgia: Valeriy Svarchuk, Irina Svarchuk

Representatives of the Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots also participated in the 9 May 2018 event which was held in Vake Park²⁵. Aleksandr Bezhentsev, executive secretary of the Coordination Council, who is also the head of the Union of Russian Youth, aired Russian President Vladimir Putin's tribute.



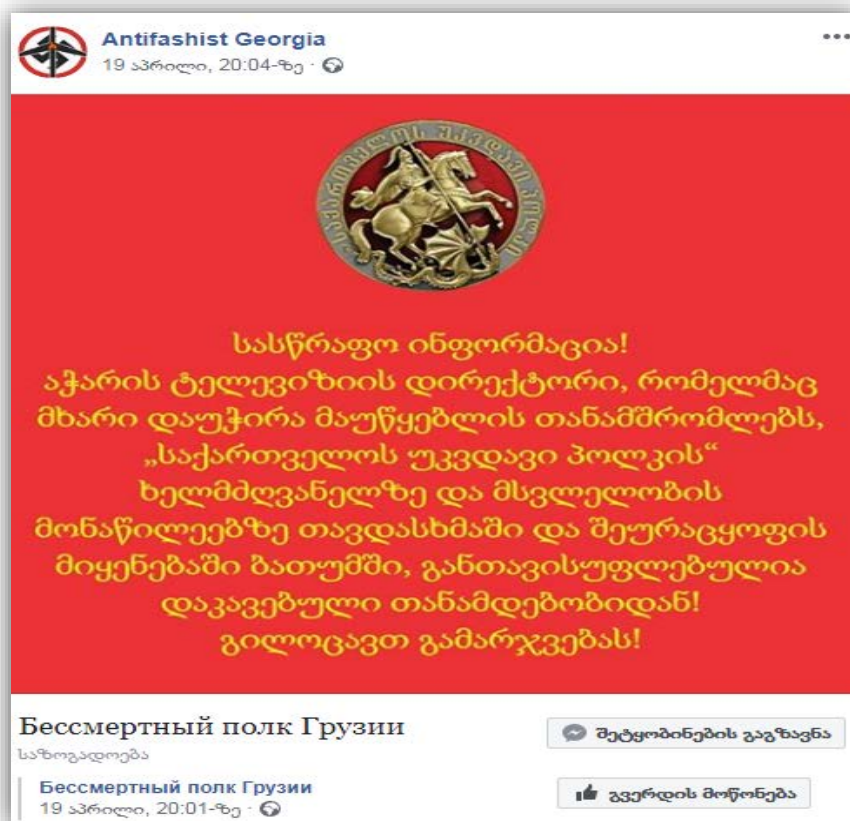
Photo by Sputnik-Georgia: Aleksandr Bezhentsev

Nikoloz Sventitski, head of the Coordination Council, director of Griboedov Theater and founder of **International Cultural and Educational Union "Russian Club"**, participated in the rally.

²⁵ <https://bit.ly/2WwEh4S>

Ruskiy Mir's partner organizations against Adjara TV. On 9 May 2018, journalists from Adjara TV and Radio were also present at the rally held on Europe Square. Davit Trapaidze and Giorgi Tserodze protested against the use of Soviet symbols and photos and called on the rally participants to observe the law²⁶.

After that, pro-Russian forces considered the impeachment of TV channel head Natia Kapanadze in 2019 their victory and disseminated a statement on their Facebook pages.



²⁶ <http://tv25.ge/news.php?lang=ge&id=6870>

1.2. St. George Ribbon Rally

On its Facebook page, „Бессмертный полк Грузии“ (the Immortal Regiment of Georgia) disseminated information that one of the organizers of the Georgian division of the Russian Immortal Regiment, Anzhelika Zakharova, addressed the Georgian Prime Minister, asking for the permission to use St. George ribbons during the march on 9 May 2019.



The media reported²⁷ that the Georgian Security served the Immortal Regiment and other organizations with a warning concerning the use of Soviet symbols, stating that it would act in accordance with the law in the event any person commits a violation.

According to the Law of Georgia “Freedom Charter”, communist totalitarian and fascist symbols are banned²⁸ as well as the symbols communicating communist totalitarian and fascist ideologies and other means of propaganda. The same law defines communist totalitarian symbols as: symbols related to communist totalitarian ideology, and which represent the communist totalitarian regime.²⁹

According to this law, the Special Commission of the Security Service of Georgia shall address an authorized person with a demand to eliminate the symbols communicating communist totalitarian and fascist ideologies³⁰. An authorized person’s failure to comply or inadequate compliance with the instruction results in issuing a warning to the authorized person or a fine in the amount of GEL 1,000³¹.

St. George ribbons were handed out to the participants of the rally marking the 70th anniversary of the victory in “the Great Patriotic War”³² which was held in Georgia in 2015. Valeriy Svarchuk, head of the **International Union of Russian Compatriots “Otchizna”**, and Irina Svarchuk, member of its board, organized the event.

²⁷ <https://bit.ly/2J5CTDm>

²⁸ Law of Georgia “Freedom Charter”, Article 1, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/download/1381526/14/ge/pdf>

²⁹ Law of Georgia “Freedom Charter”, Article 2(f).

³⁰ Law of Georgia “Freedom Charter”, Article 6.

³¹ Law of Georgia “Administrative Offences Code of Georgia”, Article 174¹⁶
<https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/28216?publication=424>

³² <https://sputnik-georgia.com/video/20150517/227620062.html>



Photo by Sputnik-Georgia: Valeriy Svarchuk

The St. George ribbon³³ which was used as a symbol of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in the World War II, is similar to the ribbon of the Order of St. George. The Order of St. George, which was established during the rule of Catherine the Great, was the highest military award in the Tsarist Russia. Until 2005, the St. George ribbon was rarely used and, in 2005, RIA Novosti news agency used it in its internet project which concerned family memories about the war. The St. George ribbon soon acquired political meaning. Since 2014, it has been a symbol of the Russian World: the ribbon was used by "Anti-Maidan" activists and the Russian-supported military in Eastern Ukraine. After that, the St. George ribbon appeared at the pro-Russian rallies in various parts of the world. Eventually, the St. George ribbon became a symbol of Russian imperialism and occupation. For Ukrainians, the St. George ribbon is associated with the Russian aggression, which is precisely why it was banned in Ukraine in 2017.³⁴

1.3. Activities Implemented With Regard to "Liberation of Adjara"

According to Georgia and the World publication³⁵, on 25 August 2016 in Batumi, the Eurasian Union held a rally dedicated to the deployment of the Russian Army in Adjara on 25 August 1878 and the liberation of Adjara from the Ottoman Empire. In 2015, a large banner was placed in the Baratashvili Garden Square in Batumi, announcing that a memorial to the "liberation of Adjara" would be erected in the garden square.

In 2014, the **Eurasian Institute** and local residents partially repaired and arranged the common cemetery with the graves of Russian soldiers in the village of Khutsubani in Kobuleti [District]; after that, the **Adjara Compatriots Society (Archil Gogitidze)** became involved in these efforts. In 2014, a plaque saying "Thankful Adjara will not forget its liberators" was mounted on the wall of the common cemetery.³⁶

1.4. Celebrating Russia Day

According to Radio Apkhazetis Khma³⁷, in 2014, the Russia Day was celebrated in Batumi, Tbilisi and Rustavi, organized by the **International Union of Russian Compatriots "Otchizna"**. The Russia Day is the main public holiday in

³³ <https://wapo.st/2LtFGIh>

³⁴ <https://bit.ly/2YjHq8N>

³⁵ <http://geworld.ge/ge/8723/>

³⁶ <https://bit.ly/2HakSAP>

³⁷ <https://bit.ly/2vIPaEV>

Russia, celebrated on 12 June. According to Radio Freedom³⁸, until 2002, this day was called “Russia’s Independence Day”. Official websites call the Russia Day the celebration of “freedom, civic peace and consent of all peoples based on law and justice”. On 12 June, official ceremonies related to this day are organized in Russian cities.

1.5 Other Georgian Actors Supporting Kremlin’s Projects

There is evidence of cooperation between Russkiy Mir Foundation’s partner organizations with other actors, such as Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center (Dimitri Lortkipanidze), Eurasian Institute³⁹ (Gulbaat Rtskhiladze)⁴⁰, Historical Heritage (Tariel Gagnidze) as well as the ethno-nationalist group Georgian Idea Political Union (Levan Chachua).

In April 2019, an event titled Reanimation of Fascist Ideology (“Реанимации фашистской идеологии”⁴¹) was held in Tbilisi where public attitudes prevailing in Georgia towards the Kremlin’s policies were described as Russophobia and anti-Russian hysteria. The table below shows that not only Russkiy Mir’s partner organizations but also representatives ultranationalist associations operating in Georgia participated in the event, which indicates that there is a connection between the Kremlin-backed actors and ultranationalist groups.



At this event, the 9 May march planned by the Immortal Regiment and its significance were discussed and also **Aleksandre Chachia’s**⁴² contribution to this process was emphasized⁴³. Aleksandre Chachia, who is a member of the Board of Trustees of Historical Heritage, an organization which founded the anti-Western publication Georgia and the World, on 13 February 2014, was awarded by Russian President Vladimir Putin with an Order of Honor “for strengthening the friendship and cooperation with the Russian Federation, for a great contribution to the development of academic and cultural ties”⁴⁴. In Putin’s decree concerning the award, Aleksandre Chachia is called a publisher of Historical Heritage Magazine and newspapers Ilori and Georgia and the World. It is noteworthy that commentators and bloggers of Georgia and the World publication were also among the participants of the event held in April.

³⁸ <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/25418975.html>

³⁹ In IDFI’s 2015 [study](#), the Eurasian Institute featured on the list of partners of Russkiy Mir Foundation and offered Russian language courses with the support from the Foundation. However, as of 8 May 2019, the Eurasian Institute can no longer be found on the list of organizations indicated on Russkiy Mir’s website.

⁴⁰ <https://www.mythdetector.ge/ka/profile/rtskhiladze-gulbaat>

⁴¹ <http://pravfond.ge/v2/2019/04/05/vstrecha/#more-2740>

<https://bit.ly/2PTOSUT>

⁴² <https://www.mythdetector.ge/ka/profile/chachia-aleksandre>

⁴³ <https://bit.ly/2IkDgIQ>

⁴⁴ <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/acts/files/0001201402130018.pdf>



Table 2. Participants of Reanimation of Fascist Ideology event

	Dimitri Lortkipanidze	Head of Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center
	Levan Chachua	Chairman of Georgian Idea Political Union
	Temur Pipia	Member of United Communist Party Political Union, founder of Socialist Georgia Public Movement



Aleksandr Bezhentsev

Chairman of the Union of Russian Youth of Georgia



Dimitri Bregvadze

Deputy Chairman of the Union of Russian Youth of Georgia



Gulbaat Rtskhiladze

Founder of Eurasian Institute



Teimuraz Makaridze

Member of the People's Patriotic Movement, „Народно-патриотическое движение”



Konstantine Chikviladze

Commentator for Georgia and the World internet publication



Givi Vanishvili

Vice Colonel



Viktor Tsaava

Historian, blogger for Georgia and the World



Photo: Georgia and the World

1.6. Media Partners

The work of the organizations involved in activities supporting the Kremlin's policies are actively covered by the following pro-Kremlin media outlets: Sakinform⁴⁵, Georgia and the World⁴⁶, Sputnik-Georgia⁴⁷, Patriot TV⁴⁸ and the media portal First Slavic⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ <http://mediameter.ge/ge/media-profiles/sakinpormi>

⁴⁶ <http://mediameter.ge/ge/media-profiles/sakartvelo-da-msoplio>

⁴⁷ <http://mediameter.ge/ge/media-profiles/sputniki-sakartvelo>

⁴⁸ <http://mediameter.ge/ge/media-profiles/patrioti-tv>

⁴⁹ The owner of the media portal First Slavic („Первый Славянский”), which is a partner organization of Russkiy Mir, is Lika Zakharova, president of the National Congress of Slavic Peoples of Georgia, <http://firstslavic.ge/>

II. Cultural and Educational Activities

The educational and cultural activities of Russkiy Mir Foundation mainly include provision of opportunities to study in Russia's higher education institutions, organization of free Russian language courses, organization of cultural and literary evenings and conferences, publishing newspapers and magazines and other activities.

2.1 Studying in Russian Higher Education Institutions

The information about the projects supporting [receiving] higher education in Russia is disseminated via the Kremlin-established media outlets⁵⁰ by Nikoloz Sventitski, head of the **Russian Club** and of the **Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots**.

According to Sventitski, there are approximately 500 students from Georgia currently studying in the Russian higher education institutions. For the 2019 academic year, 120 places have been allocated for Georgia⁵¹. The state program fully covers the tuition fees.

Under the auspices of the Russian Government, the International Union of [Russian] Compatriots "Otchizna" and the federal agency Rossotrudnichestvo (РОССОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО - Федеральное агентство по делам Содружества Независимых Государств, соотечественников, проживающих за рубежом, и по международному гуманитарному сотрудничеству)⁵² are also involved in the implementation of educational programs in Georgia.



Photo by Sputnik-Georgia: Nikoloz Sventitski

2.2. Free Russian Language Study Project "Русский уголок"

⁵⁰ <http://korsovet.ge/ksorsg/ucheba-3/>
<https://bit.ly/2JpAgeO>

⁵¹ <https://sputnik-georgia.ru/society/20190206/244228871/Kak-postupit-v-rossiyskiy-vuz-informatsia-dlya-studentov-iz-Gruzii.html>

⁵² <http://geworld.ge/ge/6983/>
<https://sputnik-georgia.com/radio/20150218/217384763.html>



Photo by Sputnik-Georgia: Revaz Gogidze, Lika Zakharova

According to Sputnik-Georgia⁵³, in September 2015, the National Congress of Slavic Peoples launched a free Russian language study project "Русский урок" (Russian Corner.) This program is implemented under the supervision of Lika Zakharova, while the project is funded by Russian Peace Foundation („Российский фонд мира”), also represented by Lika Zakharova.

2.3. Community Publications (Russian Club)

The International Cultural and Educational Union “Russian Club” publishes a monthly magazine titled Russkiy Klub (Russian Club). The project is managed by Nikoloz Sventitski. The project is implemented with the support from **Cartu Foundation** and **VTB Bank**. The magazine’s website⁵⁴ features supporter organizations’ banners. The banner of the **Sarajishvili Company** is also placed there.

⁵³ <https://sputnik-georgia.ru/society/20150921/228579465.html>

⁵⁴ <http://www.rcmagazine.ge/>



ПАМЯТИ ДАТЫ ДОСУД НАШИ ДРУЗЬЯ О НАС КОНТАКТЫ

Цитата

Моя жизнь короткая, но зато много ее видел, потому что я человек высокопоставленный, а это время ушло. Александр Володин

УЧАСТНИК КОНКУРСА

Журнали

2012 г. 2-е место
2013 г. 2-е место
2013 г. 2-е место
2013 г. 2-е место
2013 г. 2-е место
2013 г. 2-е место
2013 г. 2-е место

Почетные

1999 г. Почетный член
1999 г. Почетный член
1999 г. Почетный член
1999 г. Почетный член
1999 г. Почетный член
1999 г. Почетный член
1999 г. Почетный член



Александр Павлович Павлов



Тбилиси, 2013. Концерт, посвященный 75-летию Владимира Высоцкого



Арсен Еремян. Песни моего отца



Концерт, посвященный 75-летию Владимира Высоцкого



Мир без границ. БТБ



Остр. Валерия Харютченко



Александр Павлович Павлов



Сергей Павлов. Когда это была любовь



В.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



Михаил Павлов. Когда это была любовь



Михаил Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



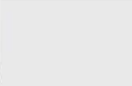
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



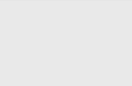
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



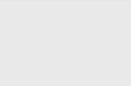
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



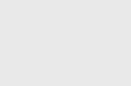
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



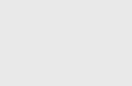
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



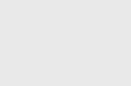
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



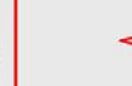
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



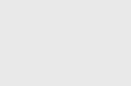
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



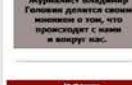
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



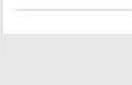
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



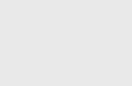
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



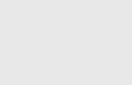
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



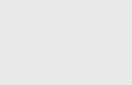
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



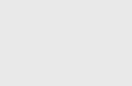
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



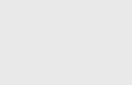
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



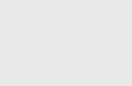
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



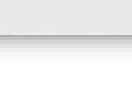
С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь



С.С. Павлов. Когда это была любовь

Netgazeti published a report⁵⁵ about the Russian Club's anniversary event under the title: "A magazine funded by Русский Мир and Ivanishvili's Foundation celebrates anniversary" (2014). According to the publication, to mark the 100th issue of the Russkiy Klub (Русский Клуб) Magazine, a festive meeting, financed by Russkiy Mir Foundation and Bidzina Ivanishvili's Cartu Foundation, was held in the Grand Reception Hall of the Sarajishvili Company on 20 March.

Nikoloz Sventitski, head of the **International Cultural and Educational Union "Russian Club"**, confirmed in the interview he gave to Radio Commerciant that some of the activities are funded by Russkiy Mir and Ivanishvili's Foundation⁵⁶.

According to Sakinform, the 10th anniversary of the Russian Club and publishing the 100th issue of the Russkiy Klub Magazine were marked by the Russian romance concert **"Это было недавно"** on 19 February 2014⁵⁷, funded by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection and organized by Mariam Ositashvili.

The Russkiy Klub Magazine is a supporter of the International Film School for Young Cinematographers from the CIS which was held in Batumi in 2019.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ <http://netgazeti.ge/culture/30249/>

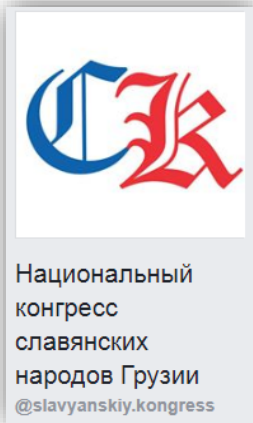
⁵⁶ <https://commerciant.ge/ge/post/ruski-klubi-diach-fondi-qartu-wlebia-gvexmareba>

⁵⁷ <https://bit.ly/2BAqD8H>

⁵⁸ <https://bit.ly/2vKZCf0>

III. Profiles

НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ КОНГРЕСС СЛАВЯНСКИХ НАРОДОВ ГРУЗИИ – National Congress of Slavic Peoples of Georgia



Registration date: 16.08.2013

President: Anzhelika Zakharova

Board Members: Revaz Gogidze, Nato Bondarenko and Viktor Vasilev

Objectives/Mission:

- Strengthening ties with Georgian and Slavic diasporas living abroad;
- Promotion of the country's socio-economic development;
- Integration of Slavic minorities into state structures;
- Protection of minority languages;
- Supporting and closely cooperating with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Web platform: Facebook page with 957 subscribers.⁵⁹

Connections: Anzhelika Zakharova is the director of the «ПЕРВЫЙ СЛАВЯНСКИЙ» portal⁶⁰. She is also the director of the organization entitled the Congress of Russian and Russian-Speaking Communities of Multinational Georgia. Revaz Gogidze is a member of its board as well; he is also the director of the Anti-Fascist Coalition of Multinational Georgia. Lika Zakharova is also a representative of the Russian Peace Foundation

(«Российский фонд мира»). The Russian Peace Foundation⁶¹ is the successor of the Soviet Peace Foundation. In June 2002, Leonid Slutsky, member of the Russian State Duma, was elected Chairman of the Board of the Russian Peace Foundation. On behalf of the Russian State Duma, Duma Committee Chairman Leonid Slutsky addressed the participants of the international conference dedicated to the 10th anniversary of establishing Russkiy Mir⁶². Lika Zakharova also attended the anniversary event – Russian World: Present and Future – which was held in the Kremlin Palace in June 2017. The event was opened by a representative of the Presidential Administration who read Vladimir Putin's welcome speech⁶³.

СОЮЗ РУССКОЙ МОЛОДЕЖИ ГРУЗИИ – Union of Russian Youth of Georgia



Registration date: 11.10.2004

Chairperson: Aleksandr Bezhentsev

Board Members: Aleksandr Mirimanov, Alla Bezhentseva, Jimsher Bitkash and Dimitri Bregvadze

Objectives/Mission:

- All-encompassing development of mutual cooperation, friendship and mutual understanding between two independent states of Russia and Georgia.

Web platform: <http://pravfond.ge>, Facebook page with 1,772 subscribers.⁶⁴

Connections: Aleksandr Bezhentsev is also the executive secretary of the Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots and is the head of the Legal Protection Center of Russian Compatriots of Georgia. Dimitri Bregvadze is the organization's Board Member and lawyer. The Legal Protection Center is funded by the Foundation for the Protection and Support of Compatriots Living Abroad which was created on the basis of the Russian president's decree and which started working on 1 January 2012. The founders

of the Foundation are the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the federal agency Rossotrudnichestvo.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/slavyanskiy.kongress/>

⁶⁰ <http://firstslavic.ge/>

⁶¹ <http://www.peacefond.ru/>

⁶² <https://ruskiymir.ru/international-conference-russian-world-present-and-future/>

⁶³ https://ruskiymir.ru/the-fund-russian-world-10-years/pdf/Pozdravlenie_Putin.pdf

⁶⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/SouzRusskojMolodeziGruzii/>

⁶⁵ Study by Liberal Academy – Tbilisi Foundation, *Liberali*, 25 January 2016, <http://liberali.ge/news/view/20408/kvleva-dasavletis-diskreditatsiis-miznit-sagartveloshi-rusuli-fondebi-gaaqtiurdnen>



Registration date: 10.10.2003

President: Nikoloz Sventitski

Board Members: Vera Tsereteli (Russian Federation), Valeri Kharyutchenko, Alla Bezhentseva and Avtandil Varsimashvili

Objectives/Mission: Facilitation of mutual cooperation between Russia and Georgia.

Web platform: Website: <http://www.rcmagazine.ge> and Facebook page with 3,044 subscribers.

Connections: Nikoloz Sventitski is also the director of Griboedov Russian Drama Theater. The office of RIA Novosti is located on the premises of Griboedov Theater. In 2016, Sventitski received awards for his achievements both in Georgia and in Russia. In Georgia, he received a special award – “Servant of Art” – from the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, while on 29 January 2016 in Russia, Nikoloz Sventitski also received an honorary title of the Merited Artist of the Russian Federation.⁶⁶



Nikoloz Sventitski is also the chairman of the Coordination Council⁶⁷ of the organization of Russian Compatriots in Georgia. The objective of the organization is to maintain the ethno-cultural identity of the Russian compatriots living in Georgia and to protect the rights and interests of the Russian-speaking communities in Georgia. The Council has 21 member-organizations⁶⁸, most of which are the organizations listed in the Russkiy Mir catalogue.

⁶⁶ <https://sputnik-georgia.com/culture/20161121/233892069/nikoloz-sventickis-jildo-xelovnebis-qurumi-gadaeca.html>

⁶⁷ <http://korsovet.ge/>

⁶⁸ <http://korsovet.ge/org/>



Союз российских
соотечественников
в Грузии
"Отчизна"

Registration date: 23.06.2016

President: Valeriy Svarchuk

Board Members: Irina Svarchuk, Vera Kusnetsova, Aleksandra Anisimova and Gia Tomash

Objectives/Mission:

- Uniting Russian citizens and compatriots from the Russian-speaking population of Georgia and creating additional resources for "public diplomacy";
- Facilitation of the development and strengthening of economic, political, cultural and social ties between Georgia and Russia.

Web platform: Facebook page with 820 subscribers.

Connections: Valeriy Svarchuk is a supporter of the Georgian Idea party⁶⁹ which, in turn, is notable for its anti-Western rhetoric. A joint briefing by Svarchuk and the chairman of Georgian Idea was covered by Sputnik-Georgia⁷⁰. The briefing concerned the history of Georgian-Russian relations and the current situation⁷¹. Medvedev decorated Valeriy Svarchuk with the Pushkin Order.⁷²



Irina Svarchuk, who is a member of the board of the International Union of Russian Compatriots "Otchizna", is also the head of the organization International Humanitarian and Charity Society "Nadezhda".

Ассоциация грузино-российских взаимосвязей Аджарии - Общество соотечественников России в Аджарии (Батуми) – Association of Georgian-Russian Relations of Adjara – Society of Russian Compatriots in Adjara (Batumi)

Registration date: 23.05.2016

Director: Archil Gogitidze

Public Activities:

- Participation together with the Eurasian Institute in the activities dedicated to the "liberation of Adjara" (2016).

Media Support: Georgia and the World

⁶⁹ <http://mythdetector.ge/ka/profile/kartuli-idea>

⁷⁰ <https://sputnik-georgia.com/pressclub/20151020/228837367.html>

⁷¹ <https://sputnik-georgia.com/society/20151021/228849348.html>

⁷² <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=404628&tid=85033>