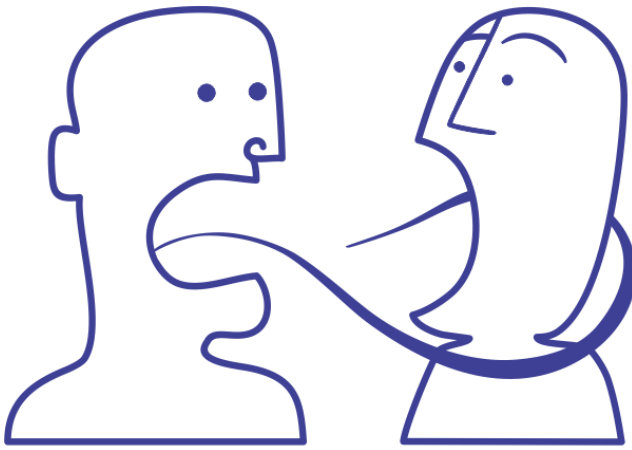




HATE SPEECH ON MEDIA PLATFORMS, SOCIAL NETWORKS AND TELEVISION BROADCAST





AGAINST HATE SPEECH

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Dear reader,

The purpose of this research is to collect comprehensive, unbiased and reliable information about the spread of hate speech in Armenia and its consequences from various sources, in order to find adequate and effective solutions to the situation.

Development of this manual is supported by Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Republic of Armenia within frames of the project "Combating hate speech for the sake of pluralism and tolerance".

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FOREWORD



In the course of the project, in the period from November 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023, the monitoring of mass media operating in the Armenian media field was conducted: TV programs, print media, publications of news outlets operating in social media, as well as serials and blogs, with the aim of studying what media spread hate speech, how is hate speech created in the Armenian media, what factors influence its spread, after what events did hate speech escalate and what are the main theses around which hate speech was formed.

“Interview”, “Press Review”, “News Release”, “Synthesis” programs of “Channel 5” TV station were studied for the monitoring of TV programs¹. 68 broadcasts of the “Interview” program were monitored, and hate speech was found in 43 of them. Ishkhan Saghatelyan, Eduard Sharmazanov, Volodya Hovhannisyanyan, Hrant Bagratyan were recurring guests of the program twice each, and Narek Mantashyan, Armen Ashotyan, Andranik Tevanyan three times each. In the case of the “Press

¹ The host of the “Interview” program is Derenik Malkhasyan, who hosts representatives of various fields.

Review”² program, 36 broadcasts were monitored, and hate speech was recorded in 10 of them. In the case of the “News Release” program, 37 broadcasts, hate speech was recorded in 14 of them. In the case of this program, the hate speech was mainly generated through the opinions voiced by citizens during the reports. In the case of the “Synthesis”³ program, 4 broadcasts were monitored, and hate speech was found in 2 of them.

From the air list of “Yerevan Today” TV station, 61 broadcasts of the program “Shortly speaking”⁴ were studied, and hate speech was found in 47 of them. 81 broadcasts of the program “Country’s Guestroom” were studied from the air list of “Yerkir Media” TV station, and hate speech was found in 31 of them. In the case of the “News Videos” program, 8 broadcasts were studied, hate speech was found in 6 of them. In the case of the above-mentioned TV programs, the subject of hate speech targeting was the RA authorities, the Civil Contract Party, Nikol Pashinyan, the RA Police, supporters of Nikol Pashinyan and pro-government people.

It is noteworthy that the same persons often appeared as guests in the “Country’s Guestroom” and during the “Interview” program of Channel 5, spreading hate speech with the same content, thus making the hate

² Marianna Gharamanyan is the host of the “Press Review” program.

³ “Synthesis” program has a conversation-debate format, the host is Spartak Seyranyan.

⁴ The host of the “Shortly speaking” program is Sevak Hakobyan.

speech continuously spread. The viewer hears similar content of hate speech in different TV programs. Eduard Sharmazanov, Armen Ashotyan, Ishkhan Saghatelyan, Andranik Tevanyan, Kristina Vardanyan, Gegham Manukyan, Davit Jamalyan, Vahe Hovhannisyan and others were on the list of recurring guests in both TV programs. Many of the above-mentioned persons acted as agents of influence in this case, who have a position in the society and whose word is more acceptable by the society.

The programs “Free Talk with Artur Kirakosyan” and “Free Talk with Gnel Sargsyan” were studied from the “FreeNews” TV channel. In the case of the "Free conversation with Artur Kirakosyan" program, 63 broadcasts were studied, of which 15 programs contained hate speech, and in the case of the “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” program, 69 broadcasts were studied, and hate speech was found in 64 of them. Thus, the largest amount of hate speech was found in the case of the program "Free contact with Gnel Sargsyan" and it is noteworthy that it was created mainly by the presenter. In the case of this TV company, the hate speech was aimed at the parliamentary opposition, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the former authorities of the Republic of Armenia, and the citizens participating in the opposition rallies.

It is worth noting the fact that the guests of the TV show are selected according to their political views, in the

case of “Channel 5”, “Yerkir Media” TV stations, the guests are mostly people who protect the interests of the opposition, who form hate speech directed at the ruling wing, and in the case of FreeNews, the opposite picture can be observed.

48 copies of “Aravot” newspaper, 48 copies of “Zhoghovurd” newspaper and 17 copies of “Iravunk” newspaper were studied for the monitoring of print media. During the observed period, about 5 examples of hate speech were found in the case of “Aravot” newspaper, 37 in the case of “Zhoghovurd” newspaper, and 73 examples of hate speech in the case of “Iravunk” newspaper. In the case of “Aravot” and “Zhoghovurd” newspapers, hate speech was manifested only through texts and articles, and in the case of “Iravunk” newspaper, through both text and caricatures⁵.

In the case of news outlets operating on social media, the hate speech was spread mainly during the comments of posted materials, as well as during the spreading of Facebook posts of persons considered to be agents of influence. During the monitoring, about 89 articles posted on Azatutyun media platforms, about 2677 comments containing hate speech, 137 articles on the 168.am platform, 1050 comments containing hate speech, 43 articles on the Hraparak platform, 227 comments containing hate speech, 118 articles on the lin.am

⁵ See Appendix.

platform, 2890 comments containing hate speech were studied. In the case of social media, the thematic frameworks of hate speech were wide ranging from the government, opposition to ethnic hate speech, which we have addressed in different chapters of this summary.

During the monitoring, 32 episodes of the TV series “Trapped Love”, 21 “Blind World”, “Every year in Spring” - 15, “Agapi” - 13, “30 Silver” - 24, “The Hunt for Justice” - 26 were studied. Among the mentioned TV series, no hate speech was found in “Hunting for Justice”, “30 Silver”, “Agapi” TV series, and in the rest of the series, hate speech was accompanied mainly by scenes of violence, and the target of hate speech was mainly women, and children from orphanages, in “Trapped Love” and “Blind World” TV series. Starting from January 16, monitoring was also carried out in the blogs of Anna Abrahamyan and Vardan Ghukasyan, which mainly contained political hate speech.

During the monitoring, Azerbaijani press publications and social media platforms, which contained hate speech directed at Armenians, were also scrutinized. During the monitored period, comments on publications made on the following Azerbaijani telegram channels: Caliber (number of followers 58,065 thousand), Shedevrplus (number of followers 60,956 thousand), APA (number of followers 21,120 thousand), Ordu.az (number of followers 2,672 thousand), haqqin.az (number of followers 17,195 thousand) and oxu.az (followers 22,212

thousand) were studied. About 208 publications related to Armenia were studied, as well as about 310 comments on social media, which contained hate speech and calls for violence against the Armenian nation. Studies show that hate speech and its various manifestations are increasing in the Azerbaijani media.

This summary covers the main themes and recurring themes of hate speech manifestations found in studies of all the above platforms in separate chapters. In each chapter, examples taken from the studied platforms are combined.

Terms and abbreviations

TERM, ABBREVIATION	EXPLANATION
Hate Speech	A manifestation of public (societal) speech that expresses hatred or incites violence against a person or group of persons due to such characteristics as a person's dissent, sex, religious affiliation, ethnic group, gender identity, etc.
Mass Media	News outlet(s) and source(s)
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RA	Republic of Armenia
UN	United Nations
Monitoring	Observation for the purpose of quality control, quality assessment of a certain state or condition
Directed Information	As a rule, one-sided, incomplete, sometimes untruthful information disseminated for the purpose of demonstrating a clear public behavior or attitude
RF	Russian Federation
Propaganda	Propaganda, defined in modern political discourse as the open dissemination of views, facts,

	arguments, and other information, including intentionally distorted and misleading information, to shape public opinion or attitudes
CC	Civil Contract
RPA	Republican Party of Armenia
ARF	Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Dashnaktsutyun
NSS	National Security Service



MANIFESTATIONS OF HATE SPEECH DRIVEN BY POLITICAL VIEWS

Hate speech motivated by political views was manifested in almost all of the media platforms considered: TV shows, print media, blogs, and social media. The political target groups of hate speech were mainly focused on the government and the opposition, and in some cases on specific individuals. It is necessary to outline several important theses of hate speech, which have been circulated in the above-mentioned media platforms. It should be noted that these theses have almost the same content, but the ways of generating hate speech by the media are different.

It is noteworthy to emphasize that the hate speech directed at the ruling wing was generated by “Channel 5”, “Yerkir Media” and “Yerevan Today” TV channels, in the case of social media: by 168.am, Hraparak, 1in.am and Azatutyun media platforms and the user comments left

below their published materials, in the case of blogs: by Vardan Ghukasyan, Anna Abrahamyan, in the case of print media: by “Aravot”, “Zhoghovurd” and “Iravunk” newspapers.

One of the most common manifestations of hate speech is the generation and dissemination of concrete word products, theses, in particular one of the above-mentioned theses, after the Artsakh war became the label of “traitor”, which is aimed at the authorities in a general way, Nikol Pashinyan - personally and also the citizens who support Nikol Pashinyan.

At least 31 cases of being labeled a “traitor” were recorded during the TV programs. In particular, during the “Country’s Guestroom” program of the “Yerkir Media” TV channel, the guest Anna Mkrtchyan labels the authorities as “traitors” and expresses the following idea: *“...it is not a political struggle in Armenia, it is not a struggle between one alliance and another in Armenia, it is a struggle in Armenia between traitors and Armenians who have a homeland...”*⁶ In this case, the hate speech was spread by the guest of the program, Anna Mkrtchyan, and of course it is not an exception, because such manifestations of hate speech are regularly repeated during the above-mentioned program. In fact, mass media not only provided a platform, but also spread hate speech. During the same broadcast,

⁶ Watch the November 21 episode of “Country's Guestroom” at 4:53 minutes. Available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmyFzrjvQU0>

the labeling of “traitor” was repeated several times with different expressions, such as “*selling the homeland and standing by the traitor Nikol*”, “*there is a struggle in Armenia between traitors and Armenians who have a homeland*”, “*land-surrender*”, “*capitulator*”.



Image 1
Caricature containing hate speech, published in "Irvunk" newspaper, February 28, 2023 / 22 (3633)

As a result of such a chain spreading of hate speech, the viewers of the program may develop a specific political attitude not only towards the authorities, but also towards the citizens who support the authorities, which in turn can

⁷ Watch the November 21 episode of Country's Guestroom at 24:09 minutes. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmyFzrjvQU0>

lead to the polarization of the society. The same thesis is also repeated during the “Interview” program of the “Channel 5” TV company, which is expressed by the RPA vice-president Armen Ashotyan. *“When in 2018, 2020, 2022, Nikol Pashinyan says that the “business card” of Armenia’s foreign policy is democracy, and he continues to say that even after all these losses, he is a traitor. From now on I drop this word that he is an imbecile. He is a traitor.”*⁸

The “traitor” label was further exacerbated when it emerged that Armenian-Hungarian relations had been restored, which had been severed in 2012, following the extradition of Ramil Safarov, who was convicted in Hungary of the 2004 murder of Armenian lieutenant Gurgen Margaryan. For example, 168.am published Armen Ashotyan’s Facebook live broadcast, where he talks about the possible restoration of Armenian-Hungarian diplomatic relations. In his speech, Armen Ashotyan states: *“These treacherous scoundrels still go to another denial, this time denying 2004 - the memory of the brutally murdered Gurgen Margaryan”*. Under the video on YouTube, users left posts containing offensive words

⁸ See the December 21 broadcast of the “Interview” program from 19:51. Available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dq4wrLevwEo>

⁹ See 168.am’s November 2 post. Available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hd5DiE5TZe4>,

<https://168.am/2022/12/02/1804819.html>

addressed to Pashinyan, calling him “*turk*”, “*profane*”, “*pashogli*”.



Image 2

A caricature appearing in the February 22, 2023 publication of "Iravunk" newspaper, which contains a propaganda element and is used as a tool to generate hatred, is intended to present Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan as a "traitor" working for a hostile state.

The term “traitor” is not only a labeling, insulting and belittling of a person, but also a term promoting enmity and hatred in society. It is necessary to note that Armen Ashotyan, being the vice-president of the RPA, has a certain role and a say in the society, and therefore he can

be considered an agent of influence, in this case, the hate speech can spread more quickly and reliably in the society. It is worth highlighting the fact that Ashotyan gave an interview on the air 4 times during the observed period, in the programs of “Yerkir Media” and “Channel 5”, and his Facebook posts on social media were published by 168.am at least 40 times, which means that what Ashotyan words have a specific addressee and are used by a specific media.

In social media, Nikol Pashinyan is also targeted as a “traitor”, but in this case, on the one hand, social media news outlets print the Facebook posts of opposition figures and thus become hate speech spreaders, on the other hand, social media news outlets publish neutral material without any hate speech, but users leave comments that contain hate speech. In the above context, it should also be noted that the authorities were often identified with Turks and Azerbaijanis, showing the public that the authorities work for the benefit of Azerbaijan and Turkey, which is a very sensitive issue for Armenians, especially after the 44-day Artsakh war. For example, on January 10, 1in.am published an article titled *“I cannot take the power I received from the people to the streets and ask who wants it. Pashinyan”*, which does not contain any words of hatred, but in the comments, there are both words labeling a traitor and expressions of identification with Turks. For example: *“How blind you are that even after this you continue to consider this Turk as a leader? Don’t you see*

who he is? How else can he say that he is a Turk?" "Prideless, unpatriotic swindler, you cheated the people and now you are justifying your vileness." On the one hand, this is a hate speech addressed to supporters of Nikol Pashinyan, on the other hand, it targets Nikol Pashinyan, presenting him as a dangerous person for the motherland. Comparisons between the authorities and Azerbaijanis can also be found in the print media. Thus, on the very first page of the December 23 issue of "Iravunk" newspaper, the headline *"Azerbaijani authorities of the Republic of Armenia are to blame"* is highlighted. First of all, it is necessary to emphasize that the title is on the first page, in the center of attention, so the reader can get an impression about the importance of the article. By identifying the RA authorities with the Azerbaijani authorities, the mass media can create a feeling of hostility towards the authorities in the reader. Another issue of the same newspaper states: *"And Nikol's tyrannical junta carried out repressions against the ARF, following the example of his spiritual daddy, Levon Ter-Petrosyan."*¹⁰ In this case, the target of hate speech is not only Nikol Pashinyan, but also Levon Ter-Petrosyan, which can form an opinion about the former president and his activities. "Iravunk" newspaper published about 8 caricatures on this topic. According to the United Nations, hate speech can also be expressed through caricatures, in the event that the author

¹⁰ See issue #2-3 of Iravunk newspaper.

goes beyond the limits of satire that determines the very essence of the caricature and floods his work with insults and hatred.

Anna Hakobyan, the Prime Minister's wife, was also the target of hate speech during the observed period. It is noteworthy to point out that Anna Hakobyan appeared in the center of hate speech not because of her gender, but because of her participation in political processes and being Nikol Pashinyan's wife. In total, Anna Hakobyan was targeted at least 30 times during the observed period. The hate speech directed at Anna Hakobyan intensified especially after her visit to Iran. 168.am news agency published a post by Facebook user Vahe Sardaryan, in which the latter calls Prime Minister's wife Anna Hakobyan and officials “the devil's servants”. *“According to my information, even in the Armenian churches of Tehran, Anna Hakobyan did not have the opportunity to meet the clergy or receive a blessing. The doors of God's house are closed to Satan's servants.”*¹¹ Under this article posted on the Facebook page of the newspaper, users targeted Anna Hakobyan and her daughter (there are two of them in the photo of the article) as “*boshas*”, “*ajebs*”, “*whore*”, “*ugly abominations*”, “*frog*”, “*freaks*” and so on. In the article published in “Iravunk” newspaper, the author first calls Anna Hakobyan “the

¹¹ See the 168.am blog post. Available here: <https://blog.168.am/blog/426388.html>

infamous Erato”, then “disgusting lady”¹². This article is accompanied by a caricature that tends to associate Anna Hakobyan and Suren Papikyan with the falsification, manipulation and Turkish propaganda of Armenian history (available in Annex). Such wordings, which are an insult to a person, tend to belittle Anna Hakobyan’s role in society.

The other thesis that is most frequently discussed and contains hate speech is about handing over different regions of Artsakh. At least 63 manifestations of hate speech were recorded on different platforms on this topic. The materials on the topic are often full not only of criticism, but also of specific hate speech, opinions, which are often *gossip or misinformation*. For example, “Hraparak” newspaper published an article on the topic *“Until the end of the year, an agreement will be signed by which Artsakh will remain part of Azerbaijan.”* The title of the article is worded as if it is not the author’s belief, but a confirmed reality that will be fulfilled in the near future. It should be noted that this scandalous headline has the specific purpose of spreading misinformation to intentionally create anti-government sentiments. Continuing, the author notes: *“Dear patriots, there is very little time left until the end of the year, finally wake up (then don’t say that we were asleep, Heydar Oghli came, took everything and left), wake up and stand up for your*

¹² See the January 24 issue of Iravunk newspaper.

homeland, otherwise you will soon find yourself at the feet of the Turk and beg to have mercy on you, not to kill you, to let you work as a servant for him.”¹³ Material with such content not only spreads misinformation and hate speech, but also aims to cause panic and alarm in society.

Hate speech with a political connotation around Artsakh intensified after the closure of the Lachin Corridor. During the “Shortly speaking” program, the presenter accuses the authorities of *“dismissing the army, starving the people of Artsakh, blurring and blackening everything”*, *“if this government remains, and continues its nation-destructive policy, then we will be closer to losing Artsakh”*¹⁴, the same host says on another air: *“You think the Goris-Stepanakert road has just been closed, that road was closed on the day when Serzh resigned amid your roars, when Kocharyan, Ohanyan, Khachaturov, who liberated Lachin, were sitting amid your roars on the day of liberating Lachin.”*¹⁵ In the above-mentioned cases, the hate speech was spread by the mass media itself, in this case Yerevan Today channel, being the opinion expressed by the presenter. It is noteworthy to emphasize that in this case the hate speech is directed not only at the RA authorities, but also at all those citizens who participated in the 2018 revolution, “howling” is characteristic of

¹³ See Hraparak daily newspaper number N200 (3427).

¹⁴ See the December 29 broadcast of the “Shortly speaking” program. Available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_Xav9UOj4w

¹⁵ See the December 15 airing of the “Shortly speaking” program.

animals and therefore the citizens who participated in the revolution can not only feel humiliated, but they can also feel guilty for blocking the road.

After the closure of the Corridor, hate speech directed at citizens supporting Nikol Pashinyan was also noticed in the print media. Similar cases were recorded at least 16 times. Thus, it is stated in “Zhoghovurd” daily: *“There is no reason to support or even sympathize with the people of Artsakh. These extreme manifestations of the Pashinyan electorate, I think, are more than a few dozen”*¹⁶, from such formulations, the reader may have the opinion that the citizens who voted for Nikol Pashinyan are indifferent to the problems of their compatriots and such manifestations of hate speech can create polarization between the citizens of Artsakh and the citizens who elected Pashinyan. It should be noted that the citizens who elected Pashinyan are also at the center of hate speech targeting in one of the articles of the “Iravunk” newspaper, where the author of the newspaper’s analysis states: *“Like the 688,000 voters, so is the “authority” elected by them: ostentatious and showy. They are in fact more interested in a luxurious Christmas tree than the torn tents of the combat positions. The chosen one of that kind, even more so the chosen one despite the capitulation, leads the state inevitably to destruction and opens the door to a new*

¹⁶ See the December 23 issue of “Zhoghovurd” daily newspaper.

*genocide*¹⁷. In that case, a considerable part of RA society is targeted, around 688 thousand citizens. The chain spreading of hate speech with such a message can lead to the polarization of society and the emergence of hostility between those who vote for the Civil Contract Party and those who do not. “Irvunk” newspaper also published caricatures on this topic. In this case, the generation of political hate speech was demonstrated by “Irvunk” newspaper, for example, in one of the caricatures, Nikol Pashinyan is depicted, counting 688,000 “sheep”, in this case, the author of the caricature compared Nikol Pashinyan’s electorate to “sheep”. The cartoon is available in Appendix.



Image 3

A caricature in "Irvunk" newspaper, targeting Nikol Pashinyan's voters

¹⁷ See the December 6 issue of “Irvunk” newspaper.

In another example, during the “Shortly speaking” program, the presenter Sevak Hakobyan states: *“There was a group of people, in which mainly those who did not serve in the army, members of Soros NGOs, those who held rallies with money, poor people, mutilators were involved. They made promises to all the groups I have listed and not listed, took the power, each of them took a position bigger than their head and led our lovely country to destruction.”*

¹⁸ In this case, all those people who did not serve in the army, NGOs, rally participants, as well as socially disadvantaged people were targeted. The presenter accused all these groups of supporting the government and believing in the government’s promises. Such wording once again drives a wedge between different layers of society and can create animosity directed towards the above groups.

After the closure of the Lachin Corridor, hate speech was accompanied by a large amount of misinformation. For example, during the “Review” program of 168.am social media, the guest of the program, Edgar Ghazaryan, expresses an opinion about an agreement of I. Aliyev and N. Pashinyan's to close the Lachin road, which is *purposeful and intentional misinformation*. The media published the material under the following title: *“Artsakh has been surrendered.*

¹⁸ See the December 19 broadcast of the “Shortly speaking” program from 6:41. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyzuEG9SNzk>

*Pashinyan is implementing two major projects with Aliyev. Ghazaryan*¹⁹. This is not only absolute misinformation, but through a scandalous headline, the mass media is spreading panic among the public, presenting Nikol Pashinyan as the one who surrenders Artsakh. It should be emphasized that the news station distributed the material with this title on 3 platforms: 168.am, 168.am's blog and YouTube, where the program has about 19 thousand views.

After the closure of the Corridor, the hate speech is directed not only to the authorities of RA, but also to the authorities of Artsakh, as well as to Arayik Harutyunyan, Davit Babayan, Ruben Vardanyan personally. Hate speech directed at the Artsakh authorities was spread mainly in the programs of the FreeNews TV channel within the framework of TV programs, and in the social media, mainly in the comments of the materials distributed by the social media news outlets. Thus, during FreeNews' "Free Talk with Artur Kirakosyan" program, guest Tigran Khzmalyan voices the following opinions: "*Russian invaders... The mercenary agents led by Davit Babayan...*", "*The elite that squandered Artsakh, that raped Artsakh...*"²⁰. Here we meet hate speech that has three directions at

¹⁹ See the January 4 broadcast of the "Review" program. Available here: <https://168.am/2023/01/04/1816212.html>

²⁰ See the January 9 broadcast of "Open Exchange with Artur Kirakosyan" from 19:25. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pP6sG5p-b6M>

once, the first one is aimed at the Russian peacekeepers, calling them Russian invaders, this expression can create the impression in the listener that the Russian peacekeepers are guarding Artsakh by force, because to invade means to use force to take control over a territory. This may lead to discrediting of Russian peacekeepers in the society. In the second case, the hate speech is directed at the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Artsakh, Davit Babayan. Labeling Davit Babayan as a “hired agent” may cause dislike and fear in the society towards the person of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the third case, the hate speech is aimed at the authorities of Artsakh in a general way. The expressions “squander” and “rape” can form a specific opinion and belief in the society that the authorities of Artsakh just came to waste the state’s property. The report had about 16,070 views. It should be noted that Tigran Khzmalyan can be considered an agent of influence for FreeNews, as he is one of the main guests on the air of this TV company, he participated in at least 4 of the 63 airs reviewed within the framework of the above-mentioned “Free Conversation with Artur Kirakosyan” program.

Artsakh authorities were also in the center of targeting in social media. In particular, a large amount of hate speech was directed at the Artsakh State Minister Ruben Vardanyan. For example, lin.am posted five separate videos with different titles from the remote press

conference of Artsakh State Minister Ruben Vardanyan on its YouTube channel. Under all the videos, users targeted Vardanyan, calling him “*freak*”, “*Russian agent*”, “*mutilator*”, “*chatlakh*”, “*rogue*”, “*putler's mistress*”, “*dalbayob*”, *etc.*, the most frequently left phrase under the videos was “*tatar rubo*” labeling. This phrase has been written at least 16 times under the same item by different users. In this case, we can mention that the society expresses its intolerance not about Vardanyan’s activities, but degrades Vardanyan’s personality with insults, which, especially after the closure of Lachin Corridor, can form an opinion about Vardanyan’s personal qualities. In another case, the same news outlet published an interview with Arman Babajanyan, who called Vardanyan “*a self-proclaimed liar, a charlatan.*”²¹ In this case, not only the users of social networks are targeting Vardanyan, but also a politician, whose speech and voiced opinions can form an opinion in the society that Vardanyan is a fraud. It is noteworthy to emphasize that Babajanyan does not provide any proof that Ruben Vardanyan is engaged in deception, so these words can be taken as slander against the person. Vardanyan is also presented as a deceiver in Vardan Ghukasyan’s blog, who specifically stated during his live broadcast: “*Ruben Vardanyan was involved in money laundering, there is no machinist financier like*

²¹ See 1in.am’s January 12 publication. Available here: <https://www.1in.am/3215271.html>

*him.”*²² In addition to gossiping, Ghukasyan cursed Vardanyan during the entire program. Ruben Vardanyan was also in the target center in Anna Abrahamyan’s blog, who stated during her live broadcast: *“All those who defend Ruben Vardanyan (born of cattle that fell from the English sky) are orphans with no pro-state thinking. He sold the country himself.”*²³

It is necessary to emphasize that, based on political events, the people of Artsakh in general have become targets of hate speech. 1in.am news channel showed the protest action of Kashatagh residents in front of the government building regarding compensating them money or providing them with a house. Under the video on the YouTube platform, users left notes containing elements of intolerance towards the people of Artsakh. People of Artsakh are accused of looting the country, for example: *“Why don't you appeal to those guys from Karabakh who looted the country, what are a few million to them?”*; users urge Artsakh people to return to “their Artsakh” with imperative sentences. This thought was also heard: *“Where are you going to go, who cares for you?”*²⁴ Posts with such intolerant style and content can be

²² See Vardan Ghukasyan’s blog. Available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjkW1OtOUv0&t=104s>

²³ See Anna Abrahamyan’s January 14 blog. Available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2poFyYvsBM>

²⁴ See 1in.am’s November 24 publication. Available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMwGRi9RDC0>

considered as targeting the people of Artsakh and generating hatred towards them.

Hate speech motivated by political views was directed at the opposition as well. In this case, the hate speech was formed during various programs of the FreeNews TV channel. The opposition is described as a “terrorist group” during various programs of the TV channel. Thus: *“Well, today the four-day session of the National Assembly resumed its work. The opposition were also present at the National Assembly, the terrorist forces called the opposition were present.”*²⁵ *“Well, we can't do without our opposition's self-proclaimed terrorist forces.”*²⁶ This thesis is repeated regularly during the broadcasts of various programs, which indicates that the TV channel has a specific goal: to form an opinion in society according to which the opposition is dangerous. During FreeNews programs, hate speech is not only manifested in the form of insults, but also misinformation and gossip. It is important to emphasize that if in the case of social media or print media, *misinformation or gossip* is presented as probable information, then in the case of this television company, misinformation or gossip is presented as a real, unambiguous, accurate fact. For example, during the program “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan”, the

²⁵ See the December 6 broadcast of the “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” program.

²⁶ See the program “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” on November 14 from 32:56.

host states: *“Armen Charchyan, from the Armenia alliance, one of our saviors, one of those who are dying for Artsakh, signed a fake medical document.”*²⁷, another broadcast of the same program mentions: *“Isn’t that what you are? Ghazinyans, swindler Arsen Babayans, Chekist Arthur Vanetsyans, child stealers from maternity hospitals.”*²⁸ This indicates that during the “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” program, the presenter himself creates hate speech directed at the representatives of the opposition and spreading unverified information, misinformation and gossip (including those that are unacceptable to society, for example the “child stealer” labeling) creates dislike and mistrust of the opposition and its individual representatives in the society. It should be noted that opposition representatives are also identified with Azerbaijanis and Turks or accused of working with them. For example: *“Gegham Manukyan, I’m giving your name, but I’m talking about your entire team, as if it’s their liberal Aliyev wing”*²⁹, *“Let’s not go into too much detail, because I’m sure that many of you are working with Turkish agents.”*³⁰

²⁷ Watch the program “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” on January 24 from 23:00.

²⁸ See “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” broadcast on February 14 from 37:00.

²⁹ See “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” broadcast on February 9 from 1:30.

³⁰ See “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” broadcast on January 25 from 26:00.

Hate speech directed at the opposition in social media was created mainly through user comments or news outlets operating in social media, published Facebook posts or speeches of government representatives that contain hate speech. For example, 1in.am published the speech of Aghvan Vardanyan, MP, member of the Hayastan faction from ARF, from the podium of the National Assembly, titled: "I have two good news. Aghvan Vardanyan", also as a video both on the Facebook page and on YouTube. Facebook and YouTube users targeted the MP with insulting expressions and insults, calling him "*kolkhoz ox*", "*gluttonous garbage*", "*toothless animal*", "*Jhud*", etc³¹. However, in addition to targeting the person of the MP, the general nature of the users' posts express hate speech against ARF members as a political force. Users also used the term "Jhud" to insult the MP, which is a manifestation of anti-Semitism. 1in.am published an article "*Ishkhan Saghatelyan is being pushed to political destruction: Alen Simonyan*", in this case, Alen Simonyan is a public figure, an agent of influence, who spreads a specific opinion about Ishkhan Saghatelyan, the comments of the article are full of words of hatred directed at Ishkhan Saghatelyan and with words of praise addressed to Alen Simonyan. Such manifestations of hate speech can degrade Saghatelyan's

³¹ See 1in.am's December 23 publication. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PEU94xBKn4>, <https://fb.watch/hCxq5ngGIJ/>:

role in society and can cause dislike both for Saghatelyan and the political force that Saghatelyan represents.



1.1. Hate speech against public and political figures

Within the monitoring time period, several public and political figures fell under the target of hate speech, conditioned by their political views and the businessman's reputation.

During the observed period, MP Khachatur Sukiasyan has been targeted. The hate speech against Sukiasyan was mainly related to his business activities. For example, during the “Chanel 5’s” “News Release” program, Sukiasyan's nickname “Grzo” is pointed out, which the public does not perceive positively. It is particularly mentioned: “How does “Grzo” complain about the looting?”, “At that time, the MP under the nickname “Grzo” was a famous oligarch”. Another example of him includes an incident, where he shouts at journalists and speaks in a very high tone during the briefing. The video does not contain hate speech, but users on Facebook and YouTube platforms left abusive comments to the MP: “It’s

obvious from your face how disgusting you are", "Clown." In another example, users made insulting, blasphemous comments against the Armenian authorities and MP calling for violence, such as "He should be eliminated together with his family." Users also use the word "Turk" as an offensive term³². Sukiasyan has been targeted at least seven times in total.

Samvel Aleksanyan has also been targeted because of his business activities. Particularly in N 22 (3633) of Iravunk newspaper, there is a cartoon where Samvel Aleksanyan is pictured with the writing "Mutation" adjacent to the satire. Then, it is written "On the matter of cabbage wars between "Zovq" and "Yerevan city". "According to economists, "Lfik" is not brought to the business field by a stork, rather is found in a cabbage³³." Although the article is published in the section "Political Humor", the post mentions Aleksanyan's nickname, which can cause a negative perception by the public. Besides, the word "Mutation" is used in an offensive manner in this case. It portrays Aleksanyan in a cabbage with a child's body in a cartoon, which can be perceived as an insult and an attempt to discredit a person.

Within the monitoring, David Khazhakyan, Daniel Ionnisyan, and Styopa Safaryan also fell under the target of hate speech. Hate speech toward David

³² 168.am publication of the 7th of November 2022

³³ "Iravunk" newspaper, N 22 (3633), February 28

Khazhakyan in the article published in “Irvunk” newspaper is conditioned by his participation in tree planting together with Nikol Pashinyan. The article particularly contains the following: "The famous "snitch" of “Bright Armenia” David Khazhakyan, took a spade from the first incident to plant a tree together with Nikol. Let's hope that this tree won't bear evil fruit, and it won't absorb the disgusting energy of those two³⁴." In this case, both David Khazhakyan and Nikol Pashinyan were targeted. The phrase "disgusting energy" is an insult and can cause a negative attitude towards Khazhakyan among readers. Daniel Iohannisyan was targeted in another article in the “Irvunk” newspaper. The newspaper mentions: "The notorious Dancik’s name is at the center of a significant agency scandal. Notorious Daniel Ioannisyan criticizes Nikol in recent times³⁵".

First, the author of the analysis calls Ionnisyan by an offensive nickname, "Dancik" (such wording is also present in the newspaper's November 15 issue), then accuses him of agency and espionage. On the one hand, this is hate speech toward Ionnisyan; on the other hand, by spreading misinformation, the author of the analysis causes the reader to feel hatred towards Ionnisyan since agency and espionage are condemnable by the public, and

³⁴ “Irvunk” newspaper, 8th of November

³⁵ “Irvunk” newspaper N 3600 (126), November 30

such information spread around a person should be perceived negatively by the public.

Sasun Mikayelyan and Styopa Safaryan have also been targeted in “Irvunk” newspaper articles. For example, the February 18 issue of the newspaper mentions: "Sasun Mikaelyan and Styopa Safaryan were recognized as sister ascarids³⁶"; a cartoon accompanies the post. Such kind of formulations, which seem to indicate the dangerousness of Sasun Mikayelyan and Styopa Safaryan, is aimed at weakening the status of the persons mentioned above in society causing fear of these persons. In another example the same newspaper targeted Styopa Safaryan in the form of cartoon and "political humor" and depicted him in prison, stating that "A new case has been taken into proceedings in the Russian Prosecutor's Office to initiate a criminal prosecution against Safaryan Styopik in connection with press news. They opened and saw in Zakon that Styopic was going to Siberia³⁷." Such expressions and changing the name, are mockery towards a person and aim to belittle the person by weakening his societal position.

³⁶ “Irvunk” newspaper, 18th of February

³⁷ “Irvunk” newspaper, 15th of November

Summarizing ...



we consider it necessary to note that the hate speech caused by political views in the TV programs “Yerkir Media”, “Channel 5” and “Yerevan Today” is mainly directed at the authorities, personally, Nikol Pashinyan and his supporters, and in the programs of the FreeNews TV channel mainly addressed to the representatives of the opposition and former authorities. In the case of print media, the hate speech created by the three reviewed newspapers was aimed at Nikol Pashinyan and his supporters. During the observed period, “Iravunk” newspaper spread the most hate speech caused by political views, in the form of about texts - 44 and caricatures - 24 . In the case of the print media, the least content of hate speech with a political orientation was found in “Aravot” newspaper - about 5 cases, and the daily newspaper “Zhoghovurd” published about 15 articles containing hate speech with a political orientation. It is noteworthy to emphasize that in the case of “Iravunk” newspaper, the cases of spreading hate speech through political satire prevail, and in the case of “Zhoghovurd” daily newspaper - through gossip. The latter distributed at least 12 articles containing gossip.

Social media is different from the above-mentioned platforms, because in this case the speech of politically oriented hate was mainly spread by the mass media, that is, the mass media observed on this platform mainly spread the Facebook posts or live broadcast of any political figure, as well as the politically oriented hate speech on these platforms spread through user comments.

The main directions of politically oriented hate speech were:

Nikol Pashinyan

Supporters of Nikol Pashinyan, electorate, family

Civil Contract Party

Party members, persons holding positions

Artsakh/NKR Authorities

David Babayan, Ruben Vardanyan, Araik Harutyunyan,
Former authorities of NKR

Opposition

Ishkhan Saghatelyan, Artsvik Minasyan, Seyran Ohanyan,
Aram Vardevanyan, Anna Mkrtchyan

Former Authorities

Robert Kocharyan, Armen Ashotyan, Serzh Sargsyan



2

HATE SPEECH DIRECTED AGAINST STATE INSTITUTIONS

Hate speech directed against state institutions is directed against state bodies and their activities, with the aim of discrediting the activities of these bodies and showing the negative aspects of their work. The target group of hate speech is mainly the police, the government in general, the Ministry of Defense and the minister personally, the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

The hate speech directed against the police was more clearly manifested in the protest-gatherings of the parents and relatives of the victims, after ensuring the safety of the prime minister on January 28 in Yerablur. There are similar manifestations of hate speech both on television and on social media. During the Yerevan Today TV channel's "Shortly speaking" program, the presenter says: *"The activities of the police are inhumane, from any point of view, it's an immoral step when you beat people, especially the parent of a soldier protecting you, and then*

sue him. This is very much like Nikole's move, who leads people to death, then goes to the graves and knees there, they don't let him, but he knees by beating them. This is very much like the step of a murderer who goes to the cemetery to pay his respects at the funeral of his victim."³⁸

In this case, the presenter targets both the police and Nikol Pashinyan, labeling their actions as “immoral”, the presenter cites examples of clashes between policemen and parents of soldiers, which is a sensitive topic for Armenian society and can cause hatred in society towards the police. Besides this, Pashinyan and the police are compared to a murderer, which can cause fear and mistrust of the police in the society. We also encounter hate speech with the similar content on social media. For example, 168.am spread the following idea of Avetik Ishkhanyan: *“Savage janissaries called Patrol, convinced of their impunity, retaliate against defenseless people with a gang attack.” Avetik Ishkhanyan.*³⁹ The news outlet chose the above-mentioned part as the title of the article, which indicates that the latter in this case is not only spreading hate speech, but by making the phrase containing hate speech the title, it is focusing the public's attention even more on

³⁸ See the November 25 broadcast of the program “Shortly speaking” from 9:59.

³⁹ See the November 28 publication of 168.am. Available here: <https://168.am/2022/11/28/1803253.html>, <https://www.facebook.com/168Armenia/posts/pfbid0vhBd6YMd8Xdhw4mmp9MLSAKsn5jp34rb25Y9AguVWBxUD1bRxpJ1e9baZ1ZVDQy9l>

the material containing hate speech. The human rights defender repeated the same phrase for the second time in the following sections of the article: *“And how are the Patrol janissaries any different from their Azeri brothers?”* It is necessary to highlight that janissaries are associated with brutal thugs and such a comparison can form an opinion about the brutality of the police in society. It is also necessary to emphasize that the human rights defender presented the policemen as brothers of Azeris, which is aimed at showing the society the possible cooperation between the police (authority system) and Azerbaijan. Hate speech has also intensified around the events related to Army Day, for example, 168.am published the Facebook post of Ruben Hakobyan, the former deputy of the National Assembly, where the author states: *“Pay attention to the amount of money allocated to the Police, and it will become clear why the colored berets had to use violence against the relatives of the victims under the instructions of the chief of police who works as a guillotine under that dreg. And the demand of the parents was one: not to allow the executioner who beheaded their children to approach the graves of the dead.”*⁴⁰ Here, the author not only targets the police, but

⁴⁰ See the January 26 publication of 168.am. Available here: <https://168.am/2023/01/26/1824034.html>, <https://blog.168.am/blog/426673.html>, <https://www.facebook.com/168am/posts/pfbid02gjyAytmKy18MSKR>

also Nikol Pashinyan, calling him a “beheading executioner” and a “dreg”.



Image 3:

"Pay special attention to the amount of money allocated to the Police." Ruben Hakobyan

<https://168.am/2023/01/26/1824034.html>

It should be noted that the parents of the fallen soldiers have a great role in the society and the above-mentioned topic is quite delicate and sensitive for citizens, so such content can cause dislike and hatred towards the

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police and Nikol Pashinyan as well. In addition, the politician talks about the money received by the police, from which the reader can assume that the police receive special money for violence against the soldiers' parents. It is noteworthy to emphasize that although the journalists of 168.am are not the authors of the material, the material was distributed on 3 platforms of the media, which indicates that in this case, the news media operating on social media contributes to the spread of hate speech.

The other state body to which hate speech is directed is the Ministry of Defense and the main topic is the issues surrounding the army. It should be noted that the hate speech directed at this state body, Minister Suren Papikyan and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan intensified after the explosion of the RA Defense Ministry military unit in Azat village. In the programs of “Yerkir Media”, “Channel 5”, “Yerevan Today” TV channels, mainly the RA authorities, Suren Papikan and Nikol Pashinyan were targeted on the topic. Hate speech on the topic in TV programs has the following content: *“It is always necessary and possible to believe the official version, however, if the official version is cynical and lacks forensic integrity, then believing the official version is a crime.”*⁴¹ *“The tragedy that happened in the Vardenis military unit is the result of*

⁴¹ See the January 24 broadcast of the “Interview” program starting from 1:00. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLSQQfdFaeU>

*the criminal negligence of these authorities.*⁴², “You came, you shut the people’s eyes, you the soldiers with strawberries, and are you roasting the soldiers today?”⁴³ It is noteworthy that the latter expresses the opinion of a citizen questioned on the street, which speaks of public intolerance. It should be emphasized that the above-mentioned programs were broadcast not only during the incident, but also during the days following it, which speaks of the continuous creation and dissemination of hate speech on the subject. Hate speech with such content can create mistrust of official information and create anti-government sentiments in society. In the case of the FreeNews TV company, after the explosion of the military unit, the target of hate speech was the captain of the military unit. Thus, during the “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” program, the presenter makes the following statements, which contain hate speech: “animals like this one”, “where did you find these kind of idiots and put them in the army? How many people have you kicked out of the army and filled it with cattle?”⁴⁴

Public intolerance on the topic was also demonstrated through social media, where users left

⁴² See the January 20 broadcast of the “Press Review” program from 3:10. Available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksTOaD5tOcE>

⁴³ Watch the January 21 broadcast of “News Release” from 16:00. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqgxeaHscUU>

⁴⁴ See the January 31 airing of the program “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” from 9:50, 10:20.

comments directed at the authorities and Suren Papikyan. 1in.am's "They used a prohibited substance when lighting the stove. Under the article of 1in.am entitled *"Prohibited means were used to light the stove. Suren Papikyan"*, where the latter reports on the fire accident in the military unit, users targeted Suren Papikyan and the authorities with the following expressions: *"scum"*, *"invertebrates"*, *"sheep"*, *"gang of evil"*, *"pig"*, *"dregs"*, *"buried ones"*, *"bury you"*, *"die you"*, *"eat poison and die"*, *"let's cut the throat of your kind"*, *"scumbags"*, *"you should have been burned"*, *"births of an ox"*, *"genocide committers"*, *"deadly monstrous liars"*, *"traitors"*, *"become a devil's share"* and so on.⁴⁵ There were also calls for violence to burn S. Papikyan or the government: *"We have to burn you."* The army has also been the target of hate speech in the case of blogs. Vardan Ghukasyan said during his live broadcast: *"Armenia's army is the most "schmuck" army in the region, but you are building a church at every step."*⁴⁶ In this case, the hate speech is aimed at both the army and the church. Such expressions can form an opinion in the society about the weakness and incompetence of the army, which in turn can cause a feeling of insecurity.

⁴⁵ See comments on 1in.am's January 19 publication. Available here: <https://www.facebook.com/1in.am/posts/pfbid0VHe8VwDRjKp79SV6LastTkaTg7cZxAMoJ9wEAmBTUBwiU8SLw2Yn1PgrDnTKemiJl>

⁴⁶ See Vardan Ghukasyan's live broadcast. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sb1ds2InCt4>

Accusations were made against Nikol Pashinyan on different broadcasts of the “Interview” program of “Channel 5”. As the prime minister, Pashinyan and the government led by him are accused of “demolishing the army”, “anti-government policy”, “demolishing state bodies” and other issues. *“They (the authorities) are intentionally disbanding the armed forces. They have already dismantled and continue to dismantle because they see a danger to the personal power of Nikol Pashinyan. This is a typical dictatorial way of working”*⁴⁷, *“Yes, this crisis is exclusively the consequence of Nikol Pashinyan’s ignorant, anti-state policy”*⁴⁸, *“They came to seize power in 2018, in order to hand over Artsakh, the plans failed because the Russians had a presence there, now they are trying to dismantle the entire statehood of Armenia and destroy the Armenian world so that there will not be a Republic of Armenia marked on the map”*, *“The people who usurped the power in the Republic of Armenia were ceding territories in a rush”*⁴⁹, *“According to the press reports, one of the authors of the CC rigged election was the CC MP Arpi Davoyan, who gave clear and specific instructions for whom to vote and for who, not. Now, in fact, no more, no less, she has come up with an initiative on the electoral processes.”*⁵⁰ It should be underlined that in the last three of the above-mentioned examples, the legitimacy of the RA government is also called into question, showing the reader that the current government has seized power in one case, and in the other case, falsified it. This

⁴⁷ Watch the broadcast of the “Interview” program on January 23 from 16:00. Available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWwCRO_s5nw

⁴⁸ Watch the broadcast of the “Interview” program on January 18 from 15:00. Available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBv6FOb_LxU

⁴⁹ See the February 1 broadcast of the “Interview” program from 20:00. Available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxQX4YRMb50&t=5s>

⁵⁰ See “Zhoghovurd” daily newspaper, November 25 issue 170 (2650), page 1.

can cause mistrust in the society towards the government and the National Assembly.

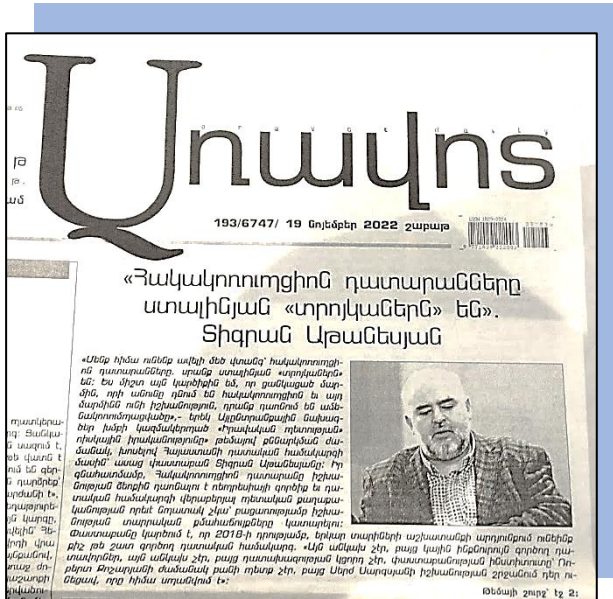


Image 4

Tigran Atanesyan's interview about the courts examining anti-corruption cases, in publication 193/6747 of "Aravot" daily on November 19.

During the observed period, the judicial system was also the target of hate speech. Hate speech about the judicial system was mainly published in the print media and it was aimed at the creation of anti-corruption courts. Thus, in the November 19 issue of “Aravot” daily, Tigran Atanesyan’s interview about the RA Anti-Corruption Court was published, where it is mentioned: “We now

*have a bigger threat: the anti-corruption courts. These are the Stalinist “troikas”. I have always been of the opinion that anybody whose name is anti-corruption and that body has power, becomes the most corrupt.”*⁵¹ The material with such content can cause the reader to have a negative attitude about the anti-corruption courts and their effectiveness, besides, the author expresses his belief that these courts will eventually become corrupt, which can cause mistrust in the society about the judicial system and especially about the newly created anti-corruption courts. It is necessary to note that although the journalist of the daily newspaper did not express his opinion, nevertheless the mass media published the material containing hate speech and placed it on the 1st page of the issue, which grabs attention. It is also necessary to emphasize that the judicial system is indirectly the target of hate speech in the TV series “Blind World” and “Trapped Love”. The scenes presented in the series have messages of corrupt and lawless judicial systems. For example, in the TV series “Blind World” the *judge threatens to “fabricate a case on him” and put him in jail*⁵² (this episode has about 348,337 views), in another scene *the judge is asked to get his daughter out of the police, and the judge says that he will do something.*⁵³ Since the action of the series takes place in

⁵¹ See “Aravot” daily, November 19, issue 193/6747, page 1.

⁵² Watch the 61st episode of the TV series “Blind World” from 21:57.

⁵³ Watch the 61st episode of the TV series “Blind World” from 15:16 minutes.

Armenia, the viewer can identify the illegal actions shown in the series with the situation in the justice system in real life.

The ambassador with special assignments Edmon Marukyan is also a target of hate speech. During the program “Country's Guestroom”, the guest of the program Elinar Vardanyan voiced the following thought: *“Anyway, I definitely don’t want to respond to Edmon Marukyan’s statements, because I think that even though Edmon Marukyan is a state official today, responding to Edmon Marukyan’s statements would mean taking Edmon Marukyan seriously. I will not respond to Edmon Marukyan, because I do not take his statements seriously.”*⁵⁴ Such a statement by Elinar Vardanyan can create a frivolous attitude in the society towards Edmon Marukyan, the ambassador with special assignments. A word of hatred directed at Marukyan was also heard during the “Interview” program of the Channel 5, by the guest Boris Murazi. *“First, about Edmon Marukyan. For me, it is understandable why he speaks, because as an ambassador with special assignments he has no place to do anything, he kind of, doesn’t have a place, he has to attract*

⁵⁴ Watch the December 17 episode of “Country’s Guestroom” from 8:55. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVVe30B9xyE&t=834s>

*a part of public hatred on himself to justify his salary.*⁵⁵

This statement aims to show the public that the state does not need such a public position and as such, the official, Edmon Marukyan, receives a salary for doing nothing, this may lead to distrust of this public body in the society.

Among the state bodies, hate speech was also addressed to the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES). The Hraparak news agency operating on social media has published an article entitled *“Illiteracy in the velvet MES”* (author-journalist: Areg Margaryan), in which it twice calls the authorities “velvet illiterates”, specifically stating: *“Classic illiteracy reigns in the Ministry of Emergency Situations: minister, deputy ministers, press secretary, staff writing messages, and so on.”*⁵⁶ In this case, the mass media, by creating hate speech, aims to show the public that the employees of the Ministry of Emergency Situations are not professionals, moreover, the author of the article targets the minister, deputy minister and other employees at once.

The hate speech directed at the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Government and Nikol Pashinyan personally intensified after the earthquake in Turkey, when the RA government decided to send rescue teams. Azatutyun news agency published the news titled:

⁵⁵ See the January 20 broadcast of the “Interview” program from 10:00. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI9-dLndkkU>

⁵⁶ See the December 16 publication of Hraparak. Available here: <https://hraparak.am/post/eb0e47ca5c3deb112c0d954438b5894f>

“Armenia is sending rescue teams to Syria and Turkey today. Spokesman of the Foreign Ministry”. Facebook users targeted the government on the basis of hatred towards Turkey with *“Turk”, “Turk-alike”, “Turk lamuks”* and other similar expressions. Users also targeted the Armenian rescuers as *“prideless sons of bitches”, “spit on you”, “spit in your face”, “sheep”, “disgusting and loathly fairies”, “chatlakhs”, “dishonorable”, “who saves is a Turk’s cab”. “prideless scum”, “whoever goes is a Turk”, “milksop”, “go and don’t come back”, “cheap ones”, “traitors of the Armenian nation”* and other expressions. Another part urged them to refuse and not to go to Turkey.⁵⁷ The same content of hatred is also found in the comments of Hraparak newspaper article entitled *“Armenian rescuers are sent to Turkey”*, where Facebook users targeted the Armenian rescuers going to Turkey on the basis of hatred for Turkey: *“Nikol’s trap”, “prideless ones”, “you have no right to be called Armenian”, “prideless”, “animal”, “you are worse than a Turk”, “devil’s share”, “births of a Turk”, “whores”, “morons sold for money”, “bugs lying under the Turk”, “anyone going is a Turk”, “prideless dogs”, “those who go should not come*

⁵⁷ See the February 7 publication of Azatutyan. Available here: <https://www.facebook.com/azatutyun/posts/pfbid031PUzRSVyCb2W6eezHcL4knQj2wHTejEjCYy8dzRRdurkGx9V12d5vtNreyHBhjT5l>, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CoXYDWPIzFr/>

back”, “*those who leave may die*” and other expressions.⁵⁸ Users shamed the rescuers for going to Turkey and in some cases identified them with Turks. Several users called on rescuers to commit terrorist attacks in Turkey.

The hate speech directed at the state bodies, especially the Yerevan Municipality, intensified after the New Year’s decorations and the news about damage to the stones of the Government building. The topic was particularly hotly discussed on social media. For example, “Hraparak” published an article in which the deputy mayor of Yerevan, Tigran Avinyan, states that there are holes and metal bars left on the Government building from ancient times, which was chosen as the title. On the Facebook site, users insulted Tigran Avinyan, calling him “*ignorant*”, “*industrial hemp*”, “*chatlakh*”, “*stupid*”, “*schizo*” and so on.⁵⁹ 168.am website used old photos for the materials related to the topic, which have nothing to do with the current situation, but are very impressive for the reader and lead them astray. The picture shared on the

⁵⁸ See the comments on the February 7 publication of Hraparak newspaper. Available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/hraparak/posts/pfbid022tXPzBvWYWVpT1zt8hcegUz7AnfgimmvKQFq1Mvs9hUBZD12zhYTt9kRSQmgnEpVI>

⁵⁹ See comments on Hraparak’s November 2 publication. Available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/hraparak/posts/pfbid0zRy8aFLrytuVCGj9AaBKOacVYR8j3aSqBWB5yiaEAHNwQ8MXtHTSLwCiVRqgPuBFl>

Internet, where the bolt is embedded in the ornament, has nothing to do with the New Year lighting project of the Yerevan Municipality. The newspaper published four articles, which are related to the work of installing the lights of the Government building.⁶⁰



Image 5

A caricature in issue #3602 (128) of "Irvunk" newspaper dated December 6, 2022, which contains hate speech in the context of the textual content accompanying the image.

⁶⁰ See 168.am's posts on the topic. Available here:
<https://168.am/2022/12/01/1804458.html>,
<https://168.am/2022/12/01/1804320.html>,
<https://168.am/2022/12/01/1804796.html>,
<https://168.am/2022/12/02/1805174.html>

In this case, the news media spread hate speech through *misinformation*, which was aimed at the Municipality and the Government, drawing the public's attention to the negative aspects of their activities.

Hate speech against the government also escalated in January, when a decision was made to close the Malatya fair. 168.am news agency published the post of Facebook user Aram Sargsyan, where the latter uses an offensive term against a person and incites hatred against a group of people. The newspaper chose as the headline: *"I do not begrudge the situation of the merchants of "Malatia". I just say that everything that is happening to them is fair. Those who vote for and support Nikol should not live well."*⁶¹ In this case, the news outlet itself is not the creator of the hate speech, but the news outlet not only spread the hate speech in the publication, but also chose such a title that incites the spread of the hate speech. The title of the article already targets the traders of Malatya. It is specifically stated in the circulated post: *"It's no secret that 70-80% of the traders are Nikol-worshippers and Nikol-addicts. Every second person in Petak either listens to Perfect TV or to that alcoholic Gnel."* Here, the user calls the actor Gnel Sargsyan "alcoholic Gnel". *"The person who votes for and supports nikol should not live well, he should feel the*

⁶¹ See the February 1 publication of 168.am. Available here: <https://blog.168.am/blog/427472.html>, <https://www.facebook.com/168am/posts/pfbid02Tp2YBHksQTjXtEBWwzGsa63qmPBtnwSx4XUzoBfj4HGERsRw1nC82ABSbsdjXpFbl>

pain of electing nikol on his own skin, his children will go hungry because of the decisions of nikol's Ministry of Emergency Situations, and the sick will be left without medicine, as a result of nikol's decisions, they were left without medicine and food in Artsakh.” Here, the user deliberately writes the name of the RA Prime Minister in lower case, and preaches hatred towards his supporters and voters, that they should not live well, children should remain hungry, and the sick should not have medicine.

During the observed period, Andranik Kocharyan, MP of “My Step” faction, also became the target of hate speech. Both insults and rumors and misinformation were spread about Andranik Kocharyan. For example, during the Yerevan Today TV channel’s “Shortly speaking” program, host Sevak Hakobyan states: *“Andranik Kocharyan, who released one of his sons from the army before the war, and evacuated the other to a safe zone during the war, there can be anything but responsibility among these people.”*⁶² Here, the presenter gives unspecified information and presents it as an absolute fact. It is necessary to emphasize that the issues surrounding the army are sensitive for the public and such statements can give the public a negative impression against the member of the National Assembly.

⁶² See the November 14 broadcast of the “Shortly speaking” program from 2:09.

NA Speaker Alen Simonyan has also become the target of hate speech. The article published in “Iravunk” newspaper states: *“Alen has completely perverted ideas about victory, because only a masochist who enjoys sexual pleasure from humiliation can think of calling the nightmare of the last two years a diplomatic victory.”*⁶³ In another example, during the “Review” program of 168.am, the guest of the program, Nairi Hokyhkyan, noted that: *“As the Speaker of the National Assembly Alen Simonyan is declaring from left and right, let’s get rid of Artsakh to make Armenia a normal country. This is their position.”* Such wordings, which are slanderous, can cause distrust in the society towards the Speaker of the National Assembly.

⁶³ See the November 18, 3595 (121) issue of “Iravunk” newspaper.



Summarizing ...

we consider it necessary to note that the analysis of hate speech directed against state bodies allows us to conclude that the hate speech in TV programs, print media and social media was aimed at belittling and weakening the role of a specific state body or public office in the eyes of the society. In the case of television programs, hate speech was directed against state bodies during the programs of “Channel 5”, “Yerkir Media”, “Yerevan Today” TV channels, and in the print media, especially in the articles published in “Zhoghovurd” and “Iravunk” newspapers.

The main targets of hate speech were:

Government and National Assembly

Nikol Pashinyan, Alen Simonyan, RA President, MPs
from Civil Contract Party

Ministry of Defense

Suren Papikyan, Armed forces of Armenia

Ministry of Emergency Situations

Rescuers

Police

Ambassador at Large of Armenia

Judicial system

Anti-corruption courts

Yerevan Municipality

HATE SPEECH WITH RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

The Armenian Apostolic Church has also become a target of hate speech. It is noteworthy that the criticisms directed at the church are sensitive enough for the broad circles of the society. In this case, not only criticism was addressed to the church, but also specific hate speech directed both at the structure in general and at specific spiritual servants. During the “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” program, the presenter targeted the church in a general way, the bishops of various dioceses, as well as the Catholicos personally. For example, Gnel Sargsyan refers to Archbishop Pargev by stating: *“Pargev Srbazan, maybe you should try to do something in the United States. Are you just busy injecting poison and pus into Armenians because the order came from Baku?”*⁶⁴ The presenter

⁶⁴ See the program “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” on December 13 from 17:43. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0B0cnZFYLhs>

targets Archbishop Pargev in this way, creating the impression among the viewers that Archbishop Pargev is dividing Armenians. In this case, the announcer not only insults the person, but also aims to belittle his role in society. In another case, again during the same program, host Gnel Sargsyan refers to the leader of the Tavush Diocese Ter-Bagrat Bishop Galstyan: “...*this is how the leader of the Tavush Diocese, His Grace, wow His Grace, Ter-Bagrat Bishop Galstyan answered*”, “*then referring to the current situation in Artsakh, the Holy Father states, one can hardly read those titles, um, Holy Father...*”⁶⁵ The presenter speaks disparagingly about church titles, with the aim of instilling in the viewer the same disdainful attitude towards the church and its servants.

In another case, again within the framework of the same program, the presenter refers to the church servants in a general way: “*The contempt for pan-Armenian consolidation by the servants of the Armenian Apostolic Church, that is, the Armenians of the world gather for the summit, but they openly lie from their office that they did not receive an invitation, if they didn’t even receive one, I’m sorry, that’s very bad, but it’s bad on their part, then as we understood, they received it well, they were simply still in the framework of their primitive lies, in any case they are in favor of deconsolidation, that is, they are in*

⁶⁵ See the program “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” on December 14 from 18:47, 19:16 minutes. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s77Dy32M45Q>

*favor of divisive actions...*⁶⁶ In this case, the presenter aims to show that the Armenian Apostolic Church has a contemptuous attitude towards the above-mentioned summit, besides this, by imposing his opinion, the presenter accuses the church of having a divisive policy. All of the above examples were voiced exclusively by the presenter of the program, which speaks of the continuous creation and dissemination of hate speech against the establishment by the same mass media and the same person.

There is also hate speech towards the politics of the church on the very first page of the November 12 issue of “Aravot” daily newspaper. The editor-in-chief of the newspaper, Aram Abrahamyan, wrote in his analysis: *“The Armenian Apostolic Church would also not be considered a “den of corruption” if [the authorities] succeeded in carrying out the “New Armenia - New Patriarch” operation, and a candidate suitable to the authorities was appointed Catholicos, who, for example, welcomed the handing over of Artsakh and depopulation.*”⁶⁷ In this case, the author does not address hate speech to the church, but the phrase *“den of corruption”* is already an insult to the structure and the reader may develop a negative attitude. In addition, Aram Abrahamyan here indirectly address a word of hatred to the authorities, noting that they

⁶⁶ See the program “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” on November 15 from 12:15.

⁶⁷ See the November 12, 188/6742, page 1 of Aravot daily.

welcome the handing over of Artsakh and the depopulation. We also find hate speech directed at the church in “Iravunk” newspaper, where it is stated: “*The Mother See of Holy Etchmiatsin reports that the main disagreements with the authorities began when Nikol put the function of the church, i.e. capturing the devil, on the NSS.*”⁶⁸ Here, the author of the newspaper’s analysis ridicules the function of the church and such wordings can be vulnerable for believers and church servants. Such wordings try to belittle the role of the church in society, as well as the discussion of church-state relations is visible in the above-mentioned publication, again in the form of mockery.

On social media, the topic was discussed mainly through user comments. For example, the news agency “Azatutyun” published the New Year’s video message of the Catholicos of All Armenians Garegin B on its Facebook and YouTube channels. Users on both platforms targeted the Catholicos, leaving insulting and intolerant posts. In particular, he was called “*filthy spoiled*”, “*garbage*”, “*damned scumbag*”, “*robber*”, “*shameless scum*”, “*turk’s mola*”, “*devil*”, “*freak*”, “*musr*” and others. Users also voiced calls to “*leave*” and “*go to hell*”.⁶⁹ There are also

⁶⁸ See the February 21 issue of Iravunk newspaper.

⁶⁹ See the comments on the January 1 publication of Azatutyun.

Available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1332000027554556>,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVRhEMRPSQU>

posts containing offensive symbols. Users also left insulting notes under the Catholicos' Christmas message, calling him “*deceiver*”, “*robber*”, “*devil*”.⁷⁰

Atheists have also been the target of religiously oriented hate speech. Aram Abrahamyan writes in “Aravot” newspaper: “*For example, militant atheists are the same ardent believers and believe with the same stupid enthusiasm that God does not exist. Now, it’s the “pro-western” Armenians, they definitely haven’t read, let’s say, Kant’s works, where it is written that man should not be a means, man is an end.*”⁷¹ Despite the fact that Aram Abrahamyan’s article has a political nature, he still makes comparisons with atheists, calling them “stupid”, which is an insult to the person.

Summarizing, we consider it necessary to note that religiously oriented hate speech was mainly directed against the Armenian Apostolic Church and atheists. Hate speech directed at the church was heard from TV channels only during the 4 airings of FreeNews TV channel “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan”, and in the case of print media, hate speech directed at the Church was recorded

⁷⁰ See the comments on the January 6 publication of Azatutyun.

Available

here:<https://www.facebook.com/azatutyun/posts/pfbid02FJJyn6WtAZ91QR3yuhj8eXry5V1rhLwwa7U3qQvrDcxqk644e8Av1hdgZzcsLLH3l>

⁷¹ See the December 20 issue of Aravot newspaper. Material on the electronic platform available here:

<https://www.aravot.am/2022/12/21/1312591/>

only in “Aravot” and “Irvunk” newspapers. Hate speech directed against atheists was found only in “Aravot” newspaper.



4

MANIFESTATIONS OF HATE SPEECH DETERMINED BY GENDER

Gender-based hate speech has mostly been directed at women. It is noteworthy to emphasize that women were the target focus mainly in the case of TV series, but cases of hate speech were also recorded during the airing of TV programs. Hate speech towards the woman was manifested mainly during the TV series “Trapped Love”, “Blind World” and “Every year in Spring”.

During the “Trapped Love” TV series, the label of a woman being “married-divorced” was mainly discussed. *“for the name attached to you “married-divorced”, the men of the city will not leave you alone”⁷², “your daughters have not taken a good path, one is married-divorced, and the other is...”⁷³* Such labeling and presenting a divorced woman in a negative context can form an opinion in

⁷² Watch the 65th episode of the TV series “Trapped Love” from 7:40.

⁷³ Watch the 79th episode of the TV series “Trapped Love” from 04:22.

society, according to which divorced women have no role in society and divorced women can only be perceived in a negative way. This labeling is discussed throughout various episodes of the series, which speaks to the recurring nature of hate speech.

In another example in the same series, the following thought is heard: *“I am not the girl to become a secretary.”*⁷⁴ All those girls who work as secretaries are targeted here, such wording can also create a stereotypical way of thinking about the work of a secretary. The topic of work restriction is also discussed during another episode of the same series, where mother and daughter talk that if the father was at home and knew that the girl stayed at work for so long, then “they wouldn’t have gotten out of his hands”.⁷⁵ Such wordings and scenes are not only examples of limiting women’s freedom, but also a representation of father-daughter relations with negative shades.

The TV series “Blind World” constantly targets girls who grew up in orphanages. *“You can hang out with an orphan, but I’m not a girl to hang out with”*⁷⁶ (329,000 views), *“a child in an orphanage cannot have good genes, good upbringing, and you don’t know what to expect from them. It’s better to marry a girl from a normal family”*⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Watch the 79th episode of the TV series “Trapped Love” from 04:22.

⁷⁵ Watch the 60th episode of the TV series “Trapped Love” from 13:18.

⁷⁶ Watch the 71st episode of the TV series “Blind World” from 12:58.

⁷⁷ Watch the 46th episode of the TV series “Blind World”.

(351,966 views), in another scene, the girl is kidnapped and told that no one needs her anyway, because she is an orphan⁷⁸. These and other similar formulations target girls raised in orphanages, polarizing society. Such wordings can first of all offend the girls who grew up in the orphanage, and then form a stereotyped opinion in the society about the orphanages, their inefficient activities, and the children who grew up there.

The issue of female morality is also a prominent theme in TV series. In the TV series “Every year in Spring”, the hero recalls that once he kicked out his daughter out of the house for hooking up with a man while she was unmarried⁷⁹ (249,268 views), in the TV series “Blind World” he tells his wife that she is far from holiness, because she has “bad past”⁸⁰ (348,337 views), “if you didn’t allow it, he wouldn’t have done it” (talks about a rape)⁸¹ (339,435 views). Such expressions are hate speech aimed at women’s morality and can cause women to feel condemned by society and fear. And in the last example there is an accusation directed to a woman who was subjected to violence, while the woman is just a victim in this case. These formulations consider rape as a natural phenomenon, which is unacceptable for society. In the TV series “Blind World”, “Trapped Love”, “30 Silver” there

⁷⁸ Watch the 60th episode of the TV series “Blind World” from 11:40.

⁷⁹ Watch “Every year in Spring” TV series episode 211 from 4:05.

⁸⁰ Watch the 61st episode of the TV series “Blind World” from 24:15.

⁸¹ Watch the 63rd episode of the TV series “Blind World” from 16:56.

were scenes of rape and violence, which speaks of spreading violence and hatred as a phenomenon in society.

Hate speech against women was also targeted on political issues. Channel 5's "News Release" program referred to the dispute between Anna Grigoryan, a member of the RA NA "Hayastan" faction, and Andranik Kocharyan, the chairman of the NA Standing Committee on Defense and Security, where Anna Grigoryan states: *"if till today you utter my name wherever you sit like a gossiping woman..."*, and Andranik Kocharyan replies: *"the gossiping woman is your husband."* To insult Kocharyan, Anna Grigoryan uses the expression "gossiping woman", which is a labeling of a woman's gender.⁸² The same topic was also discussed on social media, where users made posts containing stereotypes demeaning women's gender, such as: *"Who has seen that a woman should be the head, that she should lead... a woman should be at home, raising children, cleaning the house, taking care of her in-laws..."*, *"Women should not have any place in the government sector. Restraint has disappeared with sanity"*, *"These Armenian women have become so insolent - it is because of men's weakness - they have confused free speech and immorality - they have forgotten Serzh's salutes - they are right in saying that a slave should not be given freedom - we are further from democracy than the*

⁸² See the January 11 broadcast of "News Release" from 19:58. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yT2n-mhQb8I>

*sun*⁸³. Such wordings aim to spread stereotyped opinions about the role of women in society, showing that women should not be involved in politics, besides this, the emphasis of the inequality between women and men can be seen in the last comment.

Hraparak news published an article authored by Edik Andreasyan on its website, where the latter, talking about Nazeli Baghdasaryan, stated: fire *“cholka” Nazik, let the MPs of the CC Party spread bulshit... There should always be such things in Armenia, so that Nikol does isn’t kicked out of his chair*⁸⁴. This is a labeling of a woman based on her external characteristics.

The representatives of the LGBT community were targeted on social media platforms, as well as in the newspapers. Generally, at least 6 cases of hate speech towards sexual minorities were observed during the monitoring.

So, the “Azatutyun” (Radio Liberty) agency published a post entitled *“President of Russia signs the law forbidding the LGBT propaganda”*. On the commentary section of the social media page of the press, users made

⁸³ See the comments on the January 11 publication of Azatutyun.

Available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1340449726496709>,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2tuuaHU-0>,

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CnRUSseJ1PK>,

<https://www.tiktok.com/@azatutyuntv/video/7187331241488682246>

⁸⁴ See the January 27 publication of Hraparak.

<https://hraparak.am/post/a3317bcb746d7d8190f181cf2b5c6145>

comments which contain offense, hate speech and even calls to violence toward LGBT or sexual minority representatives. They are particularly called “*virus*”, “*weed*”, “*pervert*”, and “*whine*”. There was a comment saying “*Those weeds should be combated while it’s not too late*”. Another comment by a user contains call to violence: “*Only burning them will help*”. It’s necessary to emphasize that in the comments of social media sexual minorities are treated as offense. Thus, “Azatutyun” published a news, where it is mentioned that presidents of Russian Federation and Belarus had a phone call. Under the post Armenian users made offensive comments. It’s need to be stressed that two of those comments (“*faggot*” “*gay*”) are targeting LGBT community as well, because they are used as an offense. Another case of terminology concerning LGBT community were used as offense: “*The church cannot be constrained. You know, there are some people who have uncertain sexual orientation or are nailed to grants feeding bawl, and they say, that the church shouldn’t be involved in politics...*”⁸⁵. In this case the guest of the program humiliates specific representatives of civil society calling them “*people who have uncertain sexual orientation or are nailed to grants feeding bawl*”. It is important to mention that these targeting are quite common amongst society and the former MP uses them for

⁸⁵ Review program, aired on the 5th of January:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc5mmwyGAqg>:

gaining the support of some segment of society, thus sharpening hate. In this case both sexual minorities and grant seekers are targeted.

There is a manifestation of hate speech toward LGBT community in the “Irvunk” newspaper. In the №2-3/2023 publishment of the paper there is a remark on the N 74-N order of the 03.11.2022 of the minister of health Anahit Avanesyan which enters into force on the 1st of January 2023. The order defines the “History of child’s illness”. In the document under the section “sex” there is an alternative choice of “not clarified”. On that regard the newspaper placed a picture targeting the identity of LGBT people and an accompanying text in the first page: *“The reader possibly remembers, that in past Vigen Sargsyan who at that time was the head of the staff of the RA president, during the session of the Government assigned all the departments to through away the ugly word “gender”, because it arouses disgust of Armenians and it already has become a word from which new blasphemy was originating. And now we have a policy of not clarified sex, which doesn’t even need a genetic test for finding Turkic genetics in it”*.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ “Irvunk” newspaper №2-3/2023



Image 6

An image from “Iravunk” newspaper that tends to target the identity of LGBT people

In another case the hate speech toward sexual orientation manifested as a mis- or disinformation. “Hraparak” news agency took an interview from literature scholar, author of textbooks David Gasparyan. The later criticizes the content of new public textbooks saying: *“Moreover, everything that happens is a catastrophe for a sobber person. In the 79th page of a experimental textbook of a “Literature” for the 7th grade, created by authors’ team of “Zangak” there is a picture of 2 girls kissing. And it is served to the pupils of the 7th grade, 13 years old children*

living their puberty. The evil, which was being prepared, now is being implemented: now a committee will be elected and based on the criteria, which is a disaster itself, will either adopt or not adopt the textbook”⁸⁷. The part of two kissing girls was selected as a title by the journalist without factchecking. Then, the PR specialist of Publishing company Suzanne Chichakyan made it clear, that it was one of the famous pictures of Martiros Saryan: “*on the 79th page of experimental textbook is the picture “Love story” from the “Stories and Dreams” series of Saryan*”. The article was also published in the newspaper N 206 (3433). It is to be emphasised that it’s hard to know, whether it was min- or disinformation.

⁸⁷ Hraparak.am post of the 3rd of November, 2022
<https://hraparak.am/post/70de0b8b6a5977e804d0b0f2e3721c8d?fbclid=IwAR0TKW24DKr7XpalqhyoDxd8O9Mfz8mys7zMC4IR43WFUZJ2P-bQKC IOOs>



Summarizing ...

Summarizing, we consider it necessary to note that women were the target of hate speech conditioned by gender, and the main levers of generation of hate speech were TV serials, programs and social media. In the case of TV series, hate speech was mostly heard in the case of TV series “Trapped Love” and “Blind World”. The number of views of the first TV series are hidden, and the views of the series containing hate speech of the TV series “Blind World” exceed 320,000 on average, which speaks of the high coverage of the TV series and at the same time the wider scale of spreading hate speech.

Summing up it is important to mention, that hate speech toward sexual minorities has 2 main directions. On the one hand it is directed toward LGBT representatives, on the other hand LGBT terminology was used for targeting and offending other social groups.



HATE SPEECH DIRECTED AGAINST A SPECIFIC ETHNIC GROUP

Within the framework of this chapter, the collected information on the manifestations of hate speech against the following ethnic groups will be addressed.

Hate speech against Russians

Hate speech against Americans and the Western value system

Hate speech against Turks

Hate speech directed against Azerbaijanis

Hate speech directed against Armenians



5.1 Hate speech targeting Russians

The hate speech directed at Russia and Russian politicians especially intensified after the discussion of the CSTO-Armenia relations, as well as after the closing of the Lachin Corridor, around the effectiveness of the activities of Russian peacekeepers. A hate speech towards Russian politicians was heard during the programs of the FreeNews TV channel. Levon Shirinyan, the guest of the “Open Exchange with Artur Kiroakosyan” program, says: *“The Russian political thought is so much exaggerated among us, as if they have intelligence, if they had intelligence, they would not have entered Ukraine.”* *“That’s what they are. Because of this, Maria Zakharova, Peskov, the so called pesok [sugar], are in mental agony.”*⁸⁸ In this case, such statements aim to show the public that Russian political thought is worthless and Russians do not have sufficient intellectual abilities. Such wordings can cause dislike in the society for the political figures of this country and their

⁸⁸ Watch the program "Open Exchange with Artur Kirakosyan" on January 26 from 16:30, 21:00. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWJ7BwTTjpg>

activities. In the second part, the guest of the program offends Dmitry Peskov, who is a high level official in the Russian Federation.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was also the target of hate speech. Azatutyun media posted news that Russian President Vladimir Putin is coming to Armenia. There is no hatred in the publication of the newspaper, but under the news posted on Facebook and Instagram, Armenian users left insulting expressions directed at the President of the Russian Federation, such as *scum, dirty rat, executioner, schizic*.⁸⁹ Hate speech directed at Vladimir Putin intensified during his visit to Armenia, and again it was expressed through user comments. 1in.am news agency posted the Facebook post of human rights defender Daniel Ionnisyan with the title *“Putin should be ‘received’”*. On Facebook, users made insulting remarks against the Russian President, and also called for hitting Vladimir Putin and the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, with eggs: *“Hit Lukashenko’s and Putin’s cars with eggs”* or *“You should hit the jackal Lukashenko with a smelly egg 🐔AM and don’t greet Putin either. as other countries do.”*⁹⁰ In this case, the hate speech is also aimed at Alexander Lukashenko, and the users also called for

⁸⁹ See the comments of the November 18 publication of Azatutyun news. Available here: <https://rb.gy/8gdmtd>, <https://www.instagram.com/p/ClGYx7dNSPJ/>

⁹⁰ See 1in.am's November 18 publication. Available here: <https://www.1in.am/3192898.html>, <https://rb.gy/qoqcgw>

violence, which speaks of the normalization of hate speech and violence in society. It should be noted that there is hate speech directed at Alexander Lukashenko on other platforms as well. In the comments of the interview of the President of Belarus A. Lukashenko published by “Azatutyun” news agency. Users left insulting notes and expressions to the President of Belarus, in particular they called him *“kolkhoz begflu”, “dirt”, “born of an ox”, “orphan”* and so on.⁹¹ Insults were also voiced against the President of Belarus A. Lukashenko in another news channel: Under the video on Facebook⁹² and YouTube⁹³ titled *“The Armenian side proposed an addition to the document, but we decided not to accept those two points. Lukashenko”, users called him “gandashenko”, “tryapka”, “ghakhpa”, “turk”, “human dreg”, “tazi tula”, “rotten potato”, “scum”*. During the program “Open exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” there was also hate speech directed at Lukashenko. The presenter notes: *“The president of Belarus, the “bastard” Lukashenko, the mind-blown old man”*⁹⁴ the presenter continues, adding that “illegitimate

⁹¹ See comments on Azatutyun’s November 24 publication. Available here: <https://www.facebook.com/azatutyun/videos/694133438644329>

⁹² See Azatutyun’s Facebook post here:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=saved&v=525339532584675>

⁹³ See Azatutyun's YouTube post here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bleojADSy3s>

⁹⁴ See the November 2 broadcast of the “Open Exchange with Gnel Sargsyan” program.

children are called bastards”, thus targeting another group of society.

After the closure of the Lachin Corridor, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova and Russian peacekeepers were also targets of hate speech during the observed period. Hate speech was mostly generated again on social media. Users on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram targeted the foreign minister with insulting terms and curses under the videos published by Azatutyun news agency titled: *“Lavrov disclosed details of the negotiation process, made accusations against the West”* and *“We see attempts to obstruct the Armenian-Azerbaijani settlement by other players. Lavrov”*. They called him *“scum”*, *“rascal”*, *“calf”*.⁹⁵

On its Facebook page, lin.am news agency published news titled: *“Those calling for the withdrawal of our military are adventurers. Zakharova”*. In the comments of the news, the users targeted Maria Zakharova, the spokeswoman of the Russian Foreign Ministry, with insulting words: *“bitch”*, *“garbage”*, *“white*

⁹⁵ See the comments on the December 1 publication of Azatutyun.

Available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/azatutyun/posts/pfbid02qBRBx5nrdTneeSExxUC68rNjxfDiuWBz6XofY6pa2aEzMsvgLAcyuXCMoFNarwWU1l>,
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CloFeXELNIR/>

turk”, “witch”, “alkashka”, “shmagadyavka”, “whore”.⁹⁶ Under a material titled: “*A convoy with humanitarian cargo was escorted to Artsakh. RF MoD*” by Azatutyun media, Facebook users targeted the Russian peacekeepers with offensive terms and labels such as “*monsters*”, “*white turks*”, “*cannibals*”, “*occupiers*”, “*monkeys*”.⁹⁷ On the one hand, such comments express public dissatisfaction, on the other hand, they belittle the role of Russian peacekeepers in Artsakh.

Hate speech was also addressed to the Russian Federation as a whole. Azatutyun news agency published the political action of the “National Democratic Pole” near the Russian Embassy live on Facebook. During the entire campaign, NDP members voice anti-Russian calls inciting hatred. “*Russia is a traitor*”, “*Russia is an occupier*”, “*Russia is an aggressor*”, “*Russia is an enemy*”, “*Death to the occupier*”.⁹⁸ In this case, the news agency published a specific protest action, during which it could not control the opinions expressed, but the appeals made in the neutral

⁹⁶ See comments on 1in.am’s January 12 publication. Available here: <https://www.facebook.com/1in.am/posts/pfbid027Y3JX9DmNqer1Dqmqd3HvaaLU43AAEJpxN712siws73kxyz4WwqFY5PQ95QHkd2l>

⁹⁷ See the comments on the January 24 publication of Azatutyun news agency. <https://www.facebook.com/azatutyun/posts/pfbid02U8G9dFgRjDjjUbSp8LUEjc4bAnCJLbtzKUzsHXUHBb6QTibwmaBuBmmf89XnseUQl>

⁹⁸ See 1in.am’s January 11 publication. Available here: <https://www.facebook.com/1in.am/videos/1234843410445011>

publication can cause dislike, fear and mistrust in the society, both towards Russia and Russians.

In this case, the target group of hate speech mainly included Russian officials and Russian peacekeepers. Hate speech against Russians was mainly generated through user comments on social media.



5.2 Hate speech against Americans and the Western value system

Europeans and Americans were also under the target of hate speech in Armenian media. It is to be emphasized that the hate speech toward them was mainly generated in the print media. 5 separate cases and cartoons containing hate speech as well were observed. E. g. in the “Iravunk” newspaper of 23rd of December it is mentioned: *“Britain should become sea of blood; nuclear bombs will fall from all sides soon”*⁹⁹. In this case hate speech was manifested as a call to violence: the author apparently desires a disaster in Great Britain. In another case, “Zhoghovurd” published an analysis, where it was mentioned: *“EU doesn’t care whether there would be Armenians living in Artsakh or in the region. Today after decline of EU-Russia relations, that organization thinks about warming in winter and fuels of Azerbaijan their*

⁹⁹ “Iravunk” newspaper, December 23, 2022, N 3610 (136)

reliable partner”¹⁰⁰. It is important to notice, that this kind of expressions can arise negative feelings among Armenian society toward EU and can create impression of it being indifferent. In the analysis mutual benefit of EU-Azerbaijan relations are also discussed, which can develop an opinion among Armenian society that EU is not impartial in the issue of Artsakh. Need to be emphasized that USA is also targeted in the same article for “*apparent ignoring attitude*”. And the author of the analysis represents Azerbaijan as the main reliable partner of the USA. These kinds of expressions have potential to generate hate toward West, Europe and USA.

USA-Azerbaijan-Turkey narratives are also present in “Iravunk” newspaper. *In the newspaper an analysis entitled “We’ll see who’ll make terrorist at the end”* was placed together with a cartoon where presidents of USA Joe Biden and Turkey Erdogan are pictured as terrorists. The people of the USA are targeted indirectly in the analysis. USA is represented as a terrorist state, which might arise fear and negative feelings toward American people. It is to be emphasized that “Iravunk” newspaper uses expressions filled with hate toward Americans and uses cartoons for propaganda reasons in that context. In those cartoons the president of the USA is pictured together with Turkey’s and Azerbaijan’s presidents, which

¹⁰⁰ “Zhoghovurd” newspaper, December 20, 2022 N 214 (6768)

can create a feeling that USA supports them in the conflicts with Armenia.



Image 7

Caricature from the November 16, 2022 publication of "Irvunk" newspaper.

In the observed articles not only Americans and Europeans but also Armenians with pro-western orientation were targeted. E.g., in an analysis of the “Aravot” newspaper it is mentioned: “*Our “prowesterners” usually don’t even have an idea what are the real western (European) values. They think that it’s the same Russian imperialism but with the minus sign. The same way the “Struggling” atheists are the same extreme believers, who with the same stupid enthusiasm believe that there is no God. The same way Armenian “prowesterners” are: they didn’t for example read the books of Kant, who says that*

*the human is the goal and not the method. It is actually the core of Western values, that's source of Human rights and democracy. That all derives from putting the human in the center. But our "prowesterners" are ready to hate humans, event their close ones and compatriots, just because they believe in ideas that they do not like"*¹⁰¹. These kind of expressions are very sensitive and can create a feeling of negative attitude, mistrust and concerns among the readers (especially those who have pro-western position). It is to be mentioned that the author makes generalization speaking about "prowesterners", which means that all people with pro-western position are targeted. This article was also published in www.aravot.am website reaching 9416 views.

Summing up it should be emphasized, that hate speech toward Europe and USA was mainly conditioned with indifference toward Artsakh issue and relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan in some cases. Hate speech was manifested in texts and cartoons.

¹⁰¹ The post of "Aravot" newspaper of the 21st of December



5.3 Hate speech targeting Turks

Hate speech directed against Turks was mainly generated in the comments of news outlets operating on social media. It is necessary to emphasize that users very often use the word “Turk” itself as an insult to a person.

Thus, Azatutyun news agency published an article titled: *“There was an explosion in the center of Istanbul, there are at least 4 victims”*. There is no hate speech, insult and swearing in the material itself, but the news about terrorism on Facebook and Instagram has become an occasion for a number of users to make posts welcoming terrorism. In particular, users expressed regret that the number of victims was small. *“We are only happy for them, let them be slaughtered with children and moms”, “let one [victim] becomes a thousand”* and so on. On this topic, on November 14, the news agency posted another photo news on its Facebook page with the title *“The number of victims of the explosion in Istanbul has reached 6, the injured – 81”*, under which Armenian users again left notes that it

was not enough for Turks and the victims should have been more. For example, *“let one becomes a thousand and a million, the less they are, the sooner we will manage to strengthen the state. But let's not put our hopes on their decrease for such cases, but we will increase and become stronger to be ready to face the genocidal scum”, “The deaths are few, they should be more.”*¹⁰² This is an example of hate speech against an ethnic group, which further deepens the potential abyss of dialogue between the two nations.

In another case, the news agency lin.am published news on its Facebook page and Instagram with the title *“2 victims as a result of the fire that broke out in the Armenian Catholic “Saint Savior” church in Istanbul.”* Users on both Facebook and Instagram blamed the Turks for what happened under unknown circumstances, called for violence and cursed. *“Have you seen a burning mosque? Turks are destroying the Armenian culture”, “the handiwork of the Turk, your punishment is not far.”*¹⁰³ In this case, the users spread rumors, as a result of which not only hatred and enmity arise between the two nations, but

¹⁰² See the comments of the November 14 publication of Azatutyun news. Available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/azatutyun/posts/pfbid02zequqj9gwwX32yJP7Yfjdk8VEvfQLLMER2KdrSutLosvB2LK4vVLjEPSd7ejXVMZl>

¹⁰³ See the comments of the January 24 publication of Azatutyun news agency. Available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=583590110248575>

also suspicion may be formed in the society about the incident.

Turkish President Erdogan was also the target of hate speech. Under the headline “*We are interested in how we can ensure peace. Erdogan's statement*” published by 1in.am, Armenian Facebook users targeted the president of Turkey, calling him “*schizophrenic*”, “*monster*”, “*antichrist*”, “*animal*”, “*turkish dog*”, “*devil*” and so on.¹⁰⁴ Most of the users uttered expressions such as “*death to you*”, “*we want your death*”. Insults directed at the President of Turkey also reflect the manifestations of ethnic hatred towards Turks by users.

Hate speech against Turks intensified after the devastating earthquake there. On social media, users targeted the Turks, again cursing. “Azatutyun” published news under the title “*Devastating earthquake in Turkey, there are dozens of victims*”. In the comments of the article, Armenian Facebook users made posts containing ethnic hatred towards Turks and Azerbaijanis with the following phrases: “*why didn't they die*”, “*let one becomes a thousand*”, “*turkish bizimdir*”, “*may the next be in Azerbaijan*”, “*it is a few*”, “*be it continuous*”, “*disappear from the face of the earth*”, “*die*”, “*all of Turkey should*

¹⁰⁴ See comments on 1in.am's January 9 publication. Available here: <https://www.facebook.com/1in.am/posts/pfbid02e29hpdTgAEP12e2AindXh2TD9jqUoihtztjuwxP9FuBtS4A1tNwa56YUgw818RrnBl>

sink”, “*death to the turk*” and so on.¹⁰⁵ 21-items, all insults with the same content. There are similar comments under the article “*The number of victims of the earthquake in Turkey is increasing*” in “Hraparak”, “*they deserved it*”, “*Allah is also on our side*”, “*we want more*”, “*burn in the fire of hell*”, “*may God turn their one [victim] into a thousand*”, “*die turks*”, “*exterminate with your whole tribe*” and other expressions.¹⁰⁶ Hate speech with such content is on the one hand an insult, a call to violence directed at a specific nation, in this case - the Turks.

¹⁰⁵ See the comments on the February 6 publication of Azatutyun. Available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/azatutyun/posts/pfbid022Rsq9W8QBxo76WTkxeiPKo5qZuFZVMcoXQCnug94DDdZ421p5dRoVf49TtKNNC2W1>

¹⁰⁶ See the comments on the February 6 publication of Hraparak. Available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/hraparak/posts/pfbid0NVqeYkzYBABLUF3JisYBCPd3X2i9kV89jdmmdGR7RZqYuxYGP2zYUeubXfu3Ykjxul>



5.4 Hate speech targeting Azerbaijanis

Azerbaijanis and Ilham Aliyev personally became targets of hate speech in the Armenian press. We consider it necessary to mention that Azerbaijanis were mainly targeted in social media through user comments, there are also cases of targeting during TV programs. Armenian users also used the term “Azerbaijani” as an insult to the RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his team, which is already an example of hate speech. In the case of news outlets operating on social media, mostly the translations of Azerbaijani President Ilam Aliyev’s statements regarding Armenia and Artsakh were disseminated, in the comments of which users voiced curses, insults, and derogatory expressions.

The hate speech directed at Azerbaijan and Ilham Aliyev intensified due to the tension in Armenia-CSTO relations, the closure of the Lachin Corridor, and the exchange of clauses of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Treaty. It should be noted that sometimes the statements of the President of Azerbaijan, which were published in

the Armenian press, contained hate speech, hostility or threats. “Hraparak” news agency published the President of Azerbaijan I. Aliyev's statement, which reads: *“We have more friends in CSTO than Armenia.”* Facebook users left insulting comments about the President of Azerbaijan and CSTO members. In particular, Aliyev was called *“dirt”, “cattle”, “beghlu”, “sheep”,* and other CSTO members were called *“dumpster rats”* and *“filth”*.¹⁰⁷ It is noteworthy that under the Armenian-language materials there are comments written by both Armenians and Azerbaijanis, with which social media has become a place of confrontation of hate speech for Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

Users also created hate speech under non-political articles. For example, “Azatutyun” published a material: *“Two dozen shops caught fire at the Baku fair”*. In the comments, Azerbaijani and Armenian users cursed and insulted each other. Armenians call Azerbaijanis “sheep”, Azerbaijanis call Armenians “pigs”.¹⁰⁸ In this case, the hate speech manifests itself through insults, curses, belittling each other, deepening the abyss of ethnic hatred in both societies.

¹⁰⁷ See 1in.am’s November 21 publication. Available here: <https://www.facebook.com/1in.am/posts/pfbid02ff8zC5LfjupQM6FQ5VubZtyaUA88zxAfQpthpmFgaJUQuqEF8CDW7NVw8wv2Wvykl>, <https://www.1in.am/3193634.html>

¹⁰⁸ See the January 9 publication of Azatutyun. Available here: <https://www.facebook.com/azatutyun/posts/pfbid0UwRw9uzcPQnXaCBprj5Qcc6LluAesnP1fCdUYr1a4hhPmFsTthuTgMPQo7ahkWYEl>



5.5 Hate speech targeting Armenians in Azerbaijani press

The hate speech directed against Armenians in the Azerbaijani press were voiced both by users on social media in the form of comments, and also by officials, from the president to deputies of the Mejlis. Hate speech was voiced by officials during announcements, press conferences, Facebook posts, as well as international meetings. The latter is important, because in this way the hate speech towards Armenians is spread not only in Azerbaijani social circles, but also in all the countries with whose representatives the officials of Azerbaijan have had meetings. In this case, we are dealing with agents of influence who have a great reputation in society and the hate speech they spread has specific recipients in society. The hate speech was mainly aimed at Armenians in general, the RA authorities and Nikol Pashinyan personally.

Thus, one of the main topics of hate speech was presenting Armenia as an “*occupier*”, “*fascist*” country, and considering Armenians as “*traitors*”. The head of the state security service of Azerbaijan, colonel-general Ali Nagiev, said in his speech, “*This is a very dangerous trend, first of all, for the Armenian state. I have said it, and I will say it again, if we see that Armenian fascism is emerging, if we see that a new source of danger is emerging for our people and state, we will crush Armenian fascism once again without any hesitation. Let everyone know this! “Iron Fist”, a symbol of war and victory, is in place, let no one forget it!*”¹⁰⁹ This is not only the spread of hate speech by an official through an agent of influence, but also a call to violence against Armenians. Continuing the topic of being an “*occupier*”, we should note that Armenia is accused in the Azerbaijani press of occupying Azerbaijani lands for 30 years, of war crimes, as well as of violating the declaration of November 9 after the 2020 war and not providing maps of minefields. These theses are repeated in the statements of the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, for example: “*It is Armenia that violated all the norms and principles of international law, kept the territories of Azerbaijan under occupation for about 30 years, carried out a mass massacre against hundreds of civilians overnight in Khojaly, as well*

¹⁰⁹ See musavat.com’s November 5 publication. Available here: https://www.musavat.com/news/eli-nagiyev-ermenistan-azerbaycanin-tehlukesizliyine-risk-yaradacaq-butun-cirkin-emellerden-cekinmelidir_933990.html

as in other cities of Azerbaijan, expelled about 1 million Azerbaijanis from Armenia and the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, after the end of the occupation policy, they still have not withdrawn their illegal armed groups from the territories of Azerbaijan, and also continues military and mine threats. Accusing the Azerbaijani side of blocking the road to Lachin and violating the tripartite declaration by the Armenian Foreign Ministry is nothing but hypocrisy."¹¹⁰ Theses about war crimes are also repeated by other officials of Azerbaijan. The appeal of Sabina Aliyeva, human rights defender of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to international human rights organizations can be discussed as an example: *"Azeris captured and taken hostage by Armenia were brutally tortured and killed, and then their remains were mass buried in an inhuman manner."*¹¹¹ Such wording of statements not only instills hatred in Azerbaijan towards Armenians, but also have international resonance, they can contribute to belittling the role of Armenia and Armenians in the international community. In Azerbaijani publications, Armenia is presented as a genocidal country. Former military

¹¹⁰ See the December 13 publication of apa.az. Available here: <https://apa.az/az/xarici-siyaset/xarici-isler-nazirliyi-ermenistan-xin-in-susa-lacin-yolunda-son-veziyyetle-elaqedar-esassiz-beyanatini-qetiyyetle-redd-edirik-737246>

¹¹¹ See the January 25 publication of apa.az. Available here: <https://apa.az/az/sosial/ombudsman-ermenistanin-torettdiyi-muharibe-ve-ekoloji-cinayetlerle-bagli-yeniden-beynelxalq-teskilatlara-muraciet-edib-744192>

prosecutor of Azerbaijan Ilham Mamedov stated during Trend BIA's "On the actual with Sahil Karimli" program: *"Armenians, after being illegally resettled in Azerbaijani lands, committed genocide against our people for many years. The basis of their brutality is the fascist ideology of the terrorist Garage Nzhdeh. The Armenian state has chosen terrorism as its political line. During the First Karabakh War, Armenians committed terrible war crimes against Azerbaijanis. Merciless genocides were carried out in dozens of our settlements. People were tortured with unimaginable tortures."*¹¹² Such formulations target Armenians as a genocidal nation, presenting Armenians as a cruel and insensitive nation. Apart from that, Garegin Nzhdeh was also targeted in this speech, whom the guest of the program labeled as a "fascist". The labeling of Armenians as "genocidal" intensified at the end of February, during the Khojaly Memorial Days. In almost all media, on their social network pages, as well as in Telegram channels, there are testimonies, stories about the "genocide" allegedly organized by Armenians, coverage of commemorative ceremonies dedicated to the day, historical information about the Karabakh conflict. Ara.az, haqqin.az, Девичья башня and caliber.az Telegram platforms published about 50 articles targeting Armenians on the topic.

¹¹² See the February 14 publication of az.trend.az. Available here: <https://az.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3710045.html>

Ilham Aliyev's announcement in Shushi on November 8 had a similar content. The day of the announcement is very important, because it is a day announcing the end of the war and it is an influential day for both Azerbaijanis and Armenians. Aliyev noted: *“The current Azerbaijani army is stronger than the Azerbaijani army of two years ago, and everyone, Armenia and everyone should know that”, “We dealt such a crushing blow to the enemy that it still cannot recover. Look at what processes are going on in Armenia, now they are already sharing their anger and poison among themselves. Look at what processes are going on there during these two years”, “A person who destroys mosques cannot be friends with Muslim countries”.*¹¹³ Such formulations not only degrade Armenians and spread hostility, but also contain elements of threat. About 29 websites published this statement containing hate speech.

We consider it necessary to emphasize that the closure of Lachin Corridor has also intensified the hate speech directed against Armenians. In this case too, state, official information and user comments on social networks targeted Armenians and the RA authorities. The comments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan in response to the statement of the Ministry of Foreign

¹¹³ See the November 8 publication of apa.az. Available here: <https://apa.az/az/resmi-xeber/prezident-ilham-eliyev-zefer-gunu-munasibetile-susada-teskil-olunan-tedbirde-istirak-edib-yenilenib-731624>

Affairs of Armenia regarding the blocking of the Lachin road by Azerbaijanis are filled with words of hatred towards Armenians and Russian peacekeepers. *“As long as there are Russian occupiers on our lands, Armenians will become radicalized and try to start a war again...”*, *Russia should be expelled, and then all Armenian units should be given 24 hours to leave Karabakh. If they refuse, destroy them all.”* *“It is better to have a lion on your road than an Armenian living in your house.”*¹¹⁴ Not only hate speech is evident here, but also calls for violence and calls for the displacement of the civilian population. It is necessary to point out that hate speech is also spoken by officials during meetings with international partners, this is important because in this way the hate speech directed at Armenians takes on a large-scale character. On January 18, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met with President of the Republic of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda in Davos, during which he stated that *“Armenia is engaged in manipulations related to the events of Lachin road in order to confuse the international community.”*¹¹⁵ The President of Azerbaijan said that the Armenian side has been using the Lachin road for the transportation of mines, ammunition and personnel for more than two years. About 15 websites published

¹¹⁴ See the comments to the following article on minval.az
<https://minval.az/news/124289724>

¹¹⁵ See the January 18 publication of modern.az. Available here:
<https://modern.az/aktual/390530/ilham-eliyev-litvali-hemkari-ile-grusdu-fotolar/>

these wordings, which speaks of the chain spreading of hate speech. The hate speech on this topic was particularly intensified within the framework of the news on the return of Artsakh children [to Artsakh]. In social media, in the Telegram channel, users targeted Armenian children by stating: *“I saw nothing but hatred and fear in the eyes of these bastards. All the girls had to be dropped off and taken to an unknown direction.” “This is how they scare their own children so that the other children stay in Armenia”*¹¹⁶ The comments contain hate speech, calls for violence, and there are calls for gender-based violence in them. In this case, such hate speech is especially vulnerable for children, because it can cause hostility, fear and hatred in children.

When talking about the topic, it is also necessary to mention that Armenia has been targeted in the Azerbaijani press for creating environmental problems. According to the Human Rights Office of Azerbaijan, Sabina Aliyeva, human rights defender of the Republic of Azerbaijan, appealed to international human rights organizations regarding the war and environmental crimes committed by Armenia against Azerbaijan, stating: *“As a result of the illegal exploitation and looting of natural resources by Armenia in the territories of Azerbaijan, serious damage is*

¹¹⁶ See the comments on the January 18 post of the Девичья Башня Telegram channel.

being done to the environment."¹¹⁷ Sabina Aliyeva is an agent of influence, whose statements can instill the opinion in society that Armenians engage in theft and commit illegal activities. It should be noted that the statement is again addressed to the international community, which expands the audience of hate speech.



Image 7

A screenshot from the Azerbaijani news portal "ntv.az", where Armenians are called terrorists

¹¹⁷ See the January 25 publication of apa.az. Available here: <https://apa.az/az/sosial/ombudsman-ermenistanin-torettdiyi-muharibe-ve-ekoloji-cinayetlerle-bagli-yeniden-beynelxalq-teskilatlara-muraciet-edib744192>

Ntv.az published an article entitled *“Environmental terrorism perpetrated by Armenia against Azerbaijan”*, which states that *“the enemy destroyed the valuable tree species of Zangilan, Aghdam, Kalbajar, Gubadli and other regions and sold them to other countries as semi-finished products.”* *“Alarms have been raised many times about this brutality and environmental terrorism carried out by the Armenian fascists in the occupied territories, questions have been raised before international institutions, but all this has not yielded any results.”*¹¹⁸ The title of the article itself is a hate speech in its content, such wordings can strengthen the opinion of Armenians as terrorists in the Azerbaijani society, and also such wordings are aimed at drawing public attention to the so-called “brutal” actions of Armenians.

The RA authorities and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan personally were also the targets of hate speech in the Azerbaijani media. Pashinyan was labeled as a *“war criminal”* and continued: *“if, out of natural stupidity, Pashinyan does not understand this and has gathered the team with his image and likeness, then this still does not change anything,”* *“There is a famous quote from the Italian playwright Carlo Gozzi. “There is no greater scourge in the world than an idiot who seized the*

¹¹⁸ See the February 2 publication of Ntv.az. Available here: <https://ntv.az/news/siyaset/77984-ermenistanin-azerbaycana-qarsi-torettdiyi-ekoloji-terror>

*power.*¹¹⁹ First of all, such wordings are an insult to the RA Prime Minister, besides, they can belittle Nikol Pashinyan's role in society. The article is in Russian, which increases the scale of the hate speech audience.

Edmon Marukyan, Ambassador at Large of the Republic of Armenia, has also become the target of hate speech. An article published in Day.az states: *“If you look at Mr. Ambassador's latest tweets, you will be horrified at who is engaged in diplomacy and propaganda in Armenia.”*, *“So, Mr. Ambassador's ridiculous statements are just an attempt to cover up the real situation and deceive the international mediators, which he always does.”*¹²⁰ Such wordings are aimed at belittling the authority of Edmon Marukyan, Ambassador with Special Assignments of RA, and showing his unprofessionalism. After such wording, the international society may express mistrust and not take the ambassador seriously in diplomatic relations.

During the observed period, the Armenian-Russian relations were also discussed in the Azerbaijani press. Many of the observed materials contained provocative expressions aimed at worsening the relations between the two countries. For example, Jeyhun Mamedov, a member of the Azerbaijan Parliament, a member of the Azerbaijan-

¹¹⁹ See the November 11 publication of Minval.az. Available here: <https://minval.az/news/124288089>

¹²⁰ See the November 27 publication of Day.az. Available here: <https://news.day.az/politics/1512920.html>

Russia inter-parliamentary relations working group, spoke to apa.az about Armenia-CSTO relations and Armenia-Russia relations, stating: *“Meanwhile, Armenia took steps aimed at undermining the foundations of the CSTO, all the technical characteristics of Russian weapon systems, Russian battle plans, the methodology of combat training and military operations were transferred to the West”, “all training materials of Armenian officers studying in Russian military training institutions and together with them the personal data of the Russian soldiers who are studying were transferred to the West”, “Today, active work is being done in Armenia in order to withdraw the Russian military bases from the country.”*¹²¹ These statements were disseminated through an agent of influence and contain gossip and misinformation aimed at denigrating the role of Armenia in the public, undermining Armenian-Russian relations, and portraying Armenia as a traitorous country in the Russian society. The hate speech with the same content is also present in the conversation of Allahshukyur Pashazaden, the president of the Caucasus Muslims Department, with journalists, which took place in Moscow. He noted: *“I also brought to the attention of Patriarch Kirill the attitude of Armenians towards our mosques, the facts of vandalism, the circumstances of keeping pigs in our mosques, the facts of*

¹²¹ See the November 22 publication of apa.az. Available here: <https://apa.az/az/mdb-olkeleri/ceyhun-memmedov-pasinyanin-addimlari-ktmt-ve-rusiyaya-qarsi-tehqir-idi-734129>

the destruction of the Russian Orthodox Church, and he, of course, expressed his negative attitude in this matter,” he said, *“I told His Holiness Kirill that Aghdam was completely destroyed, and Armenians even changed the origin of the Russian Orthodox Church (made it Armenian Apostolic).”*¹²² Such wordings on the religious theme are aimed only at creating enmity between two nations, Armenians and Russians. The meeting took place in Moscow, the journalists were local and the addressee of such expressions is the Russian society, and such expressions can cause hatred and aversion towards Armenians in the Russian society. During the same conversation, Allahshukyur Pashazade also targeted Ruben Vardanyan and again described Armenia’s actions as “revanchist”. *“In the conversation with Patriarch Kirill, I mentioned that it is a pity that a new person has come to Khankendi from Moscow (implying Ruben Vardanyan to Stepanakert), he is inciting revanchism to the people, and the head of the Armenian Church supports it”, “I informed that the victorious Azerbaijan calls for peace in the region and comes up with economic projects, but, unfortunately, the manifestations of revanchism on the part of Armenia*

¹²² See the December 9 publication of apa.az. Available here: <https://apa.az/az/din/allahsukur-pasazade-patriarx-kirille-xankendiye-moskvadan-yeni-bir-sexsin-gelmesinin-teessuf-dogurdugunu-soyledim-musahibe-736673>

do not go away."¹²³ In general, Vardanyan was the target of hate speech at least 10 times during the observed period. Hate speech was mainly addressed to him by high-ranking officials of the country in official news and by users in comments. For example, Kamal Jafarov, a member of the Parliament of Azerbaijan, during the session of the Parliament, referred to the events taking place in Artsakh and expressed the idea that Armenia and Stepanakert should *expel* Ruben Vardanyan themselves.¹²⁴ Samed Seidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), made a speech at the winter session, where he noted: "*Russian oligarch Vardanyan, who is currently under the sanctions of the European Union and the USA, appeared in Karabakh. They are also afraid of this Vardanyan. Yes, because this Vardanyan wants to come to power, but not in Karabakh, but in Armenia. That's why Armenian MPs are so worried.*"¹²⁵ Such statements about Vardanyan are aimed at causing fear and alarm in the society about his

¹²³ See the December 9 publication of apa.az. Available here: <https://apa.az/az/din/allahsukur-pasazade-patriarx-kirille-xankendiye-moskvadan-yeni-bir-sexsin-gelmeginin-teessuf-dogurdugunu-soyledim-musahibe-736673>

¹²⁴ See the December 20 publication of apa.tv. Available here: <https://fb.watch/hHgZFNLQ5K/>

¹²⁵ See the January 23 publication of azertag.az. Available here: https://azertag.az/xeber/Semed_Seyidov_Ermenistan_Lachin_dehlizi_kimi_meselelerle_beynelxalq_ictimaiyyeti_chasdirmaga_cehd_edir_VIDEO-2456969

person and activities, and the last example also contains *misinformation*, which aims to make Vardanyan's image more dangerous in the eyes of the public.



Summarizing ...

we consider it necessary to note that such manifestations of hate speech aim at distorting the image of the Armenian in the Azerbaijani society as a source of constant danger, presenting the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people as an enemy, thereby inciting the Azerbaijani society to carry out hostile actions against the Republic of Armenia in various situations. The Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan has accused Armenia of ethnic cleansing, occupation, targeting the Azerbaijani civilian population, violating the Trilateral Declaration and using the Lachin Corridor to transport mines and military equipment, and the Artsakh authorities of holding the population hostage and denying their exit. The above theses were discussed during all the weeks of observation, which speaks of the propaganda of hate speech. Hate speech was generated through repeated theses that were constantly presented to the public during the observed 4 months: this speaks of hate speech propaganda.

HATE SPEECH WITH MANIFESTATIONS OF EXTREME IDEOLOGY

Within the monitoring hate speech containing fasci ideology was also observed in print media and social platforms. 168.am reposted an article from a Telegram channel named “Հնոււն/Hosank” (<https://t.me/hosank/667>). In the article, a comparison between the logo of “the Civil Contract” party and the Turkish label for products produced in Turkey “yerli uretim” (local product) is made. The post was published under the title “*How the logo of CC originated?*”. It was particularly mentioned: “*In order to prevent and destroy the Jidan program of turkification of Armenia, Armenia needs a fresh “radical” and “fasci” political power which will be based on racial values and which is not afraid of different labels of the enemy and is*

*truly loyal to its ideology and believes with whole heart in
“Armenia to Armenians” slogan*¹²⁶.

Thus, the news outlet presents the opinion posted on the private Telegram channel as truth to the reader. Besides, publishing the material with fascist calls on the blog and the Facebook page means that the news outlet encourages the propaganda of it. In another article, “Iravunk” newspaper published “Everything for Turks, nothing against Turks”. The article makes a comparison with the slogan “Everything for the nation, nothing against the nation” by Spanish fascist dictator General Franco, noting that Nikol Pashinyan follows that slogan changing it into “Everything for Turks, nothing against Turks”.

All the above-mentioned examples concern the contemporary Armenian situation, which is not only dangerous but also very alarming and disturbing since publications with these kinds of verbalization directly or indirectly find their audience forming opinions and beliefs.

¹²⁶ 168.am post of 20th of December
https://blog.168.am/blog/423354.html?fbclid=IwAR2rRrvRaKInbjwi7o7p8fOiX3SRvKsn2EznYXtly9O3EOQRjLA0CQYod_k



Այդ ներքին թրջացմանը դիմադրելու համար ի զորու չեն Բայաստանի ոչ մի ներկա քաղաքական կուսակցություն, քանի որ բոլորը ազգայնականության մորթիով թաքնված նեոբրլզկիական կամ լիբերալ ուժեր են:

Նրանք, որոնք կարծում են հնարավոր է այս երևույթի դեմն անել «պահպանողական» \$լան \$ստան միջոցներով ոչ միայն չարաչար սխալվում են, այլև անտղականորեն օգնում են մեր թշնամիներին ու միայն խոչընդոտ են հանդիսանում, քանի որ իզուր տեղը ժամանակ են ծախսում, ժամանակ, որից մենք չատ չունենք:

Բայաստանը ներսից թրջացնելու ջիւղական ծրագիրը կանխելու ու ոչնչացնելու համար Բայաստանին պետք է ցեղային արժեքների վրա հիմնված մի թարմ «ռադիկալ» ու «\$աշխտական» քաղաքական ուժ, որը չի վախենում թշնամիների տարբեր պիտակներից ու իսկապես հավատարիմ է իր գաղափարներին և իր ողջ սրտով հավատում է Բայաստանը Բայերին կարգախոսին:

Image 8

168.am post containing fascist propaganda



OTHER CASES OF EXPRESSION OF HATE SPEECH

6

Hate speech intensified during the monitored period as a result of the murder in the village of Pemzashen. The coverage of the incident in TV programs, social media and print media was full of hate speech. It is necessary to point out that if in the other cases the hate speech was created through the mass media, expressing the opinion of the host of the program or the invited guest, and public intolerance was manifested mainly in social media, then in the case of the murder of Pemzashen, we are dealing with widespread public intolerance in the print media, on TV shows and social media.

In the report during the “News Release” program, citizens’ opinions are presented. *“I don’t know them, but I know that one of them took it upon himself. It’s Vruyr, or some other damn thing.”*¹²⁷ Azatutyun posted a video about

¹²⁷ See the November 14 broadcast of the News Release program.

the murder of Pempashen, where there is no hate speech, insults and swearing, but under the video of the same name on Facebook and YouTube, users voiced calls for violence against the suspects in the murder, suggesting to beat them up, shoot, kill them (for example: *“Destroy, cut off the hands, amputate... the pain of an innocent child is in all of our homes today, they made us forget the enemy with their cruelty”*), as well as to their families (*“They should be killed together with their families, we have to slaughter all of them, so that the heart of that person rests a bit.”*).¹²⁸ Users also called not to provide a lawyer to the suspects. The article titled *“Vruyr Barseghyan, who was arrested on suspicion of murdering a 31-year-old woman and her two children from Pempashent, was arrested”* was also posted on the Facebook page of the same news agency. Under the posted article, there are 137 comments with insults, curses, and calls for violence against the suspects in the murder, as well as posts that embarrass the lawyers of the suspects.¹²⁹

It is necessary to emphasize that in some publications the murder was connected with the authorities. “Hraparak” news agency published an article

¹²⁸ See the November 14 publication of Azatutyun media.

¹²⁹ See the November 15 publication of Azatutyun media. Available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/azatutyun/posts/pfbid02cYHFcQBa1p8FyRsT54NtgB9VgwV2yWcRhG6vNawVL5PDgBxtv9WdNDUUbZBhmexZl>

by author and blogger Hasmik Aghajanyan entitled *“UNDER WHOM IS THE TAIL OF THE KILLERS OF MOTHER AND CHILD?”*, where the author tries to see a connection between the murder in Pempashen and the RA Prime Minister. In particular, the author writes: *“Now it is the murder of the “mother and children” of Pempashen. I see a resemblance of a handwriting. To create the problem, to publish the names of the killers and to “direct the public to their relatives”. It was the same in Manvel's time. I am not so naive as to say that an Armenian cannot do such a thing. But I'm not so naive that I don't take into account a number of circumstances. This government is following the agenda of peace and such a horrifying incident at that threshold. Such an incident just before putting Armenia on the Azerbaijani-Turkish rails. In whose interest it is to put Armenians against Armenians by this case? Who needs to make Armenians to think that we are worse than Turks?”*¹³⁰ Thus, the author tries to see an indirect intention on the part of the government behind the murder in this way, using sensation to spread panic in the public. This is also confirmed in the following thoughts of the author: *“It is necessary to understand the motives of the murder: are they political or domestic? I say again: I am not that naive to think that an Armenian cannot do such a thing. But in this situation, when work is being*

¹³⁰ See Hraparak's publication of November 13. Available here: <https://hraparak.am/post/e9ec010cd1af1faf0a25440d013615cf>

done day by day to destroy national sanctities, values, I want to understand under which country's gates are the skirts of such Armenians... To understand under whom is their tail. ... Or publish names, arrest... It seems that an invisible force wants us to renounce our nationality. We will be so disgusted with ourselves that we will say: Long live the Turk. And the most terrible. Today, the entire legal system is subject to one person and we are witnessing the actions of one person. In such a case, a problem of trust arises, and the government must know that in the end, as in many court cases, it will face the problem of public distrust.") The article is considered as anti-government propaganda, which aims to raise doubts among the reader, to mislead him, that the murder of Pemzashen could be deliberately organized by the government or used by the government to incite national enmity in the public. In total, this news outlet has published about 22 related articles.

There is also an identification with power and murder in "Iravunk" newspaper with the following content: *"This is one of the dregs who committed Pemzashen's outrageous crime. And not surprisingly, but legitimately, he is an ardent supporter of Nikol. Yes, you are right, dear reader, an Armenian cannot commit such a crime, but a Nikol supporter can."*¹³¹ The author of the newspaper's analysis claims without any evidence that the

¹³¹ See issue 119 (3593) of November 15 of Iravunk newspaper.

person who committed the murder is among the political followers of Nikol Pashinyan, trying to discredit a certain group of people with political convictions by means of a logical technique (syllogism) (that is, “the criminal is a supporter of Nikol, Nikol’s supporters are criminals”). The publication also contains a hate speech addressed to supporters of Nikol Pashinyan, because the author does not consider those who share Nikol Pashinyan's political beliefs to be Armenians. This is not only an insult, but also a degradation of a person in society.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within the framework of the Project “Combating hate speech for the sake of pluralism and tolerant democratic society” from November 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023, the broadcasts of mass media TV programs, news websites, print media and entertainment programs were monitored with the aim of studying whether the latter are generators, spreaders or tolerators of hate speech, to observe the forms of expression of hate speech and the frequency of its dissemination on the above platforms.

A total of 442 airings of the *“Interview”*, *“Press Review”*, *“News Release”* and *“Synthesis”* TV programs of the “Channel 5”, *“Country’s Guestroom”* and *“News Footages”* TV programs of the “Yerkir Media” TV channel, *“Shortly speaking”* TV program of “YerevanToday” TV channel, *“Free Talk with Gnel Sargsyan”*, *“Free Talk with Artur Kirakosyan”* and *“Interview with Ara Abrahamyan”* TV programs of the “FreeNews” TV channel were monitored. In the case of print media, a total of 113 issues of “Aravot”, “Zhoghovurd”, “Iravunk” newspapers were considered. A total of 387 publications and 6844 comments on the platforms “Hraparak”, “Azatutyun”, “168.am”, “1in.am” were studied in social media. In the case of TV series, a total of 131 episodes of TV series “Agapi”, “Every year in Spring”, “The Blind World”, “Hunting for Justice”, “Trapped Love” and “30 Silver” were considered. About 37

editions of Anna Abrahamyan and Vardan Ghukasyan's blogs were observed. About 208 publications and about 310 comments on the Caliber, Shedevrplus, APA, Ordu.az, haqqin.az, oxu.az platforms of the Azerbaijani press were also studied.

For the study of each platform, the monitors observed the given platform according to the established format, taking out the wordings containing hate speech, recording the minute the hate speech was uttered, in the case of print media and electronic media, the number of the newspaper and the date of publication. The monitors classified the hate speech and commented on it according to the methodology, also looking at the comments that followed the material. Later, data from all platforms were summarized to get an analytical picture of the set goal.

During monitoring, hate speech was observed:

- promoting or justifying violence against a person or group of persons,
- labeling of a person or group of persons,
- using offensive terms about a person or group of persons,
- humiliation of a person or group of persons
- cartoons,
- using profanity or similar expressions
- acts of normalizing hate speech and violence in society.

- using any symbols that illustrate hate speech
- targeting women based on gender,
- other manifestations.

Hate speech was found in 720 out of 1037¹³² monitored materials, which is 69.43 percent of the monitored materials. We consider it necessary to mention that social media comments are not included in the above, as all 6,844 observed comments contained hate speech. In the case of the Azerbaijani press, the materials and comments addressed exclusively to Armenians and already containing hate speech were studied.

Reported hate speech content has been classified into categories which are:

- wrong or false information - unreliable information disseminated without intention;
- gossip is an opinion or rumor spread by a news outlet that does not have a clearly identified source.
- propaganda - systematic promotion of hatred,

¹³² Compiled from the observed number of Armenian TV programs, print media, electronic news and serials.

- disinformation: information created intentionally to mislead and harm;
- influence agent - a person who uses his position to influence public opinion or decision-making to the benefit of the team he works for.

In the studied platforms, misinformation, wrong or false information and gossip were mainly used in news on electronic platforms, in print media and to a lesser extent during television programs. We consider it necessary to emphasize that although at first glance all of the above categories are aimed at spreading false information, the intent of their spreading is different.

In practice, it is extremely difficult to distinguish false information from disinformation, depending on the tendency of the person who spread it, that is, whether the person who spread it was aware that the given information is false and intentionally spread that information, or it was done as a result of incomplete knowledge of the person's information, because it is not visible to the reader the degree of awareness of the author of the given material.

For instance, an example of spreading false or fake information at first glance is the information spread by the head of the “Dirkapah Four-Day War Participant Association” NGO Manuel Manukyan on his Facebook page that the published private house belongs to RA Minister of Defense Suren Papikyan and captioned: “...

long live nazar (an Armenian fairy tale hero), long live nikol, long live the savior! Hey Nikol's supporter! Is there grass in front of you?"¹³³ And that note was spread by a number of news outlets, stating that it was false, but public confidence was strengthened after a few days later it became known that Minister Papikyan filed a lawsuit against Manukyan, demanding to deny the false news. In the given situation, although it is possible to say unequivocally, the analysis of the situation gives the impression that Manukyan himself did not fully master the information and unintentionally spread misinformation seasoned with hate speech.

A clear example of the spread of misinformation is when the guest of the "Review" program of 168.am social media, Edgar Ghazaryan, voiced his opinion on Aliyev and N. Pashinyan's agreement to close the Lachin road, which is *purposeful and intentional misinformation*. The mass media published the material under the following title: "*Artsakh has been surrendered. Pashinyan is implementing two major projects with Aliyev. Ghazaryan*"¹³⁴. This is not only absolute misinformation, but through a scandalous headline, the mass media is spreading panic among the public, presenting Nikol Pashinyan as the one who surrenders Artsakh. It should be emphasized that the news agency distributed the material with this title on 3

¹³³ <https://mamul.am/am/news/258135>

¹³⁴ See the January 4 broadcast of the "Review" program. Available here: <https://168.am/2023/01/04/1816212.html>

websites: 168.am, 168.am's blog and YouTube, where the program has about 19 thousand views, which also speaks of the purposeful, intentional disinformation dissemination.

Examples of gossip were mostly found in “Zhoghovurd” newspaper, about 12 items containing gossip were found in the examined examples. “Iravunk” newspaper also has a separate corner for gossip. Despite the fact that the editorial staff of the newspaper notes that it is not responsible for the inaccuracy of the information published in that section, the newspaper still publishes and distributes unverified information without a clear source.

The obvious and striking manifestation of propaganda is present as a result of the observation of the Azerbaijani press, when in a highly systematic way, from the president of Azerbaijan to the ordinary citizen, they are engaged in propaganda with the same content for both internal and external audiences, spreading theses that Armenians are occupiers, aggressors, etc.

In this study, there are also cases where hate speech was spread by specific agents of influence. It is noteworthy to emphasize that in the case of TV programs and electronic platforms, agents of influence have spread hate speech through repeated theses, which further strengthens hate speech in society. An example of an agent of influence can be Armen Ashotyan, who, being the vice-president of the Republican Party, has a certain role and a say in the

society. It is worth emphasizing the fact that Ashotyan gave an interview on the air 4 times during the observed period, in the programs of “Yerkir Media” and “Channel 5”, and his Facebook posts on social media were published by 168.am around 40 times, which means that what Ashotyan has to say has a specific addressee and is used by specific media. Another example of an agent of influence can be Tigran Khzmalyan for the FreeNews TV channel, as he is one of the main guests on the air of this TV company. The latter participated in about 4 broadcasts in the observed period within the framework of the program “Free conversation with Artur Kirakosyan”. It is noteworthy that the same persons often appeared as guests in the “Country’s Guestroom” and during the “Interview” program of Channel 5, spreading hate speech with the same content, thus making the hate speech continuously spread. the viewer hears similar content of hate speech in different TV programs. Eduard Sharmazanov, Armen Ashotyan, Ishkhan Saghatelyan, Andranik Tevanyan, Kristina Vardanyan, Gegham Manukyan, Davit Jamalyan, Vahe Hovhannisyan and others were on the list of recurring guests in both TV programs. In the case of the Azerbaijani press, officials can be considered agents of influence, from President Ilham Aliyev to deputies of the Mejlis, who have a high reputation in the society and the words of hatred spread by them have specific recipients in the society.

During the monitoring, special attention was also paid to the origin of hate speech. It was studied whether mass media created, spread or incited hate speech. Thus, in the case of TV programs, the hate speech mainly originated in all three ways mentioned above: first, it was created by the presenters, it was spread through the guests of the program, or it was provoked by the sharp questions raised by the presenter. In the case of print media, hate speech is mainly created by newspaper articles. In social media, the picture is different, because news outlets in this case did not create so much as spread hate speech in two ways: the first is the publication of the thoughts of influencers and their Facebook posts, the second is the comments left at the bottom of the articles, which were not filtered by the observed news outlets, moreover, news outlets do not have any warning about the removal of comments in case of spreading hate speech or calls for violence. In the case of TV series, the hate speech was generated according to the script of the series and spread through the broadcasting TV station. And in the case of the Azeri press, the hate speech was primarily spread by agents of influence, state officials and the press serving their interests, then spread by other mass media and news outlets operating on social platforms, accompanied by comments showing public intolerance, which again were not filtered.

From the thematic point of view, in the case of TV programs, hate speech was mainly directed at political

issues and the state apparatus. It is worth noting the fact that the guests of the TV program were selected according to their political views, in the case of “Channel 5”, “Yerkir Media” TV stations, the guests are mainly people who protect the interests of the opposition, who form hate speech directed at the ruling wing, and the opposite can be observed in the case of FreeNews.

The print media also contained political hate speech. In the case of “Aravot” and “Zhoghovurd” newspapers, the hate speech was manifested only through texts and articles, and in the case of “Iravunk” newspaper, through both text and caricatures.

In the case of social media, the thematic scope of hate speech has been wide ranging from political conflicts to ethnic hate speech. And in the case of TV series, expressions containing hate speech were mainly aimed at women, reflecting scenes of violence as well.

During the monitoring, the publications of the Azeri press and social media, which were studied, were aimed at generating antipathy towards Armenians in the society. Studies show that the hate speech and its various manifestations between the two nations is growing both in the Armenian and in the Azerbaijani media.

During the monitoring, all the events that affected the escalation of hate speech were also noted, among them: the murder of a family in Pempashen, the closure of the Lachin Corridor, the catastrophic earthquake in Turkey,

the explosion of a military unit in Azat village of Gegharkunik region, etc. We considered it necessary to emphasize the impact of the events, because after them, the amount of hate speech increased on the observed platforms. After the incident of Pempashen, the person suspected of committing the crime and his relatives were under the target, and especially under all the posts on this topic in social media, users left comments containing hate speech and calls for violence, showing their intolerance towards such crimes. The closure of the Lachin Corridor intensified the hate speech in several directions at once. On the one hand, a large amount of hate speech was directed at the RA authorities and the Prime Minister, the Artsakh authorities and officials, on the other hand, the Russian peacekeepers and the Azerbaijani authorities and Azerbaijanis as an ethnic group were targeted. After the closing of the Lachin Corridor, the hate speech directed at Armenians, the authorities of Armenia and Russia intensified in the Azerbaijani press. After the catastrophic earthquake in Turkey, there was also an increase in hate speech directed in two directions: firstly at the Turks as an ethnic group, then at the authorities of Armenia and the employees of the Ministry of Emergency Situations for sending humanitarian aid to Turkey. Active manifestations of hate speech against the rescuers were also recorded in the Azerbaijani press, where the Armenian rescuers were presented as thieves, robbers and

dangerous criminals. The escalation of hate speech was also observed after the explosion of the military unit of Azat village, Gegharkunik marz. In this case, the RA authorities, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, the Ministry of Defense and Minister Suren Papikyan, as well as the captain of the military unit, were at the center of the targeting.

The expanded summary of this monitoring covers the main themes and recurring theses of the hate speech manifestations found in the studies of all the above platforms in separate chapters. In each chapter, examples taken from the studied platforms are combined, which are not single cases, but examples separated from repeated similar manifestations.