

Social Listening Report

Topic: Health and Social Security

Reporting period: 17th January – 10th February 2022

Methodology

Zinc Network's digital team runs monthly social media listening comprised of three stages:

Stage 1: Topic identification

- EWTN submits topics for tracking each month – with each report covering conversations across a one-month timeframe
- Zinc Network identifies relevant search keywords in relation to the topic

Stage 2: Forum identification

- Topic monitoring takes place on Facebook
- Public groups and pages are identified, as well as media outlets who tend to report on the topic. These groups and pages are entered in to CrowdTangle and BuzzSumo (social media monitoring tools)
- We then identify and track key narratives and themes, alongside influential voices on the topic

Stage 3: Analysis

- The top posts and comments are analysed manually to understand discussion patterns
- Data is anonymised, and reports will not include any personal data of users involved in conversations
- A summary of findings is created, providing qualitative analysis of social media conversations, as well as a quantitative representation of the levels of conversation throughout the reporting period

Research question and setup

"How do online audiences in Georgia talk about and engage with the topic of health and social security?"

Keywords:

- ჯანდაცვა (Healthcare)
- ჯანდაცვის სისტემა (Healthcare system)
- ჯანმრთელობის პრობლემა (Health problems)
- პირველადი ჯანდაცვა (Primary health care)
- საყოველთაო ჯანდაცვა (Universal health care)
- წამალი, წამლის ფასი (Medicine, price of the medicine)
- მედიკამენტები (Medication)
- ოჯახის ექიმი (Family doctor)
- სოციალური, მატერიალური დახმარება (Social, material assistance)
- სოციალური დაცვა, უსაფრთხოება (Social protection, safety)
- შშმ პირი (Person with disabilities)
- დევნილი (IDP)
- ვეტერანი (Veteran)

Key findings on Health 1/4

- **Scale:** There was roughly as much conversation on healthcare as on social security in public groups, as well as in the comment sections of news outlets and topical pages.
- **High prices of medicine (dominant narrative):**
 - **Cost of medicine:** the sheer scale of information found during the listening suggests that the increasing prices of medicine is one of the biggest healthcare issues for the citizens of Georgia.
 - **Turkish pharmaceutical products:** on 17 January, in an effort to reduce the cost of medicine, the Georgian Prime Minister announced that companies would be allowed to import all pharmaceutical products approved by Turkey, without further national authorization. The announcement sparked online debate: while commenters welcomed the decision, many still criticized the Government for taking too long to solve the medicine price problems. Some people argued that pharmacies should be opened by the Turks, otherwise Georgian drug stores would increase the price of imported medicines anyway.



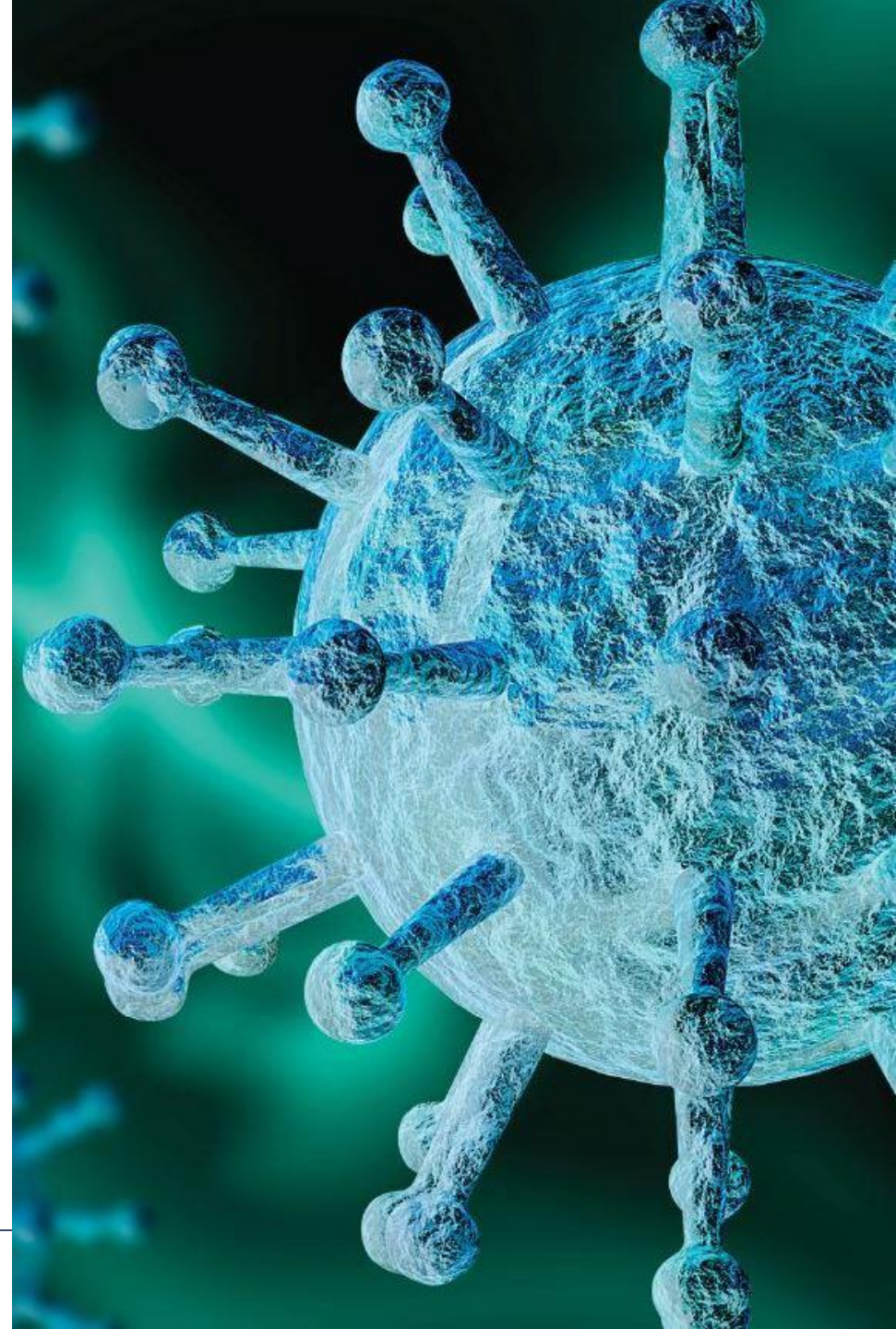
Key findings 2/4

COVID-19 related issues (dominant narratives):

- **Family doctor systems not working:** people who tested positive for Covid-19 complained that family doctors were not providing adequate support, and the Ministry of Health does nothing to fix the problem.
- **Overstrained testing facilities:** commenters complained that Covid-19 test facilities were overcrowded, and did not provide test results in time.
- **Medical staff not following guidance:** commenters on health-related groups complained that nursing staff at hospitals ignore COVID-19 rules.
- **Isolation rules:** most people opposed the reduction of the isolation period from eight to five days.
- **Overburdened emergency services:** due to high numbers of Covid-19 related calls, ambulances work with delays to reach other emergency patients. People called for the Ministry of Health to provide additional ambulance vehicles.

Other health-related issues:

- **Local needs:** users demanded a dialysis center for Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi.
- **Faulty state diabetes program:** the program is unadjusted to the beneficiaries. Parents of children diagnosed with type 1 diabetes demanded the state provide glucose measuring devices for their children.



Key findings 3/4

Narratives on social security:

- **Insufficient state pension:** people commented that the state pension of GEL 260 per month is not enough to buy food and medicine.
- **Popular vouchers for pensioners:** the Mayor of Tbilisi issued a 500 GEL voucher for socially vulnerable pensioners. Users demanded that similar initiatives should be launched in other regions of the country.
- **High-interest rates:** Pensioners are protesting against a pension loan and a high-interest rate. According to them, Liberty Bank carries a huge interest rate. They demand pensions to be available at other banks as well, and not just at Liberty. Quote: "I took a loan of 2000 GEL and I am already over 10,000"
- **Welfare abuse:** some commenters believed social assistance should be terminated. They claimed people who were perfectly able to work were shirking looking for jobs to keep claiming social assistance.
- **Assistance not reaching the most vulnerable:** many people agreed that social agents were giving social assistance to people who are not socially vulnerable, and giving preference to friends and relatives – not people who are really in need of assistance.



Key findings 4/4

Narratives on social security:

- **Disability assistance too low:** parents of persons with disabilities demanded increased assistance payments and full funding for medical examinations, treatment and medication.
- **Deficiencies in support to displaced people:** a man displaced from Russian-occupied Abkhazia jumped to his death in protest of the dragged-out relocation of over 120 families from a run-down former sanatorium building. This incident sparked a huge debate on social networks. IDPs called for the Government to provide proper living spaces and to double the assistance.
- **Need for rehabilitation centres:** parents of people with disabilities living in different regions of Georgia talked about the importance of having rehabilitation centers. (Kvemo Kartli, Ozurgeti)
- **Need for electric wheelchairs:** users demanded that the Government provide disabled persons with electric wheelchairs.
- **Inadequate support for war veterans:** a news outlet published a story about the August war veteran who lives in a landfill. For 14 years, after numerous investigations, letters, appeals, he has not been able to get a military pension. Users criticized the government for the lack of appreciation for veterans and demanded proper housing conditions and pensions for them.

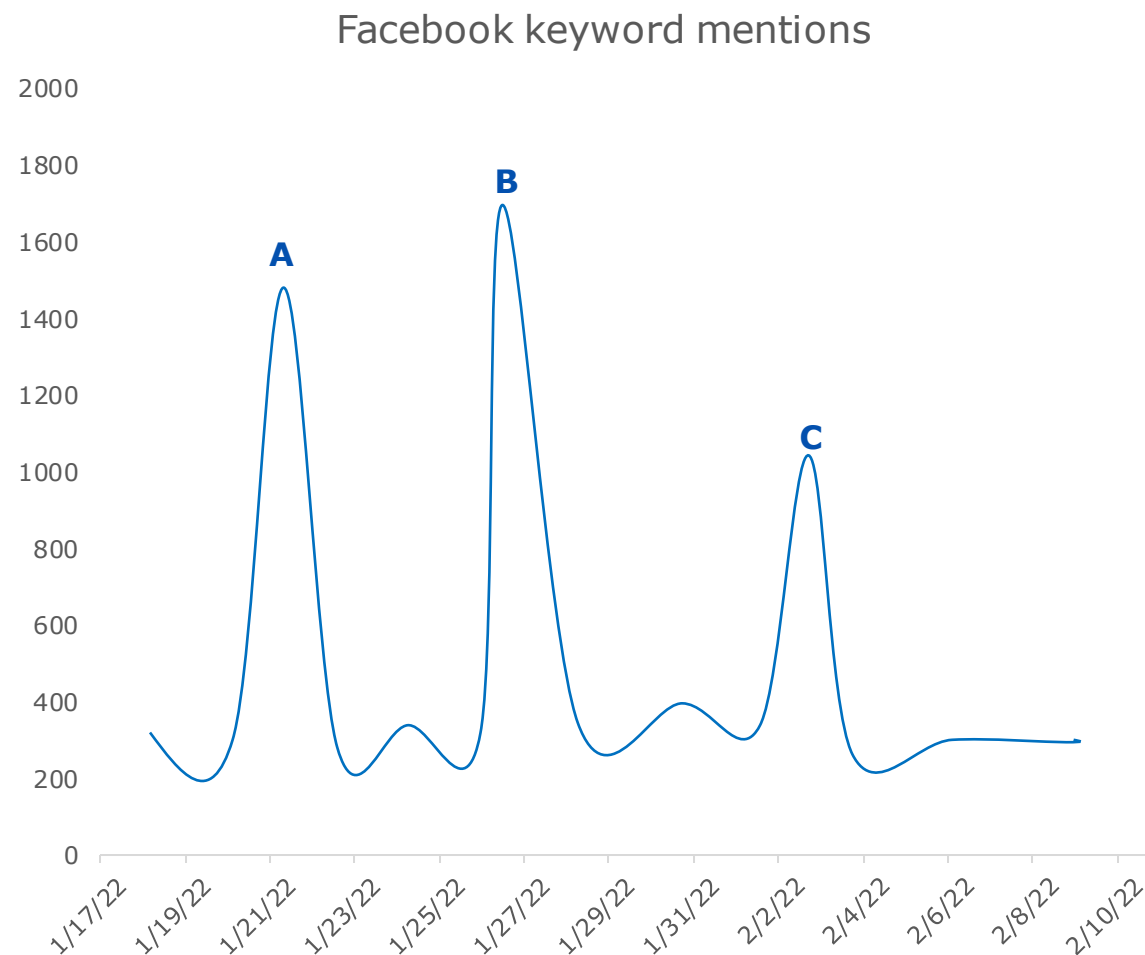


Facebook trend analysis



Trend analysis:

- Peak A was driven by a video published on TV Formula, featuring an address by a relative of the deceased Zura Chichoshvili, an IDP living in the sanatorium "Kartli".
- Peak B was driven by a video published on TV Pirveli in which Zurab Girchi Japaridze, leader of the party „Girchi More Freedom", compares medicine prices in Turkey and Georgia.
- Peak C was driven by a news story on media outlet „Prime Time" on who was eligible to receive financial aid from the Tbilisi City Hall.



Top performing Facebook posts 1/2



Interactions: 3,890

A family member of the deceased IDP addresses the Georgian Government.



Interactions: 28,000

Members of the political party "Girchi More Freedom" compare medicine prices in Georgia & Turkey.

Top performing Facebook posts 2/2



Interactions: 1,558

A human rights activist supports drug prices regulation



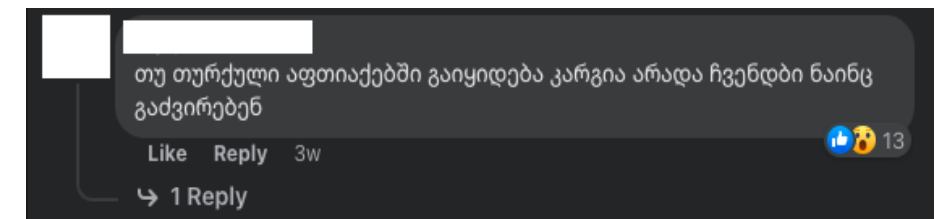
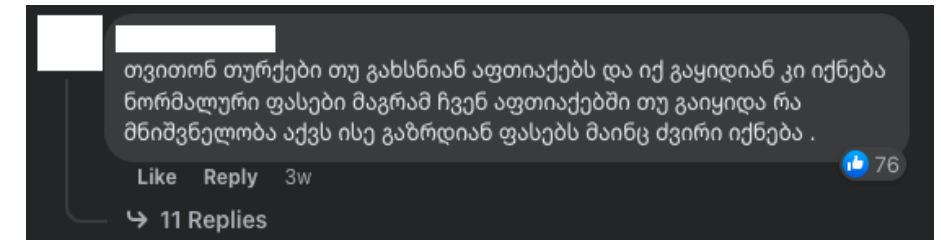
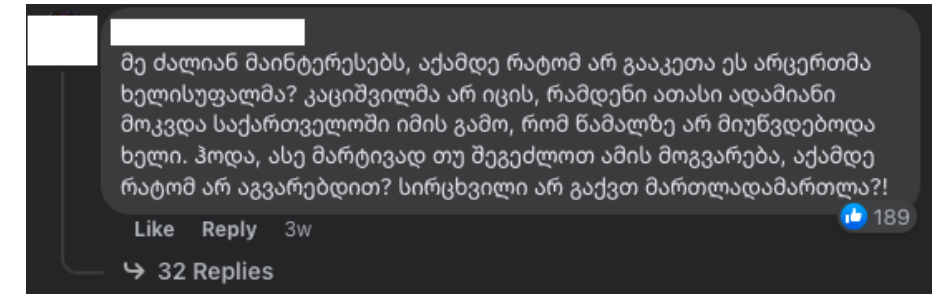
Interactions: 1,685

A media outlet published a video of a polyclinic in Digomi, which has faulty infrastructure.

Main narrative: high medicine prices

A dominant narrative surrounded the high cost of medicine:

- **General support for Turkish imports:** most users supported the idea of importing medicine from Turkey; only a few opposed it.
- **Criticism of government tardiness:** many of those who welcomed the idea of importing medicines harshly criticized the Government for taking too long to solve the medicine price problems in the country.
- **Turkish pharmacies:** some argued that Turkish pharmacies should be opened in Georgia, otherwise Georgian drug stores would increase the price of imported medicine.
- **Isolated distrust of Turkish products:** fewer commenters claimed that Turkey was Georgia's enemy, and that Georgia should not import medicine from them (Quote: "Turks will sell us poison; they will not give us anything valuable").



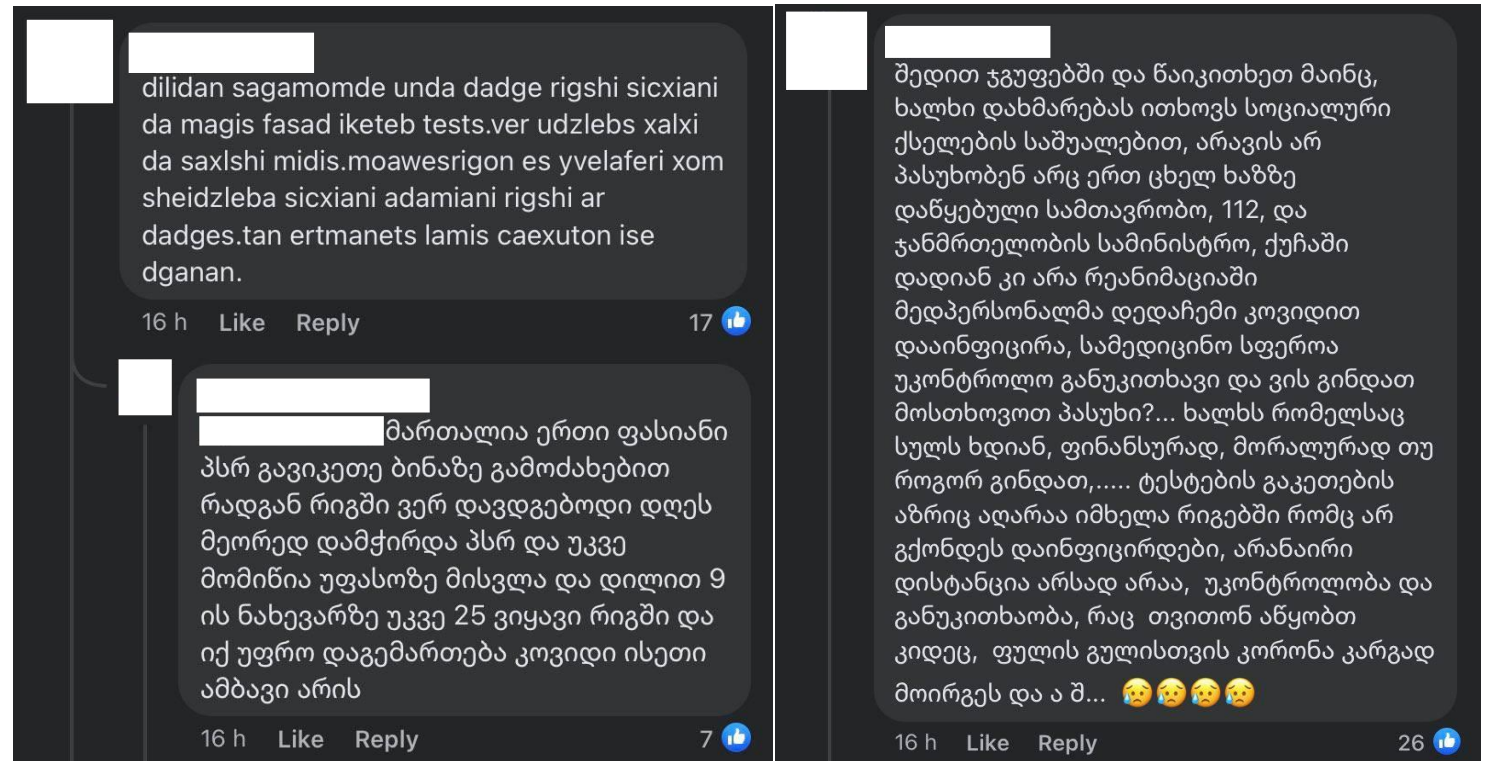
Main narrative: Covid-19 related issues

- **Poor family doctor services:** people who tested positive for Covid-19 complained that they could not reach out to family doctors and the MoH was doing nothing to improve the situation. Most of the patients who did not have a clear guide of how to treat Covid-19 symptoms were seeking help in health-related groups on Facebook.
- **'Irresponsible' reduction of the isolation period:** the government of Georgia announced the reduction of isolation days from eight to five. Most commenters called the decision irresponsible. The majority of users who had Covid-19 claimed that after 5 days they still had symptoms and were likely still contagious.
- **Medical staff ignoring guidance:** commenters on different health-related groups complained that nursing staff at hospitals do not follow the Covid-19 rules. One of the users claimed that her mother, who was in the intensive care unit, was infected by the medical staff.



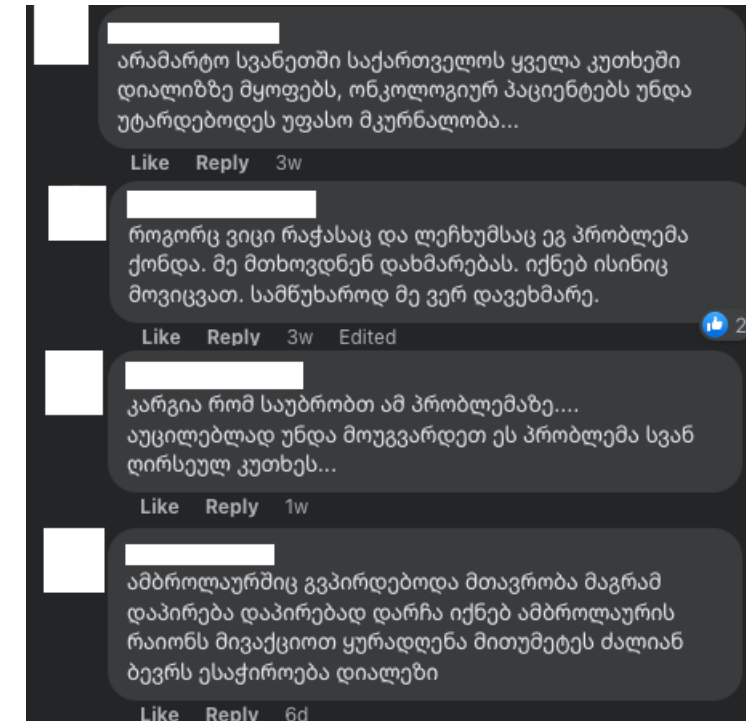
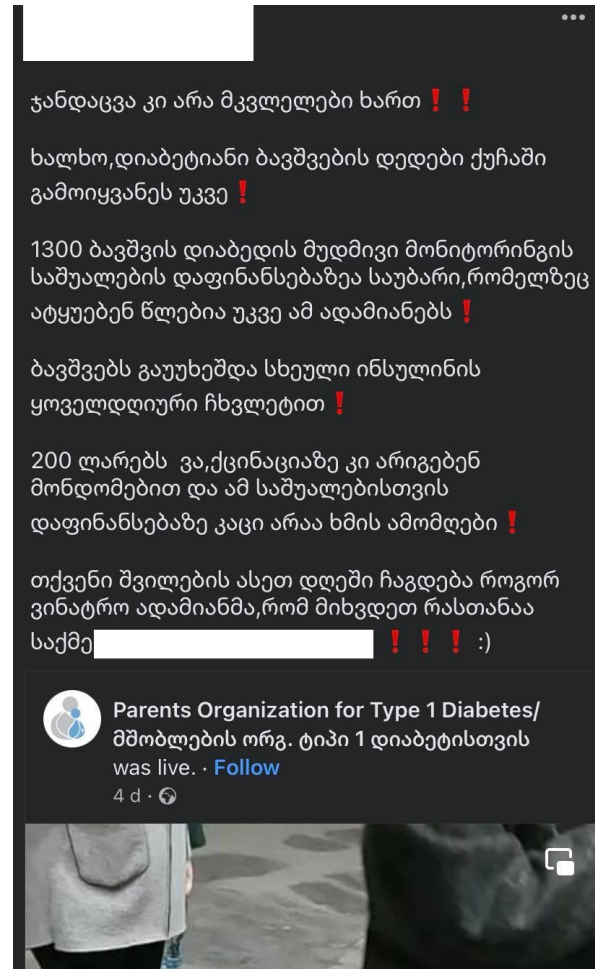
Main narrative: Covid-19 related issues

- **Overburdened ambulances:** due to the large number of calls related to Covid-19, ambulances are delayed in reaching other emergency patients. Users argued that the MoH should allocate an additional 100 ambulatory cars in order to reach patients with emergency needs.
- **Healthcare facilities are broken:** many commenters argued Covid-19 test centres are completely overcrowded. Some said that waiting in the long test centre queues was a high infection risk.



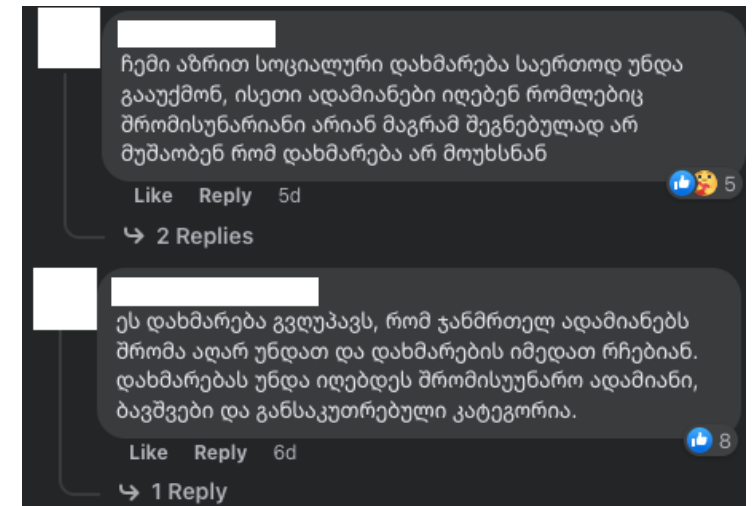
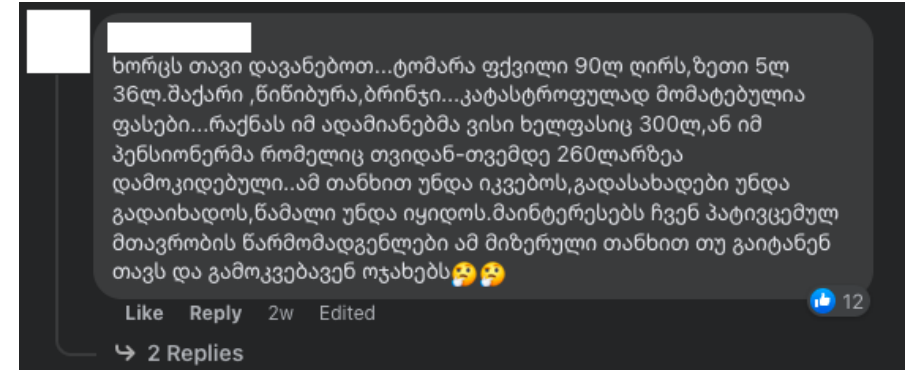
Other health-related issues:

- **Local needs:** users demanded a dialysis centre for Svaneti and Racha-Lechkhumi. Locals of Mestia submitted a petition signed by 10,000 people to the Georgian Government. According to users, those who live in Upper Svaneti and need dialysis have no choice - "either leave Mestia municipality or die".
- **Faulty state diabetes program:** the program is unadjusted to the beneficiaries. Parents of children diagnosed with type 1 diabetes demanded the state provide glucose measuring devices for their children.



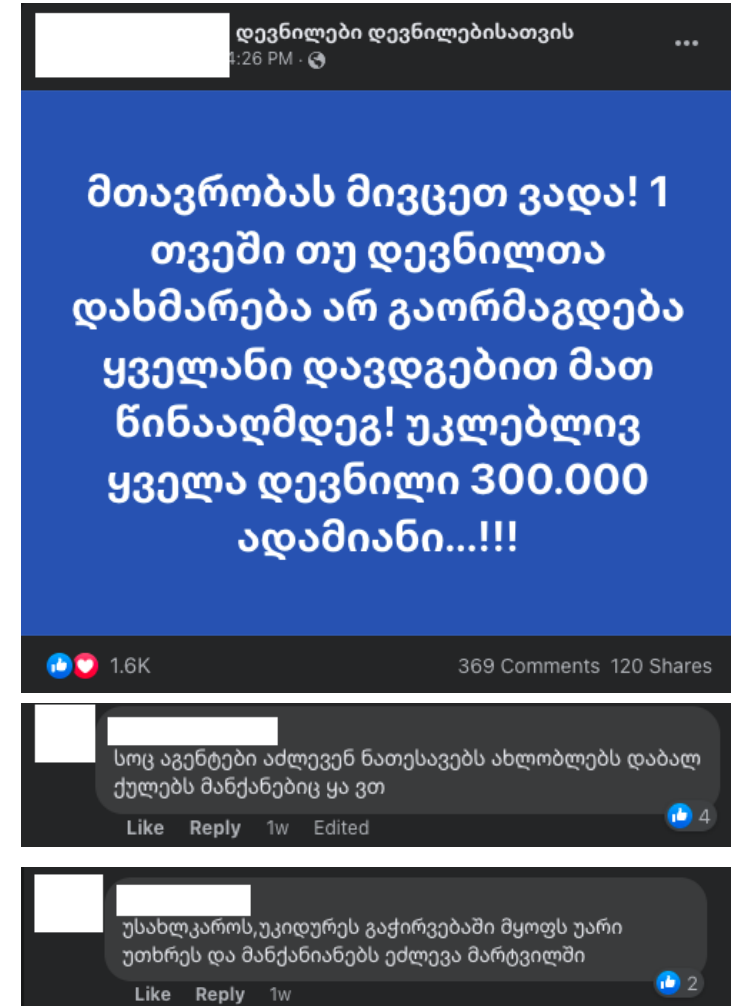
Other narratives: Low pension and social assistance

- **Insufficient state pension:** users commented that GEL 260 a month was not enough to buy food and medicine. People challenged members of government to try to survive on such a low income. The users also underlined increasing prices of food and other goods which are making the lives of pensioners even more difficult.
- **Popular vouchers for pensioners:** the Mayor of Tbilisi issued a 500 GEL voucher for socially vulnerable pensioners. People demanded that this kind of assistance should be available in other regions of the country as well.
- **Welfare fraud:** some isolated comments supported the idea of terminating social assistance. According to them, healthy and able people are consciously avoiding working to keep receiving social assistance, while the ones who really need the assistance are not getting any.



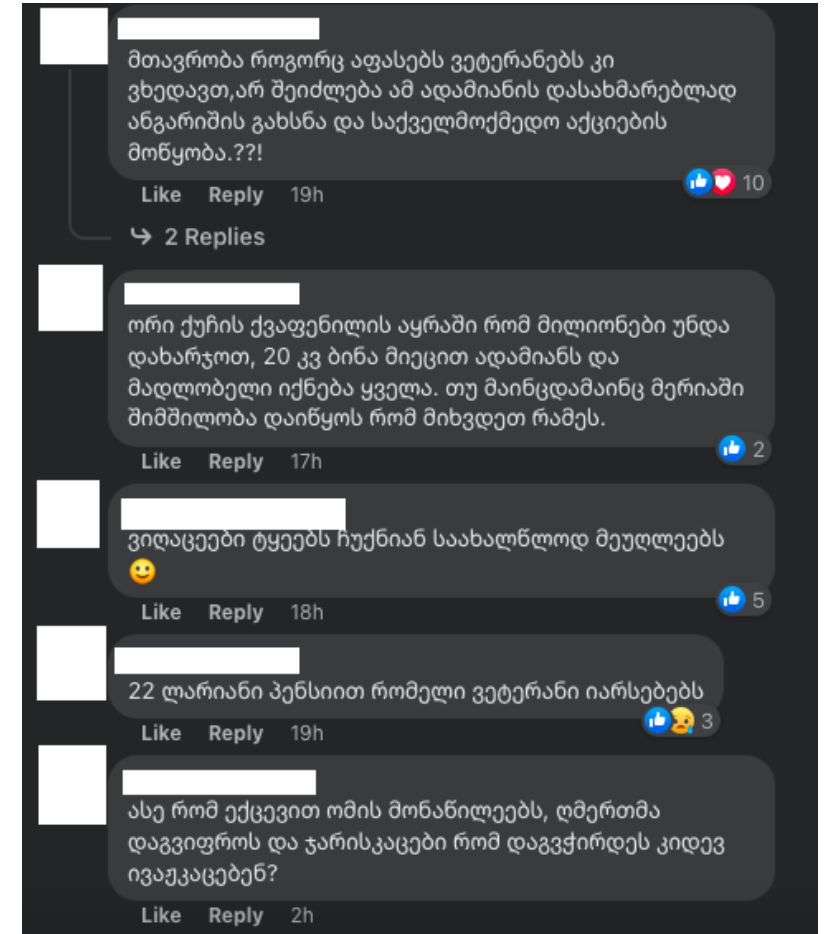
Other narratives: social assistance and IDPs

- **Insufficient support for IDPs:** people agreed that IDPs should be provided with proper living conditions and that their social assistance should be increased.
- **Some criticism of IDPs:** some people expressed their frustration that some IDPs own up to 3 houses and they should not be complaining.
- **Government connections necessary:** many commenters believed that you need to have private connections to someone in the Government in order to get proper dwelling place.
- **Assistance not reaching those in real need.** A significant number of people agreed that social agents are giving social assistance to people who are not socially vulnerable, while homeless and people living in extreme distress are not getting any help.



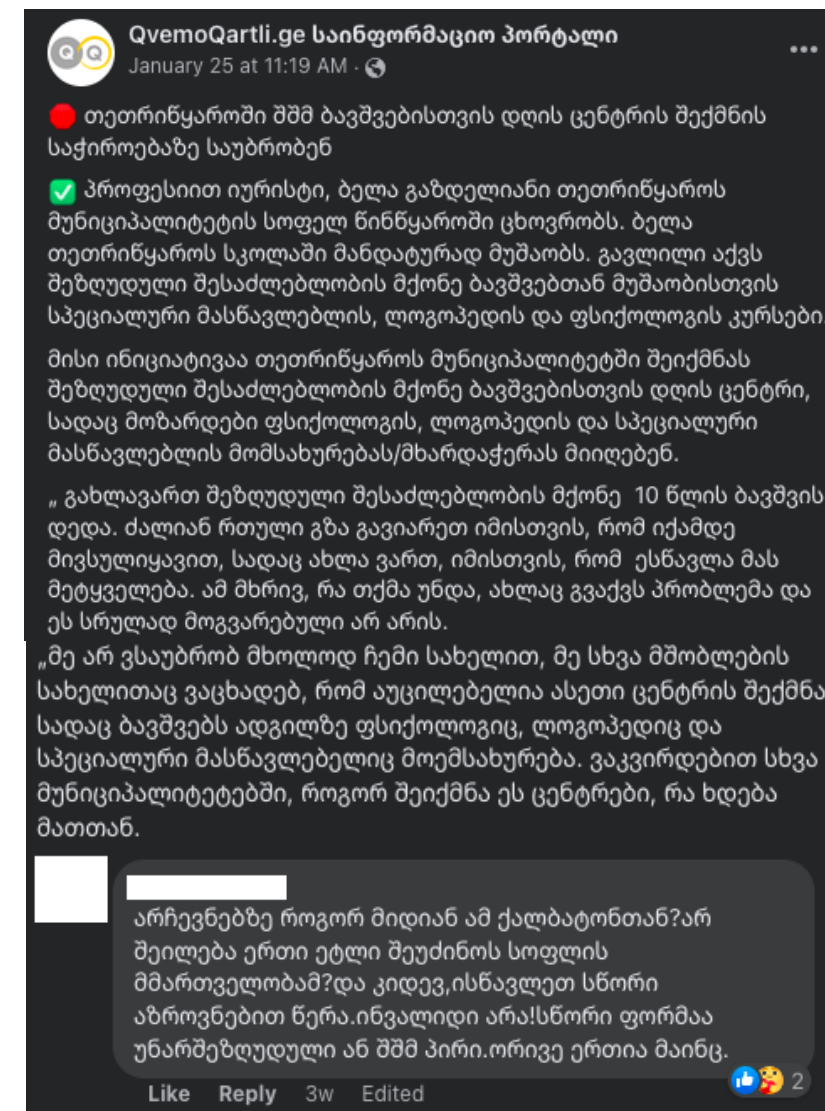
Other narratives: social security

- **Inadequate support for war veterans:** one news outlet published a story about the August war veteran who lives in a landfill. For 14 years, even after numerous investigations, letters, appeals, he has not been able to get a military pension. Users criticized the government for the lack of appreciation for veterans and demanded proper housing conditions and pensions for them.
- **Insufficient support for disabled veterans:** disabled veterans are asking for help to increase the assistance, which amounts to 22 GEL. Veterans in the relevant groups have strongly criticized the Veterans' Cases State Department, which they say is doing nothing to alleviate their daily lives.



Other narratives: social security

- **Need for rehabilitation centers:** parents of people with disabilities living in different regions of Georgia (Kvemo Kartli, Ozurgeti) talked about the importance of having rehabilitation centers. Quote: "Teachers in kindergartens and schools have no experience working with children with disabilities"
- **The need of electric wheelchairs:** a few users on different posts demanded support from the Government to provide disabled persons with electric wheelchairs.



Audience segmentation

During the listening period, six different key groups were identified:

- **Sick people** who expressed their concerns in public groups and different media outlets.
- **Healthcare professionals** who criticised the government for mismanagement of the pandemic.
- **Government supporters** who were justifying everything that the Georgian government does.
- **Parents of disabled persons** who advocated the needs of their children on social networks.
- **IDPs** who demanded proper living conditions.
- **War veterans** who voiced their concerns in different groups.



Most active Facebook groups and pages

- ჯანმრთელობა / ექიმები - **834.9K members**
- მედიკი / Medguide + - **111.0K members**
- მცოდნე დედები - MomsEdu.ge - **107,605 Followers**
- ხალხური მედიცინა - **98.3K members**
- დავეხმაროთ მოხუცებს - **38.9K members**
- დევნილები დევნილებისთვის - **37.6K members**
- მშობლის სკივრი • Mshoblis Skivri - **27,080 Followers**
- □მა - **19,650 Followers**
- სოციალურად დაუცველების, მრავალშვილიანების და შშმ პირების საინფორმაციო ჯგუფი - **17.8K members**
- ომის ვეტერანები - **7.8K members**
- კოალიცია "სოციალური რეფორმებისათვის" /Coalition For "Social Reforms" - **3,138 Followers**

Influential Voices – who are the most-followed accounts talking about health and social security?



Medical Doctor

<https://www.facebook.com/pkhakadze>



Medical Doctor

<https://www.facebook.com/giorgi.ghogoberidze.7>



Allergist/Immunologist.

<https://www.facebook.com/bidzina.kulumbegov>



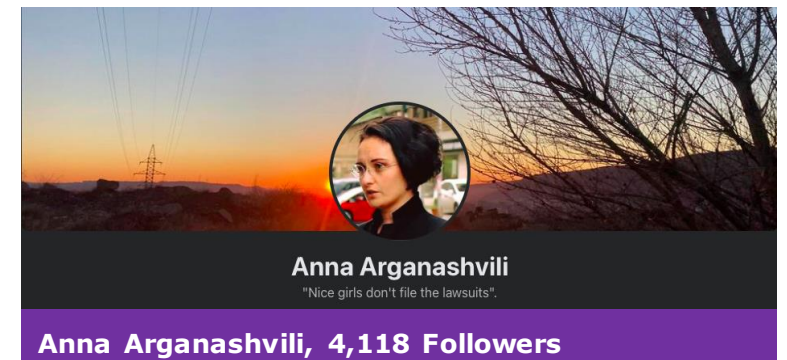
Human rights activist

<https://www.facebook.com/LashaMeskhii>



Doctor/Immunologist

<https://www.facebook.com/archil.marshania>



Human Rights Lawyer

<https://www.facebook.com/abashidze86>

Appendix

- All data in the report was taken from 17th January to 10th February 2022.
- Quantitative analysis of audiences is not possible due to the characteristics of the data.

