Taking Georgians’ pulse

Findings from February and March 2022 Surveys, and March 2022 Focus Groups

Carried out for NDI by CRRC Georgia

Research is funded by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland through the foreign, commonwealth and development office’s good governance fund.
RESEARCH GOALS

➢ To foster the development of more responsive policies and governance;

➢ To help stakeholders diagnose and address top national concerns and priorities;

➢ To help stakeholders identify impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Georgia.
FEBRUARY POLL
❖ Fieldwork dates: February 3 – 15
❖ 2,036 completed interviews (18% response rate, according to AAPOR standards)
❖ The average margin of error is +/- 1.8%

MARCH POLL
❖ Fieldwork dates: 9–20 March 2022
❖ 2,024 completed interviews (18% response rate, according to AAPOR standards)
❖ The average margin of error is +/- 1.6%
❖ Note: the margin of error is different for every response
❖ Shift from face-to-face to telephone method might affect a change on historical slides.

MARCH FOCUS GROUPS
❖ Fieldwork dates: March 15 – 22
❖ Tbilisi, Batumi, Telavi, Zugdidi, Akhalkalaki and Marneuli
❖ Two groups in each city: 18–28 y/o; 45+ y/o
❖ Conducted on Zoom.

SAMPLE
❖ Interviews were conducted on mobile phones
❖ Simple random sampling method was used. Respondents were selected using the random-digit-dial method
❖ Interviews were conducted in Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian
❖ The poll is representative of entire Georgian population (excluding the occupied territories). In addition, the poll is representative of the capital, urban and rural settlements

Quality control
❖ All interviewers receive special training
❖ CRRC central office coordinators conduct quality control interviews.
General mood
Country direction, leaders and institutions
Plurality say Georgia going in the wrong direction.
Majority remain politically undecided

Majority do not know or do not say which party is closest to them. Only 35% of citizens named a political party closest to them.

Declared support for individual parties is so low that they cannot be taken as a guide to the outcome of future elections.
Assessment of institutions remain the same, except for the president - her positive job assessment has almost doubled

Please tell me, how would you rate the performance of ... (q6)

- Good
- Average
- Bad
- DK
- RA

Prime Minister

President

Parliament

Army
Plurality content with Georgian leaders' response to the war

For each of the following, tell me how would you assess their response to the Russian invasion in Ukraine? (q26)

Data analyses show that President enjoys slightly higher support among female demographics, while Prime Minister’s likability is relatively lower among younger population and Tbilisi residents.

“PM’s statements were too rigid, rude and straightforward (about Ukraine). The President delivered the same messages, said what needed to be said but in a more gentle, diplomatic way.” – Tbilisi focus group participant, female, 27 y/o
Major (post-invasion) shifts in public perceptions in Georgia

#SlavaUkraini
Major (post-invasion) shifts in public perceptions

➔ Belief that Russia is a threat to neighbors increased;
➔ Belief in EU's economic and security benefits increased;
➔ Belief that Georgia will benefit more from abandoning west in favor of closer relationship with Russia decreased;
➔ Belief that Georgia should have closer economic and political relations with EU increased;
➔ Russia dropped on a list of Georgia's major economic and political partners;
➔ Belief that Georgia should cut economic ties with Russia increased.
Favorite foreign partners
Russian invasion strengthened belief that Georgia should have closer relations with EU, but limit with Russia.

After the Russian invasion, EU, USA and Turkey are top most desired political and economic partners for most Georgians.
Every second Georgian says Russian influence on Georgia has increased.
Russian influence is regarded as negative, while EU, NATO and US influence is perceived as positive.
European and Euro-Atlantic integration
Support for EU membership remains solid
After invasion, more people believe that EU will improve Georgian economy and security.
After invasion, more people think that Georgia has distanced itself from EU.

Which of the following statements do you agree with?
In the last 5 years ... (q10)

- Georgia has grown closer to EU: 29 Before invasion, 26 After invasion
- Georgia’s relationship with EU remains the same as before: 35 Before invasion, 24 After invasion
- Georgia has distanced itself from EU: 27 Before invasion, 36 After invasion
- DK: 9 Before invasion, 13 After invasion
Belief that Georgia will benefit more from closer ties with Russia decreased.

Younger citizens believe more strongly that Georgia will benefit more from European and Euro Atlantic integration.
Citizens across various settlements, age groups and political affiliations equally support Georgia signing EU membership application.

**Georgia's EU membership application**

On March 3 the Georgian government signed an application to join the European Union. Do you approve or disapprove of this decision? (q33)

![Chart showing approval and disapproval of EU membership application.](chart)
Support for NATO remains solid

“We must continue pursuing NATO membership. While the dictator Putin is in power, we will always be under threat” – Zugdidi focus groups, male, 27 y/o
After invasion, more people believe NATO will provide greater security to Georgia.

"Pursuit of NATO membership is the reason for all this mess. But I am hopeful that Russia will be forced to back off; and if it does, then everything will be as we wish". – Zugdidi, male, 59 y/o

If approve, why do you approve it? Up to three answers (q14) - Of those who approve joining the NATO

- It will provide greater security for Georgia
- It will improve Georgian economy
- It will strengthen Georgian defense capacity
- It will protect Georgia from Russia
- It will improve the chances to restore territorial integrity
- It will strengthen democratic development
- It will lead to visa free travel in NATO member states

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<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>April 2019</th>
<th>Before invasion</th>
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<td>It will provide greater security for Georgia</td>
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<td>It will lead to visa free travel in NATO member states</td>
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We must not stop pursuing NATO membership, but we must be careful. We must tread lightly. We must not be overly vocal and obvious about it, it’s dangerous”. - Batumi, female, 50 y/o

“We must fast track our integration in NATO. We must become NATO members as soon as possible”, - Telavi, male, 66 y/o

Majority believe NATO membership will help Georgia restore territorial integrity

There are different opinions regarding Georgia’s integration in NATO and EU. Do you agree or disagree with the following? (q12)

- Agree
- Disagree
- DK
- RA

As a result of EU integration Georgia will lose its national identity

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<th>Before invasion</th>
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If Georgia becomes NATO member, it will help restore territorial integrity of Georgia

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If Georgia joins NATO, there will be higher risks of Russia’s aggression towards Georgia

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Every second citizen believes Georgia will regain territorial integrity.

Younger demographic, Tbilisi dwellers and undecided voters are most skeptical about the prospects of regaining territorial integrity.

Thinking about 15 years from now, do you agree or disagree that Georgia will regain territorial integrity? (q17)

- **Agree**
- **Disagree**
- **DK**

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<th>Year</th>
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“It’s the economy, stupid!”
After invasion, more people think that Georgia should limit economic relations with Russia.
Half of Georgians approve of the government decision not to join sanctions against Russia

Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, countries across the world imposed a series of economic sanctions on Russia. The Georgian Government decided not to join the global sanctions against Russia. Do you approve or disapprove of Georgian government’s this decision? (q27)

- Batumi, male, 28 y/o
  “If we join Western sanctions against Russia, this will cause economic collapse for us, because we are very dependent on the Russian market. This is our government’s fault, because they failed to estimate risks and find alternative markets”.

- Zugdidi, female, 27 y/o
  “I think the government is being cautious. I don’t think our state is strong enough to impose sanctions, so they are choosing to avoid threats”.

- Tbilisi, female, 28 y/o
  “I don’t think we can or will terminate our economic relationship with Russia just like that. We must try and find new export and import partners first. It’s ridiculous that we are so much dependent on one country, we should at least have some alternatives”.

Approval: 49
Disapproval: 37
DK: 14
RA: 1
GD supporters and older citizens more likely to approve not joining economic sanctions against Russia

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, countries across the world imposed a series of economic sanctions on Russia. The Georgian Government decided not to join the global sanctions against Russia. Do you approve or disapprove of Georgian government’s this decision? (q27 X Settlement, Age, Gender, Party closest to you)

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<tr>
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<td>55+</td>
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<td>Georgian Dream (22%)</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<td>Opposition supporters (14%)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not name a party (64%)</td>
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<td>44</td>
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</table>
Russian invasion in Ukraine

#SlavaUkraini
Majority believe Russia is a major threat to neighbours

In your opinion, how much of a military threat, if at all, is Russia to its neighboring countries? A major threat, a minor threat or not a threat at all? (q18)

“I think Putin wants to restore the old glory of the Russian empire - Soviet Union,” – Tbilisi, female, 20 y/o

“I think Russia is trying to demonstrate that it still has a powerful leader, who can rule Russia and influence the political climate in Europe and in the West.” – Telavi, male, 21 y/o
Georgians are confident that war is Russia's fault

To the best of your knowledge, whose fault is the War in Ukraine?
Up to three answers (q29)

- Russia: 67
- Putin: 11
- USA: 9
- Ukraine: 5
- NATO: 3
- EU: 2
- Other: 2
- DK: 14
- RA: 1

“Russia is responsible for this war, Putin himself and his entourage. Also, all those countries who just voice their concerns but do nothing to help, those also share the blame” – Tbilisi, female, 27 y/o

“Russia and people in power are the only ones to be blamed. But I also see the responsibility of the USA and Europe. Just like in 2008, they push these small countries to provoke this tyrant [Russia] and then they leave them alone, and do nothing but impose sanctions and want to score points with this” – Tbilisi, male, 24 y/o
Georgians demonstrate strong support for Ukrainian people and their government

What is your overall opinion of the government/people of Ukraine? (q22, q23)

“I respect their unity, they came together as one, that’s what Ukrainian people are—exemplary. They know how to support each other, exemplary indeed!” – Batumi, female, 53 y/o

“They faced attacks with dignity, both the Ukrainian people and the government. People follow the government’s instructions and it’s very important as well.” – Tbilisi, female, 20 y/o
Georgians say EU helped the most

In your opinion, who helped Ukraine the most? Up to three answers (q28)

- EU / EU countries: 47
- USA: 36
- Georgia: 25
- UK: 21
- Turkey: 7
- NATO: 5
- Other: 12
- DK: 18
- RA: 1

“Small countries did whatever they could [to help Ukraine]. Bigger countries can do more. I think military help would be best to prevent Russia from causing so much damage.” - Tbilisi, female, 20 y/o

“From what I can tell, they (countries) are doing their best. I really didn’t expect so many countries rallying around for Ukraine and assisting Ukraine. I don’t think there is anything else they can do, realistically speaking.” - Telavi, female, 23 y/o
Russia and Russians
#slavaukraini
Georgians say #notall russians

Russian people viewed more favourably than Russian government

What is your overall opinion of the government/people of Russia? (q24, q25)

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<th>Government</th>
<th>People</th>
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<td>Favorable</td>
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Georgians say #notallrussians

What is your overall opinion of the people of Russia? (q25 X Settlement, Age, Gender, Party closest to you)

- National: Unfavorable 36, Favorable 59
- Capital: Unfavorable 40, Favorable 56
- Urban: Unfavorable 36, Favorable 59
- Rural: Unfavorable 33, Favorable 61

- 18-34: Unfavorable 44, Favorable 49
- 35-54: Unfavorable 34, Favorable 62
- 55+: Unfavorable 31, Favorable 65

- Male: Unfavorable 32, Favorable 62
- Female: Unfavorable 39, Favorable 57

Georgian Dream (22%): Unfavorable 28, Favorable 67
Opposition supporters (14%): Unfavorable 43, Favorable 56
Did not name a party (64%): Unfavorable 37, Favorable 57
Overwhelming support for introduction of visa regime for Russians

Currently Russian citizens don’t need visas for entering Georgia. Do you think Georgian government should introduce a visa regime for Russian citizens? (q34)
GD supporters, men and older citizens are more against introduction of visa regime, than others

“We should not turn them [Russians] away, because some Georgians are living in Russia who are providing for their families. If we turn Russians away, they might do similar to Georgians living in Russia.” – Tbilisi, female, 72 y/o

Currently Russian citizens don’t need visas for entering Georgia. Do you think Georgian government should introduce a visa regime for Russian citizens? (q34 X Settlement, Age, Gender, Party closest to you)

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Georgian Dream (22%)
Opposition supporters (14%)
Did not name a party (64%)
Future
Georgians don’t intend to live their country, but some have doubts about government’s ability to handle crisis.

Young people, Tbilisi residents and opposition supporters are more skeptical than others that Georgian government will make right decisions during a time of crisis.
Majority believe the war will negatively affect their family’s economic well-being.

Thinking about the War in Ukraine, how do you feel it may affect your and your family’s economic well-being? Economic situation of you and your family will ... (q31)
Majority expect economic decline, advancement of pro-Russian forces and Russian military aggression.

Younger demographic is expecting the worst. Tbilisi residents more worried about advancement of pro-Russian political forces.
Research is funded by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland through the foreign, commonwealth and development office’s good governance fund.

NDI-CRRC POLLS AVAILABLE AT:

➔ [WWW.NDI.ORG/GEORGIA-POLLS](http://WWW.NDI.ORG/GEORGIA-POLLS)
➔ [WWW.CAUCAUSUSBAROMETER.ORG](http://WWW.CAUCAUSUSBAROMETER.ORG)