



## **Monitoring pro-Russian propaganda on Belarus state television**

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# Objectives and methodology

## 1. Monitoring objectives and methods:

The principal objective of the monitoring is to ascertain and document the existence, extent, content, and format of pro-Russian (including anti-Western and anti-Ukrainian) propaganda on major Belarusian state-run television channels, along with its disseminators and transmitters.

The monitoring results should assist in either confirming or refuting the hypothesis that the leading state TV channels of Belarus present a media image of reality that is heavily influenced by the "Russian world" ideas. Additionally, they should demonstrate how this media landscape has evolved compared to previous studies.

The monitoring was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

**For a detailed description of the methodology, see:**

[https://baj.media/sites/default/files/analytics/files/2023/monitoring\\_baj\\_1.pdf](https://baj.media/sites/default/files/analytics/files/2023/monitoring_baj_1.pdf)

The Belarusian Association of Journalists conducted comparable studies between 2018 and 2021, which permits a comparison of the results and the identification of trends in the broadcasting of state television. It is important to note that the preceding studies were conducted before the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine.

## 2. The monitoring period is from February 1st through February 29th

- February 1st through February 4th—testing period;
- February 5th through February 29th—main phase.

The monitoring was timed with the designated Single Voting Day in Belarus, which encompassed the elections of deputies to the House of Representatives and local councils. However, unlike in previous election campaigns, the BAJ did not conduct monitoring of media coverage of the elections. This is a process whereby the allocation of time and space by various media outlets to political forces, the manner of their representation in the media, and other related factors are measured. This was not done in the current election due to the severe suppression of dissent in the country and the lack of choice as such.

The BAJ examined the information policy pursued by the most prominent Belarusian state TV channels during this period, as well as the extent of pro-Russian, anti-Ukrainian, and anti-Western propaganda disseminated by these channels during the election campaign.

In addition to the elections in Belarus, the monitoring period encompassed some other events of varying significance, subject to active coverage and commentary in the Belarusian state media. These include:

- The meetings between Aliaksandr Lukashenka and heads of various Belarusian agencies and departments, as well as heads of Russian provinces;
- Russian President Vladimir Putin's interview with U.S. political commentator Tucker Carlson;
- 30th anniversary of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan;
- Steadfast Defender 2024 NATO exercise.

### 3. During the monitoring period, the following indicators were determined:

#### 3.1. The proportion of television products produced in Russia or with its participation in the prime time broadcasting of Belarus 1, All-National TV (ONT), and Capital Television (STV) channels.

To achieve this objective, the total number of programs broadcast during prime time (between 7 pm and 12 am) on each channel was calculated, as well as the number of Russian programs and the duration of their broadcast.

All programs (news, movies, talk shows, sports, concerts), including those that commenced or concluded outside the designated prime time period, were considered, irrespective of whether they fell within the aforementioned timeframe.

Additionally, the duration of these programs during prime time was quantified in minutes.

#### 3.2. The presence of a Russian agenda in Belarusian state TV channels, which occupy the first three positions in the essential package of publicly available TV programs and are state-financed (Belarus 1, ONT, STV), represents a noteworthy phenomenon.

The following shows were monitored:

- **Evening newscasts on Belarus 1 TV channel:**
  - Mon-Sat "Panorama" (9 pm);
  - Sun "The Main Broadcast" (9 pm).

- **Evening newscasts on the All-National TV (ONT) channel:**  
Mon-Fri "Our News" (8:30 pm);  
Sat "Depends on Perspective" (8 pm);  
Sun "Our Time" (8 pm).
- **Evening newscasts on the Capital TV (STV) channel:**  
Mon-Sat "24 Hours" (7:30 pm);  
Sun "The Week" (7:30 pm).

All pieces, including those featuring Russian political actors or news items related to Russia, were recorded, regardless of whether they concerned Belarusian-Russian relations (including those related to sports, culture, or incidents). Their number and duration were calculated. The inclusion of such materials in the announcements was also considered.

### **3.3. Presence of messages associated with pro-Russian (anti-Western, anti-Ukrainian) propaganda.**

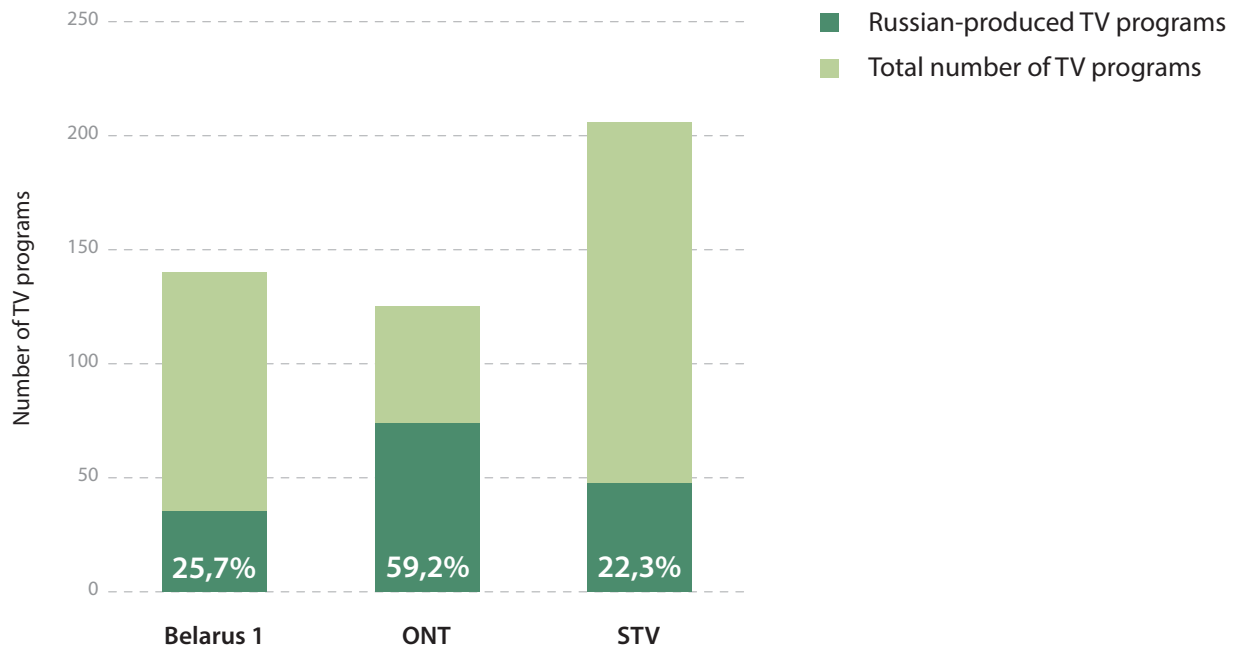
The list of messages was open. Each of the monitors independently identified and recorded the messages to be registered within monitoring. Where necessary, approaches to message qualification were discussed and adjusted.

Among others, pro-Russian propaganda messages were recorded that did not directly name Russia or Belarus (for example, about the "decaying hostile West", the war in Ukraine, the opposition labeled as the West's retainers, the threat to the Union State of Russia and Belarus, etc.), but obviously promoted Russia's narratives or similar narratives of the Belarusian authorities.

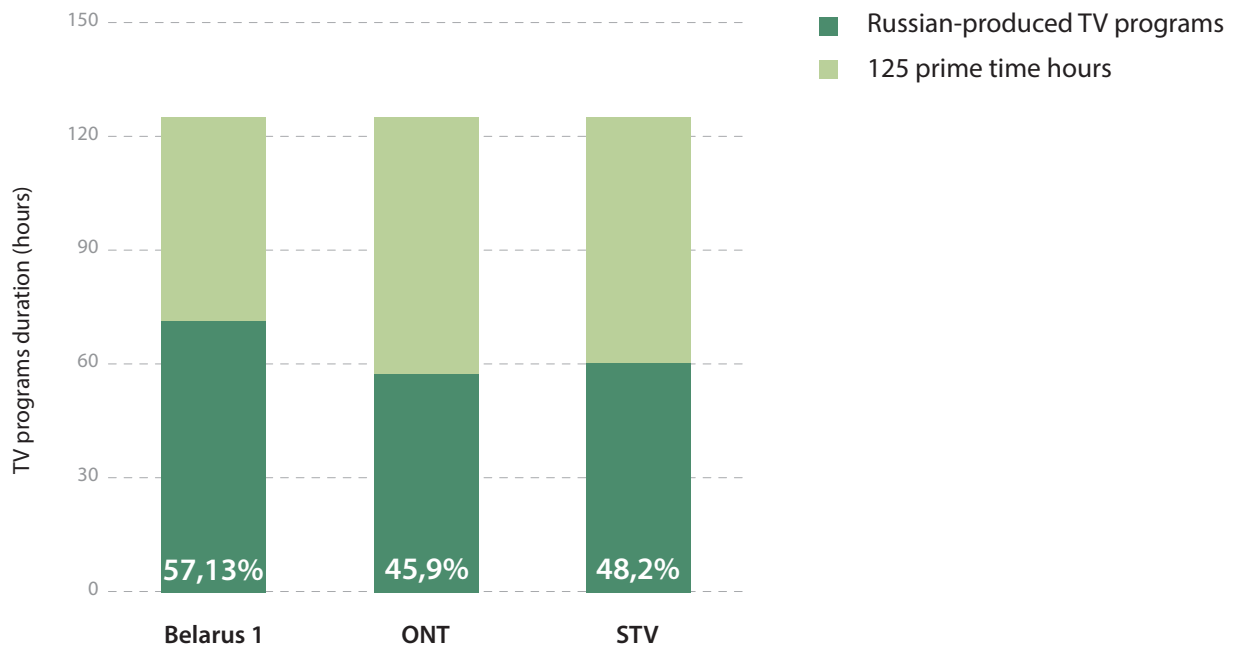
# Key monitoring results

1. The proportion of TV products produced in Russia or with its participation in the prime time broadcasting of the three Belarusian state TV channels included in the essential publicly available package:

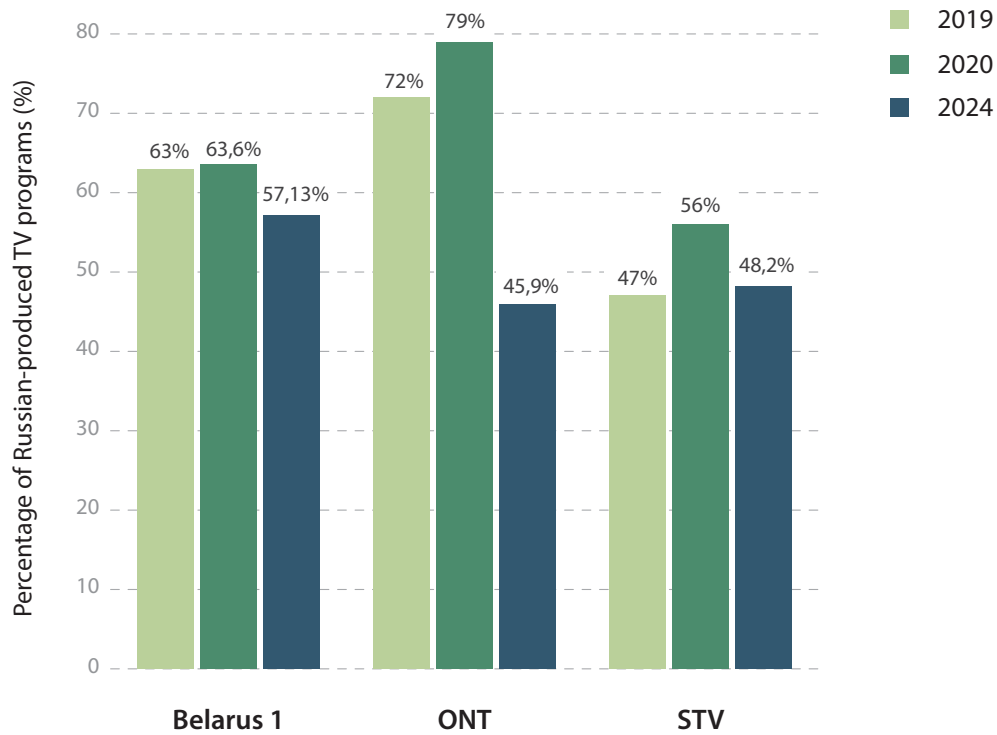
1.1. Number of prime time broadcasts of Belarus 1, ONT, and STV channels of television products produced in Russia or with its participation.



1.2. Duration of prime time broadcasts of Belarus 1, ONT, and STV channels of television products produced in Russia or with its participation.



### 1.3. Comparison of 2019, 2020, 2024 prime time Russian programs, %.

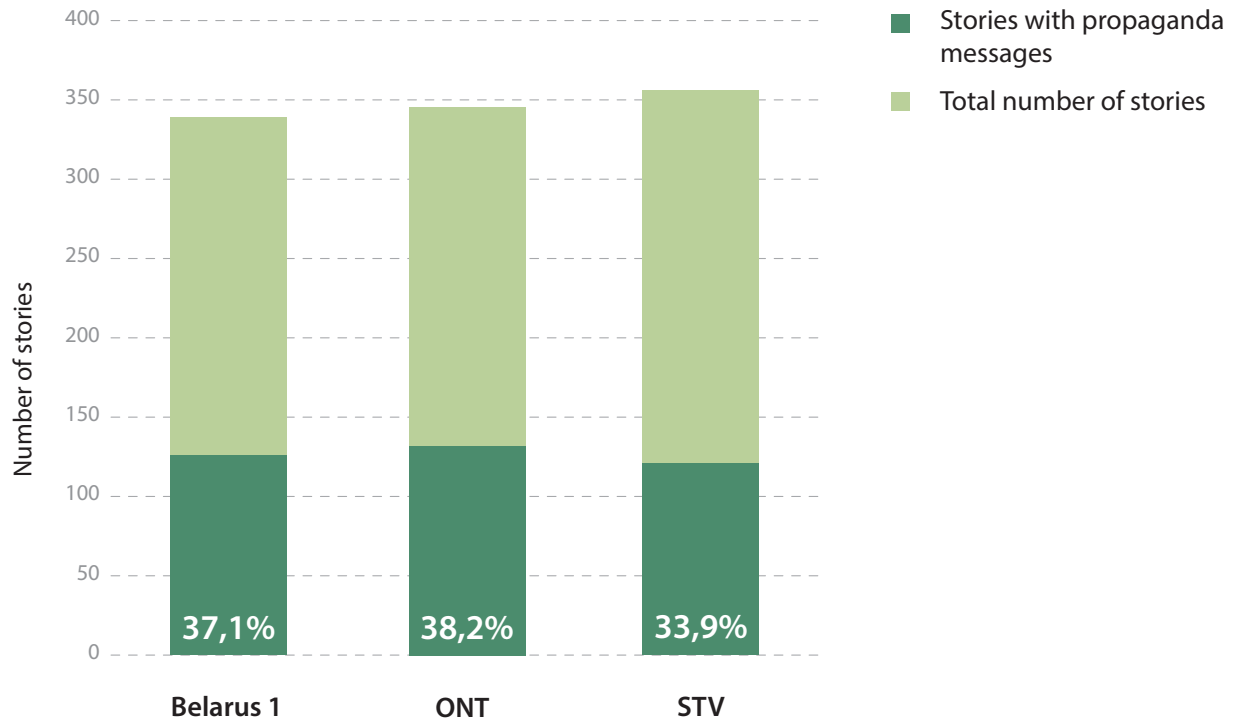


#### Findings:

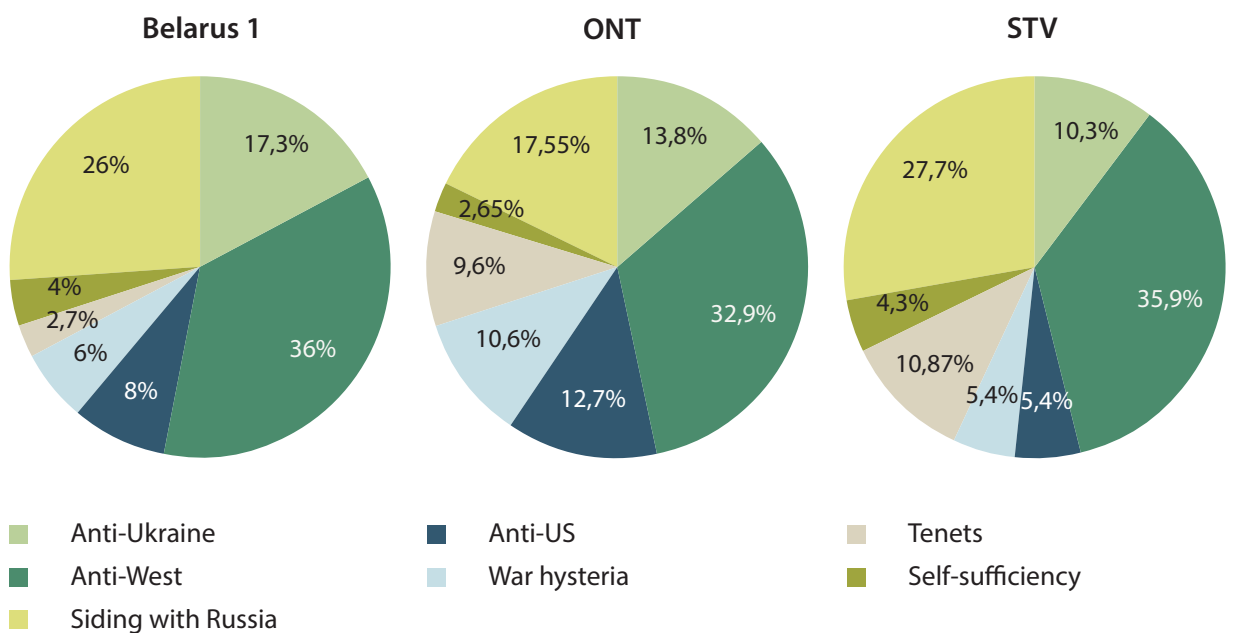
1. Russian-made programs continue to account for a significant portion of the content broadcast by Belarusian TV channels. This has an undeniable impact on the information security of the Republic of Belarus.
2. Contrary to popular belief, these numbers have declined in recent years.

## 2. Pro-Russian and anti-Western propaganda in the evening newscasts on Belarus 1, ONT, and STV:

### 2.1 Number of propagandist reports and its percentage of the total number of report.



### 2.2 Share of stories with propaganda messages as a percentage of the total number of stories.





## 2.3 Number of stories with specific propaganda messages and their share in the total number of stories with propaganda messages.

	<b>Belarus 1</b>	<b>ONT</b>	<b>STV</b>
<b>Total number of stories with propaganda messages</b>	126	132	121
Anti-Ukraine	26 (17,3%)	26 (13,8%)	19 (10,3%)
Anti-West	54 (36%)	62 (32,9%)	66 (35,9%)
Anti-US	12 (8%)	24 (12,7%)	10 (5,4%)
War hysteria	9 (6%)	20 (10,6%)	10 (5,4%)
Tenets	4 (2,7%)	18 (9,6%)	20 (10,87%)
Self-sufficiency	6 (4%)	5 (2,65%)	8 (4,3%)
Siding with Russia	39 (26%)	33 (17,55%)	51 (27,7%)
<b>Total number of propaganda messages*</b>	150	188	184

\* With multiple messages per story possible.

\*\* Leaders for each position are highlighted in **green**.

## 3. Summary table "West vs East":

	<b>Belarus 1</b>		<b>ONT</b>		<b>STV</b>	
<b>Total number of propaganda messages</b>	150		188		184	
Anti-Ukraine / % of all stories (188)	17,3%	67,3%	13,8%	70,2%	10,3%	57%
Anti-West, Anti-US	44%		45,7%		45,7%	
War hysteria	6%		10,6%		5,4%	
Tenets, Self-sufficiency	6,7%	32,7%	12,2%	29,7%	15,2%	42,9%
Siding with Russia	26%		17,55%		27,7%	

\* Messages with a Western orientation are highlighted in **green**, while those with an Eastern orientation are highlighted in **blue**.

## Main messages of pro-Russian, anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western propaganda:

### Anti-Ukraine:

Advertisement—Unified Voting Day:

**"They made their choice (footage of war and devastation), now it is your turn to make yours (footage of prosperity). Do you want that kind of democracy?"**

1. Ukraine is in a state of chaos, and the struggle for power and money is intensifying. It's been ten years since the Maidan riots, and the country has really fallen apart.
2. The war in Ukraine is the West's war against Russia. The West is pushing for the continuation of the fighting in Ukraine while it is itself in decay.
3. Ukraine is losing Western support. Supporting Ukraine is becoming increasingly controversial in the West.
4. Ukrainian security services recruit our people for sabotage in Russia.

### Anti-West:

1. Continuing military actions in Ukraine, the Middle East, and other countries is initiated by the West.
2. The West interferes in the affairs of sovereign states and manipulates "human rights."
3. European politicians are out of touch with their people; anti-Russian sanctions and support for Ukraine are a blow to Europeans themselves.
4. The West's plan for the partition of Belarus after the defeat of Russia.

### Anti-US:

1. The USA only cares about world power.
2. Americans are to blame for the war in Ukraine.
3. The USA diverges from Europe.
4. America is in decay.
5. There really isn't any freedom of speech in America.
6. The President of the United States is old and incapacitated.
7. The US State Department and special services, with the participation of other Western countries, have developed and are implementing a long-term strategy to destabilize the situation in Belarus.
8. Israel and the US are killing people in Gaza.

### **War hysteria:**

1. Belarus is dragged into the war.
2. NATO is clanking tracks near our borders. We are compelled to respond appropriately.
3. The West, the Security Service of Ukraine, and the fugitives want to seize our lands; fugitives long for Russia's defeat in the war with Ukraine.
4. Our war doctrine is defensive, but we are prepared to strike back at the West. The enemy shall not pass.
5. We have nuclear weapons, and Europe is afraid of us.
6. Moscow has not attacked anyone but will defend itself with nuclear weapons.

### **Tenets (USSR, self-sufficiency):**

1. Preserving history, restoring justice.
2. The countries of the former Soviet Union should come closer together. A shared glorious past.
3. Our young people do not need Western education.
4. Thriving in the face of sanctions.

### **Siding with Russia:**

1. When we're united, sanctions don't matter.
2. We're always going to be aligned with Russia, and in this position, we can hold our own against any opponent.
3. Russians are at home in Belarus. Common Fatherland—from Brest to Vladivostok.
4. The success of the Union State—a new civilization that will save the world—hinges on the outcome of the elections in Belarus.

# Key takeaways

1. The proportion of Russian agenda items in the evening newscasts of Belarusian TV channels was found to be smaller than in 2019–2020. This was observed both in terms of the total number of programs produced in Russia and the time of their broadcast in prime time. In general, the subject matter pertained to economic or sporting matters, with a notable focus on the topic of collaboration with Russian provinces.
2. Concurrently, numerous materials exhibited pro-Russian narratives. The primary focus was on the subjects of war, the stance towards Ukraine, and the relationship with Western countries. Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to assume that these narratives are merely a reiteration of pro-Kremlin propaganda. Rather, they are the narratives of the Belarusian authorities, which, while sharing similarities with the aforementioned propaganda, also exhibit distinctive "national peculiarities."
3. The personality cult of Aliaksandr Lukashenka is on the rise. He was presented as an experienced politician who not only preserved peace in Belarus but also tried to prevent a new world war.
4. The complicity of the Belarusian regime in the war against Ukraine is overlooked to portray the country as a peace-loving nation that does not engage in military conflicts. This is in contrast to the portrayal of Western countries, which are alleged to be seeking to weaken Russia and the Union State.
5. The war hysteria was fueled by the circulation of narratives concerning the proximity of NATO tanks to the Belarusian border, as well as the purported intentions of the collective West to invade the territory of Belarus (including from the territory of Ukraine and with the participation of "fugitives"). The collective West is accused of initiating the conflict in Ukraine and of having a vested interest in the war.
6. Western countries are depicted as experiencing a decline, failing to implement measures to support their citizens in the context of an economic crisis (which originated from supporting Ukraine and imposing sanctions against Russia and Belarus). European citizens have begun to challenge their governments, resulting in internal conflicts, with particular emphasis on farmer protests.

7. The United States of America is portrayed as the dominant power in the region, with Europe and Ukraine operating as its subordinates. Concurrently, news programs have been observed to engage in the practice of derisively critiquing the actions of a sitting US president.
8. The Single Voting Day was promoted with considerable enthusiasm. The primary messages conveyed by the elections in Belarus were that they were more democratic than those held in the West, that Western observers were not invited due to their apparent bias, and that the majority of Belarusian citizens support the incumbent authorities.
9. The sanctification of the Soviet past continued. Primarily, the theme of the Great Patriotic War, with particular emphasis on the genocide of the Belarusian people perpetrated by the Westerners (Germans) and Ukrainians. The war in Afghanistan was also glorified. However, the discourse of a shared historical legacy with Russia was less frequently articulated.