

# SECOND ROUND OF ELECTIONS IN MOLDOVA: INVOLVEMENT OF RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA



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The Institute for Conflict Studies and Analysis of Russia

**Comprehensive AI-powered media analysis**

## BACKGROUND

Media monitoring of the first round of the presidential elections in Moldova revealed numerous signs of a targeted information campaign by the Russian Federation aiming to affect the election results.

Discussions in Russian media, particularly on propaganda television channels and the Telegram platform, often featured sharp criticism of President Maia Sandu and her political course. The share of sources spreading propaganda reached 31%, twice the average figure.

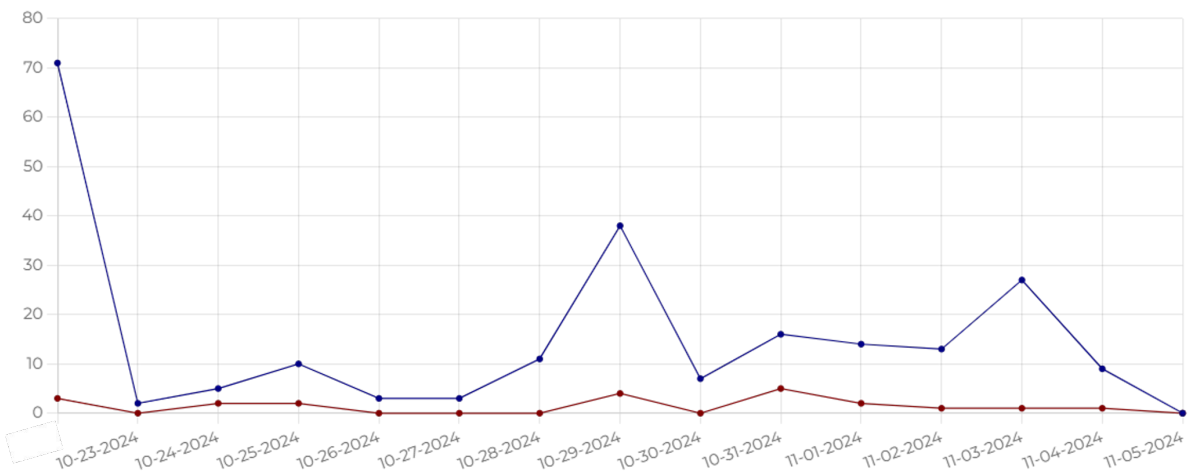
Between the voting rounds, Ms. Sandu also remained in the center of Russian propaganda's attention.

## DISCUSSION OF THE SECOND ROUND OF ELECTIONS ON RUSSIAN TELEVISION

In the period between the first round and the announcement of the results of the second round of elections, the Russian media continued the information campaign against Maia Sandu.

The graph of candidate discussions on Russian TV channels during this period shows that mentions of the current president (blue) far exceeded those of opposition candidate Alexander Stoyanoglo (red), often with sharp negative comments.

**Figure 1. Discussion of candidates on Russian television and the RuTube platform.**



The main narratives covered in Russian broadcasts regarding the elections and candidate Maia Sandu included topics such as:

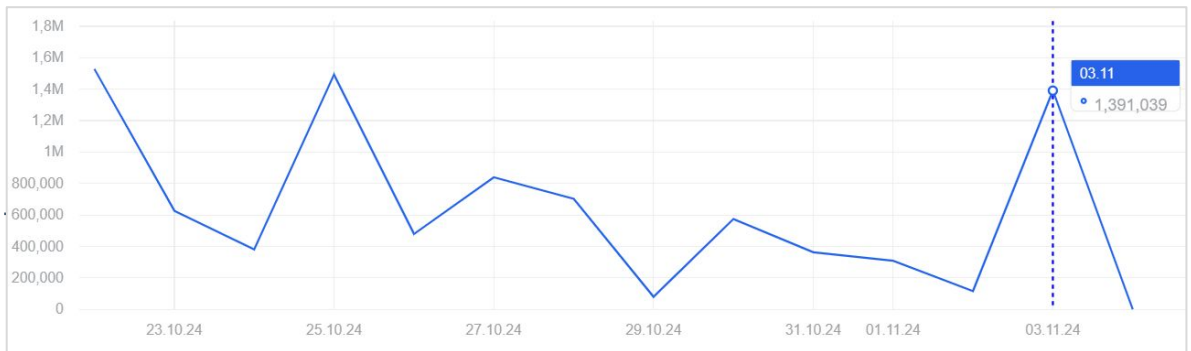
- the sale of land to foreigners
- denials of Russian interference in the Moldovan elections
- a referendum in the breakaway Transnistria region
- the assertion that Maia Sandu's victory would be "purely technical"
- repression against the opposition for criticizing the pro-European course
- and other issues.

## DISCUSSION OF THE SECOND ROUND OF ELECTIONS ON TELEGRAM PLATFORM

The Moldovan presidential elections sparked intense discussions in Russian social media between the first and second voting rounds. From October 22 to November 4, 2024, over 1,500 original posts appeared, drawing nearly 9 million views. Viewership peaked on election day and again on October 25, just before Georgia's parliamentary elections.

Notably, on Moldova's voting day, compromised sources made up over 26% of election coverage – a level nearly matching the rate on Georgia's election day.

**Figure 2. Views of Telegram messages about the elections in Moldova.**



Candidates Maia Sandu and Alexander Stoyanoglo were also frequently discussed among Russian Telegram users. Their criticism of Ms. Sandu and her pro-European stance mirrored the tone of Russian propaganda TV shows.

The graph shows three times more posts about Maia Sandu than Aleksandr Stoyanoglo. The peak of views fell on October 27, 2024 when the president introduced sanctions against Russia for the war in Ukraine.

**Figure 3. Number of Telegram publications about candidates Sandu and Stoyanoglo.**



*The active involvement of Russian propaganda and clear attempts to influence the presidential elections in Moldova indicate the significant attention Russia pays to efforts aimed at changing this country's geopolitical course. The share of propaganda and compromised sources involved in these actions sometimes doubles the average figures of other information campaigns and influence operations.*