

Religious Freedom Under Attack in Armenia



Parishioners protesting the arrest of Archbishop Ajapahyan outside Echmiadzin Cathedral
Photo by Grigor Yepremyan, PAN Photo via AP



Armenian Apostolic Holy Church Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin



Armenian Apostolic Church History & Culture

- ❖ First Christian Nation - Founded in 301 AD with the Armenian Apostolic Church
- ❖ Church Defending Faith and Country
- ❖ 1700 Years of Unbroken History Guarding Nationality and Culture
- ❖ Governed during a 600 Year Gap

Constitutionally Mandated Role of the Church

- ❖ Armenian Apostolic Church's Constitutionally Mandated Role is to Safeguard Armenia
- ❖ Articles 17.2, 17.2, and 18.1
- ❖ Strasburg International Case Law & ICC

Pashinian's Assault on Catholicos Garegin II

- ❖ Upon Election as Prime Minister
- ❖ Denial of Traditional Public Roles - Christmas and Anniversary of Genocides
- ❖ Following World Council of Churches Meeting May 30th Unprecedented Profane Verbal Attacks on Facebook (still present)
- ❖ Following Turkey's example - Pashinyan launches `coordinating council` to oust Catholicos
- ❖ On July 20, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan publicly announced his plan to convene a gathering with his supporters in the central square of Vagharshapat and to launch yet another assault on the Mother See.
- ❖ July 23, 2025 Pashinyan launched "Veharan is Great" Movement

Pashinian's Assault



Nikol Pashinyan / Նիկոլ Փաշինյան 

June 9 · 



Karegin II has violated his own voluntary covenant of celibacy and has a child. This is a fact, and if Karegin II tries to refute it, I will prove it in the necessary format. According to this, according to the Constitution of the Apostolic Church, Karegin II could not be a bishop, an archbishop, could not be elected, and could not be a Catholic; As a faithful follower of the Apostolic Church, as a man who enthusiastically treats every value, every relics, every image and stone of our spiritual heritage, I record: The Armenian Apostolic Church must have a newly elected Catholic whose benevolence will be verified and confirmed before the monarchy elections. I urge the faithful followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church to unite around the agenda of liberating the Vatican in love and Christianity and electing a truly holy clergyman to be Catholicos of All Armenians.

Arrest of Archbishops, Clergy and Church Supporters



- ❖ Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan Arrested June 25, 2025
- ❖ Archbishop Mikael Ajapahyan arrested over alleged coup plot - June 28, 2025

Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan arrested by Armenian National Security officers in Yerevan on June 25, 2025.
Photo by Melik Baghdasaryan via Reuters



Archbishop of Gyumri and Shirak, Mikael Ajapahyan arrested by Armenian National Security officers on June 27, 2025.
Photo by Grigor Yepremyan, PAN Photo via AP



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Human Rights Groups Speak Out

Human rights groups have been critical of the Pashinyan government's handling of the public protests led by Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan.

- ❖ Amnesty International,
- ❖ International Press Institute,
- ❖ Reporters Without Borders,
- ❖ Transparency International,
- ❖ International and Local NGOs

Pashinyan's Political Fall Out

- ❖ Pashinyan's erratic leadership and persistent demoralization of his electorate have left his approval in single digit 8-12 percent depending on the polling outcome), and even lower when factoring in the administrative apparatus and internal security forces under his control.
- ❖ Nepotism in Armenia has reached unprecedented levels, as loyalists with little to no relevant experience are appointed to lead key law enforcement and security agencies. These appointments have undermined the country's institutions, weakening their ability to serve the Armenian people effectively.
- ❖ Despite this overwhelming lack of public support, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of Armenia remain firmly under his control, with no meaningful challenges to his rule.



PM Nikol Pashinyan, photo via Oragark



Police Apparatus

- ❖ Pashinyan has built a massive and well-funded police apparatus by luring thousands of young uneducated men from Armenia's villages, offering them highly attractive salaries and lifestyles in Armenia's capital and ratcheting up repressions against political opponents.
- ❖ Armenia's riot police force (known for its aggressive tactics against protesters) has seen growing budgetary allocations, further signaling the regime's commitment to silencing dissent.
- ❖ Public sector under Pashinyan remains highly corrupt. Both procurement fraud and outright theft of budgetary resources remain high, as inter alia reported by local investigative journalists. Ruling party Ministers and MPs receive hefty annual bonuses, putting additional strain on public finances.
- ❖ Pashinyan's plan to "reform" higher education has been widely criticised by the academic community and student bodies of various institutions of higher learning as a way to stifle dissent and gain an even tighter control of the system, by forcing the university boards under state control.
- ❖ Armenia is on the verge of being annexed by Azerbaijan, and its church is the only remaining pillar of resistance. It deserves our support in its fight against domestic tyranny and foreign aggression.

Pashinyan's Public Sector, Educational System, etc...

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Armenian Apostolic Church- Remaining Bastion of Resistance

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 - The church is the only remaining pillar of resistance. It deserves our support in its fight against domestic tyranny and foreign aggression.