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A RISK ASSESSMENT FOR ARMENIA'S 2026 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

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Executive Summary

The parliamentary elections scheduled for June 7, 2026 represent a critical juncture for the Republic of Armenia. They will be the first regular national elections since 2017, and follow two snap elections triggered by constitutional crises in 2018 and 2021. The legacies of the 2018 democratic revolution and the 2020 war with Azerbaijan, including the subsequent domestic instability, remain central to political discourse in the country. Electoral competition is framed predominantly around two interlinked themes: the dichotomy between the incumbent authorities and the “former” political elites, and competing visions of national security and foreign policy orientation.

The Political and Institutional Context

Armenia’s political landscape is characterized by high polarization between the ruling Civil Contract Party and opposition forces associated with former presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan, including the Republican Party of Armenia, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, and the Armenia Alliance. This electoral cycle marks the entry of the Strong Armenia party, led by Russian-Armenian business tycoon Samvel Karapetyan, which is set to feature as the main contender and the center of gravity within the opposition. And while establishment actors mobilize along entrenched cleavages, a significant portion of the electorate remains disengaged.

Although the ruling party has maintained constitutional majorities at the national level, recent municipal elections have demonstrated that coordinated opposition forces can challenge its dominance. Persistent concerns about election integrity include misuse of administrative resources, opaque campaign financing, politically affiliated observer groups, and the prevalence of hate speech in politics and in campaigns.

The legal framework provides an overall enabling structure for democratic elections, including a proportional representation system with revised thresholds (4% for parties; 8% for alliances of two parties, 9% for three and 10% for alliances of more parties) and reserved minority seats. However, structural deficiencies in campaign finance transparency—particularly the delayed disclosure of party funding—create accountability gaps and elevate risks of illicit or foreign financial influence.

Foreign Policy and Regional Dynamics

Foreign policy orientation will be a central issue in the campaign. Public opinion remains divided among pro-Western, pro-Russian, and balanced approaches, with the majority favoring pragmatic engagement with both the West and Moscow. Since the 2020 war, Armenia’s cooperation with the EU has intensified, including the deployment of a civilian



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monitoring mission and the adoption of a Strategic Agenda framework. At the same time, opposition actors criticize the government's recalibration of relations with the Russia, with some advocating deeper integration initiatives.

The initialing of a peace agreement with Azerbaijan and normalization efforts with Turkey mark significant diplomatic developments. However, demands related to constitutional amendments introduce political sensitivities that could intersect with electoral dynamics. Polarization risks undermining informed debate on peace prospects and regional normalization.

Civic Space, Media, and Information Integrity

Armenia's civic space remains open in comparison to other states in the region, though civil society organizations face resource constraints, fragmentation, and politicization. Independent election observation missions generally retain strong professional reputations, yet face verbal attacks and competition from particular politically motivated groups.

The media environment reflects broad polarization. While Armenia ranks relatively high in press freedom indicators, financial vulnerability and donor dependency—particularly following reductions in international assistance—have strained independent outlets. Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) operations, attributed primarily to actors linked to Russia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey, have employed tactics such as cloned media platforms, coordinated inauthentic behavior, and AI-generated content. At the same time, the labeling of domestic criticism as “hybrid warfare” raises concerns regarding proportionality and the safeguarding of freedom of expression.

Domestic and External Risks

Key domestic risks include entrenched polarization, misuse of administrative resources, opaque campaign finance, hate speech, and the marginalization of socioeconomic policy debates. The ongoing tensions between state authorities and the Armenian Apostolic Church further complicate the institutional environment and raise constitutional questions.

Externally, intensified FIMI campaigns, potential foreign financial interference, and the politicization of constitutional reform related to the peace process may affect electoral integrity and public trust.

Strategic Considerations

To mitigate these risks, sustained emphasis on the rule of law, institutional integrity, transparent campaign finance mechanisms, and proportionate responses to hybrid threats is essential. International partners should calibrate electoral assistance to strengthen



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institutions rather than political actors, support independent oversight mechanisms, and reinforce civic resilience, particularly among youth and recently naturalized citizens.

The 2026 elections will test Armenia's capacity to consolidate democratic procedures under conditions of geopolitical flux and domestic polarization. Their conduct and aftermath will significantly shape the country's democratic trajectory and regional positioning over the coming five-year period.

Report

Armenia is approaching the 2026 Parliamentary elections in a state of polarization. These will be country's first regular national elections since 2017. In 2018 and 2021, elections were triggered after constitutional crises—the first by a mass democratic revolution and the second by a paralysis after defeat in the war that resulted in an attempted military coup. The causes of the two junctures—the issue of the “formers” (opposition led by former presidents) versus incumbents, and the country's national security—will play a key role in debates ahead of the elections.

The Political Landscape

These overarching themes largely define most other policy preferences along their lines of cleavage. Those policies, which are highly relevant for the upcoming contest, include but are not limited to Armenia's foreign policy between Russia and West, normalization of relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, the role of Armenian Apostolic Church and church-state relations, the independence of the judiciary, and law enforcement. While establishment parties—the ruling Civil Contract Party, the opposition Republican Party of Armenia led by former president Serzh Sargsyan, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and Armenia Alliance led by former president Robert Kocharyan and their proxies—mobilize along these lines of polarization and therefore exacerbate the situation, the majority of population remains apathetic and disengaged from political processes. This electoral cycle marks the entry of the Strong Armenia party, led by Russian-Armenian business tycoon Samvel Karapetyan, which is set to feature as the main contender and the center of gravity within the opposition. Although the party distances itself from the former presidents and aims for a more balanced foreign policy positioning, its record of relations and the origin of its capital draw the party close to the interests of former elites and Russia. Karapetyan's entry was triggered by his detention after he expressed support for the Armenian Apostolic Church in its conflict with the ruling party. Led and managed by his relatives and supporters, the party



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named the detained Karapetyan as its prime ministerial candidate even though his double citizenship disqualifies him—a legal impediment the party promised to override once it gained a constitutional majority.

The ruling party approaches the elections having dominated the legislature with constitutional majorities for two consecutive sessions, as well as with a significant control over the local administrations nationwide. Nevertheless, local elections in bigger cities including Yerevan have posed a bigger challenge to Civil Contract's dominance even if the party often received a plurality of votes. The snap municipal elections in Gyumri in March 2025 demonstrated that opposition parties, while not highly popular on their own, can surpass the more popular Civil Contract when they coordinate and act strategically. Based on that experience, one should expect opposition parties to run independently in the hope of outnumbering the ruling party after the elections. The experience of major municipal elections in the runup to the national one brings to light the practices of misusing administrative resources, the lack of transparency in finances, the biases of observer missions, the recurrence of hate speech, and other bad practices.

The August 8, 2025 initialing of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Agreement and the Memorandum on the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) have laid the groundwork for furthering Armenia's normalization efforts with Azerbaijan following recent military defeats and the forced deportation of the Armenian population of Karabakh in 2023. The agreements were further sealed by US Vice President J. D. Vance's historic visit to Yerevan and Baku and the bilateral advancement of relations with the United States in multiple strategic sectors. However, to finalize the peace agreement and establish diplomatic relations, Baku is insisting on a change to the Armenian constitution, a demand that many observers expect to be facilitated in a referendum in parallel to the parliamentary elections. Contrary to the ruling party's efforts to present the change to the constitution as a part of an internal process that predates Baku's demands and to avoid framing it as an externally forced step, putting the question on the ballot the same day as the elections appears premature. It not only risks undermining the ruling party's electoral bid, but also may cause the referendum to fail as well, thus torpedoing the peace process. Therefore, polarization risks undermining the healthy debate on Armenia's peace prospects. This similarly applies to the Armenia-Turkey normalization track.

The dialogue between Armenia and the EU has intensified in recent years. The turning point in these relations was in the fall of 2022, when Russia failed to meet the expectations of the government in terms of its allied commitments when attacked by Azerbaijan. This was followed by the deployment of the EU Mission in Armenia's provision of civilian patrol along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border. Building on the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, the sides have enhanced their commitments by adopting a strategic agenda for



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the EU-Armenia Partnership that widens the sectorial scope and depth of relations. The year 2025 was marked by the establishment of Security and Defense Dialogue between Yerevan and Brussels and the presentation of the Armenia–EU Visa Liberalization Action Plan to Armenia. As a response to a popular petition, in 2025 the Armenian Parliament adopted a law calling for the “start of a process of Armenia's accession to the European Union”, and even though such desires have been expressed at the highest political level, the law did not translate into tangible accession policies and steps. At Yerevan’s request, the EU has also committed funds to combat “malign influence” ahead of the 2026 general elections—just as it did for Moldova.

Armenia’s wider foreign policy or geostrategic orientation divides the pro-Western and pro-Russian electorates, with a majority favoring some form of balanced relations with both. Only 8% of the population favors an exclusively pro-Russian policy, according to the latest available [polls](#). The question is central in the pre-election debates. The ruling party and a few extra-parliamentary forces sympathetic to it will spearhead the campaign for an Armenian path to the Western community of states away from Russia’s crippling grip. While most opposition parties avoid rhetorical anti-Westernism, and Serzh Sargsyan’s Republican Party prides itself for signing the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with the EU in 2017 (after a failed bid for Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement in 2013), they criticize the ruling party for undermining the country’s alliances—first and foremost that with Russia. At the same time, Robert Kocharyan has supported the idea that Armenia should join the Russia-Belarus Union State, and forces aligned with his political stance have regularly echoed Russian talking points. Most of the establishment parties have come to terms with the loss of Karabakh or see regaining control of it as infeasible in the foreseeable future, and some are entertaining the right of the Armenian population to return. Similarly, most opposition parties, with the notable exception of former president Robert Kocharyan, while critical of its details and nuances, have largely accepted the TRIPP deal.

After the 2020 defeat in the Second Karabakh War, the Armenian Apostolic Church demanded the resignation of the prime minister, which led to an escalating standoff between the ruling party and the church. The authorities present the escalation against top Church figures as necessary to counter threats to national security, but critics argue that the measures amount to politicized policing and an infringement on the church’s independence. Responses are sharply divided: Supporters emphasize foreign interference, the opposition dismisses the allegations as unfounded, and civil society groups caution against political overreach. The ruling party’s campaign has largely remained limited to the ranks of party activists, failing to mobilize the broader public as it is often seen as a politically motivated campaign and not a genuine spiritual struggle. The tactics deployed in the crisis raise questions about the breach of executive powers over the security agencies and overall



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constitutionality of the state-church relations. At the same time, the church fails to address concerns and questions over its transparency. The Forum for Religious Freedom [condemned](#) these developments “as grave threats to freedom of religion or belief, a core human right enshrined in international law”. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [referred](#) to the situation as “a significant dispute between the state and the Armenian Apostolic Church” and expressed concern regarding the “tensions between the prime minister and the head of the Armenian Church, and by the reports of plots to usurp power by several clergymen belonging to the Armenian Apostolic Church”.

As a result of polarization, socio-economic, environmental, and human rights issues remain largely marginalized in political debates. However, traditionally, these topics have not been in the center of political or electoral debates, beyond occasional populist declarations.

Civil society remains robust, yet it is weakened by political polarization, limited financial resources, and stigmatization. Even so, [CIVICUS](#) rates Armenia’s civic space as “narrowed”, assigning it a score of 66 out of 100, far ahead all of its regional neighbors. According to CSO Meter, Armenia scores 4.8 out of 7. Its Freedom of Expression [score](#) increased, while the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly score suffered a decline.

The political polarization that has absorbed and dominated the political space risks making alternative parties and civil society irrelevant. Unable to find a constructive role in the mutually exclusive dichotomy of powers, civil society has lost its prominence as the pillar of democratic accountability. Internal debates among CSOs have led to fragmentation and politicization, dispersing the resources for effective opposition to authoritarian tendencies.

The Media Environment

Reporters without Borders [ranks](#) Armenia 34th globally, and it leads the index among the post-Soviet states outside the Baltics. The media landscape is a reflection of the political one. Struggling financially, media outlets are positioned along political lines and independent media have been facing a double struggle. Largely funded by international donors, those outlets have been struggling financially to adjust to USAID cuts and at the same time to deflect attacks from both ruling and opposition parties.

Independent media have been [spearheading](#) the struggle against malign information operations with investigative reporting and fact-checking. These operations spread fake corruption allegations against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s family, concession of territories to Azerbaijan, the cultural Turkification of Armenia, moral degeneracy, and the West’s manipulation of Armenia. Fact checkers have [identified](#) Doppelgänger (spreading false information from Western and credible-looking fake news site), Matryoshka (spreading



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through anonymous social media pages and amplified through bots), and Storm 1516 tactics (spreading artificial-intelligence-generated content and multilingual deepfakes via fake news websites) in these operations.

While the ruling party's MPs have recalled and used independent media publications to demonstrate Russia's hybrid warfare against Armenia, they also regularly engage in criticism of these outlets when their investigative and critical coverage targets them. The opposition, too, has a record of such criticism and targeted labeling of independent media. There have been and are FIMI operations against Armenia, and these will likely intensify closer to the elections. But the tendency to label criticism a "hybrid" attack justifying emergency measures calls for more scrutiny of protection of fundamental freedoms.

Political polarization has meant high voter [turnout](#) and [mobilization](#) in recent local elections. At the same time, local candidates of both the ruling and opposition parties have tried to distance themselves from the national-level leaders because of their highly toxic and discouraging effect. This is particularly manifest in the low turnout among the youth. In the parliamentary elections, polarization's double effect—mobilization of the dedicated and disengagement of the others—will be in a delicate balance. Thus, while polarization indeed mobilizes voters, it does so at the cost of constructive political debate and competition. It results in overwhelming reinforcement of oversimplified cleavages. In other words, it brings to the polling stations the support base of the key polarized groups in high numbers, but distances and disengages the median and majority of voters even further.

Hybrid threats in the form of FIMI have already begun and are expected to intensify as the elections approach. Russia, Azerbaijan, and increasingly Turkey (and sometimes these in concert) are the main influences exploiting societal insecurities and divisions. Their narratives and tactics very often overlap in their [targeting](#) of Armenia's relations with Western actors, inspiring a state of constant fear. Local and outside actors instrumentalize each other's narratives to galvanize support, thus deepening their effect. The mode of deep confrontation, which is falsely assumed necessary to address such interference, only creates more fertile ground for hybrid tactics to achieve their goals by deepening divisions and discouraging constructive participation. It also undermines efforts to combat FIMI, as polarized voters tend to reject any narrative that contradicts their own, undercutting the effectiveness of the work done by fact-checkers, civil society watchdogs, independent investigators, and law enforcement.

The Legal Framework and the Election Administration



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Overall, the existing legislation provides a generally enabling basis for the conduct of democratic elections. The electoral framework comprehensively regulates the administration of elections, voter registration, and voter identification procedures.

In the upcoming parliamentary elections, voters will elect at least 101 members of parliament through a closed-list proportional system in a single nationwide constituency, for a five-year term. To be represented at the National Assembly in mandate allocation, parties must surpass a 4% threshold of valid votes, while electoral alliances must reach 8% and higher thresholds depending on the number of parties involved. Recent reforms lowered the threshold for individual parties while raising it for alliances and reduced the level of the required financial deposit, measures intended to facilitate participation by political parties. In addition, up to four seats are reserved for the largest national minorities.

The constitution mandates proportional representation and a multiparty system. It requires the formation of a “stable parliamentary majority”, defined in the Electoral Code as 54% of parliamentary seats. If a winning list secures at least 50% plus one seat but less than 54%, it receives additional mandates to reach this threshold. If no party or alliance achieves a majority and coalition negotiations fail within six days after final results, a second round is held between the two leading lists 28 days after election day, with the possibility of forming new alliances limited to parties that competed in the first round.

In the context of the 2026 National Assembly elections, stakeholders—including voters, media representatives, civil society organizations, and election observers—will lack access to real-time information regarding the sources and structure of political parties’ pre-election financing. This information gap results from the fact that campaign expenditures will be **funded** exclusively through party accounts, with detailed financial disclosures deferred until the publication of annual party reports approximately one year later. Such a lag in transparency significantly weakens timely accountability mechanisms. By the point at which financial data are formally released, any potential influence of unlawful or noncompliant funding on the electoral process will already have materialized and will be irreversible. Absent legislative reform, upcoming elections will therefore proceed with a structural transparency deficit in at least one key domain: party and campaign finance.

This deficit may result in three concrete risks: a lack of public accountability mechanisms in case of foreign financial interference in favor of any of the candidates; a lack of transparency into the merger of business and political interests; and arbitrary and selective sanctions undermining rule of law.

First, late release of financial disclosure liberates ill-intended and even foreign illegal funding for a candidate’s campaign in the short term. A year later, when sources of funding become



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public, such candidates may already be in power and able to use their leverage to avoid political and legal accountability.

Second, this mechanism deprives citizens of the right to know what business interests are behind particular candidates. This not only hides a strategic piece of information but also leaves ample room for manipulations and conspiracies about other candidates' campaigns. The recent [changes](#) in party legislation that quadrupled the maximum amount of allowed donations detached from socio-economic realities on the ground only deepens such concerns and makes the issue of transparency and accountability ever more pressing.

Third, lack of universal and immediate mechanisms for financial transparency grants the executive control over the law enforcement and intelligence services, which can enforce rules of campaign financing selectively or arbitrarily. For example, it can prevent one candidate from running due to illegal funding, without presenting the sources of its own or other candidates' finances. The issue of fair playing field and accountability is especially important due to the well-documented [transgressions](#) by the ruling party and the lack of legal [consequences](#) for them.

Available modes of accountability are provided in an inaccessible way. Even though the Central Electoral Commission's Oversight Service (CECOS) publishes the candidates' declarations, the posts are scanned PDF files, which greatly hampers the process of their timely analyses during a time-sensitive pre-election period. Also, the lack of consistency, timeframe, and methodology of financial reports published by the CECOS and Corruption Prevention Commission undermine the efforts of independent watchdogs. Though the latest changes in the electoral code increase the state oversight competencies in monitoring campaign finance, sponsored campaigns on social media by pages not formally associated with parties remains [problematic](#).

Armenian electoral regulations do not allow the possibility of diaspora voting. While voters can travel to Armenia for election day, and some diasporas can be mobilized in an organized way to exercise their voting rights, such efforts face significant logistical and financial challenges.

Election Observation

Armenian civil society has established robust networks and systems of election observation. From a background of authoritarian electoral realities, it has developed a creative, proactive, professional and enthusiastic character that delivers high-quality election observation that is well received by European election-monitoring coalitions.



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Missions such as Akanates and Independent Observer cover not only election day, but the entire process, including the pre-election period, election administration, the campaigns, party financing, and beyond.

Even so, attacks against these groups from the ruling and opposition parties are not uncommon. In the leadup to the Yerevan mayoral race, Civil Contract's candidate, Tigran Avinyan, along with other figures from the ruling party's slate, **launched** verbal attacks and sought to discredit election observation missions, questioning their funding sources and alleging that they were engaging in manipulation.

Alongside objective and reputable independent citizen observer groups, politically motivated groups have also registered as observers in the last two local elections. These groups demonstrate strong interest in certain electoral outcomes, and they lack transparency and reporting. Armenia's electoral code obliges observers to maintain impartiality and neutrality, and not to publicly express biased positions or preferences. It is also **prohibits** observers to organize or conduct pre-election campaigns. Independent observers have brought violations of these norms to the attention of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), which failed to discipline them during recent local elections. However, this was followed by amendments further restricting the requirements for registering an observation mission and the principles of political neutrality.

Administrative Resources

Observers have repeatedly reported on instances of the improper **use** of administrative resources during national and **local** self-government elections. **Allegations** include last-minute financial allocations to address local issues, the inappropriate use of public broadcasters' airtime, pressuring or obligating employees of state and municipal institutions to attend campaign events, and organizing entertainment activities funded from public resources. Such practices provide an unbalanced and unjust advantage to the ruling party and its candidates, eroding the principle of equal competition and voters' ability to form opinions freely. Although existing legislation prescribes sanctions for the misuse of administrative resources, these practices persist in reality, and there is a significant risk that similar violations will occur during the upcoming National Assembly elections. The CEC and law enforcement bodies have been largely ineffective in combating these practices.

Hate Speech

Armenia's criminal code defines hate speech as "public speech instigating or propagating hatred, discrimination, intolerance, or hostility towards a person or a group of persons based



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on racial, national, ethnic, or social origin, religion, [or] political or other views”. Various reports highlight the dominance of [hate speech](#) in pre-election rhetoric from all sides, to such a degree and volume that its meaningful [monitoring](#) and reporting has become virtually impossible.

The 2022 decriminalization of “grave insult” removed a legal mechanism that could previously be applied to target critics of the authorities. At the same time, the governing party has relied on another instrument introduced through the 2020 amendments to the criminal code addressing hate speech that incites or legitimizes violence. Even though such normative regulations are designed to protect vulnerable groups, since its adoption, this provision has been applied predominantly in cases involving alleged calls for violence against the prime minister or those aligned with him. In practice, this provision has been regularly [invoked](#) in relation to statements perceived as advocating violence against the prime minister or his supporters.

Civil society organizations have raised [concerns](#) regarding instances of hate speech against Karabakh Armenians by the ruling party and its supporters and how their issues have become instrumentalized by the opposition. As of December 2025, 26,233 individuals from this group have acquired Armenian citizenship, including 16,919 adults. Though some politically organized groups from the refugee community have positioned themselves in opposition to the government, in the absence of evidence indicating distinct or cohesive voting behavior among this population compared to the broader electorate, their potential electoral impact appears limited. Assuming turnout rates comparable to the national average, those Karabakh Armenians who participate in elections would likely constitute approximately 3–4% of total turnout with votes dispersed across multiple political parties rather than concentrated in a single electoral bloc. These deems the effect of their vote largely free from specific results or expectations.

Conclusion

The June 7 elections are the first regular elections in almost a decade and the first after multiple crises. They come at a critical juncture for Armenia’s trajectory of development and democracy amid changes in the regional and international contexts. The high stakes of the elections are accompanied by numerous vested interests locally and internationally that may create risks.



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Domestic Risks

- political polarization undermining constructive debate and causing the majority of voters, particularly youth, to disengage, while also decreasing trust in institutions
- misuse of administrative resources to create unfair electoral advantages and deployment of undeclared financial and human resources of unknown origin.
- campaign finance opacity due to delayed financial disclosures, enabling potential illegal funding and lack of accountability
- hate speech in political rhetoric from all sides
- the state-church crisis raising questions about executive overreach and the constitutionality of security agency deployment
- the departure from strictly secularized politics due to the overt presence of politics in religious affairs and vice versa.
- the marginalization of socio-economic issues such as environmental, human rights, and economic concerns
- the risk of rising to economic populism if the agenda is hijacked by fringe political forces
- the instrumentalization and/or stigmatization of vulnerable populations, including the refugees and newly naturalized Armenians from Nagorno Karabakh during the campaign and voting

External Risks

- the intensification of FIMI operations from Russia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey
- interference in terms of explicit endorsements of various candidates by foreign governments
- hybrid warfare tactics exploiting societal divisions through deepfakes, fake news sites, and bot amplification
- pressure for constitutional change from Azerbaijan and maximalist demands in implementation of TRIPP
- foreign funding interference in campaigns, undetectable until post-election financial disclosure
- risks to the process of normalization with Azerbaijan and Turkey due to spillover of domestic populist narratives

Recommendations

- Systematically prioritize the role of democracy, rule of law, and human rights benchmarks within political dialogue frameworks and economic cooperation agreements, with clearly defined assessment and conditionality mechanisms.



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- Building upon achieved progress in the peace process with Azerbaijan and Turkey, institutionalize, consolidate, and advance durable frameworks for normalization processes with the two countries that withstand electoral cycle pressures and prevent backsliding.
- Provide technical assistance to develop institutional capacity for detecting and responding to FIMI, cyber, and financial threats during the electoral period. Support inter-agency coordination frameworks and partnerships with independent fact-checking organizations. Importantly, ensure that such mechanisms operate within legal frameworks protecting freedom of expression while enabling timely mitigation of disinformation campaigns and hybrid threats targeting electoral integrity.
- Direct capacity-building resources toward civil society organizations focused not only on election monitoring but also on long-term democratic accountability as central functions to counter civil-society fragmentation and reduce political polarization.
- Western partners should calibrate both the design and the communication of electoral assistance to minimize the risk of perceptions of foreign interference. Support should be transparent, institution-focused rather than actor-focused, and aligned with nationally identified priorities and legal frameworks.
- Support voter education initiatives for youth and other politically detached groups and vulnerable populations, particularly recently naturalized citizens including forcibly displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh, to facilitate meaningful electoral participation.
- Advocate for and support measures of tightening safeguards against circumventing political donation limits, including third-party expenditures and illicit sources and ensuring effective oversight and real-time accountability by the Central Bank and the Corruption Prevention Commission during the pre-election period.
- Advocate for and provide technical assistance to the electoral and oversight bodies to implement accessible, machine-readable reporting platforms for political party financial transactions and other reports.
- Improve and strengthen the recruitment and evaluation of election administration personnel, coupled with comprehensive training programs and independent oversight mechanisms to ensure technical competence and institutional integrity.
- Adopt steps to guarantee that the election authorities effectively and impartially fulfill their mandate to supervise the electoral process, including ensuring adherence to campaign regulations and the lawful use of administrative resources. Adopt clear and demonstrable measures to ensure the effective enforcement of existing liability provisions in cases of pre-election campaign violations.



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