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## **ARMENIA: PASHINYAN PUSHES PATRIARCH INTO CORNER**

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13.01.2026

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EurasineNet (9 January 2026)

A Church-State showdown in Armenia over government efforts to transform society and the economy may be nearing its denouement.

Since the start of the year, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has ratcheted up the pressure on his avowed political enemy, Karekin II, the patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church. On January 8, Pashinyan didnt mince words, vowing to oust the patriarch.

Karekin II has assailed what he describes as government persecution and has pledged to remain in his post as church leader.

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