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## ANALYSIS

# Joint activities of Armenian revanchist forces and representatives of the defunct illegal regime

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JANUARY 2025

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## Introduction

In recent months, significant activity has been observed among revanchist forces both within Armenia and abroad. These forces primarily aim to overthrow the current Armenian government and reclaim the Azerbaijani territories over which Armenia lost control in 2020 and 2023. It is noteworthy that the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) leads all efforts to foster revanchist tendencies within Armenian society. As a result of the measures taken in this direction:

- active support has been provided for maintaining the “state” institutions of the illegal separatist regime Armenia installed in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan during the occupation period (1991-2023)
- efforts to keep the Karabakh issue on the international agenda have gained support, driven by revanchist tendencies
- calls have been made to foster revanchist sentiments among the Armenian public

## Dashnaktsutyun’s Activities

In December 2024, a public organization called the “**Artsakh Defense Front**” was established in the United States with the goal of uniting Karabakh Armenians. The founding meeting of this organization took place in Los Angeles on December 31. During the meeting, the founders emphasized the necessity of creating a strong public organization to represent Karabakh Armenians, protect their interests, and amplify their voice at both local and federal levels in the United States.

**The organization stated its intention to undertake measures aimed at raising the Karabakh “issue” on the U.S. federal policy agenda and facilitating its discussion.** Additionally, it was noted that the activities of this newly formed organization would include preserving the identity of Karabakh Armenians, providing assistance to them, and addressing their problems.<sup>1</sup>

On December 30, 2024, **Ara Puluzian**, the head of the Dashnaktsutyun Central Committee of “Artsakh,” stated in an interview that **ensuring the operation of the defunct illegal regime’s so-called “presidential” and “parliamentary” institutions**

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<sup>1</sup> Aravot.am, The Artsakh Defense Front NGO was founded in the USA, 30 December 2024, available at: <https://ru.aravot.am/2024/12/30/444433/> (accessed January 5, 2025)

**remains a priority.** However, according to him, the Armenian government is actively working to counter this effort, allegedly attacking the former separatist regime and seeking to sow discord among Karabakh Armenians. Puluzian added that the current political agenda of “Artsakh” includes securing the rights of Karabakh Armenians and implementing their collective right to return. He highlighted that significant progress was achieved in 2024 in this direction, attributing these accomplishments to the efforts of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) and its offices. During the interview, Puluzian also addressed the activities of the Armenian diaspora. He stated:

The rights of Karabakh Armenians should not only be regarded as the rights of Karabakh Armenians but also as the rights of the entire Armenian people. Armenia, together with “Artsakh,” “Javakhk,” and “Western Armenia,” constitutes the homeland of the Armenian people. The struggle for the liberation of the homeland must become the collective responsibility of everyone. **Dashnaktsutyun has been at the forefront of the struggle for freedom for the past 130 years.** I will not hide the fact that this is highly valued by Karabakh Armenians, and no one can deny Dashnaktsutyun’s role in this matter.

Puluzian also mentioned that the structure of the Dashnaktsutyun Central Committee of “Artsakh” was reorganized in October–November 2023. He noted that party members from various regions of Armenia and Yerevan were actively involved in the organization’s work, with party operations centralized in Yerevan, where a sufficient number of groups had been established.

Puluzian added that they actively cooperate with local Dashnaktsutyun bodies. He continued:

**I am confident that our struggle will continue. There is no room for retreat.** Of course, there is psychological depression, but gradually our thoughts and actions are coming together. We cannot bear the mark of defeat forever—it can only be erased through struggle. I hope that in 2025, we will see positive changes in this regard. We could not welcome 2025 at home, but I wish that we celebrate 2026 in Revival Square in Stepanakert.<sup>2</sup>

**On December 18, 2024, an event was held in Tehran to mark the 134th anniversary of Dashnaktsutyun.** Participants included Vigen Baghumyan, a member of the

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<sup>2</sup>Aparaj.am, Only through struggle will the stigma of defeat be cleansed: Ara Puluzyan, December 30, 2024, available at: <https://aparaj.am/paykhari-mijocov-miayn-kmakhrvi-partuthyan-xaraneh%E2%80%A4-ara-puluzyan/> (accessed: January 5, 2025)

Dashnaktsutyun Bureau; representatives of the Iranian Parliament Ara Shahverdyan (responsible for Armenians of Tehran and Northern Iran) and Geghard Mansuryan (responsible for Armenians of Isfahan and Southern Iran); Ara Puluzian, head of the Dashnaktsutyun Central Committee of “Artsakh”; Sevan Danielyan, a representative of the “ALIK” Institute; Surik Abnousian, Chairman of the Deputies’ Assembly of the Presidency of the Tehran Diocese; Yovsep Avedian, a member of the Political Council of the National Central Committee of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia; Michel Aghamalian, a pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Iran; representatives of national institutions and organizations; journalists visiting Tehran from Armenia; as well as Hrant Margaryan, a former representative of the Dashnaktsutyun Bureau and head of the “Volunteers Movement” public organization.<sup>3</sup>

In his speech, Ara Puluzian, as the head of the Dashnaktsutyun Central Committee of “Artsakh,” provided details about the primary tasks and actions ahead. He emphasized that one of the main objectives is to **preserve the current leadership of the defunct separatist regime and ensure the uninterrupted continuation of its activities**. This “government,” according to Puluzian, represents the only “legal” body that was formed through elections and could advocate for the interests of Karabakh Armenians on international platforms. Another priority he outlined is to raise and discuss the fundamental rights of individuals—particularly the right to return, self-determination, and other rights—on the international stage.

Additionally, **Puluzian included the release of prisoners and detained Armenians among the tasks to be addressed**. During his speech, he made an appeal to the attendees, stating:

**I am confident that we all believe Armenians can only be saved through armed struggle; however, a strong legislative foundation is also essential, and this requires constant effort and dedication.** Dashnaktsutyun, along with all its affiliated structures, ANCA branches, related offices, and supporting circles, remains committed to the struggle for the rights of Karabakh and its people within the framework of the Armenia-Artsakh-Diaspora unity. **The struggle will undoubtedly be prolonged.** There will be

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<sup>3</sup> Arfd.am The 134th anniversary of the ARF was celebrated in Tehran, December 20, 2024, available at: <https://www.arfd.am/new/news/76603/>, (accessed: January 3, 2025)

defeats and disappointments; we will fall, and all of this is part of the fight. However, the key is to rise again, gather our strength, and keep going.<sup>4</sup>

Hrant Margaryan, speaking at the event, stated:

I am certain that one day a spark will ignite, leading to a fire, or a spontaneous wave of popular movement will emerge, turning into a storm that will drive this government out. The problem is that this team, having become a pawn of the enemy, is leading the country toward new defeats. This process must be stopped. The country must be saved, and “Artsakh” must be liberated. The primary goal is the salvation of the homeland. **The enemy may think they have won, but they fear that Armenian revanchism will inevitably replace the current Armenian government in the future.**

He continued:

Our main task, both daily and in the long term, is to engage in dialogue with people, influence them, explain our perspective, and disseminate our value system. Otherwise, these people, divided and hostile to one another, will become a problem for Armenia in the future. First and foremost, we need to influence their thinking. We are out of time, or rather, we are already late. We must unite the human, scientific, and material resources of the Armenian people to organize and develop a modern military industry. The military industry must become the cornerstone of our economy. While strengthening the army, we also need to organize it, train it, and improve its moral and psychological climate. We must establish a unified headquarters for pan-Armenian forces and launch a global Armenian struggle for the release of prisoners and detainees. We must cherish the people of “Artsakh” in Armenia, safeguarding them like the apple of our eye, and ensuring they have a place to return to in “Artsakh.” Today, the people of “Artsakh” desire a struggle—a life-giving struggle—to return to “Artsakh” and see a liberated “Artsakh.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Arfd.am, The consolidation of healthy national forces and the formation of a united front are a necessity. December 20, 2024, available at: <https://www.arfd.am/new/news/76639/> (accessed: January 3, 2025)

<sup>5</sup> Arfd.am, The main issue is the salvation of the homeland. December 20, 2024, available at: <https://www.arfd.am/new/news/76620/> (accessed: January 3, 2025)

## Activities of the Defunct Separatist Regime

On December 10, 2024, a closed session of the former illegal regime's so-called “parliament” was held at its **still-functioning representative office in Yerevan**. The session was reportedly dedicated to a referendum on the “independence” of the former regime. Participants in the meeting included Armenian Parliament deputies Seyran Ohanyan, Tigran Abrahamyan, and Hayk Mamijanyan, as well as Bagrat Galstanyan, the leader of the “Holy Struggle” movement; David Melkumyan, a former member of the regime’s permanent committee on foreign relations who had visited Yevlakh; and other party leaders.

During the event, a video recording of Galstanyan’s interview was monitored, clearly showing people entering and exiting the representative office in the background, confirming its ongoing activity.<sup>6</sup>

It was also noted that, in the yard of the representative office, a plaque was installed with the words “Freedom for Artsakh’s military-political leadership” written on it, along with photos of detained individuals of separatist regime.

Garnik Danielyan, a member of the Dashnaktsutyun party in the Armenian Parliament who attended the event, stated in an interview with the media that significant resolutions were adopted during the session. **These resolutions have been conveyed to the international community and the co-chairing countries of the Minsk Group. Danielyan further emphasized that the Karabakh issue remains unresolved.** He noted that everything must be done to ensure that the right of Karabakh Armenians to return becomes a part of the global agenda, adding that much work still needs to be done in this direction.<sup>7</sup>

Metakse Hakobyan, a representative of the so-called “parliament”, also made statements to the media regarding the session. She noted:

On December 10, we managed to meet the quorum, and efforts are ongoing to ensure that the “parliament” returns to normal functioning. We are currently at this stage, and I am confident we will overcome these challenges. Ultimately, the human factor should not be decisive; the

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<sup>6</sup> 168. Am, In the near future, we will go out to the square and finish what we started. Reverend Bagrat, December 10, 2024 available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBUwtyHFwwM&t=31s> (accessed: January 3, 2025)

<sup>7</sup>Aysor TV, The issue of Artsakh is not closed, important messages were received at the extraordinary session of the Armenian National Assembly Bagrat, December 10, 2024 available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_NijaEzV1vQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_NijaEzV1vQ) (accessed: January 3, 2025)

objective is clear, and that objective is the right of Karabakh Armenians to return to Karabakh. Of course, this is more important, and those pursuing personal gain must not prevail.

Hakobyan also accused certain “members of parliament” of serving the interests of the Armenian government. She mentioned that several attempts had been made to convene sessions of the so-called “parliament” on the most critical issues on the agenda, but one faction had boycotted them. When asked which faction, she identified it as the “United Homeland” party led by Samvel Babayan.<sup>8</sup>

It is worth noting that reports about the preservation of the “state” institutions of the defunct separatist regime have also appeared in the country’s media outlets. For instance, the publication *Hraparak* states that representatives of the defunct regime are determined to maintain the parliament, government, and presidential institutions at all costs. It claims that, for this purpose, an expert group has been formed for several months to discuss legal solutions.

According to the reports, the activity of the defunct separatist regime’s parliament will continue based on a legal provision stipulating that “the powers of the parliament terminate at the first session of the next convocation.” It is also suggested that this legal provision could be applied to the “president.” Additionally, it is noted that all these institutions will operate on a voluntary basis, without a budget.<sup>9</sup>

## Conclusion

An analysis of the events suggests that, in recent times, a certain consensus has formed between the Dashnaks and former representatives of the former illegal regime. This involves covert propaganda and organization among the population, reminiscent of efforts seen in the 1980s, with the aim of achieving similar outcomes. It is possible that the propaganda that Dashnaktsutyun is currently conducting is primarily based on this idea.

It is also possible that Dashnaktsutyun and former representatives of the former separatist entity will continue their covert activities together. There is a strong likelihood that these forces will intensify their propaganda efforts in the near future

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<sup>8</sup> Oragir.news, The work of the Artsakh National Assembly has been paralyzed due to Samvel Babayan’s party December 12, 2024, available at: <https://oragir.news/hy/material/2024/12/12/138825> (accessed: January 06, 2025)

<sup>9</sup> Hraparak.am, They found a way not to dissolve the parliament, December 20, 2024, available at: <https://hraparak.am/post/f0eedfe6f8ae6de6c91e52aa38bcf0ea> (accessed: January 06, 2025)

to keep the Karabakh issue on the agenda, change the Armenian government (by any means necessary), and spread seeds of revanchism among the population. Furthermore, the representative office of the former illegal regime could potentially be utilized for organizing some of these activities.

As for efforts among the international community, it can be stated that the primary objective is to establish certain legal footholds for a potential renewed struggle over Karabakh. The main focus is on the possibility of a change in government in Armenia in the near future, with the expectation that a new administration coming to power would initiate another fight for Karabakh.

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