

ARMENIA

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exec	exconst	polcomp
0a	ARM	6	4	9	23	1991	7	5	1995	7	5	9
1X	ARM	1	1	7	6	1995	9	27	1996	7	3	6
1O	ARM	-6	1	9	28	1996	2	3	1998	3	3	2
1Oa	ARM	5	5	2	4	1998	2	19	2003	7	5	8
2X	ARM	5	15	2	20	2003	4	23	2018	7	5	7
2Xa	ARM	5	1	4	24	2018	12	8	2018	5	7	7
2O	ARM	7	0	12	9	2018	99	99	9999	7	6	9

PITF Problem Events:

1) 07/95-09/96 (ARC 07/95-09/96)

0a) September 23, 1991 (independence) – Following a successful public referendum held on September 21, Armenia was declared an independent republic on September 23, 1991, under the leadership of Chairman of the Supreme Council Levon Ter-Petrosyan; he was elected President in the country’s first popular election on October 16, 1991.

1X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: July 6, 1995 (legislative elections)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

Political dynamics in Armenia have been substantially shaped by the armed conflict of ethnic-Armenians inhabiting the Nagorno-Karabakh region in neighboring Azerbaijan. Fighting there began in February 1988, pre-dating Armenia’s independence from the Soviet Union in September 1991. Azerbaijan retaliated against Armenia’s direct involvement in the conflict by cutting all energy supplies in November 1991, thus creating a very serious energy and economic crisis in Armenia. The Nagorno-Karabakh was effectively annexed by Armenia by 1992, although its future status remains a matter of serious dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Because of the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenian politics mobilized very rapidly. The Armenian National Movement was organized in November 1988 and leading members of the outlawed “Karabakh Committee” gained the republic president and prime minister positions in August 4, 1990, elections. In the first presidential elections in independent Armenia, held on October 16, 1991, President Levon Ter-Petrosyan was (re)elected with 83% of the popular vote. The opposition, nationalist Dashnak party was suspended by presidential decree on December 29, 1994; party leaders were later arrested and convicted of planning a July 1995 coup. A new constitution was adopted by popular referendum that coincided with the country’s first multi-party legislative elections on July 5, 1995. Ter-Petrosyan’s party gained the largest block of seats in the legislature but restrictions on the opposition Dashnak party seriously distorted the outcome.

Adverse Regime Change I: July 1995 – September 1996

July – September 1995 (legislative and presidential elections)

The flawed legislative elections held in July 1995 mark the beginning of an attempt by Ter-Petrosyan’s Pan-Armenian National Movement (HSH) to consolidate power and restrict opposition elements. The highly energized political climate in Armenia reached a crisis point

with the September 22, 1996, presidential elections. Incumbent President Ter-Petrosyan claimed victory with a narrow majority in elections that were marred by serious irregularities.

Identify Main Factions:

- *Moderate/Pragmatic Nationalists (Pan-Armenian National Movement; HHS)* — while supporting the self-determination aspirations of ethnic-Armenians outside Armenia proper, this faction accepted the fact that Armenia’s extreme economic vulnerability required compromise in order to gain external support.
- *Extreme Nationalists (Dashnaks and others)* — favor annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh as pre-condition to negotiations.
- *Former-Communists* — the conservative and “pragmatic internationalist” approaches were largely overwhelmed by the nationalist fervor that defined Armenian politics in the early years of independence. These elements reemerged as the main opposition with the collapse of the HHS dominated regime in 1998.

10) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: September 27, 1996 (government repression)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

Adverse Regime Change II: July 1995 – September 1996

On Sept. 25, an estimated 40,000 demonstrators stormed the parliament building in Yerevan where the defeated presidential candidate, Manukian, was said to be demanding a recount. The government reacted sharply, condemning the march and describing it as an attempted coup by Manukian's supporters. On Sept. 26, troops reinforced by tanks and armored personnel carriers were deployed on the streets of Yerevan to halt any further demonstrations. Police also raided and sealed off the premises of all main opposition parties and arrested scores of opposition activists; many opposition leaders went into hiding. Factional disagreements within the ruling HHS party began to surface almost immediately; defections occurred regularly and, in July 1997, a dispute over party leadership led to the defection of a large block of party members.

10a) Date of Change from Autocratic: February 4, 1998 (executive resignation)

Having lost his party’s support in the legislature as a result of his controversial plan for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, President Ter-Petrosyan resigned the presidency on February 3, 1998. Prime Minister Robert Kocharyan took over as acting President. On February 9, 1998, the banned Dashnak party was permitted to register as a legal party. New presidential elections were held on March 16 with Kocharyan (nationalist) and Karen Demirchyan (former-communist) qualifying for a runoff election held on March 30, 1998. Kocharyan won the runoff with 60% of the vote. The vote was marred by irregularities and intimidation tactics but these probably did not affect the outcome.

2X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: February 20, 2003 (presidential elections)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

Political volatility remained high through Kocharyan's first term in office, with political parties and alignments changing regularly. An attempt to reconcile political divisions occurred with the formation of the *Miasnutiun* (Unity) bloc which brought together the main nationalist and socialist parties. However, a focal point for dissent was created with the October 27, 1999, attack on the legislature in which several political leaders were killed, including Prime Minister Vargen Sargsyan and Speaker of the Assembly Demirchyan, the leaders of the Unity bloc. The Unity bloc collapsed in September 2001 and the *Ardarutyun* (Justice) bloc (a coalition of socialist parties) then emerged as the main opposition to the Kocharyan administration. Flawed residential elections held on February 19, 2003, reinvigorated factionalism between nationalists and socialists. Kocharyan defeated Stepan Demirchyan in a runoff election on March 5. Having failed to overturn the elections results, the opposition organized mass demonstrations in April 2004 calling for Kocharyan's resignation which ended in clashes with security forces. The attempt to force the President's resignation was called off in June 2004 after the movement lost momentum. The Justice bloc initiated and maintained a boycott of the National Assembly for eighteen months until ending its boycott on September 7, 2005. It then called for a boycott of a constitutional reform referendum held on November 27, 2005.

Identify Main Factions:

- *Nationalists* — supporters of President Kocharyan (mainly the Republican, NHK; Country of Law, OE; and Dashnak/HHD parties).
- *Socialists* — mainly the *Ardarutyun* (Justice) bloc.

Changes within Factional-Democratic Period:

2Xa) April 24, 2018 (executive resignation; executive-led transition) – A 2015 constitutional referendum had shifted Armenia from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary system. When two-term President Serzh Sargsyan was appointed to the post of prime minister by the ruling Republican Party at the end of his term on April 9, 2018, popular outrage produced widespread demonstrations that led to his resignation on April 23, 2018. In an apparent act of contrition, the Republican-controlled parliament elected the acknowledged leader of the anti-government protests, Nicol Pashinyan, as prime minister but remained obstructionist.

2O) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: December 9, 2018 (new elections)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

Prime Minister Nicol Pashinyan resigned office on October 16, 2018, to force new elections, which were held on December 9, 2018. Pashinyan's Civil Contract party received over 70% of the vote, while the Republican Party failed to clear the threshold for representation