

Religious freedom advocates urge Armenia to end attacks on church

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, July 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Christian Solidarity International (CSI) has joined with other religious freedom advocates in calling on the Armenian government to end its persecution of the Armenian church.

In a [statement](#), the organizations and individuals express “grave concerns over the intensifying campaign by the Armenian government against the Armenian Apostolic Church and its supporters.” The signatories include NGOs Coptic Solidarity and SOS Chrétiens d’Orient.



Etchmiadzin, the Mother See of the Armenian Apostolic Church. photo: csi

“Over the past few weeks, we have witnessed the apparently arbitrary detention of senior members of the clergy and of prominent supporters of the church, the expropriation of their property, and the use of police force within sacred spaces, including the Mother See of the Armenian Apostolic Church at Etchmiadzin,” the statement continues.

Those detained include Archbishop Mikayel Ajapahyan, Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan and Russian-Armenian businessman Samvel Karapetyan.

The statement also highlights the fact that the Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, has called for the Catholicos of the church to be removed and his replacement chosen by a government-organized committee. Such an action would contravene Article 17 of Armenia’s constitution, which guarantees the separation of church and state.

The statement makes the following demands:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Samvel Karapetyan, whose detention lacks any legal foundation;

- Release Archbishop Mikayel Ajapahyan and Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, and conduct an independent and transparent review of the charges against them;
- Cease all interference in the internal affairs of the Armenian Apostolic Church, including the ongoing campaign to delegitimize its clergy and replace its leadership through state-orchestrated mechanisms;
- Terminate all forms of retaliatory economic coercion, including politically motivated expropriation, administrative harassment, and censorship of peaceful public advocacy;
- Restore the independence of the judiciary, ensuring that Armenia's courts are no longer instrumentalized as tools of political persecution or executive control.

"Acts of conscience, faith, and lawful dissent must not become punishable acts in any nation that claims fidelity to democratic values," the statement concludes.

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