REPLY TO SHAHAN KALFAYAN'S ARTICLE, KEGHART EDITOR, AND COMMENTATORS

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Category: Opinions

By **Vicken Darakdjian**, Montreal, 7 January 2026

I have carefully read Mr. Shahan Kalfayan's article, as well as the many comments that followed it, and I have given due consideration to the points raised. While I respect everyone's right to hold and express political opinions, I find it necessary to respond to several assertions that are, in my view, inaccurate, unfair, and misleading.

You have used nearly every negative adjective in the political vocabulary to describe Armenia's twice democratically elected Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan. One may debate whether Mr. Pashinyan was *inexperienced, immature, or politically lightweight* at the beginning; these are subjective judgments and open to discussion. However, I categorically reject the characterization of Prime Minister Pashinyan as *"criminal", "dictatorial", "mentally imbalanced", "phony",* or *"corrupt*." As if these were not enough, the comment section descended even further, using language such as *"a man who is psychologically, morally, and spiritually diseased and unfit to call himself a leader", "Traitor", "Pashinyan & Hakobyan the first lady has Turkish soul" much-deserved life sentence".* Even if a fraction of these claims were true, then what are we to say about the 55% of Armenian voters, 688,761 citizens, who voted for Mr. Pashinyan in 2021? Are nearly three-quarters of a million Armenians to be dismissed as ignorant, deceived, or morally deficient? Such rhetoric does not merely attack a political leader; it insults the democratic will and intelligence of the Armenian people.

Let me be clear: I am not arguing that every policy of the Pashinyan government has been correct. Mistakes have been made, many of them serious, and criticism is both legitimate and necessary in a democracy. However, one fundamental fact cannot be ignored: Pashinyan was elected by the people twice as the head of a majority government. If there were genuinely better alternatives, why did the electorate reject his opponents?

For 27 years before 2018, Armenia was governed by three presidents whose records, by any objective standard, were far more troubling. Systemic corruption, rigged elections, fraud, repression, bribery and the terrorization of citizens marked those years. Political power was concentrated in the hands of a small elite. In contrast, Prime Minister Pashinyan has at least attempted to dismantle the corrupt and criminal structures that were deliberately built in by his predecessors.

On the Call for "Removal ASAP"

While respecting all the comments and political views, I must strongly object to the call for "removal of Pashinyan ASAP." Such language is deeply irresponsible when referring to a democratically elected head of government. What does "removal" mean in this context? God forbid, it implies action, or even assassination, ideas that, regrettably, some members of the clergy have irresponsibly echoed in the past.

In a healthy democracy, political change occurs through parliamentary debate, lawful opposition,

and election, not through threats or calls for force. Political ideas are debated in parliament, translated into policy proposals, and ultimately judged by the people at the ballot box. Armenia is approaching elections within months, and citizens will once again assess the government's record and make their choice.

A fair question must also be asked: over the past five years, how many constructive policies has the opposition proposed, beyond constant criticism and systematic sabotage of government initiatives? Armenia's citizens might be far better served today had the opposition chosen cooperation over obstruction.

Governing vs. Opposing

Every criticism raised by Mr. Kalfayan and others has a legitimate counterargument. Governing a state is fundamentally different from being in opposition or campaigning for office. Once elected, a leader must operate within a complex international system, balancing national interests while maneuvering among global powers.

Yes, when Prime Minister Pashinyan and his team assumed office seven years ago, they lacked experience. That is not unique to Armenia; history shows this pattern in many countries following protest-driven political change. When citizens are exhausted by decades of corruption and fear, they often vote for change, even if that change comes with uncertainty. This is known as a protest vote.

After 27 years of criminal governance, corruption, and intimidation, what alternative did the Armenian people truly have?

On the 44-day Artsakh War

Regarding the Artsakh war of September 27 to November 10, 2020, it is neither honest nor fair to place full responsibility on Prime Minister Pashinyan.

All available evidence shows that Armenia's previous three presidents failed to prepare the Defence Forces for an inevitable conflict. Azerbaijan spent two decades preparing for war, increasing its defence budget to approximately **$3.5 billion**, investing heavily in drones and modern weaponry. Armenia's defence budget, by comparison, stood at roughly **$520 million**, relying on military equipment that was 30-40 years old.

Who bears responsibility for this imbalance?

Robert Kocharian and Serzh Sargsyan were not preparing the country for war; they were busy building personal fortunes, building mansions, purchasing properties abroad, acquiring Greek Islands, gambling in Baden-Baden casinos, and enjoying luxury hunting trips while the state weakened.

We must also acknowledge the existence of traitorous Generals who served foreign agendas,

abandoning 18-year-old conscripts in frontline trenches. Mr. Kalfayan mentions the presence of the First Lady in Artsakh's war room, yet conveniently ignores why figures such as Robert Kocharyan, Serzh Sargsyan, Arkadi Ghukasyan, and Bako Sahakyan were there in the first place. Why were these former leaders present, and what role did they play? These questions remain unanswered.



March 1, 2008, victims

Questions That Demand Honest Answers

Let us revisit facts and concerns that are widely discussed and deeply rooted in Armenia's recent history:

1. **Did Armenia have a single free and fair election during the 27 years before Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's rise to power?** Many Armenians believe the answer is no, as elections were widely perceived to be controlled by corrupt ruling elites and political clans.
2. **Who dismantled Armenia's heavy industrial infrastructure inherited from the Soviet era and sold it as scrap metal to Iran and Turkey?** This process is commonly attributed to the Kochaiyan-era power structure and associated interests.
3. **Who oversaw the sale or transfer of Armenia's key strategic energy sector assets, including the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant (*Atomagayan),* the electricity distribution network transferred to Inter RAO Russian control, telecommunications, Mining & Natural Resources,**

and other profitable state enterprises, to Russian ownership? These decisions occurred during the Kocharyan administration and continued to raise serious questions about long-term national sovereignty.

4. **Who handed Armenia's railway system to Russian Railways under a 30-year concession agreement?** Globally, railway infrastructure is considered a vital military and logistical asset, particularly for a country in a volatile region and effectively at war with its neighbours. Once again, it was during the corrupt Kocharyan administration.
5. **Who bears political responsibility for the October 27, 1999, assassinations** of the Prime Minister Vazgen Sargisyan, the Speaker of the Parliament Karen Demirchyan, and six other members of parliament? To this day, the shadow of the Kocharyan-era power structure remains present in public discourse.
6. **Who was responsible for the tragic events of March 1, 2008,** when eight civilians and two police officers were killed next to the Myasnikyan statue, near the Freedom Square?Again, public accountability has never been fully established, and responsibility is widely associated with the ruling authorities of the time, with their clan, who turned their weapons on their own citizens to preserve power
7. **In 2001, who ordered the brutal killing of an innocent 43-year-old man," Poghos Poghosyan," beaten to death in a restaurant bathroom?** The arrogant Kocharian and his murderer bodyguards. Where in the world can you witness such an act?
8. **From 2000 and 2017, an alarming number of people, including military officers, police officials, public servants, journalists, and civilians, died under mysterious, suspicious circumstances**. Many cases were officially labelled as suicides or accidents. Who was behind all these acts? Once again, the Kocharyan and Sargsyan oligarchs?
9. **How did Levon Kocharyan become a multimillionaire in his early twenties**? Owning many businesses all over Armenia
10. **How did the Kocharyan family come to own hotels, banks, car dealerships, many media outlets, and significant portions of Northern Avenue in Yerevan?** His oligarchs controlled all strategic sectors & imports. Anyone not from his circle was either forced to surrender assets, bankrupted, arrested or driven into exile.
11. **How did the family of Serzh Sargsyan, his brother, nephew, and son-in-law, accumulate such vast fortunes while holding public office?**
12. **Why did 10 to 15 soldiers die each year under suspicious circumstances throughout nearly three decades of Kocharian and Sargsyan rule?** Many believe these deaths were the result of injustice, humiliation, bullying, and systemic abuse, often without serious investigation or accountability.
13. **Why were frontline trenches constructed from wood and old tires instead of cement walls and reinforced concrete bunkers**? Because leaders were enriching themselves instead of defending the country.
14. **Why were the 18-year-old conscripts denied proper nutrition in the Army?** Because,

according to widespread belief, military supplies were stolen and sold on the black market.

15. **During the Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan eras, hundreds of newborn babies reportedly disappeared from maternity hospitals, and Mrs. Bella Kocharyan was directly part of this scandal of inhumane baby trafficking.** These cases remained hidden, ignored, or deliberately suppressed for years. Only after Nikol Pashinyan came to power did these tragic cases come to light, prompting official investigations and criminal proceedings.
16. **Likewise, during Kocharyan and Sargsyan's years, military service was not applied equally. Families with wealth, political connections, or influence were able to avoid mandatory conscription for their sons, whereas children from ordinary and disadvantaged families were sent to serve on the front lines.** This created a deeply unjust system in which patriotism was demanded from the poor, but optional for the privileged.
17. **In the 1990's, approximately 18 tons of gold (valued $207,000,000 at that time) reportedly disappeared from Armenia's state reserves.** To this day, the public has not received a clear, transparent explanation. Many Armenians reasonably suspect that members of the Kocharyan/Sargsyan political circle, along with the first President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, deposited that gold in their personal offshore accounts.

Every adjective you have used against elected Prime Minister Pashinyan applies far more accurately to the criminal Kocharyan and Sargsyan clans, oligarch and their extended families. Pashinyan may lack political finesse, but he is not a criminal, nor is he corrupt leader; there is no credible basis to label him criminal or corrupt. The difference is that Kocharian maintained his power through force and fear, and economic monopolies. It was the same situation and continued seamlessly under Serzh Sargsyan. I wonder if you could or want to live under such a brutal regime.

18. Have you seen the difference between Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Robert Kocharyan or Serzh Sargsyan in how they approach and treat the parents of our martyrs? Pashinyan has been seen kneeling before the mothers of martyrs, kissing their hands, and showing humility and respect for their sacrifice. In contrast, during the years of Kocharian and Sargsyan, their bodyguards would not even allow grieving parents to approach the president. Instead of compassion, there was distance, arrogance, and force.

19. And why does the opposition continue to announce false and exaggerated figures regarding our human losses in the 44-day Artsakh war, throwing around numbers like 7,000 (seven thousand) or even 10,000 (ten thousand)? When the real number is (3,900), three thousand and nine hundred. It is as if they believe that by inflating the number of martyrs, they can force a drop in Nikol Pashinyan's popularity. This is not politics; this is cheap, immoral manipulation, playing with the sacred memory of our fallen heroes.

For us, even a single loss is too many. Each martyr is a son, a brother, a life with a family and a future, not a statistic to be abused for political gain.

Shame on those who exploit the pain of grieving families for their own ambitions. And these same people expect to be elected in future elections? Do they truly believe that people will forget, or have short memories?

The list goes on and on, and I can continue for many pages.

Now, let us speak about the Pashinyan government

Under Prime Minister Pashinyan's leadership, Armenia has undergone fundamental changes.

1. **Sovereignty and borders.** For the first time, Armenia's borders have been clearly defined and internationally recognized as those of a sovereign state, with a total area of **29,743 square kilometres.** One must ask: why was this not accomplished during the previous 27 years of governance?
2. **Tax Reform and Public Revenue.** The Pashinyan government reformed the income and sales tax systems and effectively eliminated systemic customs bribery. In 2025 alone, corporate and personal income tax revenues exceeded the **combined national budget of 2017,** with these funds directed toward public social programs such as healthcare, childcare, and seniors' allowances.
3. **Healthcare Reform.** Free healthcare was introduced for **children under 18** and **seniors over 65**, a landmark social policy unprecedented in Armenia's modern history.
4. **Education and childcare infrastructure.** By the end of **2026,** the government will complete the renovation or construction of **over 300 modern schools and 500 daycare facilities.** This will be followed by an additional **300 schools, 100 daycare centers, 100 vocational (skills) schools, and multiple sports and training facilities.**
5. **Infrastructure Development.** Hundreds of kilometres of highways and regional roads have been built or fully reconstructed.
6. **National Defence Modernization.** Unlike previous Governments, the Pashinyan government improved the army's nutrition by far beyond what they used to have in the Kocharyan and Sargsyan eras. It allocated funds for the procurement of **modern, next-generation military technologies** to strengthen Armenian defence forces, invested in Research and Development through government grants to the technology, robotics, and innovation sector to strengthen our local military capabilities. By supporting cybersecurity, drone technologies, artificial intelligence, and robotics, the state is fostering homegrown solutions for modern warfare. These investments not only enhance national defence but also stimulate the local high-tech economy, retain talent, and reduce dependence on foreign supplies.
7. **Democratic Elections.** Elections in Armenia are no longer decided through violence, fraud, or intimidation. Electoral legitimacy and public trust have been restored.
8. **Economic Growth,** Despite the 44-day Artsakh war, the Artsakh blockade, and three years of the COVID-19 pandemic, Armenia's economy has grown by **over 50% since 2018**; **7% growth is expected for 2026.**

9. **Civil Liberties.** Citizens can now speak freely, protest, and criticize the government without fear of persecution, an essential pillar of democracy.
10. **International Diplomacy and Recognition.** In 2025 alone, Prime Minister Pashinyan and his foreign minister achieved what was once unimaginable, holding over 18 bilateral meeting with world leaders, including the President of Russia, the United States, China, France, Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and many others, as well as meeting with the EU President, German Chancellor, Japanese Prime Minister, and numerous regional leaders. Armenia is now visibly and actively present on the global stage.

Over the past seven years, Armenia has emerged as a sovereign, independent, and internationally recognized state, something that was lacking for decades. Achieving this amid war, blockade, and a global pandemic is nothing short of extraordinary.

This does not suggest the government is flawless. However, it does mean Armenia has moved away from criminal governance toward democratic rule.

The Armenian people will determine their future, as they should, through elections, not fear, intimidation, or foreign interference.

As a landlocked country, Armenia must prioritize light industry, technology, self-sufficiency, and a strong, modern defence force. A strong military in the 21st century is built not only on manpower but on innovation, intelligence, and technological superiority.

We need experienced politicians and diplomats, unity instead of hatred, and constructive dialogue rather than constant internal division. When we stop undermining one another, Armenia will succeed.

With respect,

Vicken Darakdjian

Comments

hovanes boyadjian – 2026-01-15 13:27:40
Dear Mr. Darakdjian, no matter how truthfully and accurately you stated the facts about Prime Minister Pashinyan, his achievements and his continued battle to this day against the old regime fat cats and all the damages that they did while in power, those who blindly chant their boring mantras against Pashinyan, will continue doing so. their personal interests are far removed from Armenia's welfare.

Harout Bronozian – 2026-01-10 15:13:27
Beginning of July 2018, Tigran Avinyan, deputy prime minister and Hagop Arshakyan from the new Pashinyan government together with a few other members visited Los Angeles. A luncheon meeting was organized where 100 businessmen were present including me that lasted about 5 hours. After my discussions with this Pashinyan team, my conclusion was that the future of Armenia is in uncertain hands and these people do not have the identity of an Armenian. This followed with the closure of the ministry of culture and the diaspora which further reinforced my conviction about Pashinyan's new team. What we saw afterwards is a well organized divide and rule policy that is continuing until today. I started investigating this new regime in Armenia to find out who and what was supporting this group. The video below shows the role of George Soros in the formation of this new team. I strongly suggest you review this you tube video that explains what has been happening in Armenia since 2018, and shows the true nature of the Pashinyan rule and its anti-national objectives. This investigative video was produced five years ago. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1KqWkKMFLg&t=2345s Սորոսի գործակալական ցանցը Հայաստանում բացահայտված է. պետության զավթումը. Below is a list of Soros grants distributed in Armenia from 1998 until 2019. http://returntoarmenia.com/Soros_Grant-List-of-1998-2019-Years_Armenia.pdf List of Soros grants in Armenia 1998-2019. The above video and information explains everything that Nikol is doing in Armenia and where it will lead Armenia to. And If after eight years of Pashinyan rule, we still do not know who and what this Pashinyan team is, then I think our Armenian identity is already dead.

Margaret – 2026-01-09 17:43:35
Thank you Harut - the biggest thing in my mind is throwing clergy and others in jail/detention with no apparent due process



Zaven Kalayjian – 2026-01-09 01:38:27

I also applaud Mr. Darakdjian's sound and rational reply. Rather than haphazard criticism based on political or personal preferences, any analysis of a policy or a historical event/decision must be addressed in its context by first comprehending the decision space: what options/alternatives are available (within reason), and what were the probable consequences of those options. Otherwise, without proper grounding, we can editorialize too freely and arrive at wrong and counterproductive conclusions. For example, Mesrob asks in a comment: How did the national debt increase to $14.3B from $6.7B from 2018 to 2024. What was the money spent on? It doesn't take much research (see "tradingeconomics.com") to see that Armenia has spent nearly $6B on arms during that time period. Among the possible expenditures it could make that increases debt, military spending was what the Pashinyan administration chose. This seems to indicate, contrary to what many claim, that Pashinyan's primary goal is NOT to capitulate and turn over Armenian lands. These numbers tell a different story to anyone willing to pay sufficient attention to the actual decisions being made in their context. Another example: Mr. Keusseyan asks why Pashinyan did not accept the Lavrov plan for "peace" with Azerbaijan. (I believe the 2019 plan was intended by Mr. Keusseyan, which was based on the 2015 Lavrov plan, which was proposed before Pashinyan's time - but it makes no real difference). Look at the circumstances surrounding the 2015 and 2019 proposals: Back during the early 2010s while the Minsk Group was still trying to broker a peace, Azerbaijan was signaling that it preferred a military option. The plan proposed during the 2011 Kazan Summit included return of 5 regions to Azerbaijan, interim status for Artsakh (with self-governance and security guarantees), and a future referendum for final status. According to Serge Sarksyan, who was reportedly ready to accept the terms of the Kazan variant, "everyone was shocked" (presumably including Russia) when Aliyev abruptly refused to engage in continued diplomacy. Why the abrupt change in Azerbaijan's diplomatic position? Azerbaijani diplomacy had turned a corner. At this point in time in the ealry 2010's, Aliyev was confident that their own military, along with their allies' help, could resolve the Karabagh conflict. Since 2005, Aliyev was consistently outspending Armenia - by an enormous margin - on military expenditures (statista.com). They had the petrodollars to do it, and they knew Armenia could not catch up. Nor would the difference be provided by Russia - this is a very important point for those who still claim that Russia was interested in a "stalemate" situation between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The reasonable conclusion: why would Aliyev need to negotiate with middle men when Azerbaijan had the power to take Artsakh using military force without concessions and without negotiations? Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea deepened ties between Russia and Azerbaijan and emboldened the latter. This period marked the end of Azeri diplomacy and the beginning of the planned military solution. What did Russia do after Azerbaijan abruptly ceased negotiations starting with Kazan? Did it stick up for its little "brother," Armenia? No, it did not. A few years following Kazan, Russia proposed the Lavrov plan in 2015, which was even more favorable to Azerbaijan: return of the seven regions, no guarantee of a referendum or status of Armenians under Azeri authority, Russian peacekeepers for security of Armenians under Azeri control, Russian peacekeepers on the border. It was highly favorable to Azerbaijan, but Azerbaijan did not bite. The Lavrov plan was a dead one. Azerbaijan had resolved to settle the conflict with force, not diplomacy. This is the rule of international politics: diplomacy between peers, force otherwise. The Lavrov plan was the template for the 2019 plan, which was a near-complete concession to Azerbaijan. Since the 2019 plan was already fundamentally rejected back in 2015, it was an empty proposal. It was properly rejected by Pashinyan, who (for the record) did not "decide to go to war" against Azerbaijan. I dare say that any Armenian PM would have understood that the plan was a meaningless gesture by Russia, and that it was DOA at the negotiating table in front of Azerbaijan. In fact, the Lavrov plan itself was worse than what LTP considered two decades earlier. That proposal stirred the people to riot for LTP's resignation. Only the most brilliant and influential political figure could convince the Armenian world that it would be better to relinquish Artsakh than to sacrifice so much blood for a hopeless war (which it objectively was). There is no such Armenian on the planet today, and I'm not aware of another figure in history that could have pulled off that particular political maneuver. Pashinyan has many serious faults as a politician. We should responsibly call him out for these faults. But, assigning blame where it is not warranted is not constructive; worse, it is lazy and dishonest.



Caroline Khoushabeh – 2026-01-09 00:28:42

Thank you Vicken Darakdjian for taking the time to write this article.



Hayorti – 2026-01-08 13:35:22

It's worth repeating that emotional and irresponsible Pashinyan provided Aliyev justification to attack Artsakh when he declared, while visiting Artsakh, "Artsakh is Armenia." Dumb, dumb, dumb, This is not just another reason to condemn Pashinyan: the precipitous hurt to Armenian-Artsakh began with the declaration of the Boy Scout who can't control his mouth...or brain.

Wally Sarkeesian – 2026-01-08 13:29:48
The claim that Pashinyan was "democratically elected" is a myth. In the first election, he effectively blocked serious opposition and rushed the country into a snap election, giving people virtually no time to organize or respond. That was not free choice -it was political manipulation. In the second election, after the war, the situation was even worse. Once again, it was a snap election. More than 52% of eligible voters did not vote, and Pashinyan received only about 37% of the total electorate. Calling this a popular mandate is simply dishonest. Low turnout, rushed elections, suppressed alternatives, and a traumatized population do not equal legitimacy. If Armenians truly want the truth, the path is clear: remove him from power, arrest him, and conduct a full, independent investigation. Only a serious inquiry - with international-level financial and intelligence oversight - can uncover the full scope of his actions, including possible coordination with Azerbaijan and Turkey, political deception, and abuse of power. Until that happens, long articles defending him are not analysis - they are distractions from accountability.
https://gagrule.net/whitewashing-pashinyan-failure-wont-erase-truth/

John keusseyan, Col. USAF (Retired) – 2026-01-08 12:10:02
I agree fully with Mr. Sassounian's comment. By attacking the previous administrations, does not justify what Nicole is doing. Attacking the Armenian Church, arresting his political opponents, claiming Artsakh is part of Azerbaidjan etc. This reminds me the famous saying of Hemingway and I quote, "Don't believe everything you read or hear and even if you see it with your own eyes, believe only half of it". I have one question to the supporters of Nicole, why he did not accept Lavrov's plan to return the five areas and decided to go to war instead?

Mesrob – 2026-01-08 12:06:00
Defending Pashinyan because his three predecessors were also incompetent/corrupt is a weak argument. While I commend Mr. Darakdjian for his lengthy defense of Pashinyan, I unfortunately don't have the luxury of time for a detailed rebuttal. However, I will point out the following crucial fact: 2018: Armenia's national debt $6.7 billion. 2024: Armenia's national debt: $14.3 billion. Where did the money go? How will Armenia pay the debt.

Aha – 2026-01-08 11:48:33
Excellent and detailed rebuttal, thank you.

Berdge Arto Manoukian – 2026-01-08 10:34:31
Worthy comments and analysis. The glass is more than half full. It is not the time to promote only the negatives and ignore the reality. We live in a difficult region and navigating through it is hard. Armenia's population will soon decide who will lead through these turbulent waters.

Astghik Abaghyan – 2026-01-08 07:01:13
Appreciate this thorough and logical rebuttal of the previous article. Indeed, one of the major problems of some diaspora analysts is that it is completely devoid of any constructive thought and is simply rooted in emotional outbursts and doomsday rhetoric and is detached from the reality of what Armenians in Armenia are experiencing. We need to finally realise how harmful this is. Criticism is absolutely necessary but hysteria is not helpful at all!

Zaven Gudsuz – 2026-01-08 03:51:40
Հինգերորդ շարասիւնի անդամը, ազգադաւ կուսակցութեան մը գաղափարախօսութեան թունաբեր մելանը հոսեցուցած է մամուլի մէջ ։

hrach – 2026-01-08 03:36:57
Bravo signor Darakdjian Condivido pienamente a quanto riportato nei 19 punti negativi dei governanti preceduti a Nikol Pashinyan che sono noti a tutti gli armeni (anche a quelli cosidetti "oppositori" che desiderano cacciare Pashinyan solo per poter salvare ed aumentare le loro proprietà e richezze ottenute illegalmente e non li importa del nulla della Patria e del benessere degli armeni). Tra i meriti di Pashinyan desidero aggiungere anche il coraggio di avere messo in evidenza tutti i malefatti del katolikos e la sua cerchia di malfattori (già noto a tutti in Armenia che per paura o vergogna hanno taciuto per anni e fatto finta di non vedere) che hanno danneggiato la Sacra Chiesa Armena. Grazie al suo intervento anche la nostra Sacra chiesa sarà purificata e liberata dagli attuali Satanici dominanti.

Jirair Shoushanian – 2026-01-08 01:23:12

I'd like to add a constructive proposal for Armenia's and Armenian diaspora future based on two important books. Lee Kuan Yew's book on Singapore details Singapore's journey from a newly independent, resource-poor country to a world-leading economy through strong leadership, strong governance and strategic policies, focusing on nation-building, economic transformation and social cohesion, highlighting the lessons of a small, multi-ethnic state in creating stability and prosperity by prioritizing meritocracy, clean governance, education and housing to foster national identity and economic growth. Lee Kuan Yew implemented a tough, long-term policy of combating populism, focusing on building stability through the rule of law and fighting corruption. He shifted the strategy from labor-intensive to knowledge-intensive sectors, attracting investment and building key infrastructure such as airports and the national airline. Socialist Engineering for Unity: The policy included making English the common language and compulsory bilingualism, as well as a unique public housing system that blended different elements to promote national identity. Nation-building: Major efforts included the formation of a national army from a divided population, the creation of mass public housing, and the instillation of labor patterns and a sense of national belonging. The book argues that developing countries must adopt a "first world mentality," embrace economic liberalization, and maintain strong, uncorrupted government in order to achieve rapid development, proposing a nation-building blueprint that prioritizes literacy and national unity, self-reliance, and innovation. "The Crossroads" is one of the most important visionary studies of contemporary Armenian history and political science in recent years, prepared by Ruben Vardanyan and Nune Alekyan in collaboration with Nubar Afeyan. The manuscript "The Crossroads" is an invitation to dialogue about the future of Armenia and the Armenian people. The authors present their vision of the future, and their own plans for building that future, where they seek to expand the circle of trust. Does the Armenian world really exist today, and if so, what meaning should be invested in this understanding? -How can Armenians come closer and understand each other? Do we clearly imagine the rifts that have deepened over many decades between the various Armenian diasporas, between their ways of thinking and ways of behaving? What is the reason for these differences, and how can we overcome them? -Can we get rid of the post-genocide sense of nation-victimhood and create objects of common pride that will unite us and prevent us from being lost among the population of the planet? -What kind of role models and moral profiles of leaders do we need to orient ourselves to? -How can we achieve an increase in the number of people who consciously decide to consider themselves Armenians? - the book concludes. The book notes that the Armenian diaspora is a global and mobile nation, and for this reason we cannot apply the rules established by the diasporas of other nations, but we need multi-layered partnerships and the application of new and different forms. The book affirms the importance of the unity of Armenia and the Diaspora and the importance of a strong Diaspora, and emphasizes that without the integration of the Diaspora in Armenia's future plan, it cannot achieve its goal. The authors of the study adopt the "Hub country" classification for the future of Armenia. A hub economy refers to a country or city that serves as a central point for business, trade, finance, communication, and transportation, facilitating the flow of goods, services, and information between different regions of the world. A good example of a hub economy is Singapore. A hub country requires mobility and the ability to accommodate different cultures from all parts of the country, while at the same time maintaining its own identity and culture. This necessarily requires the adoption of flexible but stable forms of different institutions. The book affirms that being Armenian is a decision and not a matter of birth or origin, and that Armenians by their own decision should unite with unified goals and core programs, and as examples of these core programs, it cites 4 important programs: Toumo, Fast, Aurora, and Dilijan United World College. In its entirety, the study of the "Crossroads" is a very constructive work for the efforts to plan the future of the Armenian nation and achieve the difficult goal of creating a unified vision of the Armenian world. Alongside these two books, a number of Armenian intellectuals of the late twentieth century proposed a new country for Diaspora Armenians. According to them, the new Diaspora Armenian country should be multilingual, multicultural, composed of self-sufficient multi-states, and should have a continuously changing identity and apolitical nature. To reach this Diaspora Armenian country, we must first reexamine our Diaspora Armenian identity, since the Diaspora, in their opinion, is a mental image or a state of mind through which we must take ownership of our heritage and find and preserve our identity in our dispersion. According to them, we must accept that it is not the Armenian language that will keep us Armenian, but the Armenian spirit and consciousness, and in comparison to them, someone who says "je suis arménien" in French is just as Armenian as someone who says "I am Armenian" in Armenian. Whether this idea can be generalized and include the motherland along with the Diaspora is a question that needs to be studied by Armenian intellectuals.

Aha – 2026-01-08 01:11:40

Just a little story that came out 10 days ago about the continuing corruption and bad economic practices in Armenia
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6lagGEA_BM&list=PLHvbF8lB7trA-yEkz3i-9rYrYWfMXNNwm

Rita Mahdessian – 2026-01-08 01:00:36

The only leader who got re-elected after a war loss that comes to mind is Charles de Gaulle. Yet the people had no real choice. The 2018 revolution was morally framed as anti-corruption. Keeping Kocharyan and Sargsyan in legal limbo serves political interests better than imprisonement or exile. The government's permanent anti-old regime narrative allows the old elites to remain relevant keeping their assets and networks while two ex-presidents remain politically active and enjoying bargained immunity.



David – 2026-01-07 22:51:23
EXCELLENT ARTICLE written proficiently and prudently to overshadow Kalfayan's article: This exhaustive article in pointing out the truthful facts of over 30 years of Armenia's political history leads me to say in Armenian «ճակատդ համբուրեմ տաղանդաւոր Վիգէն ճան»:



Harut Sassounian – 2026-01-07 22:40:57
I commend Vicken for writing his full name and taking the time to come up with a comprehensive list of counter-arguments in defense of the Pashinyan regime. He did not do what most Pashinyan supporters do which is calling his critics as Tashnags or KGB agents. While it is true that the former leaders were no angels, Pashinyan is not an angel either. His false promises to the public, his disrespect of Armenian national symbols, his questioning the facts of the Armenian Genocide, his utter incompetence in managing the war and the government, his loss of Artsakh, his loss of 200 square kilometers of the Armenian Republic's territories, his and Anna's use of vulgar language on their Facebook pages regarding high-ranking clergy, his multiple violations of the constitution and hundreds of laws, his pornographic book, etc., etc. I know more about the problems of the former leaders than anyone else. I spent hundreds of hours one on one with each of them in the presidential palace telling them in great detail that they are mishandling their jobs. I warned them that it will not end well for them. However, they are not the ones who lost Artsakh nor parts of Armenia. Regarding corruption, nothing has changed. Pashinyan's regime is as corrupt as the previous ones. Only the names and faces have changed. Remember when it came out that over a million dollars were donated to Pashinyan's Yerevan mayoral candidate under fictitious names, violating fundraising laws, and no charges were filed against any of them? That's because judges are in Pashinyan's pocket. No judge dares to rule against his wishes. Those who are foolish enough to rule against him are summarily dismissed. Remember when when Alen Simonyan spat on the face of a Canadian-Armenian immigrant in Yerevan while he was being held on the asphalt by policemen? Of course, no charges were filed against Alen for his obvious crime of assault. He is untouchable. Pashinyan has repeatedly violated election laws by starting his electoral campaign before the legal start. He has abused the resources of the state, not his campaign funds, to pay for his electoral campaigns. He is far from being a democratic leader. He is extremely intolerant towards anyone who dares to disagree with him. Those who disagree are fired from their government jobs. Others are arrested and jailed. The first principle of democracy is freedom of speech. Even Diaspora Armenians are not free of his abuse of power and despotic rule. That is why many Diaspora Armenians who have criticized Pashinyan in their countries are turned away when thry arrive at Yerevan airport. Pashinyan treats Armenia as the backyard of his personal house. Armenia is not his personal house. Armenia is the homeland of all Armenians around the world. He cannot be a prosector, judge and jury. If you want to know more details, read the hundreds of editorials I have written in The CalifirniaCourier.com and watch on my Facebook page the hundreds of interviews I have given to journalists from Armenia in the past seven years. I also had the misfortune of meeting with Pashinyan in his office for one hour which proved to me that this man cannot run a doghouse, let alone a country with so many problems. When you say that 55% of the voters voted for Pashinyan, you made several mistakes. First of all, the Prime Minister's job is not an elective office. He did not get a single vote. His party members did. Secondly, his party got a little over 50% of those who participated in the election. His party got in fact 26% of all registered voters. That is a small minority of the registered voters. Finally, it matters not even his party had gotten 100% of the votes. A man who is destroying the country more and more on a daily basis, should be pressured to leave or resign immediately. Anyone who carelessly watches this man destroy the homeland is not a patriotic Armenian. The enemy within is more dangerous than the enemy outside.



Shant Davidian – 2026-01-07 22:16:03

Since AI is being used casually, here is what ChatGTP thinks of your retort, after reading both articles. It appears ChatGTP is more Armenian than you. 1) "He was elected" is not a shield; it's a receipt Darakdjian leans heavily on "twice democratically elected" as if ballots certify competence, foresight, or strategic judgment. Elections confer legitimacy to govern—not immunity from critique, and certainly not retroactive approval of every blunder. -A nationalist (the sane kind—the kind that still reads maps and budgets) should be the first to say: -A nation is bigger than any leader. -A state's survival is not a popularity contest. -Legitimacy doesn't replace accountability; it increases it. So when Darakdjian asks, essentially, "Are 688,761 voters ignorant?" The answer is: No. But voters can be choosing between bad options, voting against a hated past, or voting under fear and exhaustion. Democracy can explain why someone remains in power; it does not prove they used power well. (the ballot box is a hiring decision, not a holiness ritual.) 2) Strawman: "Removal ASAP" ≠ "assassination" Darakdjian frames "removal ASAP" as implying force or assassination. That's a rhetorical move: take an ambiguous phrase and interpret it in the most extreme way, then claim moral high ground for rejecting it. Two things can be true at once: -Calls for violence are disgraceful and politically poisonous. -"Remove" can plainly mean constitutional removal: resignation, a parliamentary process, elections, no confidence, etc. Meanwhile, the pro-Pashinyan reply avoids condemning the other side's genuinely deranged rhetoric in substance (it notes it, but uses it mainly to discredit opponents), while the anti-Pashinyan comment section contains explicit fantasies about prison and worse. If nationalism is "love of nation," then fantasies of internal bloodletting are anti-nationalism—because they make the state weaker, not stronger. 3) The reply commits the classic trio: tu quoque, red herring, and "assertion as argument" Darakdjian's structure is basically: -"Previous regimes were corrupt." -"Therefore criticism of Pashinyan is misleading." That's "tu quoque" (you-too): "Others were worse, so this criticism doesn't land." But a nation doesn't get to outsource standards to yesterday's criminals. Then comes the red herring: long lists of alleged crimes and scandals of past elites—including claims like baby trafficking and missing gold—presented without the level of sourcing that such explosive allegations demand. Even if some are broadly believed, the lack of careful evidence turns the reply into the very thing it accuses its opponents of being: irresponsible. And finally "assertion as argument": "Every criticism has a legitimate counterargument" is said, not shown. If the counterarguments exist, present them—especially for the major charges. 4) On the war: "the past failed to prepare" is not a full answer to "what did you do with what you had?" Kalfayan's most serious claims are about decision points: rejecting or mishandling proposed settlement frameworks, war-time communications, and post-war negotiations. Darakdjian largely replies with "Azerbaijan prepared for two decades, Armenia was underfunded, old equipment," etc. That's partial context, not a rebuttal. It does not directly engage claims like: -Alleged refusal of the "Lavrov Plan" pre-war and later ceasefire/settlement options. -The critique of how negotiations were handled and what was conceded without reciprocal gains (POWs, mines maps, territorial concessions). -The argument that public messaging undermined national positions (e.g., statements about symbols, Artsakh status, Genocide framing). You can say "the house was already on fire when he walked in." Fine. But if he then runs around arguing with the neighbors about paint colors while the roof collapses, the prior owner's negligence doesn't make that leadership. A practical nationalist doesn't care about excuses; he cares about outcomes and deterrence. 5) "Pashinyan isn't corrupt because you can't prove it" meets "Kocharyan did baby trafficking because people believe it" This is where Darakdjian's credibility takes a hit. He says there's "no credible basis" to label Pashinyan criminal or corrupt. But then he advances numerous severe allegations about prior leaders (including third parties and family members) framed as "widely believed" or "commonly attributed" or "many suspect." That's not principled reasoning. That's partisan epistemology: -High bar for my side ("credible basis"). -Low bar for your side ("many believe"). If you want to persuade serious readers, apply one standard. A nation cannot be rebuilt on gossip-grade argumentation—especially when the stakes are war, borders, prisoners, and sovereignty. 6) Nationalism with a brain: loyalty to the state, not to a faction Kalfayan's list has plenty of rhetorical heat ("traitor," "self-hating," etc.). Darakdjian is right to object to the way that language spills over into contempt for voters and into fever-dream talk of "removal" by force. But the national standard should be: -Do the policies increase Armenia's security margin? -Do they increase cohesion between Hayastan and Spyurks without turning either into a scapegoat? -Do they strengthen institutions (army professionalism, procurement, intelligence, diplomacy), or personalize everything around one man's improvisations? Darakdjian ends with a generic call for unity and modern defense. Fine—but unity is not achieved by declaring the other side irrational and then dumping a bucket of unsourced accusations on their heads. Unity is achieved by disciplined truth-telling and competence. 7) Why not answer the chronology? If Darakdjian wanted to be persuasive, he would have picked 8–10 of Kalfayan's most consequential points and addressed them directly: -If the "Lavrov Plan" claim is wrong, show why it's wrong. -If appointing inexperienced negotiators had a rationale, explain the rationale and the outcomes. -If concessions were forced by military realities, say so plainly, and justify which concessions prevented worse outcomes. -If statements about Artsakh's status were unavoidable in diplomacy, explain what Armenia secured in exchange (security mechanisms, guarantees, timelines, prisoner releases). -If outreach to Russia/West was constrained, explain the constraints without pretending that public insults are "strategy." Instead, he mostly argued: "He's elected, the old guys were crooks, therefore stop calling him names." That's a scolding, not a defense. 8) The clever nationalist bottom line Armenia does not have the luxury of theatrical politics—whether it's baseball-cap populism or diaspora keyboard tribunals. The neighborhood is not Switzerland; it's a pressure cooker. So the only acceptable "nationalism" is the boring kind: -budgets -drones -logistics -intel -alliances managed with cold realism -a national narrative that doesn't bargain away dignity for the temporary comfort of sounding "reasonable" in foreign rooms. And that's why Darakdjian's reply fails on its own terms: it defends the leader more than it defends the state. A serious reply to Kalfayan would say: "Yes, the old regimes were corrupt—and yes, some criticism of Pashinyan is hysterical. Now let's talk about the decisions that reduced Armenia's strategic depth and what, precisely, will reverse that." Darakdjian didn't do that. He litigated yesterday to excuse today, and called it democracy.



Hagop Hagopian – 2026-01-07 21:28:45
Finally someone has the balls to say it as it is. Instead of supporting each other, we always criticize with ignorances. For an editor, this is not only a shameful act but it mounts to treason and he should be condemned to the full extent of the law.



John-Emmanuel Shirajian – 2026-01-07 21:08:39
Mr. Vicken Darakdjian needs to be complemented and congratulated on the counter arguments he so eloquently presented in refuting the article by Mr. Shahan Kalfayan. John-Emmanuel Shirajian Past President of The Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America Director of Col. Ray Melikian Drone Academy



Raymond Sarkissian – 2026-01-07 20:33:44
Bravo Mr. Darakdjian, I enjoyed reading every paragraph you wrote in all fairness. Thank-you for writing the article. It was an overdue article. I agree with all the points you mentioned in your article.