REPUBLIC SQUARE PASHINYAN'S AGORA

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Although Friday, August 17 was a working day, seventy compatriots--more than half young people and women--gathered at Café Beiruti in Toronto to hear and watch Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's widely-anticipated speech at the Republic Square in Yerevan on the occasion of 100th day of his ascendance to power. The square, seen on the screen via internet, overflowed with more than one-hundred-thousand people.

While the national anthem of Armenia played the audience stood in reverence and joined enthusiastically. Following the anthem, the assembled attentively followed the speech and on several occasions applauded, particularly when the prime minister spoke of plans to purge the judiciary if the government's anti-corruption directives are not observed and when he talked about direct participatory democracy drawing a parallel with the peoples' activities in ancient Athenian agora.

About a dozen attendees, at the end of the rally, congregated to draw plans to establish a network to support the new regime in its efforts to eradicate corruption and establish the rule of law in Armenia. One of the volunteers opined that she represented not only herself, but also family members and a host of friends who could not attend. Others shared the sentiment.