
ARMENIAN OPPOSITION PARTIES SCHEDULE FIRST JOINT RALLY

-

23.09.2020

Azatutyun (22 September 2020)

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) and two other opposition parties led by embattled businessman Gagik Tsarukian and former National Security Service Director Artur Vanetsian announced on Tuesday that they will hold a joint anti-government rally on October 8.

In a joint statement, Dashnaktsutyun, Tsarukians Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) and Vanetsians Hayrenik (Fatherland) party accused the government of having failed everywhere and endangering the countrys development prospects. They cited the need for the formation of a new kind of national government.

The statement did not clarify whether they will demand the immediate resignation of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian and his government.

BHK spokeswoman Iveta Tonoyan said the three parties will soon shed more light on the purpose of their first rally that will be held in Yerevans Liberty Square. For the moment we are noting the fact that there is a great deal of public discontent [with the government] and that these three political forces are providing an opportunity to make that voice heard, she said.

Vanetsian has repeatedly called for regime change in recent months. Tsarukian, whose party has the second largest group in Armenias parliament, likewise demanded Pashinians resignation in June. He accused the government of mishandling the coronavirus crisis and its socioeconomic consequences.

The three parties agreed to work together in challenging the government shortly after Tsarukian was stripped of his parliamentary immunity from prosecution and charged with buying votes later in June. The tycoon rejects the accusations as politically motivated.

Representatives of Pashinians My Step bloc seemed undaunted by what could be the biggest opposition rally in Armenia since the 2018 Velvet Revolution that brought Pashinian to power. One of them, Ruben Rubinian, insisted that most Armenians continue to trust the ruling political team that won over 70 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections held less than two years ago.

I believe that these three political forces will never manage to mobilize serious [popular] support, Rubinian told reporters. They can look for reasons for that in their past, present and elsewhere.

The BHK, Dashnaktsutyun and Hayrenik will not be joined by Bright Armenia (LHK), the second

opposition party represented in the National Assembly. LHK leader Edmon Marukian made clear that his party has no intention to campaign for snap general elections. He said it hopes to topple the current government as a result of regular polls due in 2023.

In order for there to be pre-term parliamentary elections, 200,000 to 300,000 people have to take to the streets and occupy this [parliament] building, said Marukian. There is no other way of dissolving this parliament.

Tsarukians BHK and Marukians LHK won 8.3 percent and 6.4 percent of the vote respectively in the last elections held in December 2018. Dashnaktsutyun got only 3.9 percent, failing to win any parliament seats.

Dashnaktsutyun and the BHK had for years been represented in Armenias former government toppled during the 2018 uprising. They joined Pashinians first cabinet formed in May 2018 but were ousted from it five months later when Pashinian accused them of secretly collaborating with the former ruling Republican Party.

As for Hayrenik, Vanetsian set up the party early this year several months after falling out with the prime minister and resigning as National Security Service director. Vanetsian told his loyalists last week that Hayrenik will be playing a key role in very serious political developments which he said will unfold in Armenia very soon.

<https://www.azatutyun.am/a/30852222.html>

Kaynak/Source: