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## ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER MAKES POWER PLAY TO QUELL CHURCH OPPOSITION

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Alleging a broad-based conspiracy to topple his government, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan is taking aggressive action to stamp out opposition within the Armenian Apostolic Church.

On June 27, dozens of law enforcement personnel, including a contingent of National Security Services officers, descended on the Church's administrative center, the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, to arrest an archbishop, Mikael Adjapakhyan, on suspicion of making a public call for the government's overthrow. Clerics and devout believers put up spirited resistance, forcing law enforcement officers off Etchmiadzins grounds without taking Adjapakhyan into custody. However, the archbishop ultimately decided to surrender to authorities.

"I'm not afraid of anything. I am being persecuted illegally, all accusations are made up, the Novaya Gazeta Europa outlet quoted him as saying before being taken away. A court ordered two months of pre-trial detention for Adjapakhyan.

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