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**'LET EVERYONE FOCUS ON THEIR OWN INTERNAL AFFAIRS': MIRZOYAN RESPONDS TO LAVROV'S CONCERNS**

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Massis Post (22 January 2026)

Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan warned his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov against interfering in Armenia's internal affairs on Wednesday when he dismissed the latter's criticism of criminal proceedings against a pro-Russian Armenian politician.

Vartan Ghukasyan, the opposition mayor of Armenia's second largest city of Gyumri, was arrested in October on corruption charges and indicted under an Armenian legal provision that makes it a crime to call for a violent overthrow of the constitutional order or violation of the country's territorial integrity.

Arresting people for expressing political views, views that are in no way aimed at undermining Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, views that are aimed at maximizing the opportunities of its foreign relations in the interests of its own development — of course, this has caused serious bewilderment and concern, he told a news conference.

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