

= Armenian Revolutionary Federation =

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) (classical Armenian : Հայ Դաշնակցություն , ՀԴ) , also known as Dashnaktsutyun (in a short form , " Dashnak ") , is an Armenian nationalist and socialist political party founded in 1890 in Tiflis , Russian Empire (now Tbilisi , Georgia) in 1890 by Christapor Mikaelian , Stepan Zorian , and Simon Zavarian . The party operates in Armenia , Nagorno @-@ Karabakh and in countries where the Armenian diaspora is present , notably in Lebanon , where the party is represented in the parliament as part of the March 8 alliance .

The ARF has traditionally advocated democratic socialism and is a full member of the Socialist International since 2003 , which it had originally joined in 1907 . It possesses the largest number of members from the political parties present in the Armenian diaspora , having established affiliates in more than 20 countries . Compared to other Armenian parties which tend to primarily focus on educational or humanitarian projects , the ARF is the most politically oriented of the organizations and traditionally has been one of the staunchest supporters of Armenian nationalism . The party campaigns for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the right to reparations . It also advocates the establishment of United Armenia , partially based on the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920 .

The ARF became active within the Ottoman Empire in the early 1890s with the aim of unifying the various small groups in the empire that were advocating for reform and defending Armenian villages from massacres that were widespread in some of the Armenian @-@ populated areas of the empire . ARF members formed fedayi groups that defended Armenian civilians through armed resistance . The Dashnaks also worked for the wider goal of creating a " free , independent and unified " Armenia , although they sometimes set aside this goal in favor of a more realistic approach , such as advocating autonomy .

In 1918 , the party was instrumental in the creation of the First Republic of Armenia , which fell to the Soviet communists in 1920 . After its leadership was exiled by the communists , the ARF established itself within Armenian diaspora communities , where it helped Armenians preserve their cultural identity . After the fall of the USSR , it returned to Armenia , where it now again has a significant presence as a major party in Armenia 's parliament . Prior to Serzh Sargsyan 's election as president of Armenia and for a short time thereafter , the ARF was a member of the governing coalition , even though it nominated its own candidate in the presidential elections .

ARF then reentered Sargsyan 's cabinet in February 2016 in what was defined as a " long @-@ term political cooperation " agreement with the Republican Party by means of which the ARF would share responsibility for all government policies .

= = Early history = =

In the late 19th century , Eastern Europe and Russia became the hub of small groups advocating reform in Armenian @-@ populated areas in the Ottoman Empire . In 1890 , recognizing the need to unify these groups in order to be more efficient , Christapor Mikaelian , Simon Zavarian and Stepan Zorian created a new political party called the " Federation of Armenian Revolutionaries " (Հայ Դաշնակցություն , ՀԴ , Hay Heghapokhakanneri Dashnaktsutyun) , which would eventually be called the " Armenian Revolutionary Federation " or " Dashnaktsutyun " in 1890 .

The Social Democrat Hunchakian Party at one point had agreed to join as well , seeing that the ARF 's political ideology was socialism . However , the Hunchakians claimed the new party was not Marxist enough and withdrew from the union . The original aim of the ARF was to gain autonomy for the Armenian @-@ populated areas in the Ottoman Empire . The party began to organize itself in the Ottoman Empire in the early 1890s and held its first major meeting in Tiflis , Russian Empire , in 1892 . At that meeting , the party adopted a decentralized modus operandi according to which the chapters in different countries were allowed to plan and implement policies in tune with their local political atmosphere . The party set its goal of a society based on the democratic principles of freedom of assembly , freedom of speech , freedom of religion and agrarian reform .

= = = Russian Empire = = =

The ARF gradually acquired significant strength and sympathy among Russian Armenians . Mainly because of the ARF 's stance towards the Ottoman Empire , the party enjoyed the support of the central Russian administration , as tsarist and ARF foreign policy had the same alignment until 1903 . On June 12 , 1903 , the tsarist authorities passed an edict to bring all Armenian Church property under imperial control . This was faced by strong ARF opposition , because the ARF perceived the tsarist edict as a threat to the Armenian national existence . As a result , the ARF leadership decided to defend Armenian churches by dispatching militiamen who acted as guards and by holding mass demonstrations .

In 1905 ? 06 , the Armenian @-@ Tatar massacres broke out during which the ARF became involved in armed activities . Some sources claim that the Russian government incited the massacres in order to reinforce its authority during the revolutionary turmoil of 1905 . The first outbreak of violence occurred in Baku , in February 1905 . The ARF held the Russian authorities responsible for inaction and instigation of massacres that were part of a larger anti @-@ Armenian policy . On May 11 , 1905 , Dashnak revolutionary Drastamat Kanayan assassinated Russian governor general Nakashidze , who was considered by the Armenian population as the main instigator of hate and confrontation between the Armenians and the Tatars . Unable to rely on government forces to protect their interests and properties , the Armenian bourgeoisie turned to the ARF for protection . The Dashnak leaders argued that , given employment discrimination against Armenian workers in non @-@ Armenian concerns , the defence provided to the Armenian bourgeoisie was essential to the safekeeping of employment opportunities for Armenian laborers . The Russian Tsar 's envoy in the Caucasus , Vorontsov @-@ Dashkov , reported that the ARF bore a major portion of responsibilities for perpetrating the massacres . The ARF , however , argued that it helped to organize the defence of the Armenian population against Muslim attacks . The blows suffered at the hands of the Dashnakist fighting squads proved a catalyst for the consolidation of the Muslim community of the Caucasus . During that period , the ARF regarded armed activity , including terror , as necessary for the achievement of political goals .

In January 1912 , 159 ARF members , being lawyers , bankers , merchants and other intellectuals , were tried before the Russian senate for their participation in the party . They were defended by then @-@ lawyer Alexander Kerensky , who challenged much of the evidence used against them as the " original investigators had been encouraged by the local administration to use any available means " to convict the men . Kerensky succeeded in having the evidence reexamined for one of the defendants . He and several other lawyers " made openly contemptuous declarations " about this discrepancy to the Russian press , which was forbidden to attend the trials , and this in turn greatly embarrassed the senators . The Senate eventually opened an inquiry against the chief magistrate who had brought the charges against the Dashnak members and concluded that he was insane . Ninety @-@ four of the accused were acquitted , while the rest were either imprisoned or exiled for varying periods , the most severe being six years .

= = = Persian Empire = = =

The Dashnaktsutiun held a meeting on April 26 , 1907 , dubbed the Fourth General Congress , at which ARF leaders such as Aram Manukian , Hamo Ohanjanyan and Stepan Stepanian discussed their engagement in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution . They established that the movement was one that had political , ideological and economic components and was thus aimed at establishing law and order , human rights and the interests of all working people . They also felt that it would work for the benefit and interest of Armenian @-@ Iranians . The final vote was 25 votes in favour and one absentia .

From 1907 to 1908 , during the time when the Young Turks came to power in the Ottoman Empire , Armenians from the Caucasus , Western Armenia , and Iran started to collaborate with Iranian constitutionalists and revolutionaries . Political parties , notably the Dashnaktsutiun , wanted to influence the direction of the revolution towards greater democracy and to safeguard gains already

achieved . The Dashnak contribution to the fight was mostly military , as it sent some of its well known fedayees to Iran after the guerrilla campaign in the Ottoman Empire ended with the rise of the Young Turks . A notable ARF member already in Iran was Yeprem Khan , who had established a branch of the party in the country . Yeprem Khan was highly instrumental in the Constitutional revolution of Iran . After the Persian national parliament was shelled by the Russian Colonel Vladimir Liakhov , Yeprem Khan rallied with Sattar Khan and other revolutionary leaders in the Constitutional Revolution of Iran against Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar . Relations between Sattar Khan and the ARF oscillated between amity and resentment . Sometimes he was viewed as being ignorant , while at other times he was dubbed a great hero . Nonetheless , the ARF came to collaborate with him and alongside Yeprem Khan posted many victories including the capture of Rasht in February 1909 . At the end of June 1909 , the fighters arrived in Tehran and after several battles , took over the Majles building and the Sepahsalar mosque . Yeprem Khan was then appointed chief of Tehran police . This caused tensions between the Dashnaks and Khan .`

= = = Ottoman Empire = = =

= = = = Abdul Hamid Period (1894 ? 1908) = = = =

The ARF became a major political force in Armenian life . It was especially active in the Ottoman Empire , where it organized or participated in many revolutionary activities . In 1894 , the ARF took part in the Sasun Resistance , supplying arms to the local population to help the people of Sasun defend themselves against the Hamidian purges . In June 1896 , the Armenakans organized the Defense of Van in the province of Van , where Ottoman Hamidieh soldiers were to attack the city . The Armenakans , assisted by members of the Hunchakian and ARF parties , supplied all able @-@ bodied men of Van with weapons . They rose to defend the civilians from the attack and subsequent massacre .

To raise awareness of the massacres of 1895 ? 96 , members of the Dashnaktsutiun led by Papken Siuni , occupied the Ottoman Bank on August 26 , 1896 . The purpose of the raid was to dictate the ARF 's demands of reform in the Armenian populated areas of the Ottoman Empire and to attract European attention to their cause since the Europeans had many assets in the bank . The operation caught European attention but at the cost of more massacres by Sultan Abdul Hamid II .

The Khanasor Expedition was performed by the Armenian militia against the Kurdish Mazrik tribe on July 25 , 1897 . During the Defense of Van , the Mazrik tribe had ambushed a squad of Armenian defenders and massacred them . The Khanasor Expedition was the ARF 's retaliation . Some Armenians consider this their first victory over the Ottoman Empire and celebrate each year in its remembrance .

On March 30 , 1904 , the ARF played a major role in the Sasun Uprising . The ARF sent arms and fedayi to defend the region for the second time . Among the 500 fedayees participating in the resistance were top figures such as Kevork Chavush , Sepasdatsi Murad and Hrayr Djoghk . They managed to hold off the Ottoman army for several months , despite their lack of fighters and firepower .

In 1905 , members of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation organized the Y?ld?z Attempt , an assassination attempt on Sultan Abdul Hamid II in the capital of the Ottoman Empire , Constantinople (modern day Istanbul) . The Y?ld?z Attempt failed to assassinate the Sultan because the timed bomb missed its target by a few minutes . The Dashnaktsutiun also lost one of its founders , Kristapor Mikaelian , in an accidental explosion during the planning of the operation .

= = = = Young Turk Revolution (1908 ? 14) = = = =

Two of the largest revolutionary groups trying to overthrow Sultan Abdul Hamid II had been the ARF and the Committee of Union and Progress , a group of mostly European @-@ educated Turks . In a general assembly meeting in 1907 , the ARF acknowledged that the Armenian and Turkish

revolutionaries had the same goals . Although the Tanzimat reforms had given Armenians more rights and seats in the parliament , the ARF hoped to gain autonomy to govern Armenian populated areas of the Ottoman Empire as a " state within a state " . The " Second congress of the Ottoman opposition " took place in Paris , France , in 1907 . Opposition leaders including Ahmed Riza (liberal) , Sabahhaddin Bey , and ARF member Khachatur Maloumian attended . During the meeting , an alliance between the two parties was officially declared . The ARF decided to cooperate with the Committee of Union and Progress , hoping that if the Young Turks came to power , autonomy would be granted to the Armenians .

In 1908 , Abdul Hamid II was overthrown during the Young Turk Revolution , which launched the Second Constitutional Era of the Ottoman Empire . Armenians gained more seats in the 1908 parliament , but the reforms fell short of the greater autonomy that the ARF had hoped for . The Adana massacre in 1909 also created antipathy between Armenians and Turks , and the ARF cut relations with the Young Turks in 1912 .

= = = World War I and the Armenian Genocide = = =

In 1915 , Dashnak leaders were deported and killed alongside other Armenian intellectuals during a purge by Ottoman officials against the leaders of the empire 's Armenian communities . The ARF , maintaining its ideological commitment to a " Free , Independent , and United Armenia " , led the defense of the Armenian people during the Armenian Genocide , becoming leaders of the successful Van Resistance . Jevdet Bey , the Ottoman administrator of Van , tried to suppress the resistance by killing two Armenian leaders (Ishkhan and Vramian) and trying to imprison Aram Manukian , who had risen to fame and gained the nickname " Aram of Van " . Moreover , on April 19 , he issued an order to exterminate all Armenians , and threatened to kill all Muslims who helped them .

About 185 @, @ 000 Armenians lived in Vaspurakan . In the city of Van itself , there were around 30 @, @ 000 Armenians , but more Armenians from surrounding villages joined them during the Ottoman offensive . The battle started on April 20 , 1915 , with Aram Manukian as the leader of the resistance , and lasted for two months . In May , the Armenian battalions and Russian regulars entered the city and successfully drove the Ottoman army out of Van . The Dashnaktsutiun was also involved in other less @-@ successful resistance movements in Zeitun , Shabin @-@ Karahisar , Urfa , and Musa Dag . After the end of the Van resistance , ARF leader Aram Manukian became governor of the Administration for Western Armenia and worked to ease the sufferings of Armenians .

At the end of World War I , members of the Young Turks movement considered executors of the Armenian Genocide by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation were assassinated during Operation Nemesis .

= = = Republic of Armenia (1918 ? 1920) = = =

As a result of the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917 , the Armenian , Georgian , and Muslim leaders of the Caucasus united to create the Transcaucasian Federation in the winter of 1918 . The Treaty of Brest @-@ Litovsk had drastic consequences for the Armenians : Turkish forces reoccupied Western Armenia . The federation lasted for only three months , eventually leading to the proclamation of the Republics of Armenia , Georgia , and Azerbaijan . The negotiators for Armenia were from the ARF .

With the collapse of the Transcaucasian Federation , the Armenians were left to fend for themselves as the Turkish army approached the capital of Yerevan . At first , fearing a major military defeat and massacre of the population of Armenia , the Dashnaks wanted to evacuate the city of Yerevan . Instead , the Military Council headed by Colonel Pirumian decided that they would not surrender and would confront the Turkish army . The opposing armies met on May 28 , 1918 , near Sardarapat . The battle was a major military success for the Armenian army as it was able to halt the invading Turkish forces . The Armenians also stood their ground at the Battle of Kara Killisse and at

the Battle of Bash Abaran . The creation of the First Republic of Armenia was proclaimed on the same day of the Battle of Sardarapat , and the ARF became the ruling party . However , the new state was devastated , with a dislocated economy , hundreds of thousands of refugees , and a mostly starving population .

During this period , in May 1918 , this group committed a massacre in Guba in Azerbaïdjan killing 3 000 civilians including Muslims , Mountain Jews and Lezgians .

The ARF , led by General Andranik , tried several times to seize Shusha (known as Shushi by Armenians) , a city in Karabakh . Just before the Armistice of Mudros was signed , Andranik was on the way from Zangezur to Shusha , to control the main city of Karabakh . Andranik 's forces got within 26 miles (42 km) of the city when the First World War ended , and Turkey , along with Germany and Austria @-@ Hungary , surrendered to the Allies . British forces ordered Andranik to stop all military advances , assuring him that the conflict would be solved with the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 . Andranik , not wanting to antagonize the British , retreated to Goris , Zangezur .

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation had a strong presence in the DRA government . Most of the important government posts , such as prime minister , defence minister and interior minister were controlled by its members .

The DRA wanted to recover the country 's economy , and create new rules and regulations , but the situation required it to focus on overcoming widespread hunger in the country . The situation was complicated externally , provoked by Turkish and Azeri Muslim riots . In 1920 the situation in the country became worse , with apparent rapprochement between Soviet Russia and Kemal 's Turkey . When the Turkish @-@ Armenian war started in autumn 1920 , Armenia was isolated and abandoned by Western allies . The newly formed League of Nations did not provide any help . Soviet Russia intensified its pressure on Armenia . Losing the war , Armenia signed the Treaty of Alexandropol on December 2 , 1920 , which resulted in the recognition of large territorial losses to Turkey . The Armenia military @-@ revolutionary committee formed in Soviet Azerbaijan . Despite their tight grip on power , the ARF ceded power to the Communist Red Army troops invading from the north , which culminated with a Soviet takeover . The ARF was banned , its leaders exiled , and many of its members dispersed to other parts of the world .

= = Exile = =

After the communists took over the short @-@ lived First Republic of Armenia and ARF leaders were exiled , the Dashnaks moved their base of operations to where the Armenian diaspora had settled . With the large influx of Armenian refugees in the Levant , the ARF established a strong political structure in Lebanon and to a lesser extent , Syria . From 1921 to 1990 , the Dashnaksutun established political structures in more than 200 states including the USA , where another large influx of Armenians settled .

With political and geographic division came religious division . One part of the Armenian Church claimed it wanted to be separate from the head , whose seat was in Echmiadzin , Armenian SSR . Some Armenians in the US thought Moscow tried to use the Armenian Church to promote Communists ' ideas outside the country . The Armenian Church thus separated into two branches , Echmiadzin and Cilician , and started to operate separately . In the US , Echmiadzin branch churches of the Armenian Apostolic Church would not admit members of the ARF . This was one of the reasons why the ARF discouraged people from attending these churches and brought the representatives from a different wing of the church , the Armenian Catholicate of Cilicia , from Lebanon to the US . In 1933 , members of ARF were convicted in the assassination of Armenian archbishop Levon Tourian in New York City . Prior to his murder , the archbishop had been accused of being exclusively pro @-@ Soviet by the ARF . However , the ARF itself was legally exonerated from any direct complicity in the assassination .

During World War II , some Berlin @-@ based ARF members saw an opportunity to remove Soviet control from Armenia by supporting the Nazis . The Armenian Legion , composed largely of former Soviet Red Army POWs , was led by Drastamat Kanayan . It participated in the occupation of the

Crimean Peninsula but was later based in the Netherlands and France a result of Adolf Hitler 's distrust of their loyalty .

During the 1950s , tensions arose between the ARF and Armenian SSR . The death of Catholicos Garegin of the Holy See of Cilicia prompted a struggle for succession . The National Ecclesiastic Assembly , which was largely influenced by the ARF , elected Zareh of Aleppo . This decision was rejected by the Echmiadzin @-@ based Catholicos of All Armenians , the anti @-@ ARF coalition , and Soviet Armenian authorities . Zareh extended his administrative authority over a large part of the Armenian diaspora , furthering the rift that had already been created by his election . This event split the large Armenian community of Lebanon , creating sporadic clashes between the supporters of Zareh and those who opposed his election .

Religious conflict was part of a greater conflict that raged between the two " camps " of the Armenian diaspora . The ARF still resented the fact that they were ousted from Armenia after the Red Army took control , and the ARF leaders supported the creation of a " Free , Independent , and United Armenia " , free from both Soviet and Turkish hegemony . The Social Democrat Hunchakian Party and Ramgavar Party , the main rivals of the ARF , supported the newly established Soviet rule in Armenia .

= = = Lebanon = = =

From 1923 to 1958 , conflicts erupted among Armenian political parties struggling to dominate and organize the diaspora . In 1926 , a struggle between committees of the ARF and Hunchakian parties for control of the newly established shanty @-@ town of Bourj Hammoud in Lebanon led to the assassination of ARF member Vahan Vartabedian . As retaliation for the murder , Hunchakian members Mihran Aghazarian and S. Dekhrouhi were assassinated in 1929 and 1931 respectively . In 1956 , when Bishop Zareh was consecrated Catholicos of Cilicia , the Catholicos of Echmiadzin refused to recognize his authority . This controversy polarized the Armenian community of Lebanon . As a result , in the context of the Lebanese civil strife of 1958 , an armed conflict erupted between supporters (the ARF) and opponents (Hunchakians , Ramgavars) of Zareh .

Prior to the Lebanese Civil War of 1975 ? 90 , the party was closely allied to the Phalangist Party of Pierre Gemayel and generally ran joint tickets with the Phalangists , especially in Beirut constituencies with large Armenian populations . The refusal of the ARF , along with most Armenian groups , to play an active role in the civil war , however , soured relations between the two parties , and the Lebanese Forces (a militia dominated by Phalangists and commanded by Bachir Gemayel , Pierre Gemayel 's son) , responded by attacking the Armenian quarters of many Lebanese towns , including Bourj Hammoud . Many Armenians affiliated with the ARF took up arms voluntarily to defend their quarters . In the midst of the Lebanese civil war , a shadowy guerrilla organization called Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide emerged and carried out a string of assassinations from 1975 to 1983 . The guerrilla organization has sometimes been linked to the Dashnaks .

Ethnic Armenians are allocated six seats in Lebanon 's 128 @-@ member National Assembly . The Lebanese branch of the ARF has usually controlled a majority of the Armenian vote and won most of the ethnic Armenian seats in the National Assembly . A major change occurred in the parliamentary election of 2000 . With a rift between ARF and the Mustaqbal (Future) party of Rafik Hariri and the ARF was left with only one parliamentary seat , its worst result in many decades . The ARF called for a boycott of the 2005 Beirut elections . Relations soured further when on August 5 , 2007 by @-@ election in the Metn district , which includes the predominantly Armenian area of Bourj Hammoud , ARF decided to support Camille Khoury , the candidate backed by opposition leader Michel Aoun 's Free Patriotic Movement against Phalangist leader Amine Gemayel and subsequently won the seat . In the 2009 Lebanese general elections , the ARF won 2 seats in parliament which it holds presently . In June 2011 , a new Lebanese government was formed where ARF party members were appointed to two ministerial positions , including Ministry of Industry , as part of the March 8 alliance .

The ARF Lebanon branch is headquartered in Bourj Hammoud in the Shaghzoian Centre , along

with the ARF Lebanon Central Committee 's Aztag Daily newspaper and " Voice Of Van " 24 @-@ hour radio station .

= = Independent Armenia = =

The ARF has always maintained its ideological commitment to " a Free , Independent , and United Armenia " . The term United Armenia refers to the borders of Armenia recognized by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and outlined in the Treaty of Sèvres . After Armenia fell under Soviet control in 1920 , the ARF within the Armenian diaspora opposed Soviet rule over Armenia and rallied in support of Armenian independence . It contributed to organizing a social and cultural framework aimed at preserving the Armenian identity . However , because of tight communist control , the ARF could not operate in the Armenian SSR and the political party remained banned until 1991 .

When independence was achieved in 1991 , the ARF soon became one of the major and most active political parties , rivaled mainly by the Pan @-@ Armenian National Movement . Subsequently , on December 28 , 1994 , President Levon Ter @-@ Petrosyan in a famous television speech banned the ARF , which was the nation 's leading opposition party , along with Yerkir , the country 's largest daily newspaper . Ter @-@ Petrosyan introduced evidence that supposedly detailed a plot hatched by the ARF to engage in terrorism against his administration , endanger Armenia 's national security and overthrow the government . Throughout the evening , government security forces arrested leading ARF figures , and police seized computers , fax machines , files and printing equipment from ARF offices . In addition to Yerkir , government forces also closed several literary , women 's , cultural , and youth publications . Thirty @-@ one men , who would later be known as the " Dro Group " (named after the Dro Committee , the group that was allegedly behind the plot) , were arrested .

Gerard Libaridyan , an historian and close adviser of Ter @-@ Petrosyan , collected and presented the evidence against the defendants . He later stated in an interview that he was unsure if the evidence was true , inviting the notion that the party was banned because of its increasing chances of winning seats in the July 1995 parliamentary elections . Several months after the elections , most of the men were found not guilty with the exception of several defendants charged for engaging in corrupt business practices . The ban on the party was lifted , however , less than a week after Ter @-@ Petrosyan fell from power in February 1998 and was replaced by Robert Kocharyan , who was backed by the Dashnaks .

However , two members ARF : Arsen Artsruni and Armenak Mnjoyan still arrested so far .

In 2007 , the ARF was not part of but had a cooperation agreement in place with the governing coalition , which consisted of two parties in the government coalition , the Republican Party and Prosperous Armenia Party . The Country of Law party was also a member of the governing coalition until it pulled out in May 2006 . With 16 of the 131 seats in the National Assembly of Armenia , the Armenian Revolutionary Federation is the major socialist party in Armenia and the third @-@ largest party in parliament .

In addition to its parliamentary seats , the following governmental ministries were also headed by ARF members : Ministry of Agriculture , Davit Lokian ; Ministry of Education and Science , Levon Mkrtchian ; Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs , Aghvan Vardanian ; Ministry of Healthcare , Norair Davidian . On July 13 , 2007 , the ARF History Museum was inaugurated in Yerevan , displaying the history of the party and of its notable members .

In 2007 , the ARF announced that it would nominate its own candidate to run for president of Armenia in the February 2008 presidential election . In an innovation on November 24 ? 25 , 2007 , the ARF conducted a non @-@ binding Armenia @-@ wide primary election . They invited the public to vote to advise the party which of two candidates , Vahan Hovhannisyan and Armen Rustamyan , they should formally nominate for president of Armenia in the subsequent official election . What characterized it as a primary instead of a standard opinion poll was that the public knew of the primary in advance , all eligible voters were invited , and the voting was by secret ballot . Nearly 300 @,@ 000 people voted in makeshift tents and mobile ballot boxes . Vahan Hovhannisyan received the most votes and was subsequently nominated for the presidential

election by the ARF Supreme Council in a secret ballot . In the presidential election , Hovhannisyan placed fourth with 6 @. @ 2 % of the vote . In 2008 , ARF re @-@ joined the ruling political coalition in Armenia and supported strong police actions during the 2008 Armenian presidential election protests that led to ten deaths .

Due to the signature of the so @-@ called Zurich Protocols the ARF left the coalition and became an opposition party once again in 2009 , but relations with other factions in the Armenian opposition have remained frosty . In 2012 parliamentary election the ARF won 5 seats losing 11 parliamentary seats from 2007 .

ARF then reentered Sargsyan 's cabinet in February 2016 , obtaining three ministerial posts : Ministry of Economy , Local Government and Education ; also as a result of what was defined as a " long @-@ term political cooperation " agreement with the Republican Party , ARF also got to appoint the regional governors of Aragatsotn and Shirak Provinces .

= = = Electoral record = = =

In the 2000s , the party usually garnered some 10 to 15 of the vote in national elections . In a 2007 confidential telegram Anthony Godfrey , U.S. Embassy in Armenia chargé d 'affaires , wrote that the party " has had a historically loyal following of 10 to 12 percent of the population , but probably has little chance to expand from that base . "

= = Nagorno @-@ Karabakh = =

After the Soviet Union expanded into the South Caucasus , it established the Nagorno @-@ Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) within the Azerbaijan SSR in 1923 . In the final years of the Soviet Union , the Armenian Revolutionary Federation established a branch in Nagorno @-@ Karabakh . In January 1991 , the Dashnaktsutun won the parliamentary election and governed as the ruling party during the entirety of the Nagorno @-@ Karabakh war . The Dashnaks actively supported the independence of Nagorno @-@ Karabakh (or Artsakh as Armenians call it) . It aided the Nagorno @-@ Karabakh Defense Army by sending armed volunteers to the front lines and supplying the army with weapons , food , medicine and moral support . After deciding not to run in the second parliamentary elections , the Armenian Revolutionary Federation ran in the 1999 elections and won 9 of the 33 seats in the National Assembly of Nagorno Karabakh . At the June 2005 elections , the Dashnaktsutun was part of an electoral alliance with Movement 88 that won 3 out of 33 seats .

= = Ideology and goals = =

The principal founders of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation were nationalist , socialists , and Marxist elements were omnipresent in the introductory section of the party 's first program written by Rosdom , entitled " General Theory " . The ARF first set down its ideological and political goals during the Hamidian regime . It denounced the Ottoman regime and the unbearable conditions of life for its Armenians and advocated changing the regime in power and securing more rights through revolution and armed struggle . The ARF had and still has socialism within its political philosophy . Its program expresses the entire , multifaceted make @-@ up of the Armenian revolutionary movement , including its national @-@ liberation , political , and social @-@ economic aspects .

Despite subsequent modifications , the above @-@ mentioned principles and tendencies continue to characterize the ideological world of the Dashnaktsutun , and its approach toward issues has remained unchanged . In recent decades , the Armenian Revolutionary Federation reasserted itself ideologically and reformulated the section of its program called " General Theory " , adapting it to current concepts of socialism , democracy and rights of self @-@ determination . The party has long supported a parliamentary republican political system and campaigned for a " yes " vote in the 2015 constitutional referendum .

Its goals are :

Creation of a free , independent , and united Armenia . The borders of United Armenia shall include all territories designated as Armenia by the Treaty of Sèvres as well as the regions of Artsakh , Javakhk , and Nakhichevan (See map) .

International condemnation of the Genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians , return of the lands which are occupied , and just reparations to the Armenian nation

The gathering of worldwide expatriate Armenians on the lands of United Armenia .

Strengthening Armenia 's statehood , institutionalization of democracy and the rule of law , securing the people 's economic well being , and establishment of social justice , and a democratic and socialistic independent republic in Armenia

The ARF is often accused of having a present strategy that does not differ from the one used during the time of the Ottoman Empire . Its tactics are viewed as still being aimed at convincing Western governments and diplomatic circles to sponsor the party 's demands .

In 1907 , the Dashnaktsutun joined the Second International until its dissolution during World War I. It later joined the reformed Socialist International and remained a full member until 1960 , when it decided to pull out of the organization . In 1996 , it was re @-@ accepted as an observer member , and in 1999 the Dashnaks earned full membership in the international organization . The party was also a member of the Labour and Socialist International between 1923 and 1940 .

A member of the ARF is called Dashnaktsakan (in Eastern Armenian) or Tashnagsagan (in Western Armenian) . Other than calling each other by name , members formally address one another as Comrade (????? or Unger for boys and men , ?????????? or Ungerouhi for girls and women) .

= = Affiliate organizations = =

The ARF is considered the foremost organization in the Armenian diaspora , having established numerous Armenian schools , community centers , Scouting and athletic groups , relief societies , youth groups , camps , and other organs throughout the world .

The ARF also works as an umbrella organ for the Armenian Relief Society , the Homenetmen Armenian General Athletic Union , the Hamazkayin Cultural Foundation , and many other community organizations . It operates the Armenian Youth Federation , which encourages the youth of the diaspora to join the political cause of the ARF and the Armenian people .

The ARF Shant Student Association and the ARF Armen Karo Student Association are organizations of college and university students on various campuses and are the only ARF organizations whose membership is exclusively from this group .

= = = US and Canada = = =

Armenian National Committee of America , an @-@ ARF affiliate organization , is the strongest Armenian lobby organization in the United States . Its sister organization Armenian National Committee of Canada , operated in Canada .

= = = Other countries = = =

Argentina , Australia , Bulgaria , Canada , Cyprus , Egypt , England , France , Georgia , Germany , Greece , Iran , Israel , Russia , Switzerland , Syria , Uruguay subsequently have played a significant role in the campaign for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in their respective countries .

= = Media = =

ARF and its affiliate organizations worldwide publish 11 newspapers : 4 daily and 7 weekly . Also , there are two TV channels , including one online . Two radio stations are aired everyday , including one online .

Periodicals

Television
Radio