[Template:Pp-protected](/wiki/Template:Pp-protected" \o "Template:Pp-protected) [Template:About](/wiki/Template:About) [Template:Redirect2](/wiki/Template:Redirect2)[Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country)

**Armenia** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en), [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en);[[1]](#cite_note-1) [Template:Lang-hy](/wiki/Template:Lang-hy), [tr.](/wiki/Romanization_of_Armenian) *Hayastan*, [Template:IPA-hy](/wiki/Template:IPA-hy)[Template:Efn](/wiki/Template:Efn)), officially the **Republic of Armenia** ([Template:Lang-hy](/wiki/Template:Lang-hy), [tr.](/wiki/Romanization_of_Armenian) *Hayastani Hanrapetut’yun*), is a [sovereign state](/wiki/Sovereign_state) in the [South Caucasus](/wiki/South_Caucasus) region of [Eurasia](/wiki/Eurasia). Located in [Western Asia](/wiki/Western_Asia),[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3) it is bordered by [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey) to the west, [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)) to the north, the *de facto* [independent](/wiki/Independence) [Nagorno-Karabakh Republic](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh_Republic) and [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan) to the east, and [Iran](/wiki/Iran) and the [exclave](/wiki/Exclave) of [Nakhchivan](/wiki/Nakhchivan_Autonomous_Republic) to the south.

Armenia is a unitary, multi-party, democratic nation-state with an ancient cultural heritage. [Urartu](/wiki/Urartu) was established in 860 BC and by the 6th century BC it was replaced by the [Satrapy of Armenia](/wiki/Satrapy_of_Armenia). In the 1st century BC the [Kingdom of Armenia](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Armenia_(antiquity)) reached its height under [Tigranes the Great](/wiki/Tigranes_the_Great). Armenia became the first state in the world to adopt [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) as its [official religion](/wiki/State_religion).[[4]](#cite_note-4) In between the late 3rd century to early years of the 4th century, the state became the first Christian nation.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[7]](#cite_note-7) The official date of state adoption of Christianity is 301 AD.[[8]](#cite_note-8) The ancient Armenian kingdom was split between the [Byzantine](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) and [Sasanian Empires](/wiki/Sasanian_Empire) around the early 5th century. Under the [Bagratuni dynasty](/wiki/Bagratuni_dynasty), the [Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia](/wiki/Bagratid_Kingdom_of_Armenia) was restored in the 9th century. Declining due to the wars against the Byzantines, the kingdom fell in 1045 and Armenia was soon after invaded by the [Seljuk Turks](/wiki/Seljuk_Empire). An Armenian principality and later a kingdom [Cilician Armenia](/wiki/Armenian_Kingdom_of_Cilicia) was located on the coast of the [Mediterranean Sea](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea) between the 11th and 14th centuries.

Between the 16th century and 19th century, the traditional Armenian homeland composed of [Eastern Armenia](/wiki/Eastern_Armenia) and [Western Armenia](/wiki/Western_Armenia) came under the rule of the [Ottoman](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) and [Iranian](/wiki/Persian_Empire) empires, repeatedly ruled by either of the two over the centuries. By the 19th century, Eastern Armenia had been conquered by the [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire), while most of the western parts of the traditional Armenian homeland remained under Ottoman rule. During [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I), Armenians living in their ancestral lands in the Ottoman Empire were systematically exterminated in the [Armenian Genocide](/wiki/Armenian_Genocide). In 1918, after the [Russian Revolution](/wiki/Russian_Revolution), all non-Russian countries declared their independence from the Russian empire, leading to the establishment of the [First Republic of Armenia](/wiki/First_Republic_of_Armenia). By 1920, the state was incorporated into the [Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic](/wiki/Transcaucasian_Socialist_Federative_Soviet_Republic), and in 1922 became a founding member of the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union). In 1936, the Transcaucasian state was dissolved, transforming its constituent states, including the [Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic](/wiki/Armenian_Soviet_Socialist_Republic), into full [Union republics](/wiki/Republics_of_the_Soviet_Union). The modern Republic of Armenia became independent in 1991 during the [dissolution of the Soviet Union](/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Soviet_Union).

The Republic of Armenia recognizes the [Armenian Apostolic Church](/wiki/Armenian_Apostolic_Church), the world's oldest national church, as the country's primary religious establishment.[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10) The unique [Armenian alphabet](/wiki/Armenian_alphabet) was invented by [Mesrop Mashtots](/wiki/Mesrop_Mashtots) in 405 AD.

Armenia is a member of the [Eurasian Economic Union](/wiki/Eurasian_Economic_Union), the [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe) and the [Collective Security Treaty Organization](/wiki/Collective_Security_Treaty_Organization). Armenia supports the de facto independent [Nagorno-Karabakh Republic](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh_Republic), which was proclaimed in 1991.

## Contents

* 1 Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]
* 2 History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]
  + 2.1 Antiquity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]
  + 2.2 Middle Ages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]
  + 2.3 Early Modern era[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]
  + 2.4 World War I and the Armenian Genocide[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]
  + 2.5 First Republic of Armenia[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]
  + 2.6 Soviet Armenia[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]
  + 2.7 Restoration of independence[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]
* 3 Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]
  + 3.1 Topography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]
  + 3.2 Environment[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]
  + 3.3 Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]
* 4 Government and politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]
  + 4.1 Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]
  + 4.2 Human rights[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]
  + 4.3 Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]
  + 4.4 Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]
* 5 Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]
  + 5.1 Exports and imports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]
* 6 Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]
  + 6.1 Ethnic groups[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]
  + 6.2 Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]
  + 6.3 Cities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]
  + 6.4 Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]
  + 6.5 Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]
  + 6.6 Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]
* 7 Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]
  + 7.1 Media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]
  + 7.2 Music and dance[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]
  + 7.3 Art[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]
  + 7.4 Sport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]
  + 7.5 Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]
* 8 See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]
* 9 Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]
* 10 References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]
* 11 Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]
* 12 External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The native [Armenian](/wiki/Armenian_language) name for the country is [*Template:Lang*](/wiki/Template:Lang). The name in the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages) was extended to [*Hayastan*](/wiki/Wikt:Հայաստան), by addition of the [Persian](/wiki/Persian_language) suffix [*-stan*](/wiki/-stan) (place).

The name has traditionally been derived from [Hayk](/wiki/Hayk) ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang)), the legendary patriarch of the [Armenians](/wiki/Armenians) and a great-great-grandson of [Noah](/wiki/Noah), who, according to the 5th-century AD author [Moses of Chorene](/wiki/Moses_of_Chorene), defeated the [Babylonian king](/wiki/List_of_Kings_of_Babylon) Bel in [2492 BC](/wiki/3rd_millennium_BC) and established his nation in the [Ararat](/wiki/Ararat,_Armenia) region.[[11]](#cite_note-11) The further origin of the name is uncertain. It is also further postulated[[12]](#cite_note-12)[[13]](#cite_note-13) that the name *Hay* comes from one of the two confederated, Hittite vassal states—the [Ḫayaša](/wiki/Hayasa)-Azzi (1600–1200 BC).

The [exonym](/wiki/Exonym_and_endonym) *Armenia* is attested in the [Old Persian](/wiki/Old_Persian) [Behistun Inscription](/wiki/Behistun_Inscription) (515 BC) as [*Armina*](/wiki/Wikt:𐎠𐎼𐎷𐎡𐎴#Old_Persian) ([30x20pxpx](/wiki/File:Old_Persian_a.png) [30x20pxpx](/wiki/File:Old_Persian_ra.png) [30x20pxpx](/wiki/File:Old_Persian_mi.png) [30x20pxpx](/wiki/File:Old_Persian_i.png) [30x20pxpx](/wiki/File:Old_Persian_na.png)). The [ancient Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greek) terms [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) (*Armenía*) and [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) (*Arménioi*, "Armenians") are first mentioned by [Hecataeus of Miletus](/wiki/Hecataeus_of_Miletus) (c. 550 BC – c. 476 BC).[[14]](#cite_note-14) [Xenophon](/wiki/Xenophon), a Greek general serving in some of the Persian expeditions, describes many aspects of Armenian village life and hospitality in around 401 BC. He relates that the people spoke a language that to his ear sounded like the language of the [Persians](/wiki/Persian_people).[[15]](#cite_note-15) According to the histories of both Moses of Chorene and Michael Chamchian, *Armenia* derives from the name of [Aram](/wiki/Aram_(given_name)), a lineal descendant of Hayk.[[16]](#cite_note-16)<ref name=battles>*History of Armenia* by Father Michael Chamich from B.C. 2247 to the Year of Christ 1780, or 1229 of the Armenian era, Bishop's College Press, Calcutta, 1827, page 19: "[Aram] was the first to raise the Armenian name to any degree of renown; so that contemporary nations... called them the Aramians, or followers of [Aram](/wiki/Aram_(given_name)), a name which has been corrupted into Armenians; and the country they inhabited, by universal consent, took the name of Armenia."</ref> [thumb|Historical Armenia 150 b.c.](/wiki/File:Arshakuni_Armenia_150-en.svg)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

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### Antiquity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|300px|A reconstruction of](/wiki/File:Herodotus_World_Map.jpg) [Herodotus'](/wiki/Herodotus) world map c. 450 BC, with Armenia shown in the center. [thumb|300px|The](/wiki/File:Armenian_Empire.png) [Kingdom of Armenia](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Armenia_(Antiquity)) at its greatest extent under [Tigranes the Great](/wiki/Tigranes_the_Great), who reigned between 95 and 66 BC. Armenia lies in the highlands surrounding the mountains of [Ararat](/wiki/Mount_Ararat). There is evidence of an early civilization in Armenia in the [Bronze Age](/wiki/Bronze_Age) and earlier, dating to about 4000 BC. Archaeological surveys in 2010 and 2011 at the [Areni-1 cave complex](/wiki/Areni-1_cave_complex) have resulted in the discovery of [the world's earliest known leather shoe](/wiki/Areni-1_shoe),[[17]](#cite_note-17) skirt,<ref name=strawskirt>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> and [wine-producing facility](/wiki/Areni-1_winery).[[18]](#cite_note-18) Several bronze-era states flourished in the area of Greater Armenia, including the [Hittite Empire](/wiki/History_of_the_Hittites) (at the height of its power), [Mitanni](/wiki/Mitanni) (South-Western historical Armenia), and [Hayasa-Azzi](/wiki/Hayasa-Azzi) (1500–1200 BC). The [Nairi people](/wiki/Nairi) (12th to 9th centuries BC) and the [Kingdom of Urartu](/wiki/Urartu) (1000–600 BC) successively established their sovereignty over the [Armenian Highland](/wiki/Armenian_Highland). Each of the aforementioned nations and tribes participated in the ethnogenesis of the [Armenian people](/wiki/Armenians).[[19]](#cite_note-19)[[20]](#cite_note-20)[[21]](#cite_note-21)[[22]](#cite_note-22) A large cuneiform lapidary inscription found in [Yerevan](/wiki/Yerevan) established that the modern capital of Armenia was founded in the summer of 782 BC by King [Argishti I](/wiki/Argishti_I_of_Urartu). Yerevan is the world's oldest city to have documented the exact date of its foundation.

During the late 6th century BC, the [first geographical entity that was called Armenia](/wiki/Satrapy_of_Armenia) by neighboring populations was established under the [Orontid Dynasty](/wiki/Orontid_Dynasty) within the [Achaemenid Empire](/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire), as part of the latters' territories. The kingdom became fully sovereign from the sphere of influence of the [Seleucid Empire](/wiki/Seleucid_Empire) in 190 BC under King [Artaxias I](/wiki/Artaxias_I) and begun the rule of the [Artaxiad dynasty](/wiki/Artaxiad_dynasty). Armenia reached its height between 95 and 66 BC under [Tigranes the Great](/wiki/Tigranes_the_Great), becoming the most powerful kingdom of its time east of the [Roman Republic](/wiki/Roman_Republic).

In the next centuries, Armenia was in the [Persian Empire's](/wiki/Persian_Empire) sphere of influence during the reign of [Tiridates I](/wiki/Tiridates_I_of_Armenia), the founder of the [Arsacid dynasty of Armenia](/wiki/Arsacid_dynasty_of_Armenia), which itself was a branch of the eponymous [Arsacid dynasty of Parthia](/wiki/Arsacid_dynasty_of_Parthia). Throughout its history, the kingdom of Armenia enjoyed both periods of independence and periods of autonomy subject to contemporary empires. Its strategic location between two continents has subjected it to invasions by many peoples, including the [Assyrians](/wiki/Assyria) (under [Ashurbanipal](/wiki/Ashurbanipal), at around 669–627 BC, the boundaries of the [Assyrian Empire](/wiki/Assyrian_Empire) reached as far as Armenia & the [Caucasus Mountains](/wiki/Caucasus_Mountains)),[[23]](#cite_note-23) [Medes](/wiki/Medes), [Achaemenid Persians](/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire), [Greeks](/wiki/Greeks), [Parthians](/wiki/Parthian_Empire), [Romans](/wiki/Ancient_Rome), [Sassanid Persians](/wiki/Sassanian_Empire), [Byzantines](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire), [Arabs](/wiki/Arabs), [Seljuks](/wiki/Seljuks), [Mongols](/wiki/Mongols), [Ottomans](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire), successive Iranian [Safavids](/wiki/Safavid_dynasty), [Afsharids](/wiki/Afsharid_dynasty), and [Qajars](/wiki/Qajar_dynasty), and the [Russians](/wiki/Russians).

[thumb|The Armenian pagan](/wiki/File:Garni_Temple_02.JPG) [Temple of Garni](/wiki/Garni_Temple), probably built 1st century AD, is the only "Greco-Roman [colonnaded](/wiki/Colonnade) building" in Armenia and the entire [former Soviet Union](/wiki/Post-Soviet_states).[[24]](#cite_note-24) Religion in ancient Armenia was historically related to a set of beliefs which, in Persia, led to the emergence of [Zoroastrianism](/wiki/Zoroastrianism). It particularly focused on the worship of [Mihr](/wiki/Mithras) (Avestan [Mithra](/wiki/Mithras)) and also included a pantheon of native Aryan gods, such as [Aramazd](/wiki/Aramazd), [Vahagn](/wiki/Vahagn), [Anahit](/wiki/Anahit), and [Astghik](/wiki/Astghik). The country used the solar [Hayk](/wiki/Hayk) [Armenian calendar](/wiki/Armenian_calendar), which consisted of 12 months.

Christianity spread into the country as early as AD 40. King [Tiridates III](/wiki/Tiridates_III_of_Armenia) (238–314) made Christianity the [state religion](/wiki/State_religion) in 301,[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[26]](#cite_note-26) partly, in defiance of the [Sassanids](/wiki/Sassanids), it seems,[[27]](#cite_note-27) becoming the first officially Christian state, ten years before [the Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire) granted Christianity an official toleration under [Galerius](/wiki/Galerius), and 36 years before [Constantine the Great](/wiki/Constantine_the_Great) was baptized. Prior to this, during the latter part of the [Parthian](/wiki/Parthian_Empire) period, Armenia was a predominantly [Zoroastrian](/wiki/Zoroastrianism) land.[[27]](#cite_note-27) After the fall of the [Armenian kingdom](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Armenia_(antiquity)) in 428, most of Armenia was incorporated as a [marzpanate](/wiki/Marzpanate_Period) within the Sassanid Empire. Following an [Armenian rebellion](/wiki/Battle_of_Avarayr) in 451, Christian Armenians maintained their [religious freedom](/wiki/Freedom_of_religion), while Armenia gained autonomy.

### Middle Ages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Etchmiadzin_cathedral.jpg) [Etchmiadzin Cathedral](/wiki/Etchmiadzin_Cathedral), Armenia's Mother Church traditionally dated 303 AD, is considered the oldest cathedral in the world.[[28]](#cite_note-28)[[29]](#cite_note-29)[[30]](#cite_note-30)

After the [Marzpanate period](/wiki/Marzpanate_Period) (428–636), Armenia emerged as the [Emirate of Armenia](/wiki/Emirate_of_Armenia), an autonomous principality within the Arabic Empire, reuniting Armenian lands previously taken by the [Byzantine Empire](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) as well. The principality was ruled by the Prince of Armenia, and recognized by the [Caliph](/wiki/Caliphate) and the [Byzantine Emperor](/wiki/List_of_Byzantine_emperors). It was part of the administrative division/emirate [*Arminiya*](/wiki/Arminiya) created by the Arabs, which also included parts of Georgia and [Caucasian Albania](/wiki/Caucasian_Albania), and had its center in the Armenian city, [Dvin](/wiki/Dvin_(ancient_city)). The [Principality of Armenia](/wiki/Principality_of_Armenia) lasted until 884, when it regained its independence from the weakened Arab Empire under King [Ashot I](/wiki/Ashot_I_of_Armenia) Bagratuni.

The re-emergent Armenian kingdom was ruled by the [Bagratuni dynasty](/wiki/Bagratuni_dynasty) and lasted until 1045. In time, several areas of the Bagratid Armenia separated as independent kingdoms and principalities such as the Kingdom of [Vaspurakan](/wiki/Vaspurakan) ruled by the House of [Artsruni](/wiki/Artsruni) in the south, Kingdom of [Syunik](/wiki/Syunik_Region) in the east, or [Kingdom of Artsakh](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Artsakh) on the territory of modern [Nagorno Karabakh](/wiki/Nagorno_Karabakh), while still recognizing the supremacy of the Bagratid kings.

[250px|thumb|The](/wiki/File:Cilician_Armenia-en.svg) [Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia](/wiki/Armenian_Kingdom_of_Cilicia), 1198–1375. In 1045, the Byzantine Empire conquered Bagratid Armenia. Soon, the other Armenian states fell under Byzantine control as well. The Byzantine rule was short lived, as in 1071 [Seljuk Turks](/wiki/Seljuk_Turks) defeated the Byzantines and conquered Armenia at the [Battle of Manzikert](/wiki/Battle_of_Manzikert), establishing the Seljuk Empire.[[31]](#cite_note-31) To escape death or servitude at the hands of those who had assassinated his relative, [Gagik II](/wiki/Gagik_II_of_Armenia), King of [Ani](/wiki/Ani), an Armenian named [Roupen](/wiki/Ruben_I,_Prince_of_Armenia), went with some of his countrymen into the gorges of the [Taurus Mountains](/wiki/Taurus_Mountains) and then into [Tarsus](/wiki/Tarsus_(city)) of [Cilicia](/wiki/Cilicia). The Byzantine governor of the palace gave them shelter where the [Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia](/wiki/Armenian_Kingdom_of_Cilicia) was eventually established on 6 January 1198 under King [Leo I](/wiki/Leo_I,_King_of_Armenia), a descendant of Prince Roupen.

Cilicia was a strong ally of the European Crusaders, and saw itself as a bastion of Christendom in the East. Cilicia's significance in Armenian history and statehood is also attested by the transfer of the seat of the Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the spiritual leader of the Armenian people, to the region.

The Seljuk Empire soon started to collapse. In the early 12th century, Armenian princes of the [Zakarid](/wiki/Zakarid) [noble family](/wiki/Nobility) drove out the Seljuk Turks and established a semi-independent Armenian principality in Northern and Eastern Armenia, known as [Zakarid Armenia](/wiki/Zakarid_Armenia), which lasted under the patronage of the [Georgian Kingdom](/wiki/History_of_Georgia_(country)). The noble family of [Orbelians](/wiki/Orbelian_Dynasty) shared control with the Zakarids in various parts of the country, especially in [Syunik](/wiki/Syunik_Region) and [Vayots Dzor](/wiki/Vayots_Dzor), while the Armenian family of [Hasan-Jalalians](/wiki/House_of_Hasan-Jalalyan) controlled provinces of [Artsakh](/wiki/Artsakh) and [Utik](/wiki/Utik) as the [Kingdom of Artsakh](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Artsakh).

### Early Modern era[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Further2](/wiki/Template:Further2) During the 1230s, the [Mongol Empire](/wiki/Mongol_Empire) conquered the Zakaryan Principality, as well as the rest of Armenia. The Mongolian invasions were soon followed by those of other Central Asian tribes such as the [Kara Koyunlu](/wiki/Kara_Koyunlu), [Timurid](/wiki/Timurid_dynasty) and [Ak Koyunlu](/wiki/Ag_Qoyunlu), which continued from the 13th century until the 15th century. After incessant invasions, each bringing destruction to the country, with time Armenia became weakened.

In the 16th century, the [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) and [Safavid Empire](/wiki/Safavid_Empire) divided Armenia. From the early 16th century, both [Western Armenia](/wiki/Western_Armenia) and [Eastern Armenia](/wiki/Eastern_Armenia) fell under Iranian [Safavid rule](/wiki/Safavid_dynasty).[[32]](#cite_note-32)[[33]](#cite_note-33) Owing to the century long Turco-Iranian geo-political rivalry that would last in [Western Asia](/wiki/Western_Asia), significant parts of the region were frequently fought over between the two rivalling empires. From the mid 16th century with the [Peace of Amasya](/wiki/Peace_of_Amasya), and decisively from the first half of the 17th century with the [Treaty of Zuhab](/wiki/Treaty_of_Zuhab) until the first half of the 19th century,[[34]](#cite_note-34) Eastern Armenia was ruled by the successive [Iranian](/wiki/Iran) Safavid, [Afsharid](/wiki/Afsharid_dynasty) and [Qajar](/wiki/Qajar_dynasty) empires, while Western Armenia remained under [Ottoman](/wiki/Ottoman_Turkey) rule.

From 1604 [Abbas I of Iran](/wiki/Abbas_I_of_Persia) implemented a "scorched earth" policy in the region to protect his north-western frontier against any invading Ottoman forces, a policy which involved a [forced resettlement](/wiki/History_of_Armenia#Persian_Armenia) of masses of Armenians outside of their homelands.[[35]](#cite_note-35) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Capture_of_Erivan_Fortress_by_Russia,_1827_(by_Franz_Roubaud).jpg)[Seizure of Yerevan](/wiki/Capture_of_Erivan) fortress by Russian troops in 1827 during the [Russo-Persian War (1826-1828)](/wiki/Russo-Persian_War_(1826-1828)) by [Franz Roubaud](/wiki/Franz_Roubaud). In [1813](/wiki/Treaty_of_Gulistan) and [1828](/wiki/Treaty_of_Turkmenchay), following the [Russo-Persian War (1804-1813)](/wiki/Russo-Persian_War_(1804-1813)) and the [Russo-Persian War (1826-1828)](/wiki/Russo-Persian_War_(1826-1828)) respectively, [Qajar Iran](/wiki/Qajar_dynasty) was forced to irrevocably cede [Eastern Armenia](/wiki/Eastern_Armenia) to [Imperial Russia](/wiki/Imperial_Russia). (consisting of the [Erivan](/wiki/Khanate_of_Erevan) and [Karabakh](/wiki/Karabakh) [khanates](/wiki/Khanate)[[36]](#cite_note-36)[[37]](#cite_note-37)).[[38]](#cite_note-38) By now Eastern Armenia would, after centuries of Iranian rule, fall into a [Russian dominated era](/wiki/Russian_Armenia).

While Western Armenia still remained under Ottoman rule, the Armenians were granted considerable autonomy within their own enclaves and lived in relative harmony with other groups in the empire (including the ruling Turks). However, as Christians under a strict Muslim [social system](/wiki/Social_structure), Armenians faced pervasive discrimination. When they began pushing for more rights within the Ottoman Empire, Sultan [‘Abdu’l-Hamid II](/wiki/‘Abdu’l-Hamid_II), in response, organized state-sponsored massacres against the Armenians between 1894 and 1896, resulting in an estimated death toll of 80,000 to 300,000 people. The [Hamidian massacres](/wiki/Hamidian_massacres), as they came to be known, gave Hamid international infamy as the "Red Sultan" or "Bloody Sultan."[[39]](#cite_note-39) During the 1890s, the [Armenian Revolutionary Federation](/wiki/Armenian_Revolutionary_Federation), commonly known as *Dashnaktsutyun*, became active within the [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) 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. Dashnaktsutyun members also formed [*fedayi*](/wiki/Armenian_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.

The Ottoman Empire began to collapse, and in 1908, the [Young Turk Revolution](/wiki/Young_Turk_Revolution) overthrew the government of Sultan Hamid. In April 1909, the [Adana massacre](/wiki/Adana_massacre) occurred in the [Adana Vilayet](/wiki/Adana_Vilayet) of the Ottoman Empire resulting in the deaths of as many as 20,000–30,000 Armenians. The Armenians living in the empire hoped that the [Committee of Union and Progress](/wiki/Committee_of_Union_and_Progress) would change their second-class status. [Armenian reform package](/wiki/Armenian_reform_package) (1914) was presented as a solution by appointing an [inspector general](/wiki/Inspector_General) over Armenian issues.[[40]](#cite_note-40)

### World War I and the Armenian Genocide[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Morgenthau336.jpg)[Armenian Genocide](/wiki/Armenian_Genocide) victims in 1915 When World War I broke out leading to confrontation between the [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) and the [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire) in the [Caucasus](/wiki/Caucasus_Campaign) and [Persian Campaigns](/wiki/Persian_Campaign), the new government in [Istanbul](/wiki/Istanbul) began to look on the Armenians with distrust and suspicion. This was because the [Imperial Russian Army](/wiki/Imperial_Russian_Army) contained a contingent of [Armenian volunteers](/wiki/Armenian_volunteer_units). On 24 April 1915, [Armenian intellectuals were arrested by Ottoman authorities](/wiki/Deportation_of_Armenian_intellectuals_on_24_April_1915) and, with the [Tehcir Law](/wiki/Tehcir_Law) (29 May 1915), eventually a large proportion of Armenians living in [Anatolia](/wiki/Anatolia) perished in what has become known as the [Armenian Genocide](/wiki/Armenian_Genocide).

The genocide was implemented in two phases: the wholesale killing of the able-bodied male population through massacre and subjection of army conscripts to forced labour, followed by the deportation of women, children, the elderly and infirm on [death marches](/wiki/Death_march) leading to the [Syrian desert](/wiki/Syrian_desert). Driven forward by military escorts, the deportees were deprived of food and water and subjected to periodic robbery, rape, and massacre.[[41]](#cite_note-41)[[42]](#cite_note-42) There was local [Armenian resistance](/wiki/Armenian_resistance_during_the_Armenian_Genocide) in the region, developed against the activities of the Ottoman Empire. The events of 1915 to 1917 are regarded by Armenians and the vast majority of Western historians to have been state-sponsored mass killings, or genocide.[[43]](#cite_note-43) Turkish authorities deny the genocide took place to this day. The Armenian Genocide is acknowledged to have been one of the first modern [genocides](/wiki/Genocide).[[44]](#cite_note-44)[[45]](#cite_note-45) According to the research conducted by [Arnold J. Toynbee](/wiki/Arnold_J._Toynbee), an estimated 600,000 Armenians died during deportation from 1915–16). This figure, however, accounts for solely the first year of the Genocide and does not take into account those who died or were killed after the report was compiled on the 24th May 1916.[[46]](#cite_note-46) The [International Association of Genocide Scholars](/wiki/International_Association_of_Genocide_Scholars) places the death toll at "more than a million".[[47]](#cite_note-47) The total number of people killed has been most widely estimated at between 1 and 1.5 million.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Armenia and the Armenian diaspora have been campaigning for [official recognition](/wiki/Recognition_of_the_Armenian_Genocide) of the events as genocide for over 30 years. These events are traditionally commemorated yearly on 24 April, the Armenian Martyr Day, or the Day of the Armenian Genocide.

### First Republic of Armenia[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The Government house of the](/wiki/File:Government_building_of_the_first_Rep._of_Armenia_(1918-1920),_Yerevan.jpg) [First Republic of Armenia](/wiki/First_Republic_of_Armenia) (1918–1920) Although the [Russian Caucasus Army](/wiki/Russian_Caucasus_Army_(World_War_I)) of Imperial forces commanded by [Nikolai Yudenich](/wiki/Nikolai_Yudenich) and Armenians in volunteer units and Armenian militia led by [Andranik Ozanian](/wiki/Andranik_Ozanian) and [Tovmas Nazarbekian](/wiki/Tovmas_Nazarbekian) succeeded in gaining most of Ottoman Armenia during World War I, their gains were lost with the [Bolshevik Revolution of 1917](/wiki/October_Revolution).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) At the time, Russian-controlled [Eastern Armenia](/wiki/Eastern_Armenia), Georgia, and [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan) attempted to bond together in the [Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic](/wiki/Transcaucasian_Democratic_Federative_Republic). This federation, however, lasted from only February to May 1918, when all three parties decided to dissolve it. As a result, the Dashnaktsutyun government of Eastern Armenia declared its independence on 28 May as the [First Republic of Armenia](/wiki/First_Republic_of_Armenia) under the leadership of [Aram Manukian](/wiki/Aram_Manukian).

The First Republic's short-lived independence was fraught with war, [territorial disputes](/wiki/Territorial_dispute), and a mass influx of refugees from Ottoman Armenia, bringing with them disease and starvation. The [Entente Powers](/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_I), appalled by the actions of the Ottoman government, sought to help the newly founded Armenian state through relief funds and other forms of support.

At the end of the war, the victorious powers sought to divide up the Ottoman Empire. Signed between the [Allied and Associated Powers](/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_I) and [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) at [Sèvres](/wiki/Sèvres) on 10 August 1920, the [Treaty of Sèvres](/wiki/Treaty_of_Sèvres) promised to maintain the existence of the Armenian republic and to attach the former territories of Ottoman Armenia to it. Because the new borders of Armenia were to be drawn by United States President [Woodrow Wilson](/wiki/Woodrow_Wilson), Ottoman Armenia was also referred to as "[Wilsonian Armenia](/wiki/Wilsonian_Armenia)." In addition, just days prior, on 5 August 1920, [Mihran Damadian](/wiki/Mihran_Damadian) of the Armenian National Union, the de facto Armenian administration in Cilicia, declared the independence of [Cilicia](/wiki/Cilicia) as an Armenian autonomous republic under French protectorate.[[49]](#cite_note-49) There was even consideration of possibly making Armenia a mandate under the protection of the United States. The treaty, however, was rejected by the [Turkish National Movement](/wiki/Turkish_National_Movement), and never came into effect. The movement used the treaty as the occasion to declare itself the rightful [government of Turkey](/wiki/Politics_of_Turkey), replacing the monarchy based in [Istanbul](/wiki/Istanbul) with a republic based in [Ankara](/wiki/Ankara). [right|thumb|Advance of the](/wiki/File:11thRedArmyYerevan.jpg) [11th Red Army](/wiki/11th_Army_(Soviet_Union)) into the city of Yerevan In 1920, Turkish nationalist forces invaded the fledgling Armenian republic from the east. Turkish forces under the command of [Kazım Karabekir](/wiki/Kâzım_Karabekir) captured Armenian territories that Russia had annexed in the aftermath of the [1877–1878 Russo-Turkish War](/wiki/Russo-Turkish_War_(1877–78)) and occupied the old city of Alexandropol (present-day [Gyumri](/wiki/Gyumri)). The violent conflict finally concluded with the [Treaty of Alexandropol](/wiki/Treaty_of_Alexandropol) on 2 December 1920. The treaty forced Armenia to disarm most of its [military forces](/wiki/Armed_forces), cede all former Ottoman territory granted to it by the [Treaty of Sèvres](/wiki/Treaty_of_Sèvres), and to give up all the "Wilsonian Armenia" granted to it at the Sèvres treaty. Simultaneously, the [Soviet Eleventh Army](/wiki/11th_Army_(Soviet_Union)), under the command of [Grigoriy Ordzhonikidze](/wiki/Grigoriy_Ordzhonikidze), invaded Armenia at Karavansarai (present-day [Ijevan](/wiki/Ijevan)) on 29 November. By 4 December, Ordzhonikidze's forces entered Yerevan and the short-lived Armenian republic collapsed.

After the fall of the republic, the [February Uprising](/wiki/February_Uprising) soon took place in 1921, and led to the establishment of the [Republic of Mountainous Armenia](/wiki/Republic_of_Mountainous_Armenia) by Armenian forces under command of [Garegin Nzhdeh](/wiki/Garegin_Nzhdeh) on April 26, which fought off both Soviet and Turkish intrusions in the Zangezur region of southern Armenia. After Soviet agreements to include the [Syunik Province](/wiki/Syunik_Province) in Armenia's borders, the rebellion ended and the Red Army took control of the region on July 13.

### Soviet Armenia[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The coat of arms of](/wiki/File:Coat_of_arms_of_Armenian_SSR.png) [Soviet Armenia](/wiki/Armenian_Soviet_Socialist_Republic) depicting [Mount Ararat](/wiki/Mount_Ararat) in the center. Armenia was annexed by [Bolshevist Russia](/wiki/Russian_Soviet_Federative_Socialist_Republic) and along with [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)) and [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan), it was incorporated into the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) as part of the [Transcaucasian SFSR](/wiki/Transcaucasian_SFSR) (TSFSR) on 4 March 1922.[[50]](#cite_note-50)[[51]](#cite_note-51) With this annexation, the Treaty of Alexandropol was superseded by the Turkish-Soviet [Treaty of Kars](/wiki/Treaty_of_Kars). In the agreement, Turkey allowed the Soviet Union to assume control over [Adjara](/wiki/Adjara) with the port city of [Batumi](/wiki/Batumi) in return for sovereignty over the cities of [Kars](/wiki/Kars), [Ardahan](/wiki/Ardahan), and [Iğdır](/wiki/Iğdır), all of which were part of Russian Armenia.[[50]](#cite_note-50)[[51]](#cite_note-51) The TSFSR existed from 1922 to 1936, when it was divided up into three separate entities ([Armenian SSR](/wiki/Armenian_Soviet_Socialist_Republic), [Azerbaijan SSR](/wiki/Azerbaijan_Soviet_Socialist_Republic), and [Georgian SSR](/wiki/Georgian_Soviet_Socialist_Republic)). Armenians enjoyed a period of relative stability under Soviet rule. They received medicine, food, and other provisions from Moscow, and communist rule proved to be a soothing balm in contrast to the turbulent final years of the Ottoman Empire. The situation was difficult for the church, which struggled under Soviet rule. After the death of [Vladimir Lenin](/wiki/Vladimir_Lenin), [Joseph Stalin](/wiki/Joseph_Stalin) took the reins of power and began an era of renewed fear and terror for Armenians.[[52]](#cite_note-52) Armenia was not the scene of any battles in World War II. An estimated 500,000 Armenians (nearly a third of the population) served in the military during the war, and 175,000 died.[[53]](#cite_note-53) Fears decreased when Stalin died in 1953 and [Nikita Khruschev](/wiki/Nikita_Khrushchev) emerged as the Soviet Union's new leader. Soon, life in Soviet Armenia began to see rapid improvement. The church, which suffered greatly under Stalin, was revived when [Catholicos](/wiki/Catholicos_of_All_Armenians) [Vazgen I](/wiki/Vazgen_I) assumed the duties of his office in 1955. In 1967, a memorial to the victims of the Armenian Genocide was built at the [Tsitsernakaberd](/wiki/Tsitsernakaberd) hill above the [Hrazdan](/wiki/Hrazdan) [gorge](/wiki/Canyon) in [Yerevan](/wiki/Yerevan). This occurred after [mass demonstrations](/wiki/1965_Yerevan_demonstrations) took place on the tragic event's fiftieth anniversary in 1965.

[thumb|Armenians gather at](/wiki/File:Yerevan-summer88_-_020_(1).jpg) [Theater Square](/wiki/Freedom_Square,_Yerevan) in central [Yerevan](/wiki/Yerevan) to claim unification of [Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh_Autonomous_Oblast) with the [Armenian SSR](/wiki/Armenian_SSR). During the [Gorbachev](/wiki/Mikhail_Gorbachev) era of the 1980s, with the reforms of [Glasnost](/wiki/Glasnost) and [Perestroika](/wiki/Perestroika), Armenians began to demand better environmental care for their country, opposing the pollution that Soviet-built factories brought. Tensions also developed between Soviet Azerbaijan and its autonomous district of [Nagorno-Karabakh](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh), a majority-Armenian region separated by Stalin from Armenia in 1923. About 484,000 [Armenians](/wiki/Armenians_in_Azerbaijan) lived in Azerbaijan in 1970.[[54]](#cite_note-54) The Armenians of Karabakh demanded unification with Soviet Armenia. Peaceful protests in Yerevan supporting the Karabakh Armenians were met with [anti-Armenian pogroms](/wiki/Sumgait_pogrom) in the Azerbaijani city of [Sumgait](/wiki/Sumgait). Compounding Armenia's problems was a [devastating earthquake](/wiki/1988_Armenian_earthquake) in 1988 with a [moment magnitude](/wiki/Moment_magnitude_scale) of 7.2.[[55]](#cite_note-55) Gorbachev's inability to alleviate any of Armenia's problems created disillusionment among the Armenians and fed a growing hunger for independence. In May 1990, the New [Armenian Army](/wiki/Armenian_Army) (NAA) was established, serving as a defence force separate from the Soviet [Red Army](/wiki/Red_Army). Clashes soon broke out between the NAA and [Soviet Internal Security Forces](/wiki/Russian_Ministry_of_Internal_Affairs) (MVD) troops based in Yerevan when Armenians decided to commemorate the establishment of the 1918 First Republic of Armenia. The violence resulted in the deaths of five Armenians killed in a shootout with the MVD at the railway station. Witnesses there claimed that the MVD used excessive force and that they had instigated the fighting.

Further firefights between Armenian militiamen and Soviet troops occurred in [Sovetashen](/wiki/Nubarashen), near the capital and resulted in the deaths of over 26 people, mostly Armenians. The [pogrom of Armenians in Baku](/wiki/Pogrom_of_Armenians_in_Baku) in January 1990 forced almost all of the 200,000 Armenians in the Azerbaijani capital [Baku](/wiki/Baku) to flee to Armenia.[[56]](#cite_note-56) On 17 March 1991, Armenia, along with the [Baltic states](/wiki/Baltic_states), Georgia and [Moldova](/wiki/Moldova), boycotted a nationwide [referendum](/wiki/Referendum) in which 78% of all voters voted for the retention of the Soviet Union in a reformed form.[[57]](#cite_note-57)

### Restoration of independence[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [right|thumb|Armenian soldiers during the](/wiki/File:NKR_war.JPG) [Nagorno-Karabakh War](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh_War) On 23 August 1990, Armenia declared independence, becoming the first non-Baltic republic to secede from the Soviet Union. When, in 1991, the Soviet Union was dissolved, Armenia's independence was officially recognized. [Levon Ter-Petrosyan](/wiki/Levon_Ter-Petrosyan) was popularly elected the first President of the newly independent Republic of Armenia on 16 October 1991. He had risen to prominence by leading the [Karabakh movement](/wiki/Karabakh_movement) for the unification of the Armenian-populated [Nagorno-Karabakh](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh).[[58]](#cite_note-58) Ter-Petrosyan led Armenia alongside Defense Minister [Vazgen Sargsyan](/wiki/Vazgen_Sargsyan) through the [Nagorno-Karabakh War](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh_War) with neighboring Azerbaijan. The initial post-Soviet years were marred by economic difficulties, which had their roots early in the Karabakh conflict when the [Azerbaijani Popular Front](/wiki/Azerbaijani_Popular_Front_Party) managed to pressure the Azerbaijan SSR to instigate a railway and air [blockade](/wiki/Blockade) against Armenia. This move effectively crippled Armenia's economy as 85% of its cargo and goods arrived through rail traffic.[[58]](#cite_note-58) In 1993, Turkey joined the blockade against Armenia in support of Azerbaijan.<ref name=GHF>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

[thumb|180px|During the September 21, 2011 parade in Yerevan, marking the 20th anniversary of Armenia's re-independence](/wiki/File:September_21,_2011_parade,_Yerevan.jpg) The Karabakh war ended after a Russian-brokered [cease-fire](/wiki/Ceasefire) was put in place in 1994. The war was a success for the Karabakh Armenian forces who managed to capture 16% of Azerbaijan's internationally recognised territory including Nagorno-Karabakh itself.[[59]](#cite_note-59) Since then, Armenia and Azerbaijan have held peace talks, mediated by the [Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe](/wiki/Organization_for_Security_and_Co-operation_in_Europe) (OSCE). The status of Karabakh has yet to be determined. The economies of both countries have been hurt in the absence of a complete resolution and Armenia's borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan remain closed. By the time both Azerbaijan and Armenia had finally agreed to a ceasefire in 1994, an estimated 30,000 people had been killed and over a million had been displaced.[[60]](#cite_note-60) As it enters the 21st century, Armenia faces many hardships. It has made a full switch to a [market economy](/wiki/Market_economy). One study ranks it the 41st most economically free nation in the world, [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[61]](#cite_note-61) Its relations with Europe, the Middle East, and the [Commonwealth of Independent States](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Independent_States) have allowed Armenia to increase trade.[[62]](#cite_note-62)[[63]](#cite_note-63) Gas, oil, and other supplies come through two vital routes: Iran and Georgia. Armenia maintains cordial relations with both countries.[[64]](#cite_note-64)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[thumb|250px|Armenia's topography is mountainous and volcanic.](/wiki/File:Armenien_topo.jpg) [thumb|250px|Armenia map of Köppen climate classification.](/wiki/File:Armenia_map_of_Köppen_climate_classification.svg) Armenia is [landlocked](/wiki/Landlocked_country) in the [South Caucasus](/wiki/Transcaucasus). Located between the [Black](/wiki/Black_Sea) and [Caspian Seas](/wiki/Caspian_Sea), Armenia is bordered on the north and east by [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)) and [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan), and on the south and west by [Iran](/wiki/Iran) and [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey). Armenia lies between latitudes [38°](/wiki/38th_parallel_north) and [42° N](/wiki/42nd_parallel_north), and meridians [43°](/wiki/43rd_meridian_east) and [47° E](/wiki/47th_meridian_east).

### Topography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

The Republic of Armenia, covering an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), is located in the north-east of the [Armenian Highland](/wiki/Armenian_Highland). The terrain is mostly mountainous, with fast flowing rivers and few forests. The climate is highland [continental](/wiki/Continental_climate), which means that Armenia is subjected to hot summers and cold winters. The land rises to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) [above sea level](/wiki/Metres_above_sea_level) at [Mount Aragats](/wiki/Mount_Aragats), and no point is below [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) [above sea level](/wiki/Metres_above_sea_level).[[65]](#cite_note-65) [Mount Ararat](/wiki/Mount_Ararat), which was historically part of Armenia, is the highest mountain in the region. Now located in Turkey, but clearly visible in Armenia, it is regarded by the Armenians as a symbol of their land. Because of this, the mountain is present on the [Armenian national emblem](/wiki/Coat_of_arms_of_Armenia) today.[[66]](#cite_note-66)[[67]](#cite_note-67)[[68]](#cite_note-68)

### Environment[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

Armenia has established a Ministry of Nature Protection and introduced taxes for air and water pollution and solid-waste disposal, whose revenues are used for environmental protection activities. [Waste management in Armenia](/wiki/Waste_management_in_Armenia) is underdeveloped, as no waste sorting or recycling takes place at Armenia's 60 landfills.

Despite the availability of abundant renewable energy sources in Armenia (especially [hydroelectric](/wiki/Hydroelectricity) and [wind power](/wiki/Wind_power)), the Armenian Government is working toward building a new [nuclear power plant at Metsamor](/wiki/Metsamor_Nuclear_Power_Plant) near [Yerevan](/wiki/Yerevan).[[69]](#cite_note-69)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

The climate in Armenia is markedly continental. Summers are dry and sunny, lasting from June to mid-September. The temperature fluctuates between [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). However, the low humidity level mitigates the effect of high temperatures. Evening breezes blowing down the mountains provide a welcome refreshing and cooling effect. Springs are short, while autumns are long. Autumns are known for their vibrant and colorful foliage.

Winters are quite cold with plenty of snow, with temperatures ranging between [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). [Winter sports](/wiki/Winter_sport) enthusiasts enjoy skiing down the hills of [Tsakhkadzor](/wiki/Tsakhkadzor), located thirty minutes outside Yerevan. [Lake Sevan](/wiki/Lake_Sevan), nestled up in the Armenian highlands, is the second largest lake in the world relative to its altitude, at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) [above sea level](/wiki/Metres_above_sea_level).

## Government and politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Parliament_Yerevan_building.jpg) [National Assembly](/wiki/National_Assembly_(Armenia)) in [Yerevan](/wiki/Yerevan). [Politics of Armenia](/wiki/Politics_of_Armenia) takes place in a framework of a [semi-presidential](/wiki/Semi-presidential_system) [representative democratic](/wiki/Representative_democracy) republic. According to the [Constitution of Armenia](/wiki/Constitution_of_Armenia), the President is the [head of state](/wiki/Head_of_state) and of a [multi-party system](/wiki/Multi-party_system). [Executive power](/wiki/Executive_(government)) is exercised by the government. [Legislative power](/wiki/Legislature) is vested in both the government and parliament.

The [unicameral parliament](/wiki/Unicameral_parliament) (also called the [Azgayin Zhoghov](/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Armenia) or [*National Assembly*](/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Armenia)) is controlled by a coalition of four political parties: the conservative [Republican party](/wiki/Republican_Party_of_Armenia), the [Prosperous Armenia](/wiki/Prosperous_Armenia) party, the [rule of law](/wiki/Rule_of_Law_(Armenia)) party and the [Armenian Revolutionary Federation](/wiki/Armenian_Revolutionary_Federation). The main [opposition party](/wiki/Opposition_(parliamentary)) is [Raffi Hovannisian's](/wiki/Raffi_Hovannisian) [Heritage](/wiki/Heritage_(Armenia)) party, which favors eventual Armenian membership in the European Union and [NATO](/wiki/NATO).

The Armenian government's stated aim is to build a Western-style [parliamentary democracy](/wiki/Parliamentary_system) as the basis of its form of government. It has universal suffrage above the age of eighteen.

International observers of [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe) and [US Department of State](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_State) have questioned the fairness of Armenia's parliamentary and [presidential elections](/wiki/Election) and constitutional referendum since 1995, citing polling deficiencies, lack of cooperation by the [Electoral Commission](/wiki/Electoral_Affairs_Commission), and poor maintenance of electoral lists and polling places. [Freedom House](/wiki/Freedom_House) categorized Armenia in its 2008 report as a "Semi-consolidated Authoritarian Regime" (along with [Moldova](/wiki/Moldova), Kosovo, [Kyrgyzstan](/wiki/Kyrgyzstan), and Russia) and ranked Armenia 20th among 29 nations in [transition](/wiki/Transition_country), with a Democracy Score of 5.21 out of 7 (7 represents the lowest democratic progress).[[70]](#cite_note-70) Since 1999, Freedom House's Democracy Score for Armenia has been steadily on the decline (from 4.79 to 5.21).[[71]](#cite_note-71) Furthermore, Freedom House ranked Armenia as "[partly free](/wiki/Freedom_in_the_World_(report))" in its 2007 report, though it did not categorise Armenia as an "electoral democracy", indicating an absence of relatively free and competitive elections.[[72]](#cite_note-72) However, significant progress seems to have been made and the [2008 Armenian presidential election](/wiki/Armenian_presidential_election,_2008) was hailed as largely democratic by [OSCE](/wiki/Organization_for_Security_and_Co-operation_in_Europe) and Western monitors.[[73]](#cite_note-73)

### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Moscow,_embassy_of_Armenia_(2).jpg)[Embassy of Armenia in Moscow](/wiki/Embassy_of_Armenia_in_Moscow)

Armenia presently maintains good relations with almost every country in the world, with two major exceptions being its immediate neighbours, Turkey and Azerbaijan. Tensions were running high between Armenians and Azerbaijanis during the final years of the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union). The [Nagorno-Karabakh War](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh_War) dominated the region's politics throughout the 1990s.[[74]](#cite_note-74) The border between the two rival countries remains closed up to this day, and a permanent solution for the conflict has not been reached despite the mediation provided by organisations such as the [OSCE](/wiki/Organization_for_Security_and_Co-operation_in_Europe).

Armenia is a member of more than 40 international organisations, including the United Nations; the [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe); the [Asian Development Bank](/wiki/Asian_Development_Bank); the [Commonwealth of Independent States](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Independent_States); the [World Trade Organization](/wiki/World_Trade_Organization); [World Customs Organization](/wiki/World_Customs_Organization); the [Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation](/wiki/Organization_of_the_Black_Sea_Economic_Cooperation); and [La Francophonie](/wiki/Organisation_internationale_de_la_Francophonie). It is a member of the [CSTO](/wiki/Collective_Security_Treaty_Organisation) military alliance, and also participates in NATO's [Partnership for Peace](/wiki/Partnership_for_Peace) programme.

Turkey also has a long history of poor relations with Armenia over its refusal to acknowledge the [Armenian Genocide](/wiki/Armenian_Genocide). Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize the Republic of Armenia (the 3rd republic) after its independence from the USSR in 1991. Despite this, for most of the 20th century and early 21st century, relations remain tense and there are no formal diplomatic relations between the two countries due to Turkey's refusal to establish them for numerous reasons. During the Nagorno-Karabakh War and citing it as the reason, Turkey illegally closed its land border with Armenia in 1993. It has not lifted its blockade despite pressure from the powerful Turkish business lobby interested in Armenian markets.[[74]](#cite_note-74) On 10 October 2009, Armenia and Turkey signed protocols on normalisation of relationships, which set a timetable for restoring diplomatic ties and reopening their joint border.[[75]](#cite_note-75) The ratification of those had to be made in the national parliaments. In Armenia it passed through the required by legislation approval of the Constitutional Court and was sent to the parliament for the final ratification. The President had made multiple public announcements, both in Armenia and abroad, that as the leader of the political majority of Armenia he assured the ratification of the protocols if Turkey also ratified them. Despite this, the process stopped, as Turkey continuously added more preconditions to its ratification and also "delayed it beyond any reasonable time-period".

Due to its position between two unfriendly neighbours, Armenia has close security ties with Russia. At the request of the Armenian government, Russia maintains a [military base](/wiki/Russian_102nd_Military_Base) in the northwestern Armenian city of [Gyumri](/wiki/Gyumri)[[76]](#cite_note-76) as a deterrent against Turkey.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Despite this, Armenia has also been looking toward Euro-Atlantic structures in recent years. It maintains good relations with the United States especially through its [Armenian diaspora](/wiki/Armenian_diaspora). According to the [US Census Bureau](/wiki/United_States_Census), there are 427,822 Armenians living in the country.[[77]](#cite_note-77) Because of the blockades by Azerbaijan and Turkey, Armenia continues to maintain solid relations with its southern neighbor Iran especially in the economic sector. Economic projects such a gas pipeline going from Iran to Armenia are in time being developed.

[thumb|210px|Russian President](/wiki/File:Dmitry_Medvedev_at_Armenian_Genocide_memorial-1.jpg) [Dmitry Medvedev](/wiki/Dmitry_Medvedev) at [Armenian Genocide memorial](/wiki/Tsitsernakaberd) in Yerevan Armenia is also a member of the Council of Europe, maintaining friendly relations with the European Union, especially with its member states such as France and Greece. A 2005 survey reported that 64% of Armenia's population would be in favor of joining the EU.[[78]](#cite_note-78) Several Armenian officials have also expressed the desire for their country to eventually become an EU member state,[[79]](#cite_note-79) some[Template:Who](/wiki/Template:Who) predicting that it will make an official bid for membership in a few years.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) In 2004 its forces joined [KFOR](/wiki/Kosovo_Force), a NATO-led international force in [Kosovo](/wiki/Kosovo). It is also an observer member of the [Eurasian Economic Community](/wiki/Eurasian_Economic_Community) and the [Non-Aligned Movement](/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement).

[A former republic](/wiki/Armenian_SSR) of the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union), Armenia is an [emerging democracy](/wiki/Emergent_democracy) and [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) was negotiating with the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) to become an associate partner. Legally speaking, it has the right to be considered as an prospective EU member provided it meets necessary standards and criteria, although officially such plan does not exist in Brussels.[[80]](#cite_note-80)[[81]](#cite_note-81)[[82]](#cite_note-82)[[83]](#cite_note-83) The Government of Armenia, however, has joined the [Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia](/wiki/Customs_Union_of_Belarus,_Kazakhstan_and_Russia)[[84]](#cite_note-84) and the [Eurasian Economic Union](/wiki/Eurasian_Union).[[85]](#cite_note-85)[[86]](#cite_note-86) Armenia is included in the European Union's [European Neighbourhood Policy](/wiki/European_Neighbourhood_Policy) (ENP) which aims at bringing the EU and its neighbours closer.

### Human rights[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Armenia faces considerable human rights problems.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Armenia is classified "partly free" by [Freedom House](/wiki/Freedom_House), which gives it "freedom rating" of 46.[[87]](#cite_note-87)

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Armenianarmya.jpg)[Armenian Army](/wiki/Armenian_Army) [BTR-80s](/wiki/BTR-80). [thumb||Armenian soldiers at the](/wiki/File:2010_Moscow_Victory_Day_Parade-8.jpeg) [2010 Moscow Victory Day Parade](/wiki/2010_Moscow_Victory_Day_Parade).

The [Armenian Army](/wiki/Armenian_Army), [Air Force](/wiki/Armenian_Air_Force), [Air Defence](/wiki/Armenian_Air_Force), and [Border Guard](/wiki/Armenian_Border_Guard) comprise the four branches of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia. The Armenian military was formed after the [collapse of the Soviet Union](/wiki/History_of_the_Soviet_Union_(1985–91)) in 1991 and with the establishment of the Ministry of Defence in 1992. The [Commander-in-Chief](/wiki/Commander-in-chief) of the military is the [President of Armenia](/wiki/President_of_Armenia), [Serzh Sargsyan](/wiki/Serzh_Sargsyan). [The Ministry](/wiki/Ministry_(collective_executive)) of Defence is in charge of political leadership, currently headed by [Colonel General](/wiki/Colonel_general) [Seyran Ohanyan](/wiki/Seyran_Ohanyan), while military command remains in the hands of the [General Staff](/wiki/Staff_(military)), headed by the Chief of Staff, who is currently Colonel General [Yuri Khatchaturov](/wiki/Yuri_Khatchaturov).

Active forces now number about 81,000 soldiers, with an additional [reserve](/wiki/Military_reserve_force) of 32,000 troops. Armenian border guards are in charge of patrolling the country's borders with [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)) and [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan), while Russian troops continue to monitor its borders with [Iran](/wiki/Iran) and [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey). In the case of an attack, Armenia is able to mobilise every able-bodied man between the age of 15 and 59, with military preparedness.

The [Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe](/wiki/Treaty_on_Conventional_Armed_Forces_in_Europe), which establishes comprehensive limits on key categories of military equipment, was ratified by the Armenian parliament in July 1992. In March 1993, Armenia signed the multilateral [Chemical Weapons Convention](/wiki/Chemical_Weapons_Convention), which calls for the eventual elimination of chemical weapons. Armenia acceded to the [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty](/wiki/Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty) (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapons state in July 1993.

Armenia is member of [Collective Security Treaty Organisation](/wiki/Collective_Security_Treaty_Organisation) (CSTO) along with [Belarus](/wiki/Belarus), [Kazakhstan](/wiki/Kazakhstan), [Kyrgyzstan](/wiki/Kyrgyzstan), [Russia](/wiki/Russia), [Tajikistan](/wiki/Tajikistan) and [Uzbekistan](/wiki/Uzbekistan). It participates in NATO's [Partnership for Peace](/wiki/Partnership_for_Peace) (PiP) program and is in a NATO organisation called [Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council](/wiki/Euro-Atlantic_Partnership_Council) (EAPC). Armenia has engaged in a peacekeeping mission in [Kosovo](/wiki/Kosovo) as part of non-NATO [KFOR](/wiki/Kosovo_Force) troops under Greek command.[[88]](#cite_note-88) Armenia also had 46 members of its military [peacekeeping forces](/wiki/Peacekeeping) as a part of the [Coalition Forces](/wiki/International_Security_Assistance_Force) in [Iraq War](/wiki/Iraq_War) until October 2008.[[89]](#cite_note-89)

### Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Armenia Labelled Map](/wiki/Template:Armenia_Labelled_Map) [thumb|230px|](/wiki/File:Գեղարդ.jpg)[Geghard](/wiki/Geghard) monastery, [Kotayk Province](/wiki/Kotayk_Province). Armenia is divided into ten [provinces](/wiki/Administrative_divisions_of_Armenia) (*marzer*, singular *marz*), with the city (*kaghak*) of [Yerevan](/wiki/Yerevan) ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang)) having special administrative status as the country's capital. The chief executive in each of the ten provinces is the *marzpet* (*marz* governor), appointed by the government of Armenia. In Yerevan, the chief executive is the mayor, appointed by the president.

Within each province are [communities](/wiki/List_of_municipalities_of_Armenia) (*hamaynkner*, singular *hamaynk*). Each community is self-governing and consists of one or more settlements (*bnakavayrer*, singular *bnakavayr*). Settlements are classified as either towns (*kaghakner*, singular *kaghak*) or villages (*gyugher*, singular *gyugh*). [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Armenia includes 915 communities, of which 49 are considered urban and 866 are considered rural. The capital, Yerevan, also has the status of a community.[[90]](#cite_note-90) Additionally, Yerevan is divided into twelve semi-autonomous districts.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Province** | | **Capital** | | **Area (km²)** | **Population †** |
| [Aragatsotn](/wiki/Aragatsotn_Province) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Ashtarak](/wiki/Ashtarak) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | 2,756 | 132,925 |
| [Ararat](/wiki/Ararat_Province) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Artashat](/wiki/Artashat,_Armenia) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | 2,090 | 260,367 |
| [Armavir](/wiki/Armavir_Province) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Armavir](/wiki/Armavir,_Armenia) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | 1,242 | 265,770 |
| [Gegharkunik](/wiki/Gegharkunik_Province) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Gavar](/wiki/Gavar) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | 5,349 | 235,075 |
| [Kotayk](/wiki/Kotayk_Province) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Hrazdan](/wiki/Hrazdan) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | 2,086 | 254,397 |
| [Lori](/wiki/Lori_Province) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Vanadzor](/wiki/Vanadzor) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | 3,799 | 235,537 |
| [Shirak](/wiki/Shirak_Province) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Gyumri](/wiki/Gyumri) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | 2,680 | 251,941 |
| [Syunik](/wiki/Syunik_Province) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Kapan](/wiki/Kapan) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | 4,506 | 141,771 |
| [Tavush](/wiki/Tavush) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Ijevan](/wiki/Ijevan) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | 2,704 | 128,609 |
| [Vayots Dzor](/wiki/Vayots_Dzor) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Yeghegnadzor](/wiki/Yeghegnadzor) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | 2,308 | 52,324 |
| [Yerevan](/wiki/Yerevan) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | – | – | 223 | 1,060,138 |

† 2011 census  
Sources: Area and population of provinces.[[91]](#cite_note-91)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[thumb|350px|A proportional representation of Armenia's exports, 2009.](/wiki/File:Tree_map_export_2009_Armenia.jpeg) The economy relies heavily on investment and support from Armenians abroad.[[92]](#cite_note-92) Before independence, Armenia's economy was largely industry-based – [chemicals](/wiki/Chemical_substance), [electronics](/wiki/Electronics), machinery, [processed food](/wiki/Food_processing), [synthetic rubber](/wiki/Synthetic_rubber), and textile – and highly dependent on outside resources. The republic had developed a modern [industrial sector](/wiki/Secondary_sector_of_the_economy), supplying [machine tools](/wiki/Machine_tool), textiles, and other [manufactured goods](/wiki/Final_goods) to sister republics in exchange for raw materials and energy.[[25]](#cite_note-25) Recently, the [Intel Corporation](/wiki/Intel_Corporation) agreed to open a research center in Armenia, in addition to other technology companies, signalling the growth of the technology industry in Armenia.[[93]](#cite_note-93) Agriculture accounted for less than 20% of both [net material product](/wiki/Net_material_product) and [total employment](/wiki/Full_employment) before the [dissolution of the Soviet Union](/wiki/History_of_the_Soviet_Union_(1985–1991)) in 1991. After independence, the importance of agriculture in the economy increased markedly, its share at the end of the 1990s rising to more than 30% of GDP and more than 40% of total employment.<ref name=agri>Z. Lerman and A. Mirzakhanian, *Private Agriculture in Armenia*, Lexington Books, Lanham, MD, 2001.</ref> This increase in the importance of agriculture was attributable to food security needs of the population in the face of uncertainty during the first phases of [transition](/wiki/Transition_economy) and the collapse of the non-agricultural sectors of the economy in the early 1990s. As the economic situation stabilized and growth resumed, the share of agriculture in GDP dropped to slightly over 20% (2006 data), although the share of agriculture in employment remained more than 40%.<ref name=yb2007>[Statistical Yearbook 2007](http://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=179), Armenia National Statistical Service, Yerevan</ref>

[thumb|300px|](/wiki/File:Mount_Ararat_and_the_Yerevan_skyline.jpg)[Yerevan](/wiki/Yerevan) is the economic and cultural centre of Armenia. Armenian mines produce copper, zinc, gold, and lead. The vast majority of energy is produced with fuel imported from Russia, including gas and nuclear fuel (for its one nuclear power plant); the main domestic energy source is hydroelectric. Small deposits of coal, gas, and petroleum exist but have not yet been developed.

Like other [newly independent states](/wiki/Post-Soviet_states) of the former Soviet Union, Armenia's economy suffers from the breakdown of former Soviet trading patterns. Soviet investment in and support of Armenian industry has virtually disappeared, so that few major enterprises are still able to function. In addition, the effects of the [1988 Spitak earthquake](/wiki/1988_Armenian_earthquake), which killed more than 25,000 people and made 500,000 homeless, are still being felt. The conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh has not been resolved. The closure of Azerbaijani and Turkish borders has devastated the economy, because Armenia depends on outside supplies of energy and most raw materials. Land routes through Georgia and Iran are inadequate or unreliable. The GDP fell nearly 60% between 1989 and 1993, but then resumed robust growth.<ref name=agri/> The national currency, the dram, suffered hyperinflation for the first years after its introduction in 1993.

Nevertheless, the government was able to make wide-ranging economic reforms that paid off in dramatically lower inflation and steady growth. The 1994 cease-fire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has also helped the economy. Armenia has had strong economic growth since 1995, building on the turnaround that began the previous year, and inflation has been negligible for the past several years. New sectors, such as precious-stone processing and jewellery making, information and communication technology, and even tourism are beginning to supplement more traditional sectors of the economy, such as agriculture.

[thumb|300px|New buildings in the](/wiki/File:Overdone_house_in_Yerevan.jpg) [Ajapnyak District](/wiki/Ajapnyak_District) of Yerevan. This steady economic progress has earned Armenia increasing support from international institutions. The [International Monetary Fund](/wiki/International_Monetary_Fund) (IMF), [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank), [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](/wiki/European_Bank_for_Reconstruction_and_Development) (EBRD), and other [international financial institutions](/wiki/Global_financial_system) (IFIs) and foreign countries are extending considerable grants and loans. Loans to Armenia since 1993 exceed $1.1 billion. These loans are targeted at reducing the budget deficit and stabilizing the currency; developing private businesses; energy; agriculture; food processing; transportation; the health and education sectors; and ongoing rehabilitation in the earthquake zone. The government joined the World Trade Organization on 5 February 2003. But one of the main sources of foreign direct investments remains the Armenian diaspora, which finances major parts of the reconstruction of infrastructure and other public projects. Being a growing democratic state, Armenia also hopes to get more financial aid from the Western World.

A liberal foreign investment law was approved in June 1994, and a law on privatisation was adopted in 1997, as well as a program of state property privatisation. Continued progress will depend on the ability of the government to strengthen its macroeconomic management, including increasing revenue collection, improving the investment climate, and making strides against corruption. However, unemployment, which currently stands at around 15%, still remains a major problem due to the influx of thousands of refugees from the Karabakh conflict.

Armenia ranked 78th on the 2010 [UNDP](/wiki/United_Nations_Development_Programme) [Human Development Index](/wiki/Human_Development_Index), the lowest among the [Transcaucasian](/wiki/South_Caucasus) republics.[[94]](#cite_note-94) In the 2007 [Transparency International](/wiki/Transparency_International) [Corruption Perceptions Index](/wiki/Corruption_Perceptions_Index) (CPI), Armenia ranked 99 of 179 countries.[[95]](#cite_note-95) In the 2008 [Index of Economic Freedom](/wiki/Index_of_Economic_Freedom), Armenia ranked 28th, ahead of countries like Austria, France, Portugal and Italy.[[61]](#cite_note-61)

### Exports and imports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Exports to** | | **Imports from** | |
| **Country** | **Percentage** | **Country** | **Percentage** |
| [Template:BEL](/wiki/Template:BEL) | 23% | [Template:RUS](/wiki/Template:RUS) | 15% |
| [Template:RUS](/wiki/Template:RUS) | 15% | [Template:USA](/wiki/Template:USA) | 12% |
| [Template:USA](/wiki/Template:USA) | 13% | [Template:BEL](/wiki/Template:BEL) | 10% |
| [Template:IRN](/wiki/Template:IRN) | 10% | [Template:IRN](/wiki/Template:IRN) | 9% |
| Others | 39% | Others | 54% |
|  |  |  |  |

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Armenia has a population of 3,238,000 (2008 est.)<ref name=autogenerated1>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> and is the second most densely populated of the former Soviet republics. There has been a problem of [population decline](/wiki/Population_decline) due to elevated levels of [emigration](/wiki/Emigration) after the break-up of the [USSR](/wiki/USSR).[[96]](#cite_note-96) In the past years emigration levels have declined and there is steady population growth.

[thumb|350px|The](/wiki/File:ArmenianDiaspora.png) [Armenian population around the world](/wiki/Armenian_diaspora). Armenia has [a relatively large external diaspora](/wiki/Armenian_diaspora) (8 million by some estimates, greatly exceeding the 3 million population of Armenia itself), with communities existing across the globe. The largest Armenian communities outside of Armenia can be found in [Russia](/wiki/Russia), [France](/wiki/France), [Iran](/wiki/Iran), the [United States](/wiki/United_States), [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)), [Syria](/wiki/Syria), [Lebanon](/wiki/Lebanon), [Argentina](/wiki/Argentina), [Australia](/wiki/Australia), [Canada](/wiki/Canada), [Greece](/wiki/Greece), [Cyprus](/wiki/Cyprus), [Israel](/wiki/Israel), [Poland](/wiki/Poland), [Ukraine](/wiki/Ukraine) and [Brazil](/wiki/Brazil). 40,000 to 70,000 Armenians still live in [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey) (mostly in and around [Istanbul](/wiki/Istanbul)).[[97]](#cite_note-97) About 1,000 Armenians reside in the [Armenian Quarter](/wiki/Armenian_Quarter) in the [Old City](/wiki/Old_City_(Jerusalem)) of [Jerusalem](/wiki/Jerusalem), a remnant of a once-larger community.[[98]](#cite_note-98) Italy is home to the [San Lazzaro degli Armeni](/wiki/San_Lazzaro_degli_Armeni), an island located in the [Venetian Lagoon](/wiki/Venetian_Lagoon), which is completely occupied by a monastery run by the [Mechitarists](/wiki/Mechitarists), an Armenian Catholic congregation.[[99]](#cite_note-99) Approximately 139,000 Armenians live in the de facto country of [Nagorno-Karabakh](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh) where they form a majority.[[100]](#cite_note-100)

### Ethnic groups[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[thumb|Armenian children at the](/wiki/File:Armenian_children.jpg) [UN Cup Chess Tournament](/wiki/UN_Cup_Chess_Tournament) in 2005. Ethnic [Armenians](/wiki/Armenians) make up 97.9% of the population. [Yazidis](/wiki/Yazidi) make up 1.3%, and [Russians](/wiki/Russians) 0.5%. Other minorities include [Assyrians](/wiki/Assyrian_people), [Ukrainians](/wiki/Ukrainians), [Pontic Greeks](/wiki/Pontic_Greeks) (here usually called [Caucasus Greeks](/wiki/Caucasus_Greeks)), [Kurds](/wiki/Kurdish_people), [Georgians](/wiki/Georgians), and [Belarusians](/wiki/Belarusians). There are also smaller communities of [Vlachs](/wiki/Vlachs), [Mordvins](/wiki/Mordvins), [Ossetians](/wiki/Ossetians), [Udis](/wiki/Udi_people), and [Tats](/wiki/Tat_people_(Caucasus)). Minorities of [Poles](/wiki/Poles) and [Caucasus Germans](/wiki/Caucasus_Germans) also exist though they are heavily [Russified](/wiki/Russification).[[101]](#cite_note-101) During the [Soviet era](/wiki/Soviet_era), [Azerbaijanis](/wiki/Azerbaijanis) were historically the second largest population in the country (forming about 2.5% in 1989).[[102]](#cite_note-102) However, due to the conflict over [Nagorno-Karabakh](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh), virtually all of them emigrated from Armenia to Azerbaijan. Conversely, Armenia received a large influx of Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, thus giving Armenia a more homogeneous character.

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Armenian](/wiki/Armenian_language) is the only official language. Due to its Soviet past, Russian is still widely used in Armenia and could be considered as *de facto* second language. According to a 2013 survey, 95% of Armenians said they had some knowledge of Russian (24% advanced, 59% intermediate) compared to 40% who said they knew some English (4% advanced, 16% intermediate and 20% beginner). However, more adults (50%) think that English should be taught in public secondary schools than those who prefer Russian (44%).[[103]](#cite_note-103)

### Cities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [Template:List of municipalities of Armenia](/wiki/Template:List_of_municipalities_of_Armenia)

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

[thumb|The 7th-century](/wiki/File:Kohrvirab.jpg) [Khor Virap](/wiki/Khor_Virap) monastery in the shadow of [Mount Ararat](/wiki/Mount_Ararat), the peak on which [Noah's Ark](/wiki/Noah's_Ark) is said to have landed during the [biblical flood](/wiki/Genesis_flood_narrative). Armenia was the first nation to adopt Christianity as a state religion, an event traditionally dated to AD 301.[[104]](#cite_note-104)[[105]](#cite_note-105)[[106]](#cite_note-106)[[107]](#cite_note-107) The predominant [religion in Armenia](/wiki/Religion_in_Armenia) is Christianity. The roots of the [Armenian Church](/wiki/Armenian_Apostolic_Church) go back to the 1st century. According to tradition, the Armenian Church was founded by two of Jesus' twelve [apostles](/wiki/Twelve_Apostles) – [Thaddaeus](/wiki/Jude_the_Apostle) and [Bartholomew](/wiki/Bartholomew_the_Apostle) – who preached Christianity in Armenia between AD 40–60. Because of these two founding apostles, the official name of the Armenian Church is [Armenian Apostolic Church](/wiki/Armenian_Apostolic_Church).

Over 93% of Armenian Christians belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church, a form of Oriental (Non-[Chalcedonian](/wiki/Chalcedonian_Christianity)) Orthodoxy, which is a very ritualistic, conservative church, roughly comparable to the [Coptic](/wiki/Coptic_Orthodox_Church_of_Alexandria) and [Syriac](/wiki/Syriac_Orthodox_Church) churches.[[108]](#cite_note-108) The Armenian Apostolic Church is in communion only with a group of churches within [Oriental Orthodoxy](/wiki/Oriental_Orthodoxy#Oriental_Orthodox_Communion).

The [Armenian Evangelical Church](/wiki/Armenian_Evangelical_Church) has a very sizable and favorable presence among the life of Armenians with over several thousand members throughout the country. It traces its roots back to 1846 which was under patronage of the [Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople](/wiki/Armenian_Patriarchate_of_Constantinople) the aim of which was to train qualified clergy for the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Other Christian denominations practicing faith based on Nicene Creed in Armenia are the Pentecostal branches of Protestant community such as the [Word of Life](/wiki/Word_of_Life_(Armenia)), the [Armenian Brotherhood Church](/wiki/Armenian_Brotherhood_Church),[[109]](#cite_note-109) the [Baptists](/wiki/Baptists) which are known as of the oldest existing denominations in Armenia and were permitted by the authorities of Soviet Union,[[110]](#cite_note-110)[[111]](#cite_note-111) and [Presbyterians](/wiki/Presbyterians).[[112]](#cite_note-112) Catholics also exist in Armenia, both [Latin rite](/wiki/Latin_Church) and [Armenian rite](/wiki/Armenian_rite) Catholics. The [Mechitarists](/wiki/Mechitarists) (also spelled "Mekhitarists" [Template:Lang-hy](/wiki/Template:Lang-hy)), are a congregation of [Benedictine](/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Benedict) monks of the [Armenian Catholic Church](/wiki/Armenian_Catholic_Church) founded in 1712 by [Mekhitar of Sebaste](/wiki/Mekhitar_of_Sebaste). They are best known for their series of scholarly publications of ancient [Armenian](/wiki/Armenians) versions of otherwise lost ancient Greek texts.

The [Armenian Catholic](/wiki/Armenian_Catholic_Church) denomination is headquartered in [Bzoummar](/wiki/Bzoummar), [Lebanon](/wiki/Lebanon).

Armenia is home to a [Russian](/wiki/Russians_in_Armenia) community of [Molokans](/wiki/Molokan) which practice a form of Spiritual Christianity originated from the Russian Orthodox Church.[[113]](#cite_note-113) The Yazidi Kurds, who live in the western part of the country, practice [Yazidism](/wiki/Yazidism). There are also non-Yazidi Kurds who practice [Sunni Islam](/wiki/Sunni_Islam).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

There is a [Jewish community in Armenia](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Armenia) diminished to 750 persons since independence with most emigrants leaving for Israel. There are currently two synagogues in Armenia – in the capital, Yerevan, and in the city of [Sevan](/wiki/Sevan_(city)) located near [Lake Sevan](/wiki/Lake_Sevan).

### Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

Life expectancy at birth was 70 for males and 76 for females in 2006.[[114]](#cite_note-114) Health expenditures were about 5.6% of GDP in 2004.[[114]](#cite_note-114) Most of those expenditures were outside the private sector.[[114]](#cite_note-114) Government expenditures on health were US$112 per person in 2006.[[115]](#cite_note-115) Vast improvements of health services occurred in the past decade. Such improvements consisted of easier accessibility to health-care services and an Open Enrollment program which allows Armenians to freely choose their healthcare service provider.[[116]](#cite_note-116)

### Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

In its first years of [independence](/wiki/History_of_Armenia), Armenia made uneven progress in establishing systems to meet its national requirements in social services.<ref name=loc>Curtis, Glenn E. and Ronald G. Suny. "Education". [Armenia: A Country Study](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/amtoc.html). [Library of Congress](/wiki/Library_of_Congress) [Federal Research Division](/wiki/Federal_Research_Division) (March 1994). *This article incorporates text from this source, which is in the public domain.*</ref> Education, held in particular esteem in [Armenian culture](/wiki/Culture_of_Armenia), changed fastest of the social services, while health and welfare services attempted to maintain the basic state-planned structure of the Soviet era.<ref name=loc/>

A literacy rate of 100% was reported as early as 1960.<ref name=loc/> [In the communist era](/wiki/Armenian_Soviet_Socialist_Republic), Armenian education followed the standard Soviet model of complete state control (from Moscow) of [curricula](/wiki/Curriculum) and teaching methods and close integration of education activities with other aspects of society, such as politics, culture, and the economy.<ref name=loc/> As in the Soviet period, primary and secondary education in Armenia is free, and completion of secondary school is compulsory.<ref name=loc/> [thumb|](/wiki/File:Yerevan_State_Medical_University.JPG)[Yerevan State Medical University](/wiki/Yerevan_State_Medical_University) named after [Mkhitar Heratsi](/wiki/Mkhitar_Heratsi)

In the 1988–89 school year, 301 students per 10,000 population were in specialized secondary or higher education, a figure slightly lower than the Soviet average.<ref name=loc/> In 1989 some 58% of Armenians over age fifteen had completed their secondary education, and 14% had a higher education.<ref name=loc/> In the 1990–91 school year, the estimated 1,307 primary and secondary schools were attended by 608,800 students.<ref name=loc/> Another seventy specialized secondary institutions had 45,900 students, and 68,400 students were enrolled in a total of ten postsecondary institutions that included universities.<ref name=loc/> In addition, 35% of eligible children attended [preschools](/wiki/Preschool_education).<ref name=loc/> In 1992 Armenia's largest institution of higher learning, [Yerevan State University](/wiki/Yerevan_State_University), had eighteen departments, including ones for social sciences, sciences, and law.<ref name=loc/> Its faculty numbered about 1,300 teachers and its student population about 10,000 students.<ref name=loc/> The [National Polytechnic University of Armenia](/wiki/National_Polytechnic_University_of_Armenia) is operating since 1933.<ref name=loc/>

In the early 1990s, Armenia made substantial changes to the centralized and regimented Soviet system.<ref name=loc/> Because at least 98% of students in higher education were Armenian, curricula began to emphasize [Armenian history](/wiki/History_of_Armenia) and culture.<ref name=loc/> [Armenian](/wiki/Armenian_language) became the dominant language of instruction, and many schools that had taught in Russian closed by the end of 1991.<ref name=loc/> Russian was still widely taught, however, as a second language.<ref name=loc/>

On the basis of the expansion and development of Yerevan State University a number of higher educational independent Institutions were formed including Medical Institute separated in 1930 which was set up on the basis of medical faculty. In 1980 Yerevan State Medical University was awarded one of the main rewards of the former USSR – the Order of Labor red Banner for training qualified specialists in health care and valuable service in the development of Medical Science. In 1995 YSMI was renamed to YSMU and since 1989 it has been named after [Mkhitar Heratsi](/wiki/Mkhitar_Heratsi), the famous medieval doctor. [Mkhitar Heratsi](/wiki/Mkhitar_Heratsi) was the founder of Armenian Medical school in Cilician Armenia. The great doctor played the same role in Armenian Medical Science as [Hippocrates](/wiki/Hippocrates) in Western, [Galen](/wiki/Galen) in Roman, [Ibn Sīnā](/wiki/Avicenna) in Arabic medicine. [thumb|Graduates of the MAB program of the Agribusiness Teaching Center](/wiki/File:MAB_Graduates.jpg)

Foreign students' department for Armenian diaspora established in 1957 later was enlarged and the enrollment of foreign students began. Nowadays the YSMU is a Medical Institution corresponding to international requirements, trains medical staff for not only Armenia and neighbor countries, i.e. Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Georgia, but also many other leading countries all over the world. A great number of foreign students from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the USA and Russian Federation study together with Armenian students. Nowadays the university is ranked among famous higher Medical Institutions and takes its honorable place in the World Directory of Medical Schools published by the WHO.

Other educational institutions in Armenia include the [American University of Armenia](/wiki/American_University_of_Armenia) and the [QSI International School of Yerevan](/wiki/QSI_International_School_of_Yerevan). The [American University of Armenia](/wiki/American_University_of_Armenia) has [graduate programs](/wiki/Graduate_school) in Business and Law, among others. The institution owes its existence to the combined efforts of the Government of Armenia, the [Armenian General Benevolent Union](/wiki/Armenian_General_Benevolent_Union), [U.S. Agency for International Development](/wiki/United_States_Agency_for_International_Development), and the [University of California](/wiki/University_of_California). The extension programs and the library at AUA form a new focal point for English-language intellectual life in the city. Armenia also hosts a deployment of [OLPC](/wiki/OLPC) – One Laptopschool Per child XO laptop-tablet schools.[[117]](#cite_note-117)

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Armenians have their own distinctive [alphabet](/wiki/Armenian_alphabet) and [language](/wiki/Armenian_language). The alphabet was invented in AD 405 by [Mesrop Mashtots](/wiki/Mesrop_Mashtots) and consists of thirty-nine letters, three of which were added during the [Cilician period](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Cilicia). 96% of the people in the country speak Armenian, while 75.8% of the population additionally speaks Russian, although English is becoming increasingly popular.

### Media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Television, magazines, and newspapers are all operated by both state-owned and for-profit corporations which depend on [advertising](/wiki/Advertising), [subscription](/wiki/Subscription), and other sales-related revenues. The [Constitution of Armenia](/wiki/Constitution_of_Armenia) guarantees freedom of speech and Armenia ranks 78th in the 2015 [Press Freedom Index](/wiki/Press_Freedom_Index) report compiled by [Reporters Without Borders](/wiki/Reporters_Without_Borders), between [Lesotho](/wiki/Lesotho) and [Sierra Leone](/wiki/Sierra_Leone).<ref name=FH>[Freedom House](/wiki/Freedom_House), [Armenia](https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/armenia), 2015 Press Freedom report</ref> As a [country in transition](/wiki/Transition_economy), Armenia's media system is under transformation.<ref name=EJC>Anais Melikyan, [Armenia](http://ejc.net/media_landscapes/armenia), EJC Press Landscapes (circa 2009)</ref>

Frequent attacks on journalists of non-state sponsored media is a serious threat to Armenia's press freedom. The number of assaults has recently declined, but the physical integrity of journalists remain at stake.<ref name=pace>Parliamentary Assembly of the [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe), [The Protection of media freedom in Europe](http://www.cfom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PACE-HORSLEY-FINAL-2014-REPORT-AAC-25_14-Flego-protection-of-media-freedom-18-June.pdf).Background report prepared by Mr William Horsley, special representative for media freedom of the [Association of European Journalists](/wiki/Association_of_European_Journalists)</ref>

### Music and dance[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Multiple image](/wiki/Template:Multiple_image) Armenian music is a mix of indigenous folk music, perhaps best-represented by [Djivan Gasparyan's](/wiki/Djivan_Gasparyan) well-known [duduk](/wiki/Duduk) music, as well as light pop, and extensive [Christian music](/wiki/Christian_music).

Instruments like the duduk, the [dhol](/wiki/Dhol), the [zurna](/wiki/Zurna), and the [kanun](/wiki/Kanun_(instrument)) are commonly found in Armenian folk music. Artists such as [Sayat Nova](/wiki/Sayat_Nova) are famous due to their influence in the development of Armenian folk music. One of the oldest types of Armenian music is the [Armenian chant](/wiki/Armenian_chant) which is the most common kind of religious music in Armenia. Many of these chants are ancient in origin, extending to pre-Christian times, while others are relatively modern, including several composed by Saint Mesrop Mashtots, the inventor of the Armenian alphabet. Whilst under [Soviet](/wiki/Soviet_Union) rule, Armenian classical music composer [Aram Khatchaturian](/wiki/Aram_Khatchaturian) became internationally well known for his music, for various ballets and the [Sabre Dance](/wiki/Sabre_Dance) from his composition for the ballet [Gayane](/wiki/Gayane_(ballet)). [thumb|Traditional](/wiki/File:Armeniapedia_dance2.jpg) [Armenian dance](/wiki/Armenian_dance).

The Armenian Genocide caused widespread emigration that led to the settlement of Armenians in various countries in the world. Armenians kept to their traditions and certain diasporans rose to fame with their music. In the post-Genocide Armenian community of the United States, the so-called "kef" style Armenian dance music, using Armenian and Middle Eastern folk instruments (often electrified/amplified) and some western instruments, was popular. This style preserved the folk songs and dances of [Western Armenia](/wiki/Western_Armenia), and many artists also played the contemporary popular songs of Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries from which the Armenians emigrated.

[Richard Hagopian](/wiki/Richard_Hagopian) is perhaps the most famous artist of the traditional "kef" style and the Vosbikian Band was notable in the 1940s and 1950s for developing their own style of "kef music" heavily influenced by the popular American [Big Band](/wiki/Big_Band) Jazz of the time. Later, stemming from the Middle Eastern Armenian diaspora and influenced by Continental European (especially French) pop music, the Armenian pop music genre grew to fame in the 1960s and 1970s with artists such as [Adiss Harmandian](/wiki/Adiss_Harmandian) and [Harout Pamboukjian](/wiki/Harout_Pamboukjian) performing to the Armenian diaspora and Armenia; also with artists such as [Sirusho](/wiki/Sirusho), performing pop music combined with Armenian folk music in today's entertainment industry.

Other Armenian diasporans that rose to fame in classical or international music circles are world-renowned [French-Armenian](/wiki/List_of_French-Armenians) singer and composer [Charles Aznavour](/wiki/Charles_Aznavour), pianist [Sahan Arzruni](/wiki/Sahan_Arzruni), prominent opera sopranos such as [Hasmik Papian](/wiki/Hasmik_Papian) and more recently [Isabel Bayrakdarian](/wiki/Isabel_Bayrakdarian) and [Anna Kasyan](/wiki/Anna_Kasyan). Certain Armenians settled to sing non-Armenian tunes such as the heavy metal band [System of a Down](/wiki/System_of_a_Down) (which nonetheless often incorporates traditional Armenian instrumentals and styling into their songs) or pop star [Cher](/wiki/Cher). In the Armenian diaspora, [Armenian revolutionary songs](/wiki/Armenian_Revolutionary_Songs) are popular with the youth. These songs encourage Armenian patriotism and are generally about Armenian history and national heroes.

### Art[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[thumb|upright|Ancient Armenian](/wiki/File:Khachkar-raffi_kojian-IMG_0513.JPG) [Khachkars](/wiki/Khachkar) (cross-stones). [Yerevan Vernissage](/wiki/Yerevan_Vernissage) (arts and crafts market), close to Republic Square, bustles with hundreds of vendors selling a variety of crafts on weekends and Wednesdays (though the selection is much reduced mid-week). The market offers woodcarving, antiques, fine lace, and the hand-knotted wool carpets and kilims that are a Caucasus specialty. [Obsidian](/wiki/Obsidian), which is found locally, is crafted into assortment of jewellery and ornamental objects. Armenian gold smithery enjoys a long tradition, populating one corner of the market with a selection of gold items. Soviet relics and souvenirs of recent Russian manufacture – nesting dolls, watches, enamel boxes and so on – are also available at the Vernisage.

[right|thumb|233x233px|*Queen Zabel’s Return to the Palace*,](/wiki/File:Zabel_return.jpg) [Vardges Sureniants](/wiki/Vardges_Sureniants), (1909).

Across from the Opera House, a popular art market fills another city park on the weekends. Armenia’s long history as a crossroads of the [ancient world](/wiki/Ancient_history) has resulted in a landscape with innumerable fascinating [archaeological sites](/wiki/Archaeological_site) to explore. [Medieval](/wiki/Middle_Ages), [Iron Age](/wiki/Iron_Age), [Bronze Age](/wiki/Bronze_Age) and even [Stone Age](/wiki/Stone_Age) sites are all within a few hours drive from the city. All but the most spectacular remain virtually undiscovered, allowing visitors to view churches and fortresses in their original settings.

The National Art Gallery in Yerevan has more than 16,000 works that date back to the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages), which indicate Armenia's rich tales and stories of the times. It houses paintings by many [European](/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_Europe) masters as well. The Modern Art Museum, the Children’s Picture Gallery, and the [Martiros Saryan](/wiki/Martiros_Saryan) Museum are only a few of the other noteworthy collections of fine art on display in Yerevan. Moreover, many private galleries are in operation, with many more opening every year, featuring rotating exhibitions and sales.

On April 13, 2013, the Armenian government announced a change in law to allow [freedom of panorama](/wiki/Freedom_of_panorama) for 3D works of art.[[118]](#cite_note-118)

### Sport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|250px|The Tsaghkadzor Olympic Sports complex.](/wiki/File:Tsaghkadzor_Olympic_Sports_complex.jpg) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Ireland_Armenia_teams.jpg) [Armenia national football team](/wiki/Armenia_national_football_team) in Dublin, Ireland. A wide array of sports are played in Armenia, the most popular among them being wrestling, weightlifting, judo, association football, chess, and boxing. Armenia's mountainous terrain provides great opportunities for the practice of sports like skiing and climbing. Being a landlocked country, water sports can only be practiced on lakes, notably [Lake Sevan](/wiki/Lake_Sevan). Competitively, Armenia has been successful in chess, weightlifting and wrestling at the international level. Armenia is also an active member of the international sports community, with full membership in the Union of European Football Associations ([UEFA](/wiki/UEFA)) and International Ice Hockey Federation ([IIHF](/wiki/IIHF)). It also hosts the [Pan-Armenian Games](/wiki/Pan-Armenian_Games).

Prior to 1992, Armenians would participate in the Olympics representing the USSR. As part of the Soviet Union, Armenia was very successful, winning plenty of medals and helping the USSR win the medal standings at the Olympics on numerous occasions. The first medal won by an Armenian in modern Olympic history was by [Hrant Shahinyan](/wiki/Hrant_Shahinyan) (sometimes spelled as Grant Shaginyan), who won two golds and two silvers in gymnastics at the [1952 Summer Olympics](/wiki/1952_Summer_Olympics) in Helsinki. To highlight the level of success of Armenians in the Olympics, Shahinyan was quoted as saying:

"Armenian sportsmen had to outdo their opponents by several notches for the shot at being accepted into any Soviet team. But those difficulties notwithstanding, 90 percent of Armenians athletes on Soviet Olympic teams came back with medals."[[119]](#cite_note-119) Armenia first participated at the [1992 Summer Olympics](/wiki/1992_Summer_Olympics) in Barcelona under a unified CIS team, where it was very successful, winning three golds and one silver in weightlifting, wrestling and sharp shooting, despite only having 5 athletes. Since the [1994 Winter Olympics](/wiki/1994_Winter_Olympics) in [Lillehammer](/wiki/Lillehammer), Armenia has participated as an independent nation.

Armenia participates in the Summer Olympic Games in boxing, wrestling, weightlifting, judo, gymnastics, track and field, diving, swimming and sharp shooting. It also participates in the Winter Olympic Games in alpine skiing, cross-country skiing and figure skating.

[thumb|180px|World number 2 Chess Champion](/wiki/File:Levon_Aronian_2011.jpg) [Levon Aronian](/wiki/Levon_Aronian). [Football](/wiki/Football_in_Armenia) is also popular in Armenia. The most successful team was the [FC Ararat Yerevan](/wiki/FC_Ararat_Yerevan) team of the 1970s who won the [Soviet Cup](/wiki/Soviet_Cup) in 1973 and 1975 and the [Soviet Top League](/wiki/Soviet_Top_League_1973) in 1973. The latter achievement saw FC Ararat gain entry to the [European Cup](/wiki/European_Cup_1974-75) where – despite a home victory in the second leg – they lost on aggregate at the quarter final stage to eventual winner [FC Bayern Munich](/wiki/FC_Bayern_Munich). Armenia competed internationally as part of the [USSR national football team](/wiki/USSR_national_football_team) until the [Armenian national football team](/wiki/Armenian_national_football_team) was formed in 1992 after the split of the Soviet Union. Armenia have never qualified for a major tournament although recent improvements saw the team to achieve 44th position in the [FIFA World Rankings](/wiki/FIFA_World_Rankings) in September 2011. The national team is controlled by the [Football Federation of Armenia](/wiki/Football_Federation_of_Armenia). The [Armenian Premier League](/wiki/Armenian_Premier_League) is the highest level football competition in Armenia, and has been dominated by [FC Pyunik](/wiki/FC_Pyunik) in recent seasons. The league currently consists of eight teams and relegates to the [Armenian First League](/wiki/Armenian_First_League).

Armenia and the Armenian diaspora have produced many successful footballers, including [Youri Djorkaeff](/wiki/Youri_Djorkaeff), [Alain Boghossian](/wiki/Alain_Boghossian), [Andranik Eskandarian](/wiki/Andranik_Eskandarian), [Andranik Teymourian](/wiki/Andranik_Teymourian), [Edgar Manucharyan](/wiki/Edgar_Manucharyan) and [Nikita Simonyan](/wiki/Nikita_Simonyan). Djokaeff and Boghossian won the [1998 FIFA World Cup](/wiki/1998_FIFA_World_Cup) with [France](/wiki/France_national_football_team), Andranik Teymourian competed in the [2006 World Cup](/wiki/2006_FIFA_World_Cup) for [Iran](/wiki/Iran_national_football_team) and Edgar Manucharyan played in the Dutch [Eredivisie](/wiki/Eredivisie) for [Ajax](/wiki/AFC_Ajax).

[Wrestling](/wiki/Wrestling) has been a successful sport in the Olympics for Armenia. At the [1996 Summer Olympics](/wiki/Armenia_at_the_1996_Summer_Olympics) in [Atlanta](/wiki/Atlanta), [Armen Nazaryan](/wiki/Armen_Nazaryan) won the gold in the Men's [Greco-Roman](/wiki/Greco-Roman_wrestling) Flyweight (52 kg) category and [Armen Mkrtchyan](/wiki/Armen_Mkrtchyan) won the silver in Men's [Freestyle](/wiki/Freestyle_wrestling) Paperweight (48 kg) category, securing Armenia's first two medals in its Olympic history.

Traditional Armenian wrestling is called Kokh and practiced in traditional garb; it was one of the influences included in the Soviet combat sport of [Sambo](/wiki/Sambo_(martial_art)), which is also very popular.[[120]](#cite_note-120) The [government of Armenia](/wiki/Politics_of_Armenia) budgets about $2.8 million annually for sports and gives it to the [National Committee of Physical Education and Sports](/wiki/National_Committee_of_Physical_Education_and_Sports), the body that determines which programs should benefit from the funds.[[121]](#cite_note-121) Due to the lack of success lately on the international level, in recent years, Armenia has rebuilt 16 Soviet-era sports schools and furnished them with new equipment for a total cost of $1.9 million. The rebuilding of the regional schools was financed by the Armenian government. $9.3 million has been invested in the resort town of [Tsaghkadzor](/wiki/Tsaghkadzor) to improve the [winter sports](/wiki/Winter_sports) infrastructure because of dismal performances at recent [winter sports](/wiki/Winter_sports) events. In 2005, a cycling center was opened in [Yerevan](/wiki/Yerevan) with the aim of helping produce world class Armenian cyclists. The government has also promised a cash reward of $700,000 to Armenians who win a gold medal at the Olympics.[[121]](#cite_note-121) Armenia has also been very successful in chess, winning the [World Champion](/wiki/World_Team_Chess_Championship) in 2011 and the [World Chess Olympiad](/wiki/Chess_Olympiad) on three occasions.[[122]](#cite_note-122)

### Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[thumb|Armenian cuisine](/wiki/File:Armenian_cuisine.jpg) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Armenian cuisine is as [ancient](/wiki/Ancient) as the history of Armenia, a combination of different tastes and aromas. The food often has quite a distinct aroma. Closely related to eastern and [Mediterranean cuisine](/wiki/Mediterranean_cuisine), various [spices](/wiki/Spices), [vegetables](/wiki/Vegetables), [fish](/wiki/Fish), and [fruits](/wiki/Fruit) combine to present unique dishes. The main characteristics of Armenian cuisine are a reliance on the quality of the ingredients rather than heavily spicing food, the use of herbs, the use of wheat in a variety of forms, of legumes, nuts, and fruit (as a main ingredient as well as to sour food), and the stuffing of a wide variety of leaves.

The [pomegranate](/wiki/Pomegranate), with its symbolic association with fertility represents that nation. The [apricot](/wiki/Apricot) is the national fruit.

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [Outline of Armenia](/wiki/Outline_of_Armenia)
* [Index of Armenia-related articles](/wiki/Index_of_Armenia-related_articles)
* [Republic of Mountainous Armenia](/wiki/Republic_of_Mountainous_Armenia)
* [Template:Books-inline](/wiki/Template:Books-inline)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Notelist](/wiki/Template:Notelist)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

* [de Waal, Thomas](/wiki/Thomas_de_Waal). *Black Garden*. NYU (2003). ISBN 0-8147-1945-7

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

General information

* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Armenia](http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/armenia.htm) at *UCB Libraries GovPubs*
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Armenia profile](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17398605) from the [BBC News](/wiki/BBC_News)
* [Template:Wikiatlas](/wiki/Template:Wikiatlas)
* [Template:Osmrelation-inline](/wiki/Template:Osmrelation-inline)
* [Template:Cite EB1911](/wiki/Template:Cite_EB1911)
* [Key Development Forecasts for Armenia](http://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm_CountryProfile.aspx?Country=AM) from [International Futures](/wiki/International_Futures)

[Template:Armenia topics](/wiki/Template:Armenia_topics) [Template:Countries of Europe](/wiki/Template:Countries_of_Europe) [Template:Countries of Asia](/wiki/Template:Countries_of_Asia) [Template:Navboxes](/wiki/Template:Navboxes) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates)

[Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control)

[Category:Armenia](/wiki/Category:Armenia) [Category:Caucasus](/wiki/Category:Caucasus) [Category:Countries in Europe](/wiki/Category:Countries_in_Europe) [Category:Western Asian countries](/wiki/Category:Western_Asian_countries) [Category:Near Eastern countries](/wiki/Category:Near_Eastern_countries) [Category:Western Asia](/wiki/Category:Western_Asia) [Category:Republics](/wiki/Category:Republics) [Category:States and territories established in 1918](/wiki/Category:States_and_territories_established_in_1918) [Category:States and territories established in 1991](/wiki/Category:States_and_territories_established_in_1991) [Category:Armenian-speaking countries and territories](/wiki/Category:Armenian-speaking_countries_and_territories) [Category:Russian-speaking countries and territories](/wiki/Category:Russian-speaking_countries_and_territories) [Category:Landlocked countries](/wiki/Category:Landlocked_countries) [Category:Member states of the Council of Europe](/wiki/Category:Member_states_of_the_Council_of_Europe) [Category:Member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States](/wiki/Category:Member_states_of_the_Commonwealth_of_Independent_States) [Category:Member states of the United Nations](/wiki/Category:Member_states_of_the_United_Nations) [Category:Members of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization](/wiki/Category:Members_of_the_Unrepresented_Nations_and_Peoples_Organization) [Category:Eastern Europe](/wiki/Category:Eastern_Europe)