

Pashinyan Receives Western Endorsements Ahead of Parliamentary Elections

06.03.2026 [Vasif Huseynov](#)

Executive Summary:

- U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Yerevan on May 26, where he signed a strategic partnership charter, a transit corridor framework, and a critical minerals accord. Two days later, U.S. President Donald Trump publicly endorsed Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan ahead of the June 7 parliamentary elections.
- Rubio's visit and Washington's endorsement followed the first EU–Armenia summit on May 4–5. Moscow responded with a range of threats, warnings of a “Ukrainian scenario,” and an information campaign ranked second only to Russia's 2025 operation in Moldova.
- The convergence of external interventions has transformed a domestic vote into a contest over Armenia's geopolitical orientation, closely echoing the dynamics observed during Moldova's recent elections.

On May 26, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio made a brief stopover at Yerevan's Zvartnots International Airport to meet with Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan ([U.S. Department of State](#), May 26). The visit lasted barely an hour, but it produced three signed documents and an unambiguous political signal. Rubio and Mirzoyan concluded a Charter on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, a framework agreement on the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), and a memorandum on securing the supply of critical minerals and rare earths ([U.S. Department of State](#); [Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), May 26). Standing alongside his Armenian counterpart, Rubio commended the government in Yerevan for “blazing a trail toward a brighter and more independent future” ([Armenpress.am](#), May 26). The timing of the visit, less than two weeks before Armenia's parliamentary elections, lent these agreements a pronounced electoral subtext.

The agreements carry weight beyond their symbolism. TRIPP, the roughly 43-kilometer (27-mile) road-and-rail corridor intended to connect mainland Azerbaijan with its Nakhchivan exclave via Armenia's Syunik province, constitutes the centerpiece of the peace framework that U.S. President Donald Trump brokered between Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Washington in August 2025 (see [EDM](#), August 12, 2025). The Charter on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership subsumes four memoranda previously concluded between Trump and Pashinyan on energy security, artificial intelligence and semiconductor innovation, a peace capacity-building partnership, and TRIPP. It explicitly affirms Washington's support of both Armenia and Azerbaijan proceeding to sign and ratify the initialed peace agreement, with border delimitation based on the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration ([Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), May

26). The accompanying critical minerals memorandum advances Washington's priority of diversifying rare-earth supply chains away from the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Washington's support to Pashinyan escalated further two days later. In a Truth Social post on May 28, Trump declared his "complete and total endorsement" of Pashinyan for re-election, praising him as a friend and leader who shares his vision of peace and prosperity for the South Caucasus, crediting Rubio's visit with advancing important agreements, and anticipating that the two countries would soon break ground on TRIPP ([Armenpress.am](https://armenpress.am), May 28). He claimed that the TRIPP will grant U.S. energy companies access from Central Asia to the United States ([Euronews](https://euronews.com), May 28).

These gestures form part of a wider pattern of Western support for Pashinyan's government in the run-up to the vote. On May 5, Yerevan hosted the first-ever EU–Armenia summit, at which European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President António Costa signed a connectivity partnership, reaffirmed 2.5 billion euro (\$2.7 billion) in investment under the Global Gateway strategy, and pledged to assist Yerevan in countering Russian disinformation ahead of the June elections ([Prime Minister of Armenia](https://armenpress.am), May 5; see [EDM](https://edmonline.com), May 11). French President Emmanuel Macron, attending the European Political Community summit, signed a bilateral strategic partnership and endorsed Pashinyan, framing his support as a "decision to defend Europe" and drawing an explicit parallel to his 2024 backing of Moldovan President Maia Sandu ([Armenpress](https://armenpress.am), May 4). Pashinyan's Civil Contract party, having frozen Armenia's membership in the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), has placed European integration at the center of its campaign (see [EDM](https://edmonline.com), August 5, 2024).

Moscow's response has combined direct coercion with influence operations. One day before Rubio's arrival, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov warned that Armenia could forfeit an "attractive and preferential price" for natural gas should it turn away from Moscow ([Armenpress.am](https://armenpress.am), May 25). Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, now deputy chairman of the Russian Security Council, accused Pashinyan of steering the country down "the path of Bandera Ukraine," and Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova had earlier offered to dispatch a Russian rapid-response electoral support contingent to Armenia and reminded Yerevan of its obligations as a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States ([Sputnik Armenia](https://sputnik.am), March 4; 1newz.az, May 25). These interventions rest on substantial leverage, as Russia retains considerable influence over the Armenian economy through energy, trade, and ties to the Eurasian Economic Union.

Rubio's visit sharpened the domestic fault line over the peace process with Azerbaijan. Former Armenian President and Hayastan bloc premier candidate Robert Kocharyan, heading the principal Russia-aligned opposition alliance, declared that the visit had "only one goal—to cause pain to Russia," dismissed it as contrary to Armenian national interests, and characterized it as an instrument of Pashinyan's election campaign ([News.am](https://news.am), May 25). Kocharyan described the existing Armenia–Azerbaijan accord not as a genuine peace treaty but as a preliminary initialed

document lacking the necessary guarantor architecture, and insisted that any durable settlement must be underwritten by the United States, the PRC, and Russia jointly, backed by a UN Security Council statement with defined consequences for violations ([News.am](#), May 25).

The informational component of the Russian effort has been equally extensive. Researchers attribute a large-scale campaign, part of the artificial intelligence-driven “Matryoshka” operation, to pro-Kremlin groups including Storm-1516 and the Foundation to Battle Injustice, networks previously active in the United States, Germany, France, and Moldova ([European Union External Action](#), March 2026). Analysts counted 343 fabricated videos by early May, ranking the operation second only to the campaign conducted during Moldova’s 2025 elections ([Euronews](#), May 20). The narratives combine allegations that Pashinyan is surrendering national interests to Azerbaijan and Türkiye with personal fabrications, among them claims that the prime minister purchased a multimillion-euro residence in France.

For all external mobilization, the most probable outcome remains continuity. Polling depicts an unpopular prime minister who nonetheless leads most projections, largely because the opposition remains fragmented and lacks a credible unifying alternative ([Eurasianet](#), May 26). The peace agreement with Azerbaijan, which anchors Pashinyan’s Western orientation, divides Armenian society almost evenly. Overt Russian economic pressure, moreover, risks proving counterproductive, reinforcing the prime minister’s argument that Armenia must diversify away from its dependence on Moscow.

While the June 7 vote is formally a domestic contest, the intensity of foreign involvement has rendered it, in effect, a referendum on Armenia’s geopolitical orientation. The outcome of the elections will also have major implications for the future of the Armenia–Azerbaijan peace process. A renewed mandate for Pashinyan would likely preserve the current momentum toward signing and ratifying the peace agreement and implementing connectivity projects such as TRIPP. A stronger Russia-aligned opposition could complicate or delay the process by insisting on additional security guarantees and broader external involvement. In this sense, the parliamentary elections have evolved beyond a domestic political struggle into a decisive moment not only for Armenia’s foreign policy orientation, but also for the prospects of long-term stability and normalization in the South Caucasus.