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THE DASHNAK ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION'S LATEST STATEMENT AND A RECENT EXAMPLE OF VICTIMHOOD POLITICS

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On 9 July 2026, we published a commentary about the Armenian Revolutionary Federation's (ARF) statement, which addressed its divisive discourse targeting peace and stability in the South Caucasus.[1] This organization, which has a dark history and attempts to lead and represent the opposition against the Armenian government, has once again revealed its stance regarding political developments in Armenia, as well as its approach to the concepts of democratic legitimacy, the rule of law, and political responsibility through its new statement published on 22 July 2026.[2] While ARF's statement initially gives the impression that it defends the rule of law, a closer assessment reveals that it forms a discourse centered on victimhood, spreading political polarization, and pre-emptively characterizing legal processes that do not align with its political interests as political pressure, all of which are consistent with the Dashnaks political tradition.

Considering the political line adopted by ARF to date, the statement is mostly to be expected, but there are still a few points that need to be reviewed. The statement systematically describes the current government in Armenia as "illegitimate", "repressive", etc. However, in democratic systems, election results and constitutional processes are important factors in determining legitimacy. Nevertheless, considering the Dashnaktsutyun-based ARFs infamous political legacy and its victimhood discourse, it comes as no surprise that the organization characterizes a government that has just emerged from elections with re-established trust as "illegitimate" or "a regime experiencing a legitimacy crisis", and attempts to manipulate public opinion by presenting this assessment as an undeniable fact.

Another point that stands out in the statement is its declaration in advance that all ongoing investigations are illegal. If political party donors are being investigated illegally, it is the duty of the independent judiciary to evaluate this, and the appropriate forum for such a process are the judicial organs. However, labeling all investigations as illegal and

political revenge before any judicial process is completed is the reflection of an approach that seeks to politicize the judicial mechanism rather than defending the rule of law.

The statement called on international institutions to assess the government's actions. International observation and monitoring mechanisms are important elements of democratic systems. However, using these calls solely as a tool to validate one's own political agenda risks undermining the impartiality of international institutions. Of course, this is not surprising, considering ARF's political stance. It is a known fact that this organization has a tendency to distort legal processes and rules in line with its own political interests.

ARF's accusation of neo-Bolshevism against the current Armenian government is another example of using political concepts out of their historical context. The current government has significantly shifted away from a Russia-centric foreign policy, strengthening relations with the EU and Western institutions, and pursuing new approaches in the security field. ARF, however, is known for its long-standing political stance advocating closer relations with Russia and for assigning Moscow a significant role based on ARFs traditional understanding of security. As such, ARF targeting the current government, which has clear relations with the West, with the concept of "neo-Bolshevism" is a result of the organization's contradictory policies.

In conclusion, ARF's statement, while claiming to defend the rule of law, has failed to go beyond being a text that pre-emptively rejects the outcome of legal processes, prioritizes political interests over the law, and uses victimhood discourse as its primary political strategy. Furthermore, the accusation of neo-Bolshevism not only contradicts Armenia's recent shift towards a Western-centric foreign policy, but also appears as an attempt to deny which side ARF currently stands on.

[1] Tuğçe Tecimer, Identity Politics And The Regional Normalization Process In Armenia Within The Framework Of The Turkification Discourse Of The Dashnak Armenian Revolutionary Federation, *AVİM*, September 29, 2026, https://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/IDENTITY-POLITICS-AND-THE-REGIONAL-NORMALIZATION-PROCESS-IN-ARMENIA-WITHIN-THE-FRAMEWORK-OF-THE-TURKIFICATION-DISCOURSE-OF-THE-DASHNAK-ARMENIAN-REVOLUTIONARY-FEDERATION.

[2] ARF Members, Supporters and Sympathizers Will Not Be Intimidated and Will Continue Their Struggle Against the Current Regime with Determination Statement by the ARF Supreme Body of Armenia, *ARF*, July 22, 2026, https://www.arfd.am/eng/news/8590/.

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