



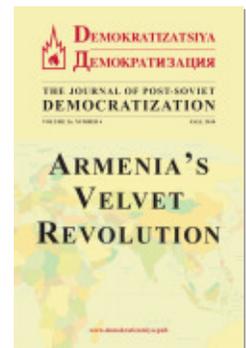
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MY STEP ASIDE FROM SASNA TSRER: THE DYNAMICS OF PROTEST COALITIONS IN ARMENIA, 2016 AND 2018

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Abstract: This article is devoted to the comparison of two Armenian protest coalitions: the 2016 coalition of Sasna Tsrer supporters and Nikol Pashinyan’s My Step coalition of 2018. The analysis shows that Pashinyan’s coalition, unlike the coalition of Sasna Tsrer supporters, was not a liberal-nationalist alliance, but rather a liberal-bureaucratic one. This difference turns out to be crucial, as the Sasna Tsrer polemic was heavily polarized by the clash between the statist and counter-statist frames of the Armenian nation, with none of the sides possessing enough symbolic or political resources to win. The generally successful outcome of Pashinyan’s protest can thus be explained by the fact that it was not so strongly framed by a counter-statist understanding of the Armenian nation.

In recent years, Armenia has experienced a series of mass political and social protests.¹ In the Million Mask March of 2013, large numbers of anti-government protesters rallied in the streets of Yerevan and clashed

¹ The research was supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (grant project N 17-03-12024, “Eurasia Index—Information Analysis System”).

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with police. In 2015, the Armenian capital saw mass protests that were triggered by an increase in the price of electricity. The following year, protesters took to the streets to express their support of the Sasna Tsrer armed group, which had seized a police station in Yerevan.

Sasna Tsrer's action was violent and, in the eyes of many observers in Armenia and abroad, was considered a mutiny or even an act of terror, in contrast to previous protests, which had been performed in a civic, non-violent, and legal way. Nevertheless, the seizure of the police regiment garnered massive support among politicians, civil activists, shapers of public opinion, and the general public. Unlike previous mass protests, it not only reflected public discontent with some of the authorities' malpractices, but also challenged the legitimacy of the political system. In terms of political change, Sasna Tsrer's action was probably the most effective of the protests that took place between 2013 and 2016, as it led to a political crisis that resulted in government change – in September 2016, Karen Karapetyan was appointed prime minister, while Serzh Sargsyan retained his position as president.

Intriguingly, however, massive approval of Sasna Tsrer did not translate into significant results at the polls: the following year, the ruling Republican Party of Armenia, headed by President Serzh Sargsyan, once again won the parliamentary elections. Yet in April 2018, Sargsyan's attempt to retain power by moving to the position of prime minister sparked a massive protest, the My Step movement, under the leadership of opposition parliamentarian Nikol Pashinyan. In contrast to previous demonstrations, the My Step protest was a success. Sargsyan resigned, and Pashinyan became the head of the government and the head of state under the new constitution, which came into force in 2018.

Most studies of contemporary Armenian politics devoted to the mass manifestations of recent years tend to focus on the issues that served as triggers for the protests. For example, commentators discuss the April 2016 war in Nagorno-Karabakh;² social-economic issues (such as pension privatization and tariff and transport fare hikes); the lack of democracy, justice³ and leaders' accountability;⁴ environmental problems;⁵ deterio-

² Gayane Novikova. 2017. "Armenia: Some Features of Internal (in)Stability." *Caucasus Survey* 5: 2: 177–94.

³ Armine Ishkanian. "From Civil Disobedience to Armed Violence: Political Developments in Armenia." *openDemocracy*. July 19, 2016, At <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/armine-ishkanian/from-civil-disobedience-to-armed-violence-political-developments-in-armen>, accessed September 16, 2018.

⁴ Karena Avedissian. "The Power of Electric Yerevan." *openDemocracy*. July 6, 2015, At <https://www.opendemocracy.net/karena-avedissian/electrified-yerevan>, accessed September 16, 2018.

⁵ Armine Ishkanian. "Neoliberalism, Mining and Armenia's Politics of Plunder." *openDemocracy*. June 24, 2016, At <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/armine-ishkanian/neoliberalism-mining-and-politics-of-plunder-in-armenia>, accessed September 16, 2018.

rating living conditions;⁶ dysfunctional channels for popular input into the political process;⁷ and other factors. This article seeks to explore the same trends and events, but from a different perspective, considering not the immediate drivers of the protests, but fundamental features of public discourse that structure the political polemic in Armenia regardless of which particular issues are on the agenda at any particular moment.

Our study is an attempt to explain protest dynamics in Armenia by examining discourses of Armenian nationalism. In previous studies,⁸ we have shown the insights that this approach can provide into the controversy regarding Sasna Tsrer and the failure of its supporters' protest actions. In this paper, we assess how nationalism manifested itself in the revolution of April–May 2018.

Our task is to compare the composition of the coalition of public figures who approved of the actions of Sasna Tsrer in 2016 with the Pashinyan coalition that gained power after the 2018 revolution. Through a detailed study of these coalitions, we will try to explain the divergent outcomes of these two waves of mass mobilization. Our analysis of the coalition of Sasna Tsrer supporters is based on our earlier research on Armenian media discourse,⁹ while to study the 2018 coalition we analyze a set of key executive figures in the new government that was formed after the revolution.

Nationalism as a Discursive Formation

In our analysis, we follow Craig Calhoun in considering nationalism to be primarily a “discursive formation.” Calhoun notes that the innumerable manifestations of nationalism can hardly be explained by a single universal cause, but are united by a specific view of the world that presupposes the very existence of nations.¹⁰ This is the same logic used by Rogers Brubaker. In his view, nationhood and ethnicity are not “things *in* the world,” but “perspectives *on* the world” (emphasis in original)¹¹—that is, specific ways of seeing, explaining, framing, and narrating, as well as specific formal and informal systems of classification, categorization, and identification.

Gellner's formula that nationalism is a “political principle, which

⁶ Jan Strzelecki. 2015. *Protests in Armenia as a Manifestation of the State's Systemic Crisis*. At <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2015-07-01/protests-armenia-a-manifestation-states-systemic-crisis>, accessed September 16, 2018.

⁷ Armen Ghazaryan. 2017. “A Self-Repeating Crisis: The Systemic Dysfunctionality of Armenian Politics.” *Caucasus Analytical Digest* 91: 5-7.

⁸ Ivan Fomin and Nikolai Silaev. 2018. “Armenian Nationalism vs. Armenian State: Cleavages and Coalitions in the Discourses on Sasna Tsrer.” *Polis. Political Studies* 3: 87-90.

⁹ Fomin and Silaev, “Armenian Nationalism vs. Armenian State.”

¹⁰ Craig Calhoun. 1997. *Nationalism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 20-23.

¹¹ Rogers Brubaker. 2004. *Ethnicity without Groups*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 17.

holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent,¹² and his insights into the correlations between nationalism and industrial society, as well as Hobsbawm's idea of nation being connected to modernity as such,¹³ provide the broadest theoretical and explanatory framework on the subject. The tradition of seeing nationalism as a political movement that is aimed toward nation-state building is also fruitful, especially when it comes to thorough historical analysis of state formation in place of collapsing empires.¹⁴ The discursive understanding of nations and nationalism does not contradict these traditions. However, it is the discursive approach that is used as the key instrument of our analysis, because it is this approach that provides analytical tools of varying scales: from the macrosociological level of modernity (or the nation-state phenomenon) to local interactions between political groups holding different views and ideas on the same nation. Our research is focused on the relation between nationalism and state in a given nation-state; the discursive interpretation of nationalism allows us to analyze specific political situations in which different interpretations of the nation collide and to explore nationalism as it is manifested in concrete local interactions.

Brubaker focuses on the concept of *frame* when addressing "ethnic" violence and the "interpretive struggles" around it: violence and conflict become ethnic because such meaning is attached to them by participants or observers. The ethnic framing also implies an understanding of the conflict in groupist terms (i.e. considering groups as subjects of social relations). Referring to Donald Horowitz, Brubaker speaks in this context about *meta-conflicts*, which are conflicts over the nature of the conflict itself.¹⁵ Although no one interpreted either the seizure of the police station by Sasna Tsrer nor the events of spring 2018 as an ethnic conflict, it is crucial for our analysis that in those cases, too, there were struggles over the interpretation and framing of events.

Brubaker also refers to the concept of *frame* when criticizing the typical, but in his view analytically untenable, distinction between "ethnic" and "civic" nationalisms. In its stead, he offers his own typology of nationalist doctrines and movements, based on the distinction between "state-framed" and "counter-state" understandings of nationhood and forms of nationalism: "In the former, 'nation' is conceived as congruent with the state, and as institutionally and territorially framed by it. In the latter, 'nation' is imagined as distinct from, and often in opposition to, the

¹² Ernest Gellner. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1.

¹³ Eric J. Hobsbawm. 1991. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780; Program, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 14.

¹⁴ Miroslav Hroch. 1985. *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; John Breuilly. 1993. *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

¹⁵ Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 16-17.

territorial and institutional frame of an existing state or states.”¹⁶

A similar idea about nationalism being simultaneously stabilizing and revolutionary was outlined by Benedict Anderson, who noted that in the nineteenth century the Euro-Mediterranean monarchies, seeking to shore up their legitimacy, sidled toward “a beckoning national identification.” But the very recognition of a king as the king of the Germans, Ottomans, or Romanians and representative of the nation gave rise to the possibility of challenging his legitimacy on behalf of that nation.¹⁷

We expect this theoretical framework of “two-faced nationalism” to be useful in our analysis, since recent studies of Armenia note the existence of two not entirely compatible vectors of Armenian nationalism. For instance, the tension between a “constitutional space” and a “nationalist space” is one of the central arguments in David Lewis’s work about “the contested state in post-Soviet Armenia.”¹⁸ Contributors to the recent Russian research project on post-Soviet national identities also point out that “the Armenian society still faces the dilemma between the building of a stable state and the development of a nation as a traditional cultural and historical formation.” They further note that the understanding of Armenia as “the great Western Armenia,” alongside a distrust of the small “Araratian” Armenia, continues to be preserved in the diaspora.¹⁹ A similar point is made by Suren Zolyan in his work on the national identity of Armenians.²⁰ According to him, there are signs that two different representations of the Armenian nation exist: the nation of “political self-understanding” and the nation in the “epic folklore understanding.”²¹

It is important to note here that historically, Armenian nationalism was formed through competition between those institutions that claimed to politically represent and organize the nation. In the nineteenth century, the competitors were the Apostolic Church and the revolutionary political parties of the secular intelligentsia. In the twentieth century, they were the Armenian diaspora, the Soviet Armenia project, Dashnaksutyun, and

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹⁷ Benedict Anderson. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso, 84-86.

¹⁸ David Lewis. 2017. “The Contested State in Post-Soviet Armenia.” In John Heathershaw and Edwaed Schatz, eds., *Paradox of Power: The Logics of State Weakness in Eurasia*. Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press.

¹⁹ Irina Semenenko, Vladimir Lapkin, Andrei Bardin, and Vladimir Pantin. 2017. “Between the State and the Nation: Dilemmas of Identity Policy in Post-Soviet Societies.” *Polis. Political Studies* 5: 67-69.

²⁰ Suren Zolian. 2017. “O dinamicheskome ponimanii natsional’noi identichnosti (na primere opisaniia armianskoi identichnosti) [On the Dynamic Approach to the Notion of National Identity (Armenian Identity Case Study)].” *SOTIS - sotsial’nye tekhnologii, issledovaniia* 1: 46.

²¹ Here, of course, we have to draw attention to the name of the group of fighters who captured the police station in Yerevan. The very name *Sasna Tsrer* refers to epic folklore motifs.

ASALA.²² None of those national projects were able to promise what would have been a decisive argument in their favor—namely, to restore political control over the lost lands of Western Armenia. Thus, the two motifs—the restitution of the lost territories and the insufficiency of the existing nation-state, which controls only a small part of the historical homeland (“not the Motherland, but the home nook”²³)—were exceptionally strong within Armenian nationalism.²⁴

In earlier research,²⁵ it was demonstrated that the sharpness of the polemic over Sasna Tsrer in Armenia indicated that such discourse involved a clash of certain fundamental aspects that were important to the self-description and self-perception of the Armenian society. In that polemic, fundamentally different interpretations of the same events were produced as conflicting frames of nationhood collided. Each side of that meta-conflict attempted to establish a dominant interpretation by using disposable resources of symbolic power (that is, “power to construct reality” and establish a gnoseological order).²⁶ In this article, we attempt to transpose this explanatory scheme to the events of the spring of 2018.

Sasna Tsrer’s Coalition of Approval

In July 2016, the mass demonstrations in support of Sasna Tsrer and opinion leaders’ supportive rhetoric indicated that the Armenian public was prepared to approve of radical protest actions, even if they involved hostage-taking and violence against the police. It was almost exclusively high-ranked state bureaucrats and members of the ruling parliamentary coalition who overtly condemned the Sasna Tsrer attack (see Table 1). The rest of the country’s political class either approved of (Table 2) or attempted to justify (Table 3) the actions of the armed group (see Figure 1).²⁷

²² Ronald Grigor Suny. 1993. *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 227.

²³ Gagerin Nzhde. 1992. *Otkrytye pis'ma armianskoi intelligentsii* [Open Letters to the Armenian Intelligentsia]. Yerevan: Armianskaia revoliutsionnaia federatsiia “Dashnaksutiun,” 5.

²⁴ Dmitry Furman used the psychoanalytic metaphors of trauma and compensation to compare the Armenian national movement with the Jewish one: while the Jews were able to compensate for the trauma of genocide by building a strong and prosperous state, the Armenians did not have such a compensating event, so “with the opportunities for normal, real nation-state life being limited, appeared a kind of dreamy compensatory fantasy [about the return of Western Armenia]” (Dmitrii Furman. 1993. *Kul'turnye i sotsial'no-psikhologicheskie osnovy sovremennogo armianskogo natsional'nogo dvizheniia* [Cultural and Socio-Psychological Foundations of the Contemporary Armenian National Movement]. Moscow: Gorbachev-Fond, 8-9).

²⁵ Fomin and Silaev, “Armenian Nationalism vs. Armenian State.”

²⁶ Pierre Bourdieu. 1979. “Symbolic Power.” *Critique of Anthropology* 4: 13-14: 79.

²⁷ In our earlier research, we divided public statements by different political actors on Sasna Tsrer into four clusters according to the dominant discursive strategies (condemnation, justification, approval, neutral) in an attempt to grasp the key discursive cleavages, link

The core public supporters of Sasna Tsrer included the following clusters:

1. representatives of “liberal” NGOs (Helsinki Civil Assembly, Helsinki Association, Yerevan Press Club etc.)
2. representatives of the Heritage Party and other entities connected with Raffi Hovannisian (Armenian Center for National and International Studies, Barev Yerevan faction)
3. members and supporters of the Founding Parliament organization²⁸
4. veterans of the Armenian political scene in the first years of independence²⁹
5. prominent representatives of the Armenian diaspora
6. cultural figures

Sasna Tsrer was reminiscent of earlier coalitions that had become the drivers of “color revolutions” in post-Soviet countries, as it included both the liberal cluster (liberal NGOs) and nationalist forces (the Founding Parliament and Heritage Party). As such, the coalition could be termed “liberal-nationalist.” However, it is necessary to note that its “liberal” and “nationalist” elements were not themselves internally homogeneous and were ideologically separated from each other. Among the members of the Founding Parliament were several figures who were better described as liberals than nationalists, among them the film director Tigran Khzmalyan,³⁰ known for his sharp criticism of the Russian political regime and its influence on Armenia, while the leader of the movement, the Karabakhi Beirut-born veteran Jirair Sefilyan, was closer to the nationalist part of the coalition. For its part, the Heritage Party, although committed to a pro-Western liberal agenda, proved to have nationalist views on some issues (namely the idea of settling ethnic Armenians in former districts of the Azerbaijan SSR around Nagorno-Karabakh). The merging of liberal and nationalistic elements was catalyzed by the Western narrative, which labeled Russia as the authoritarian stronghold of the post-Soviet space and depicted it as the foreign force subduing Armenia via Serge Sargsyan’s

discursive strategies with certain political and social positions, and compare the weights of those positions in the Armenian media (see Tables 1, 2, 3 and Figure 1). Our analysis did not set out to describe the nuanced spectrum of attitudes to Sasna Tsrer in Armenian society in full detail and in fact reduced unique opinions to quite a limited set of strategies, but this approach turned out to be productive in terms of mapping the discursive reality of state-nation relations in Armenia as it emerged during the crisis. For more details on the study, see Fomin and Silaev, “Armenian Nationalism vs. Armenian State.”

²⁸ Founding Parliament leader Jirair Sefilian was taken into custody in June 2016 on suspicion of organizing illegal transportation and storage of weapons. His release was one of Sasna Tsrer’s main demands.

²⁹ For example, Paruyr Hayrikyan, a Soviet-era dissident, and Ashot Manucharyan, a member of the Karabakh Committee and security advisor to the Armenian president in 1991-1993.

³⁰ Tigran Khzmalyan had reportedly left Founding Parliament by July 2016.

puppet regime. In the eyes of Armenian liberals and nationalists, they had the same mission: to eliminate the authoritarian and corrupt domestic regime and to liberate the nation from dependence on the Kremlin, thus gaining a free hand to conduct their desired policy in Karabakh.

Furthermore, this coalition was similar to the revolutionary political coalitions of the perestroika era described by Georgi Derluguian. These alliances united intellectuals and semi-urban marginals with no certain professional and social status (those Bourdieu terms the sub-proletariat).³¹ The intelligentsia, with its symbolic capital, and the sub-proletariat, with its readiness for physical confrontation and violence, merged in the struggle for the national cause.³² When part of the Soviet nomenklatura—with its political capital—joined that alliance, it created an explosive mixture that detonated in a series of armed conflicts just as the Soviet Union was in the midst of collapse.³³

In general, the fact that public discourse in 2016 was dominated by Sasna Tsrer supporters (Figure 1) could be explained by the extreme unpopularity of the president and the ruling party. However, that unpopularity did not prevent Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party from winning the parliamentary elections the following year. In other words, the mass political mobilization around Sasna Tsrer was emotionally intense but inefficient in terms of electoral politics. At the same time, the Armenian authorities utterly failed to turn public opinion against the armed group. The situation was thus characterized by “double powerlessness”—the powerlessness of both the authorities and the protesters opposing them.

Interpretive Struggles of Armenian Nationalisms

The discourse of the public polemic regarding Sasna Tsrer was built on two mutually exclusive frames that produced fundamentally different interpretations of the events. The minority of speakers qualified the Sasna Tsrer attack as a dangerous insurgency or a terrorist act that threatened national security. We call this interpretative template the *statist frame*. But most public figures reacted to the events in a very different way, representing the actions of Sasna Tsrer as a popular uprising, a heroic deed in the name of the nation, or an expression of natural indignation provoked by the actions of the authorities. This rhetoric inscribed Sasna Tsrer in the long

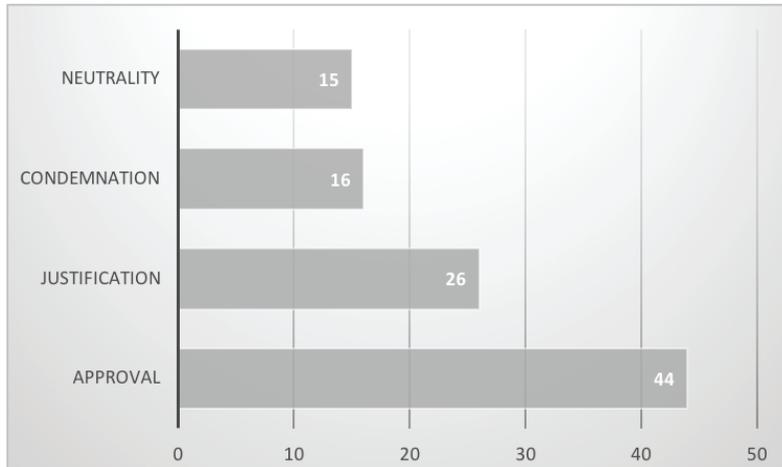
³¹ Pierre Bourdieu. 1973. “The Algerian Subproletariat.” In I. W. Zartman, ed., *Man, State and Society in the Contemporary Maghrib*. New York: Praeger.

³² Moreover, in that situation the marginals had an opportunity to turn their socially condemned behavior (violence and criminal practices) into socially approved activity, since their actions were put in the service of the nation. They transformed from “suspicious types” into folk heroes.

³³ Georgii Derlug'ian. 2010. *Adept Burd'e na Kavkaze: eskizy k biografii v mirosistemnoi perspektive* [Bourdieu's Adherent in the Caucasus: Sketches to the Biography in the World-System Perspective]. Moscow: Territoria budushchego, 305-307.

tradition of the Armenian *fedayi*, the armed resistance of irregular militia. We suggest labeling this interpretation schema as the *counter-statist frame*.

Figure 1. Share of Approving, Justifying, Condemning, and Neutral Statements About Sasna Tsrer in the Discourse of Armenian Media Commentators (%)



These two frames are directly correlated with two types of nationalistic doctrines and movements proposed by Brubaker: the *state-framed* and the *counter-state*. But these two types of nationalism appeal to the same nation: the Armenian one. Armenian nationalism turns out to be both state-framed and counter-state. It becomes the field of an interpretive battle between two ways of describing the social reality. Just as two Armenian states co-exist, one the heir to the legitimacy of the Soviet republics (the Republic of Armenia) and the other undermining that legitimacy (the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic), Armenian nationalism turns out to be both state-framed, based on national statehood, and counter-state, questioning and challenging this statehood and even rebelling against it in some extreme manifestations.

However, in the case of the Sasna Tsrer controversy, it was not only this contradiction that was important, but also the special constellation of different forms of capital³⁴ that accompanied it. One may note that the coalition of Sasna Tsrer condemners included those who had enough economic and social capital to fear losing their current positions. That capital—in the form of official positions and economic resources—could have been converted into symbolic capital if the state-framed concept of

³⁴ Pierre Bourdieu. 1986. "The Forms of Capital." In John Richardson, ed. *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood.

the nation had been shared widely by Armenian society. However, it was the social capital of veteran, opposition, or diaspora statuses that were more effectively converted into symbolic capital at that time, as these footings³⁵ were more compatible with the counter-state frame of the nation.

The counter-statist – “fedayi” – frame holds a special place in Armenian nationalism. On the one hand, it provides the unique standpoint of a monopoly to interpret the political events in which the nation is involved. On the other hand, those who win the struggle for symbolic power by relying on this frame are usually deprived of any political or economic power.

We have chosen the word “fedayi” to label this counter-statist frame, as well as the core of the Sasna Tsrer supporters (combatant counter-state nationalists), but we use it only metaphorically. We neither claim to link them directly with Armenian fighters who resisted the Ottoman and Russian empires a century ago nor try to juxtapose resistance to the Ottomans with resistance to the Sargasyan regime. This metaphor, however, is important as a means to illustrate the specific relationship between the political actor and violence. Contrary to an army officer, whose commitment to the nation is mediated by the whole military structure of a state, a “fedayi” acts as a direct and immediate representative of a nation. He proclaims his right and duty to use violence on behalf of a nation that does not have its own state. Sasna Tsrer acted in this way, and “fedayis” were the heroic images to which they referred and with which they identified themselves. The term does not entail their opposition to any state, including the national Armenian state, but rather stresses their claim to judge the existing state from the position of an immediate representative of the nation and the herald of the nation’s will.

The importance of the “fedayi” frame and its ability to produce symbolic power can be explained by the special role played by the Karabakh issue in Armenian politics. As Laurence Broers has put it, it is Karabakh that emits the symbolic currency of Armenian politics, giving politicians a sort of a symbolic patriot’s certificate.³⁶ This is an important element in the exchange between Yerevan and Stepanakert. At the same time, the case of Karabakh fits perfectly into the “fedayi” vision of the Armenian nation, thus supporting and reproducing this frame.

Here we may draw a parallel with certain features of the political

³⁵ *Footing* is the way in which speakers discursively establish the self as a social entity by arranging themselves and their relationships to others (Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak. 2001. *Discourse and Discrimination: Rhetorics of Racism and Antisemitism*. London: Routledge, 82). In other words, this is where speakers put themselves into the picture of the social world that they describe.

³⁶ Laurence Broers, Alexander Iskandaryan, and Sergey Minasyan. 2015. *The Unrecognized Politics of De Facto States in the Post-Soviet Space*. Yerevan: Caucasus Institute and International Association for the Study of the Caucasus, 157.

careers of Karabakh war veterans. The popularity and authority of the commanders who achieved victories in Karabakh were exceptionally high in the first decade of Armenia's independence. The veterans themselves were a large, cohesive, and well-organized community with a great deal of influence. Having formed an alliance with the former first secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia, Karen Demirchyan, Vazgen Sargsyan, the charismatic leader of the Karabakh veterans who personified the Soviet-era administrative elite, won the 1999 parliamentary elections. A terrorist act in the Armenian Parliament in 1999, in which both Demirchyan and Sargsyan were killed, halted their march to power. After the governmental change of May 2000, it was President Robert Kocharyan who took control over the key aspects of Armenian politics. The rise of Kocharyan, a Karabakhi but not a veteran, marked the decline of the influence of veteran leaders and organizations.³⁷ "Fedayi" won the war, but lost their place in politics.

The ambivalence of Armenian nationalism, with its two rival frames, put "fedayi" outside state institutions and deprived them of access to political power while simultaneously depriving these institutions of their most important symbolic source of legitimacy, which originated from the authority of the political representatives of the nation. Thus, different types of capital and power belonged to different elite groups, which—due to the split between the two Armenian nationalisms—failed to ally. This produced a social order that drove the turbulence of Armenian political life, with its frequent mass protests, while blocking any substantive political changes. State institutions lost to "fedayi" in legitimacy and in the right to politically represent the nation, thus reinforcing the idea that the existing national state was incomplete and imperfect. At the same time, the counter-statist discourse placed in doubt not only the authority of ruling groups, but also the very political institutions of the incomplete and imperfect state, including the electoral mechanisms. It was this constellation that led to the situation of "double powerlessness" in which both authorities and protesters found themselves during the clash over Sasna Tsrer.

So how and why was April 2018 different from July 2016?

Pashinyan's Coalition and the Signs of Change

The protest coalition that forced the resignation of Serzh Sargsyan and led Nikol Pashinyan to power can hardly be described using the same categories as we have deployed to analyze the debate about Sasna Tsrer. While the coalitions of approval and condemnation of Sasna Tsrer were formed in the first days of the protests and remained generally stable thereafter, Pashinyan's coalition appeared as a narrow alliance, then rapidly grew to

³⁷ Alexander Iskandaryan, Hrant Mikaelian, and Sergey Minasyan. 2016. *War, Business and Politics: Informal Networks and Formal Institutions in Armenia*. Yerevan: Caucasus Institute, 55-56.

include more actors. The interpretative struggle was much shorter in 2018: a number of political figures jumped on the bandwagon, thus preventing the development of argumentative battles at the very moment of mass political mobilization. Moreover, many actors joined Pashinyan's coalition not due to their political convictions but out of concern for their very survival. For example, among the Republican Party parliamentarians who voted for Nikol Pashinyan for prime minister was General Manvel Grigoryan, who was a month later accused of numerous crimes and arrested. Therefore, we have to assess Pashinyan's coalition not through the publicly expressed political positions of the participants, but rather through the data on the personnel composition of the key executive bodies (the government and its apparatus, the National Security Service, the police, the State Control Service, and the National Security Council) following the revolution. We can trace how the rival factions of Armenian nationalism that emerged from the Sasna Tsrer crisis merged into the ruling coalition that came to power in May 2018 (see Table 4). The correspondence between the coalitions of 2016 and 2018 may not be exact, but we can nevertheless trace 2016 actors to their current situations and draw some conclusions as to the status of the two frames in current Armenian politics.

As to points of intersection between the two coalitions, firstly, the leader of the 2018 protest movement was a key member of the approval coalition during the Sasna Tsrer crisis. He spoke in support of the armed group's action³⁸ and organized a series of mass protests. He also made an attempt to mediate between the authorities and Sasna Tsrer.³⁹

Secondly, as Pashinyan came to power, some Sasna Tsrer sympathizers who had been members of the liberal faction of the approval coalition in 2016 received positions in the executive. A prime example is the new head of the State Control Service, David Sanasaryan, who in August 2016 was arrested on charges of organizing riots in support of Sasna Tsrer.⁴⁰ In 2016, Sanasaryan belonged to the Barev Yerevan ("Hello, Yerevan") faction in

³⁸ "From the very first minute all my actions were aimed at proving that the guys from the Sasna Tsrer group are not terrorists. Being personally acquainted with some of them, I can say: they are loyal to the homeland, tired of lawlessness," said Pashinyan in a speech he gave at the Sasna Tsrer supporters' rally on July 22, 2016. ("Pashinian: Ter-Petrosian pomogaet sdai' zavoevannye territorii, chtoby dokazat' svoiu pravotu v 1997-98 gg" [Pashinyan: Ter-Petrosyan helps to surrender the conquered territories in order to prove his rightness in 1997-98]. *PanARMENIAN.Net*. July 22, 2016, At <http://www.panarmenian.net/rus/news/217540/>, accessed September 16, 2018.

³⁹ Naira Akopian. 2016. *Nikol Pashinian: Shtrikhi k politicheskomu portretu* [Nikol Pashinyan: The Touches of Political Portrait], At <http://russia-armenia.info/node/30693>, accessed July 4, 2018.

⁴⁰ "Uchastnik aktsii v podderzhku zakhvativshei polk PPS v Erevane gruppy 'Sasna tsrer'—David Sanasarian—arestovan na 2 mesiatsa" [A participant in the actions in support of the Sasna Tsrer group that seized the patrol police regiment in Yerevan, David Sanasaryan, is arrested for 2 months]. *Panorama.am*. August 8, 2016, At <https://www.panorama.am/ru/news/2016/08/02/Давид-Санасарян-арестован/1621860>, accessed July 26, 2018.

the Yerevan City Council, which was formed around the Heritage party. The political alliance between Pashinyan and Sanasaryan came about due to the active participation of the latter in the My Step initiative. Notably, in news reports about Sanasaryan's appointment, he was usually depicted as an active participant in the protests rather than as a former Heritage and Barev Yerevan affiliate.⁴¹

Thirdly, several important figures in the new government belong to a broad and rather amorphous community of NGO activists that was also the core of Sasna Tsrer's approval coalition. They include Ararat Mirzoyan, the new first deputy prime minister; Araik Harutyunyan, the minister of education and science; and Daniel Ioannisian, who heads the prime minister's commission for electoral legislation reform. None of those people, however, were Sasna Tsrer supporters, which is why we can only speak about a partial intersection between the coalition of Sasna Tsrer supporters and Pashinyan's coalition. The new prime minister was obviously recruiting people with an NGO background but did not pick the most counter-statist segment of this community.

As for clear differences between the coalition of Sasna Tsrer supporters and Pashinyan's coalition, one of the most significant is that representatives of the combatant counter-state "fedayi" faction of the pro-Sasna Tsrer coalition, closely associated with the Founding Parliament and the armed group itself, are absent from the new government. Moreover, Pashinyan's rise to power was accompanied by conflict with this part of the Armenian political spectrum. On May 16, 2018, Sasna Tsrer supporters blocked one of the streets in Yerevan, demanding the release of participants in the armed group and the leader of the Founding Parliament, Jirair Sefilian. According to some observers, participants and supporters of the group are going to take part in the forthcoming parliamentary elections independently, in fact competing with Pashinyan.⁴²

Furthermore, the Pashinyan coalition includes several figures close to the coalition that condemned Sasna Tsrer. In particular, there are three ministers close to the oligarch Gagik Tsarukyan: Mher Grigoryan, the deputy prime minister; Hrachya Rostomanian, the minister for emergencies; and Levon Vaughradyan, the minister for sports and youth affairs. They gained their positions in the government by fulfilling the quota of the "Tsarukyan" parliamentary block. Although our analysis found that they did not personally express their opinion on Sasna Tsrer during the

⁴¹ e.g., "David Sanasarian naznachel glavoi Gosudarstvennoi kontrol'noi sluzhby Armenii" [David Sanasaryan appointed head of the State Control Service of Armenia]." *Panorama.am*. May 22, 2018, At <https://www.panorama.am/ru/news/2018/05/22/Давид-Санасарян-Армения/1952796>, accessed July 26, 2018.

⁴² Kirill Krivosheev. "Armenia ishchet v sebe novye sily [Armenia seeks new forces in itself]." *Kommersant*. July 25, 2018, At <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3695361>, accessed July 26, 2018.

summer 2016 crisis, the position of their patron, Gagik Tsarukyan, and his Prosperous Armenia party on Sasna Tsrer was predominantly condemning. It is obvious, however, that for Pashinyan the alliance with Tsarukyan is not ideologically conditioned, but is based on tactical calculations and the need for parliamentary support for the new government.

Another difference between the 2016 coalition and the 2018 coalition is that cadre bureaucracy is much more broadly represented in the new ruling group. For example, current defense minister David Tonoyan, finance minister Atom Janjuguzyan, and Sasun Khachatryan, the head of the Special Investigation Service, served as key figures in the Sargsyan-era bureaucracy. Moreover, Valery Osipyan, the new head of the police, was then a deputy chief of the Yerevan police department.⁴³ Arthur Vanetsyan, the new head of the National Security Service, held a similar post in his department. In 2016, some of those people were affiliated with the coalition that condemned Sasna Tsrer, as their offices made statements against Sasna Tsrer.

Even those members of Pashinyan's coalition who do not belong to the cadre bureaucracy often represent not so much street opposition as parliamentary opposition—they are primarily representatives of the Yelk (“Way Out”) bloc.⁴⁴ Thus, under the former political regime, they were involved in political interactions in the statist frame, albeit in the role of oppositionists.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Pashinyan's coalition, unlike the 2016 coalition of Sasna Tsrer approval, is not a liberal-nationalist alliance, but a liberal-bureaucratic one. In this new coalition, the “fedayi” component is much less important, as the nationalist forces and the people connected with the practice of political violence are much less influential. This has made the revolutionary coalition of 2018 much less counter-state than the one that drove the political mobilization of 2016. During the protests in April and May 2018, the state did not appear as an alien force against which it was necessary to rise for the sake of the nation, nor as a worthless fragment of the Great Armenia, but as an instrument that needed to be captured in order to direct it in accordance with the people's will. The energy of the national uprising was directed into the framework of the nation-state. If this frame proves to be a stable one in the discourse about Armenia and Armenians,

⁴³ In July 2016, Valery Osipyan was held hostage by Sasna Tsrer.

⁴⁴ Pashinyan's coalition also includes the Dashnaksutyun party, which, during the Sasna Tsrer crisis, expressed its opinion in a quite restrained way, justifying the actions of members of the armed group than approving of them. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the party was part of the ruling parliamentary coalition at that time. After the revolution, Dashnaksutyun representatives became a part of government—once again in return for providing parliamentary support to the country's leader, albeit a new one.

then the fruitless struggle of two rival Armenian nationalisms, which was inherent in the Sasna Tsrer controversy, may be overcome.

Table 1. Coalition Condemning Sasna Tsrer

TOP OFFICIALS	
[Statement from the office]	National Security Service of Armenia
[Statement from the office]	Investigative Committee of Armenia
[Statement from the office]	Ministry of Health of Armenia
[Statement from the office]	Office of the Ombudsman of Armenia
Vahram Baghdasaryan	Head of the RPA faction
Gevorg Kostanyan	Prosecutor General of the Republic of Armenia
Hermine Naghdalyan	Vice Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia
Serzh Sargsyan	President of Armenia
OPPOSITION	
Stepan Demirchyan	Chairman of the People's Party of Armenia; member of the parliamentary faction Armenian National Congress
Vahe Enfiayyan	Secretary of the parliamentary faction Prosperous Armenia
Aram Sargsyan	Leader of the Republic party
Ludmila Sargsyan	Member of the Armenian Parliament
Levon Ter-Petrosyan	First President of Armenia
Naira Zohrabyan	Leader of the opposition party Prosperous Armenia; head of the parliamentary faction Prosperous Armenia
NAGORNO-KARABAKH	
[Statement from the office]	Artsakh Union of Veterans of the Karabakh War (Azatamartiks)
Vitaliy Balasanyan	Deputy of the National Assembly of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic; hero of Artsakh

Garnik Isagulyan	Advisor to the Permanent Mission of Nagorno-Karabakh to the Republic of Armenia; former advisor of the Armenian president; chairman of the National Security party
EXPERTS	
Hakob Avetikyan	Editor-in-chief of the newspaper Azg
Aaron Adibekyan	Sociologist and director of the sociological center Sociometer
Ara Ghazaryan	International law expert
Gagik Keryan	Head of the Department of Political Institutions and Processes of YSU; Doctor of Political Sciences; professor
Narek Samsonyan	Chairman of the NGO Civil Consciousness; political analyst

Table 2. Coalition Approving of Sasna Tsrer

CIVIL RIGHTS NGO ACTIVISTS	
Haykak Arshamyan	Program Coordinator of Yerevan Press Club
Mikael Danielyan	Chairman of the Helsinki Association
Zara Hovannisian	Journalist; participant in the “Four +” initiative
Avetik Ishkhanyan	Chairman of the Helsinki Committee of Armenia; member of the “Four +” initiative
Arthur Sakunts	Head of the Vanadzor office of the Helsinki Civil Assembly; member of the “Four +” initiative
LIBERAL PARLIAMENTARY PARTIES	
Anahit Bakhshyan	Member of the Heritage Party; member of the “Barev Yerevan” faction
Artur Gasparyan	Member of the Council of Elders of Yerevan
Raffi Hovannisian	Leader of the Heritage Party
Hovsep Khurshudyan	Member of the Heritage Party
Vardan Malkhasyan	Member of the Board of the ANC
Armen Martirosyan	Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Heritage Party
Nikol Pashinyan	Deputy of the National Assembly; opposition parliamentarian

Zaruhi Postanjyan	Member of the Heritage Party
David Sanasaryan	Member of the Heritage Party
NATIONALIST LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS	
Garegin Chugaszyan	Chairman of the Founding Parliament
Razmik Evoyan	Representative of the Founding Parliament
Araik Khudaverdian	Veteran; commander of the “Kornidzor” detachment
Petros Makeyan	Chairman of the Democratic Homeland party; veteran
Hrachya Mirzoyan	Member of the Public Council; member of the Founding Parliament
Razmik Petrosyan	Veteran
Mushegh Saghatelyan	Veteran
Susan Simonyan	Press Relations Executive of the Founding Parliament
Alec Yenikomshian	Member of the Founding Parliament; former member of ASALA; member of the political council of the Sasna Tsrer movement
DIASPORA	
Arsine Khandjian	Canadian actress of Armenian origin
Shant Voskerchyan	Coordinator of the Paris branch of the all-Armenian organization Armenian Renaissance
CULTURAL FIGURES	
Robert Amirkhanyan	Composer
Artavazd Bayatyan	Musician
Ruben Hakhverdyan	Bard
Tamara Hovhannisyan	Actress and director
Tigran Khzmalyan	Film director
Tigran Mansuryan	Composer
Yeghishe Petrosyan	Musician
EXPERTS	
Armen Baghdasaryan	Political analyst
Stepan Grigoryan	Political analyst
Manvel Sargsyan	Political analyst; head of the Armenian Center for National and International Studies
Levon Shirinyan	Political analyst

Aghasi Yenokyan	Political analyst
OTHERS	
[Statement from the office]	Alliance party
Yerzhanik Abgaryan	Oppositionist
Armen Agayan	Member of the Board of the Ayazn Party
Azat Arshakyan	Member of the Supreme Council of Armenia
Albert Baghdasaryan	Member of the Supreme Council of Armenia; member of the Karabakh Committee
Paruyr Hayrikyan	Leader of the National Self-Determination association
Shagen Harutyunyan	Civil activist; son of Shant Harutyunyan, who was detained for attempting a violent change of power
Vardges Gaspari	Civil activist
Andreas Ghukasyan	Member of the civil initiative “Get up, Armenia!”
Gevorg Gorgisyan	Member of the Light Armenia Party
Hrayr Kostanyan	Civil activist
Armenak Kureghyan	Father of the Kureghyan brothers
Ashot Manucharyan	Member of the Karabakh Committee
Armen Mkrtychyan	Member of the Board of the Ayazn Party
Ani Navasardyan	Activist
Armen Parsadanyan	One of the organizers of rallies
Karen Petrosyan	Activist; participant in rallies
Suren Sahakyan	Activist
Nanor Sefilian	Spouse of Jirair Sefilian
Toros Sefilian	Brother of Jirair Sefilian

Table 3. Coalition Justifying Sasna Tsrer

Larisa Alaverdyan	First ombudsman of Armenia; executive director of the NGO Foundation Against the Violation of Law
Aram Amatuni	Journalist for <i>lin.am</i>
Azat Arshakyan	Member of the Supreme Council

Haykak Arshamyan	Program Coordinator of the Yerevan Press Club
Alexander Arzumanyan	Deputy of the National Assembly; former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia; Chairman of the Council of the Armenian National Movement
Armen Badalyan	Political expert
Gagik Baghdasaryan	Head of the Barev Yerevan faction
Nikolay Baghdasaryan	Lawyer
Vitaliy Balasanyan	Hero of Karabakh; hero of the Artsakh war
Levon Barseghyan	Chairman of the Asparez press club; member of the Council of Elders of Gyumri
Vardan Bostanjyan	Economist; former deputy of the National Assembly of Armenia
Stepan Danielyan	Political analyst
Gagik Gambaryan	Political analyst
Arshak Gasparyan	Expert in criminal justice; psychologist
Lilit Gevorgyan	Leading analyst on CIS and Russia issues for Jane's Intelligence, the authoritative British think tank on defense and security issues
Ara Ghazaryan	International law expert
Andrias Ghukasyan	Political analyst
Vardan Harutyunyan	Human rights activist
Shagen Harutyunyan	Activist
Mikael Hayrapetyan	Chairman of the Conservative Party
Garnik Isagulyan	Chairman of the National Security party
Avetik Ishkhanyan	Human rights activist
Richard Kirakosyan	Director of the Center for Regional Studies; political analyst
Armenak Kureghyan	Father of the Kureghyan brothers
Gagik Makaryan	Chairman of the Employers Union of Armenia
Petros Makeyan	Chairman of the party Democratic Homeland
Hovhannes Mandakuni	Journalist for <i>lin.am</i>
Vahram Martirosyan	Journalist

Grant Melik-Shahnazaryan	Political analyst
Arman Melikyan	Former Foreign Minister of the NKR; extraordinary and plenipotentiary ambassador
Musa Mikaelyan	Journalist for <i>lin.am</i>
Sasun Mikaelyan	Member of the board of the Civil Contract party; commander of the “Sasun” detachment
Kaitz Minasyan	French Center for Regional Studies expert; political analyst
Lala Mnatsakanyan	Actress
Ara Nedolyan	Journalist
Vova Vardanov	Veteran
Gurgen Yeghiazaryan	Former parliamentarian; head of the National Security Service (NSS) of Armenia
Alec Yenikomshian	Representative of the Founding Parliament
Naira Zohrabyan	Head of the parliamentary group Prosperous Armenia

Table 4. The Government of Armenia—Pashinyan Coalition

Name	Current position	Previous affiliations	Attitude to Sasna Tsrer
CIVIL CONTRACT PARTY			
Nikol Pashinyan	Prime Minister	<i>Haykakan Zhamanak</i> newspaper, Armenian National Congress, Civil Contract Party, Yelk bloc in the National Assembly	Approval
Ararat Mirzoyan	First Deputy Prime Minister	Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (National Academy of Science), National Archive of Armenia, HSBS Bank Armenia, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, <i>Regnum</i> news agency, Initiatives for Development of Armenia Foundation, Netherlands Institute for Multi-party Democracy, Civil Contract Party, Yelk bloc in the National Assembly	None ¹

Tigran Avinyan	Deputy Prime Minister	Armenian Development Bank, Irrigate Company, SHTE Company, Cyber Vision software developing company, Civil Contract Party, Yelk bloc in Yerevan City Council	None
Mkhitar Hayrapetyan	Minister of Diaspora	Young Politicians Association, Civic Education and Youth Development Center, Civil Contract Party	None
Arayik Harutyunyan	Minister of Education and Science	Yerevan State University, Helsinki Association for Human Rights, <i>lin.am</i> , <i>Araratnews.am</i> , HIMA NGO, Transparency International NGO, Civil Contract party, Yelk bloc in Yerevan City Council	None
Suren Papikyan	Minister for Territorial Administration and Development	High School No. 54 in Yerevan, Quantum College, Civil Contract Party, My Step initiative	None
Eduard Aghajanyan	Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister	HSBC Bank Armenia, Yerevan City Council, Yelk bloc, Civil Contract Party	None

YELK BLOC			
Artak Zeynalyan	Minister of Justice	National Institute of Health, Mikayelyan Institute of Surgery, Ministry of Health, Republican Committee on Health, Republican Committee for the Reassessment of Medical Supplies Received by Humanitarian Means, Committee on Constitutional Justice of the Scientific and Analytical Center of the Chamber of Advocates of the Republic of Armenia, Human Rights NGO Tanik, NGO Lawyers Against Torture, NGO Rule of Law, Yerkrpah Union of Volunteers, Republic Party, Yelk bloc in the National Assembly	None
Mane Tandilyan	Minister of Labor and Social Affairs	Garni Investment & Development, Ararat Gold Recovery Company LLC, Hovnanyan International LLC, Mentor Graphics Development Services, Synopsys Armenia CJSC, Bright Armenia Party, Yelk bloc in the National Assembly	None
CIVIL RIGHTS NGO ACTIVISTS			
Lilit Makunts	Minister of Culture	Russian-Armenian University, American Peace Corps	None
Davit Sanasaryan	Head of State Control Service	Armobil LLC, Shirinyan Legal Advice Center, National Assembly, Barev Yerevan faction in the Yerevan City Council, Heritage party, My Step initiative	Approval
Armen Grigoryan	Secretary of National Security Council	Transparency International	None
CADRE BUREAUCRACY			
Davit Tonoyan	Minister of Defense	Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Emergency Situations	None

Atom Janjughazyan	Minister of Finance	Armenian SSR State Planning Committee, Ministry of Economy, State Engineering University of Armenia, Armenian State University of Economics, Ministry of Finance	None
Zohrab Mnatsakanyan	Minister of Foreign Affairs	Office of the President of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	None
Ashot Hakobyan	Minister of Transport, Communication, and Information Technologies	Ministry of Internal Affairs, Police, Investigative Committee, Special Investigation Service, Ar-Be Armenian-Belarusian Trade House LLC	Condemnation
Artur Vanetsyan	Director of National Security Service	National Security Service	Condemnation
Valeriy Osipyan	Chief of Republic of Armenia Police	Ministry of Internal Affairs, Police	Condemnation
TECHNOCRATS			
Mher Grigoryan	Deputy Prime Minister	Central Bank of Armenia, Armimpexbank, HSBC Bank Armenia, Inecobank, VTB Bank Armenia, ArCa Credit Reporting, Armenia Insurance Company	None
Arsen Torosyan	Minister of Healthcare	“Real World, Real People” NGO, Primary Healthcare Reform Program, National Center for Tuberculosis Control of Ministry of Healthcare, MIBS Medical Diagnostic Center	None

Erik Grigoryan	Minister of Natural Protection	Ministry of Natural Protection, OSCE, USAID, EU, World Bank, UNDP-supported programs for ecology, American University of Armenia, Government of Armenia	None
DASHNAKTSUTYUN			
Arthur Khachatryan	Minister of Agriculture	Yerevan State University, USAID, California International Trade and Investment Office in Yerevan, French University in Armenia Foundation, Vivat Consulting LLC, Ardshinbank, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development, Shirak Marz Administration	Justification
Artsvik Minasyan	Minister of Economic Development and Investments	Ministry of Finance and Economy, Yerevan State University, Securities Market Inspectorate, Yerevan State Institute of Economy Securities Commission, Armenia Accountants and Auditors Association, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Dashnaksutyun faction in the National Assembly, Minister of Economy, Minister of Natural Protection	Justification
TSARUKYAN'S QUOTA			
Mher Grigoryan	Deputy Prime Minister	Central Bank of Armenia, Armimpexbank, HSBC Bank Armenia, Inecobank, VTB Bank Armenia, ArCa Credit Reporting, Armenia Insurance Company	Condemnation
Hrachya Rostomyan	Minister of Emergency Situations	Ani-90 Ltd, Children's Dental Clinic No. 5, Yerevan State Medical University, Yerevan Council of Elders, President of Armenia Basketball Federation, Secretary-General of the National Olympic Committee, Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs	Condemnation

Artur Grigoryan	Minister of Energy Infrastructure and Natural Resources	Hrazdan Region People's Court, Justice Ministry's Judicial Acts Enforcement Service, Control Chamber, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Multi Group Concern	Condemnation
Levon Vahradyan	Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs	Yerevan State Institute of Physical Culture, Yerevan Children's Sports School Complex No. 13, National Olympic Committee of Armenia, Olympic Sport School of Boating Sports, Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs	Condemnation

Note: Some of the speakers who are marked "None" may have commented on the Sasna Tsrer crisis, but were outside of the analyzed corpus of mass media messages. For the description of the corpus, see Fomin and Silaev, "Armenian Nationalism vs. Armenian State."