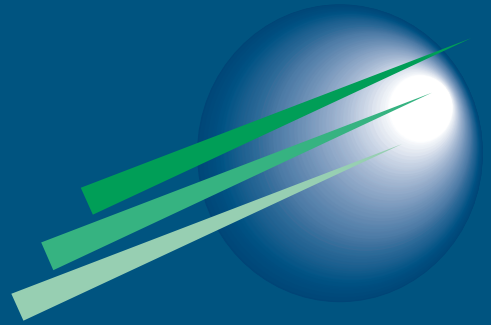


# ACNIS NEWSLETTER

November - December 2012

The Armenian Center for National and International Studies



## ACNIS NEWSLETTER

In 2010, the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) launched the publication of a regular series of newsletters. This is the next issue of our new *ACNIS Newsletter*, a publication that provides a brief summary of our work, activities and projects for the period from November to December 2012.

## ACNIS Considers International Context of the Karabagh Issue

On November 7, The Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) held a daylong roundtable discussion to explore the significance of the conflicting situation around Mountainous Karabagh (Artsakh). The seminar discussion brought together leading analysts, policy specialists, and young political scientists.

ACNIS director of research Manvel Sargsian welcomed the audience with opening remarks. "Over the course of this dialogue we will try to model present-day international legal and political mechanisms and standards concerning the conflicting situation to elucidate some theses—particularly Karabagh's recognition or non-recognition issue—that are widely articulated in public domain and political circles," Sargsian stated.

The event featured presentations from experts Marta Aivazyan, Levon Gevorgyan, Arthur Ghazinyan, Andrias Ghoukasyan and Davit Shahnazaryan, who evaluated the legal and political realities with respect to the conflicting situation around Mountainous Karabagh, and presented the avenues to act upon the current state of affairs from the standpoint of security prospects by probing into the issue's international-legal and political models—along with their standards—and the methods of political influence on the conflict.

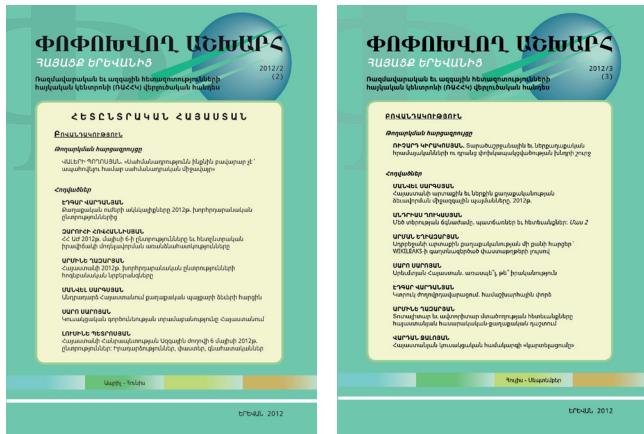


According to the analysts, the international-legal model of the Karabagh conflict includes the nature of the internationally recognized issue, the proposal of the resolution, and the legal acts that shaped the international stand towards the conflict. The participants considered the internationally acknowledged fact of disagreement on some aspects of the Karabagh issue, the availability of international process of political resolution of the problem—based on the guiding principles of Helsinki Final Act—Azerbaijan's obligation to peacefully resolve the issue, and the fact of internationally hampered use of force by Azerbaijan as the standards of the political model.

In the light of the same set of standards, the seminar reflected on the internationally non-recognized right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination, Azerbaijan's hegemony over Karabagh and de facto recognition of the right of Karabagh's Armenians to self-determination, and the actual controversy among the regional states on the conflicting situation around Mountainous Karabagh.

In regard to efficient legal ways of impact on the Karabagh issue, the policy specialists underscored the stagnation of the negotiation process within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk Group, and highlighted potential security concerns in case of the recognition of the Mountainous Karabagh Republic (MKR). The discussants underlined that both the recognition of MKR by Armenia and the change of the issue's international-legal model have some resources, while at the same time bear some risks.

# ACNIS RELEASES THE SECOND AND THIRD ISSUES OF PUBLIC POLICY JOURNAL: "THE CHANGING WORLD: VIEWPOINTS FROM YEREVAN"



The overriding purpose of the Public Policy Journal: *"The Changing World: Viewpoints from Yerevan"* is to reveal and reflect on a comprehensive set of critical issues, challenges and opportunities pertinent to Armenian's today and tomorrow in light of major regional and international developments. The publication embraces a well-elaborated set of insightful articles and analyses, practical recommendations and policy prescriptions vis-à-vis the challenges facing Armenia—both domestic and foreign—and thereby helps carve out a bigger role for the Center in shaping the political discourse of Armenia. The publication is intended for scholars, political experts and practitioners in Armenia and beyond.



With its broader focus on post-election developments in Armenia—and public perceptions and attitudes relating thereto—the second issue of Public Policy Journal: *"The Changing World: Viewpoints from Yerevan"* offers an insightful interview with the member of the Constitutional Court V. Poghosian. The discussion touches upon the cultural and idiosyncratic aspects of public consciousness with respect to realization of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, issues relating to institutional underpinnings of the parliamentary recall system, as well as the execution of the right of petition.

The proceeding part of the publication introduces a wide range of scholarly articles focusing on post-

election situation in Armenia and its domestic repercussions from different angles. As such, the Center analysts E. Vardanian, A. Ghazarian and S. Saroian have attempted to assess the attitudes and expectations of the political parties from 2012 elections, the psychological connotations and subtleties in relation to party activity during the electoral process. Issues relating to modes of political competition in Armenia are addressed by ACNIS director of research M. Sargsian, while Z. Hovhannisian considers the modeling peculiarities of post-election situation.



The second issue ends with the comprehensive study by L. Petrosian, which lays out the detailed chronology of National Assembly elections, relevant facts, official statements and assessments.

The third issue of the Public Policy Journal: *"The Changing World: Viewpoints from Yerevan"* covers an in-depth interview with the Director of Regional Studies Center (RSC) R. Giragosian on issues related to major trends and events unfolding in the South Caucasus and Middle East, Syrian crisis, and 2013 presidential elections of Armenia. ACNIS analyst E. Vardanian assesses the rapid trends of democratization process the world over in the preceding forty years, its trajectory and dynamics. Apart from exploring the etymology of the term "Western Armenia" and its interrelatedness to the Armenia Cause, ACNIS expert S. Saroian considers the linkage between the myths and reality revolving around Western Armenia by the Armenian public at large.

ACNIS director of research M. Sargsian attempts to pin down the underlying factors of foreign dependence that shape and determine the formulation of domestic and foreign policy in Armenia. Drawing upon the analysis of information released by WikiLeaks, A. Egiazarian addresses some aspects of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. A. Gukasian provides a follow-up article to his previous research publication on the effects and causes of great state's crisis covered in the first edition. In his article A. Jaloian considers issues related to political parties and their activities in light of western theories, as well as assesses the overlapping and diverging trends related thereto. Finally, A. Ghazarian provides overview of the social and political implications of authoritarian mentality and its various manifestations in Armenian political setting.



## MEDIA OUTREACH

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### “Decisions Announced by the Authorities Are Made Within Quite Different Circles”



On December 13, ACNIS analyst Edgar Vardanian gave an interview to *168.am* news agency and spoke about the institutional underpinnings of electoral process, strategic calculations and decision-making processes characterizing the conduct of political parties prior to the run-up of 2013 presidential elections in Armenia.

In his interview E. Vardanian acknowledges the paralyzed and dysfunctional nature of the electoral system and its institutional underpinnings as the sole unifying agenda for the truly democratic forces to come together and amend. “In other words,” the analyst notes, “the only agenda that, in my opinion, is today relevant and may render meaning to joint actions is this.”

Not excluding the possibility of different pressures exerted on the ruling authorities and their policy choices from without, ACNIS analyst E. Vardanian concludes that the decisions of the ruling regime are frequently made within corrupt oligarchic circles, where resource sharing calculations take precedence over constitutional and legal processes.

### “Revolution Will Be the Only Prerequisite for Armenia’s Development”



On November 13, ACNIS analyst Saro Saroyan gave an interview to *Lragir.am* news agency and reflected on a wide range of issues revolving around the shortcomings in the electoral mechanisms, transition to proportional electoral system and party politics, as well as the important role of civil society movements in bringing about the desired change.

Mr. Saroyan stressed the untapped potential of civil society movements and civic activism as the sole reliable bedrock to instigate a revolutionary change in the minds, words and quest of people toward a better political setting. To fully illustrate his point, the speaker refers to the enlightening experience of Poland, Chile, Africa and other countries adopting non-violent means of civil disobedience (i.e., strategic nonviolence) to combat the regime as a case in point. “We have witnessed the efficiency of this strategy in Mashtots Park, Yerevan, a few months ago, when civic activists succeeded through an accurate understanding and application of this strategy,” the speaker wraps up the discussion.

### ACNIS Director of Research Manvel Sargsian Is the Guest of “P.S.” Program on A1+ Online Television

On November 22, ACNIS director of research Manvel Sargsian was the guest speaker of “P.S.” Program on A1+ online television and shared his insight on issues pertinent to majoritarian and proportional systems, fraudulent electoral mechanisms, as well as the uncertainties that characterize the Armenian political landscape prior to the nomination of presidential candidates.



Given the unlawful nature of the regime, Mr. Sargian notes, the outcome of the elections is more determined along the lines of resource sharing between oligarchic cliques rather than a constitutional process that guarantees and reflects the choice of rank-and-file citizen. To redress this situation and restore the constitutional right of people to freely elect their representatives, there need to be an indigenous civilian resistance applying extreme pressure on the regime's institutions, cronies and backers. The will of the people and free and fair elections are more powerful than any state machine, notwithstanding its strength and severity.

The most effective and least costly way for challenging these regimes is not violent revolt, and not even external power. The instrument for bringing this about is a civilian-based movement-operating on a unified frame of shared goals- that uses nonviolent strategies to reconstitute or replace governments that has trampled on their rights. "Even the most powerful cannot rule without the cooperation of the ruled," he concluded.

## "The Tragedy of 'King-Loving' People"

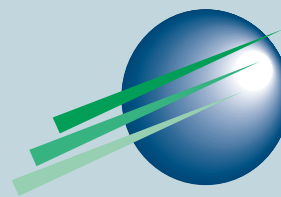


On December 8, ACNIS analyst, psychologist Armine Ghazarian gave an interview to *Lragir.am* news agency and reflected on the psychological connotations of

public apathy characterizing the electoral activism of the population prior and after the conduct of elections. Not only does distrust toward the electoral process cripple civic activism, but it also serves as a major impediment on the way to change. There is no need for an in-depth study to infer that the notion of electing a "king" is still deeply ingrained in the psychology of people, who subject their well being and prosperity to decisions taken at whim and with no accountability whatsoever.

Although the main wing of the opposition, along with other opposition forces and active civil society movements, are against the President and the regime, they are unable to change the situation. "The situation that predominates in Armenia, the style and content of the President's governance—however falsified the elections are—is not solely the outcome of the authoritarian rule, but also reflects the authoritarian thinking of people," A. Ghazarian sums up her analysis.

## MORE ABOUT US



**The Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS)** is a leading independent strategic

research center located in Yerevan, Armenia. As an independent, objective institution committed to conducting professional policy research and analysis, ACNIS strives to raise the level of public debate and seeks to broaden public engagement in the public policy process, as well as fostering greater and more inclusive public knowledge. Founded in 1994, ACNIS is the institutional initiative of Raffi K. Hovannisian, Armenia's first Minister of Foreign Affairs. Over the past eighteen years, ACNIS has acquired a prominent reputation as a primary source of professional independent research and analysis covering a wide range of policy issues.

For more information on ACNIS, our work and activities, please contact us at: [root@acnis.am](mailto:root@acnis.am) or visit our website at: [www.acnis.am](http://www.acnis.am).