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The Creation of a New Armenia

April 23rd, 2018 marked an unprecedented victory for the people of Armenia. Those united both in their courage and resolve to end a corrupt and repressive regime demanded the resignation of Serzh Sargsyan - and their demands were fulfilled. At one point, over 160,000 were protesting in Yerevan alone. It is truly remarkable that the people - led by Nikol Pashinyan - were able to accomplish this feat without themselves causing a ripple of violence, even when violence was inflicted upon them.

After a one-day break to properly honor our genocide victims on April 24th, demonstrations have continued. The resignation of Serzh Sargsyan was only the first victory. The people's disdain for the Republican Party - which has assured its dominance for over 20 years through corrupt election practices - continues to drive their deep sentiments for a wholesale change. It should be noted that the Armenian people have also expressed their disappointment with the lack of support from the church, diasporan organizations, and Armenian leaders worldwide.

Regardless of what happens next, the immediate outcome has been an enormous victory for the people. While the heroes of the revolution remain tireless and fearless soldiers of change, Karen Karapetyan - the acting PM - and his 'progressive' team have been quietly at work trying to game the corrupt system for the last two years. They have continued in spite of the challenges behind serving in Serzh Sargsyan's administration. Sadly, they have also become targets of the movement because of their affiliation with the Republican party.

So, what should happen next? An ideal path forward: New and fair elections to overhaul the parliament with qualified candidates, followed by a new constitution to reflect the value system created by and for the people of Armenia, and reformed laws to no longer favor the cronies of the corrupt elements of the system.

This would be a good start.

The electoral appointment of a new Prime Minister - one who does not owe any favors



in the process of being appointed - is essential. Otherwise our efforts in building an exemplary country for our people and the world will be impeded.

Navigating through the potential of external meddling in Armenia's internal affairs will require resolve and skill by strong leaders. A show of strength created by a unified front between the two key actors - the hero of the people's movement Nikol Pashinyan and the acting PM, Karen Karapetyan, could accomplish wonders in this regard. While the prospects of such an alliance feels nearly impossible at this point, it could be the key to the grand solution in the best interest of Armenia and its citizens. If the people continue to stay galvanized and troubled by the Republican party's refusal to leave their positions of power, it would put the future of the country and its people in great jeopardy. Election of a Prime Minister on May 1st should be the end of the turbulence, not a new commencement. A consensus must be agreed upon, and a new Armenia shall emerge.

Those who have profited immensely from the system should work to unify with the people, to help make Armenia whole. As part of the reforms, oligarchs should invest meaningfully into venture philanthropy, address the much-needed infrastructural deficits, and work towards endeavors that genuinely ensure the country's progress in empowering the people to define their future.

The last two weeks have been a big step for Armenia. With unity and courage, we will continue our efforts to create a truly amazing new Armenia. Like the efforts that have led to the success of April 23rd, we must continue with non-violence, determination, and a unified understanding of what Armenia deserves.

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