



International Foundation  
for Electoral Systems

**Election FAQs: Armenia**  
*Yerevan City Council Elections*  
*September 17, 2023*

Europe and Eurasia

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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## Election Snapshot

- Election Day: September 17, 2023
- Registered voters: 823,559 (as of July 14, 2023)
- Polling stations: 475
- Seats: 65
- Political party and alliance lists:
  1. Public Voice Party (Chief candidate: Artak Galstyan)
  2. Civil Contract Party (Chief candidate: Tigran Avinyan)
  3. Just Armenia Party (Chief candidate: Norayr Norikyan)
  4. Victory Party (Chief candidate: Victor Mnatsakanyan)
  5. Power of Homeland Party (Chief candidate: Nelli Harutyunyan)
  6. European Party of Armenia (Chief candidate: Tigran Xmalyan)
  7. National Progress Party (Chief candidate: Hayk Marutyan)
  8. For Social Justice (Chief candidate: Arman Ghukasyan)
  9. Republic Party (Chief candidate: Artak Zeynalyan)
  10. Unified Armenia (Chief candidate: Yervand Tarverdyan)
  11. Bright Armenia Party (Chief candidate: Davit Khazhakyan)
  12. Democratic Consolidation Party (Chief candidate: Suren Petrosyan)
  13. Country to Live (Chief candidate: Mane Tandilyan)
  14. Mother Armenia Alliance (Chief candidate: Andranik Tevanyan)
- Candidates: 804
  - Male: 502
  - Female: 302
- Campaign expenditure and donation limits:
  - Party and alliance expenditures for the election are capped at AMD 300 million (roughly USD \$780,000)
  - Donations are capped at the following levels:
    - AMD 100,000 (roughly USD \$260) for individual citizens;
    - AMD 1 million (roughly USD \$2,600) for candidates who contribute to party election funds; and
    - AMD 300 million (or USD \$780,000) for parties transferring funds from their party accounts to their election funds.

## When is Election Day?

The election for the Yerevan City Council will be held on September 17, 2023. Polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time. The election campaign period began formally on August 23, 2023, and will end on September 15, with no campaigning permitted on the day before Election Day.

## Why is this year's City Council election important?

The Municipality of Yerevan has experienced a series of transitions since 2018. Following the Velvet Revolution, the My Step Coalition, headed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, won the 2018 Yerevan City Council election, and Hayk Marutyan was elected mayor. However, Marutyan was removed from office after a no-confidence vote passed in December 2021. Deputy Mayor

Hrachya Sargsyan then became mayor. On March 17, 2023, Mayor Sargsyan announced his resignation 15 months after being instated, leaving the mayoral position vacant through the September 17 election.

More than one-third of Armenia's electorate lives in Yerevan, the capital city, making this the largest local election in Armenia. Yerevan's size and political influence further emphasize this election's importance, which many are looking to as a midterm assessment of the ruling party ahead of the 2026 parliamentary elections.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the election will take place in a volatile political environment, exacerbated by Armenia's conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

## **Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?**

The Yerevan City Council comprises 65 members, including the mayor and the first deputy mayor, elected through a proportional electoral system. Mandates are distributed among electoral lists of political parties or alliances of political parties that receive 4 percent and 6 percent of valid votes, respectively. City Council members are elected for a five-year term.

Political parties were required to register by August 18, 2023, and electoral lists of political parties or alliances of political parties were published on the Central Electoral Commission's website three days later. Thirteen political parties and one alliance of political parties are contesting the Yerevan City Council election.

## **What is Armenia's election management body? What are its powers?**

Armenia's chief election management body is the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), whose powers and scope of responsibility are enshrined in the Constitution and the Electoral Code. The CEC is charged with organizing elections at the national level as well as the Yerevan City Council election. The CEC also coordinates the activities of lower-level electoral management bodies and issues regulatory acts as needed to ensure the efficient conduct of elections. The CEC comprises seven members appointed to a six-year term by a three-fifths vote of Parliament. Any citizen over 18 who possesses a higher education degree and meets the eligibility requirements to serve as a Member of Parliament may be appointed a CEC member. At least two members of the CEC must be women. The seven current members of the CEC, including four women, were appointed in October 2022.

Lower-level electoral management bodies include 38 territorial electoral commissions (TECs), 10 covering the metropolitan area. TECs outside Yerevan are responsible for organizing elections for local self-government bodies. Each TEC consists of seven members appointed by the CEC for six years. Each member of a TEC must be over 18 and possess a higher education degree. As with the CEC, at least two members must be women. TECs implement the orders and decisions of the CEC and act as conduits between the CEC and precinct electoral commissions (PECs).

PECs serve as the most direct level of election administration, with 475 established for the Yerevan City Council election. PECs are directly responsible for administering polling stations

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/748135/yerevan-elections-explainer/>

and conducting the first preliminary vote count. PEC appointment is variable for each election and depends on the number of factions in Parliament. Eight PEC members will be assigned to each polling station during the Yerevan City Council elections. No gender requirement exists at this level. PEC members are appointed by a combination of political parties with a presence in Parliament and relevant TECs. If the political parties fail to appoint PEC members per the timeline set out in the Electoral Code, the chairperson of the relevant TEC may appoint members to fill any vacancies. PEC chairs' and secretaries' positions are distributed proportionally, reflecting the distribution of seats to factions in the Parliament.

## **What is the legal framework for conducting the elections?**

The Yerevan City Council election is organized and conducted per the Constitution and the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia. The current electoral legislation was established in 2016 and most recently amended in 2021 following the National Assembly's approval of a significant package of electoral reforms.

The Central Electoral Commission (CEC) is responsible for implementing the legal framework established by the Constitution and the Electoral Code. The CEC also sets the calendar of activities, issues decisions on matters not covered in the legislation, and provides guidance for and oversees territorial electoral commissions. The CEC also implements aspects of the Law on Political Parties, principally related to political campaign finance.

## **Who is eligible to run as a candidate?**

Armenian citizens who were registered to vote in Yerevan at least six months before Election Day and foreign citizens who have legally resided in Yerevan for at least one year and are 18 years old by Election Day are eligible to be added to the electoral lists of political parties and/or alliances of political parties as candidates. However, citizens serving in certain professions specified by the Electoral Code cannot be nominated. Those excluded from nomination include judges, police and military officers, tax and customs personnel, and members of election commissions.

Candidates may be nominated by a political party or an alliance of two or more political parties. Electoral lists must include at least 25 but no more than 195 candidates. Political parties and alliances of political parties may nominate candidates who are not formally members of the party. These candidates may comprise no more than 30 percent of the total number of candidates on the electoral list of a political party or alliance of political parties.

## **What are the campaign expenditure and donation limits?**

Armenia's campaign finance regulations are governed primarily by the Law on Political Parties and the Electoral Code. Each political party or alliance contesting the Yerevan City Council election is obliged by law to set up a separate election fund with the Central Bank of Armenia within seven days of registering its candidate list. Failure to do so within the designated timeframe may result in the revocation of the electoral list's registration. Political parties contesting the election as part of an alliance may not establish an election fund separate from the alliance's fund.

Political parties may contribute up to AMD 300 million (or USD \$780,000). Donations from citizens are capped at AMD 100,000 (roughly USD \$260), while candidates running for Yerevan City Council seats on party lists may contribute up to AMD 1 million (approximately USD \$2,600) to their party's election funds.

## **Who can vote in these elections?**

Armenian citizens who are at least 18 years old by Election Day and registered to vote in Yerevan at least six months before Election Day are eligible to vote in the upcoming election. Foreign citizens above 18 who have legally resided in Yerevan for more than one year are also eligible to vote. The Ministry of Interior Affairs maintains a central voter registry, which, along with the Central Electoral Commission, is responsible for publishing voter lists online and posting them in front of each polling station. Voters can report inaccuracies in published voter lists to the police until 10 days before Election Day.

## **What provisions are in place that support the equal rights of women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups?**

The Electoral Code provides for a 70/30 percent gender balance on each electoral list of political parties or alliances of political parties, with neither sex comprising more than 70 percent of the list. Thus, at least 30 percent of seats on an electoral list must be reserved for women. Among the candidates contesting the Yerevan City Council election, 302 (37.8 percent) are women.

In 2021, the Electoral Code enshrined accessibility for persons with disabilities into law by allowing persons with disabilities to change their voter registration from the polling station assigned to their area to another that is accessible. Accessible and partially accessible polling stations are labeled, and accessibility information is provided on the Central Electoral Commission's website.

Although not legally required, tactile ballot guides and a braille list of political parties and alliances of political parties are made available in all Yerevan polling stations to help voters with visual impairments to vote independently.

## **Is out-of-country voting allowed?**

The Electoral Code permits voting abroad only for Armenians working overseas under certain classifications for national elections. Out-of-country voting is not allowed for municipal elections.

## **Who can observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?**

International organizations and foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that support democracy, as well as domestic NGOs that work in democracy and human rights and are not affiliated with any political party, have the right to observe the election. Media representatives can also cover the election upon accreditation by the Central Electoral Commission. Applications for observer and media accreditation may be submitted until 10 days before Election Day (in this case, until September 7), and changes to the list of accredited observers and/or media

representatives can be made until three days before Election Day. Citizen observers must agree to adhere to a code of conduct and complete mandatory training.

International and citizen observers and media representatives may be present at electoral commission meetings and in polling stations during voting, and they may observe the printing, transport, storing, and counting of ballots.

## **Where are vote counting and tabulation held?**

Each precinct electoral commission (PEC) is responsible for counting votes and issuing a results protocol. Polling stations close at 8 p.m., after which only voters in the voting room at the time of closure will be permitted to vote. Then, the ballots will be counted. The Electoral Code requires the PEC to finish counting ballots and draw up the results protocol within 12 hours after the polls close. The protocol is subsequently transmitted to the relevant territorial electoral commission, which checks the protocol for inaccuracies or miscounts before tabulating and publishing the preliminary results. The verified protocols must be sent to the Central Electoral Commission within 24 hours of the polls closing.

## **When will official results be announced?**

Under the Electoral Code of Armenia, within 24 hours of polls closing and as soon as possible after receipt of verified protocols from the territorial electoral commissions, the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) must create a formal protocol with preliminary results and publicize them online. The final results must be published within seven days of the closing of polls, following any recounts or decisions delivered by the CEC.

## **How will election disputes be adjudicated?**

Decisions rendered by an electoral commission may be appealed by voters, observers, media representatives, and parties if they believe the subjective rights guaranteed in the relevant section of the Electoral Code have been infringed upon. Disputes against Precinct Electoral Commission decisions may be appealed to the applicable Territorial Electoral Commission (TEC) within two days of the incident. Similarly, disputes against TEC decisions may be appealed to the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) and must be submitted within three days of the incident. CEC decisions may be appealed to the Constitutional Court in the case of parliamentary elections. For all other elections, including the Yerevan City Council election, CEC decisions are appealed to the Administrative Court.

Any dispute appealed before Election Day must receive a response within five days of submission but no later than Election Day. Decisions appealed after Election Day must receive a response no later than two days before the deadline for finalization of election results at 6 p.m. or by September 22, 2023. Disputes contesting election results and seeking to declare the results invalid must be submitted by 6 p.m. on September 22, 2023.

## Resources

- [Constitution of the Republic of Armenia](#)
- [Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia](#)
- [Law on Political Parties](#)
- [Central Electoral Commission of Armenia](#)
- [IFES Armenia Election Guide](#)

## About IFES in Armenia

The International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) is working on democracy-building in Armenia through a Strengthening Electoral Processes and Political Accountability in Armenia (SEPPA) project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and a Supporting Safeguards of Democracy in Armenia (SSDA) project, funded by UK International Development from the UK government.

Through SEPPA, IFES assists the Armenian government by reinforcing the capacity of election administration bodies, providing technical expertise on drafting electoral legislation, enhancing political finance transparency, promoting electoral accessibility for persons with disabilities, and increasing youth engagement in the political process.

SSDA seeks to bolster Armenian democracy through a three-tiered approach that addresses election cybersecurity, oversight of political finance by civil society, and civic education.

## Disclosure

These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Central Election Commission as of September 13, 2023, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any International Foundation for Electoral Systems policy or technical recommendations.