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Opposition Party Challenges Armenian Elections

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YEREVAN, Armenia — A leading opposition group in Armenia said parliamentary elections won by the president's party had been tarnished by fraud and vowed to ask a top court to overturn the results.

About 5,000 supporters of former President Levon Ter-Petrosyan's Armenian National Congress took to the streets in central Yerevan after Sunday's vote.

The Republican Party of President Serzh Sarksyan won about 68 seats, a majority in the 131-seat parliament, according to results released Monday. In the outgoing parliament, the party was a few seats shy of a majority and formed a coalition with the Prosperous Armenia party, which finished second in Sunday's vote.

The Armenian National Congress won seven seats, but its leaders argue the elections should be thrown out altogether, saying widespread vote-buying and other violations had taken place.

“We took a decision to appeal to the Constitutional Court to annul the results of the elections,” Aram Manukyan, a leader of the congress, said Tuesday.

International monitors have given a mixed assessment of the vote in Russia’s main ally in the strategic South Caucasus. Republican Party officials said the elections were democratic.

The Armenian National Congress, which had no seats in the previous parliament, said it would not refuse the parliament seats it had won. “The bloc’s participation in the work of parliament will give new impulse to our struggle,” said another congress leader, Stepan Demirchyan.

(Reuters, AP)

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