

Wounded Armenian Candidate Will Not Delay Presidential Election

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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YEREVAN — An Armenian presidential candidate who was shot last month canceled an application to postpone next week's election, a Constitutional Court spokesman said Monday, paving the way for the vote to be held as scheduled.

Paruyr Hayrikyan, an outsider in the race, widely expected to see current President Serzh Sarkisyan win a new five-year term, was shot in the shoulder on Jan. 31 near his home in the capital Yerevan.

Hayrikyan, who had initially said he would not delay the vote, asked the Constitutional Court for a two-week postponement of the Feb. 18 poll, raising concerns over instability in the South Caucasus republic of 3.2 million people.

Paruyr Hayrikyan's lawyer took his application to the Constitutional Court back today," said Hovhannes Papikyan, the court's spokesman. "Hayrikyan or other candidates have no right

now to appeal the court with a request to delay the vote."

It was not immediately clear why Hayrikyan had withdrawn his application for a postponement of the vote.

The land-locked country, bordered by foes Azerbaijan and Turkey, as well as by Iran and Georgia, saw violence flare ahead of a 2008 presidential election, leaving 10 people dead.

Police clashed with supporters of former president and opposition candidate Levon Ter-Petrosyan who protested for days on the streets of the capital ahead of the 2008 vote.

Doctors have removed the bullet from Hayrikyan's shoulder and said his life was not in danger, but he remained in the hospital Monday.

Hayrikyan, 63, a pro-Western former Soviet dissident, said hours after the shooting that he suspected a foreign secret service was responsible and suggested that he was referring to Russia, which is Yerevan's main ally and has a military base on its territory.

Police said last week that two suspects had confessed and were arrested, though their motive was not immediately clear.

Formerly known as the Soviet Union's manufacturing hub, Armenia has remained firmly within Moscow's radius since its industry fell apart with the 1991 Soviet collapse.

Today, its economy is still struggling from the effects of a war with neighboring Azerbaijan in the 1990s that ended diplomatic ties between the countries.

Hayrikyan leads an opposition party, the National Self-Determination Union, and ran for president in 2003.

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