

# Armenia's New Leader Pashinyan Meets Putin, Seeks Deeper Military Ties With Russia

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**Nikol Pashinyan and Vladimir Putin / Kremlin.ru**

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told President Vladimir Putin on Monday that he wanted to further develop military relations with Russia and stressed the importance of strategic ties between the neighboring countries.

Protest leader Pashinyan was voted in by the country's parliament as Armenia's newest leader last week following weeks of peaceful protests against corruption. Putin was among the first foreign leaders to congratulate Pashinyan, who had vowed to pursue friendly relations with Russia.

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Putin called Armenia Russia's "closest" economic and security partner and ally in the Caucasus region, [according](#) to a Kremlin read-out of the first meeting between the two leaders on Monday.

"I want to wish you success in your post as head of the government," Putin said. "I hope our relations will develop as steadily as they have until now."

"I can assure you that in Armenia there is a consensus and nobody has ever doubted the importance of the strategic nature of Armenian-Russian relations," Pashinyan told Putin.

Political commentator Grigor Atanesian told The Moscow Times that the meeting was important for Pashinyan "to be formally accepted as Armenia's new leader on the international arena."

"But it also isn't completely useless for him domestically, as Putin is very popular in Armenia," he added.

Atanesian addressed the Kremlin's lack of interference on behalf of the ruling elite that had run the ex-Soviet nation since the late 1990s, allowing for a bloodless transition of power, as "the new normal."

"This is the new normal — one nation's leader greets another for not publicly interfering," he said.

*Reuters contributed reporting to this article.*

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