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Armenian PM Makes First Trip to Russia Since Re-Election, Food Import Ban

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Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. **Hayk Baghdasaryan / Photolure via REUTERS**

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan arrived in Russia on Monday for his first visit to the country since winning re-election last month.

Pashinyan was in the city of Yekaterinburg to participate in the plenary session of the annual Innoprom industrial exhibition, his press service said. He is also scheduled to meet with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, it added.

A video shared on Pashinyan's official Telegram channel showed Yekaterinburg Mayor Alexei Orlov greeting him at the local airport with a traditional Russian bread-and-salt welcome.

In June, Russia accused Western countries of interfering in Armenia's elections after Pashinyan's ruling party won a parliamentary majority.

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Russia

Before and after the vote, Russia imposed sweeping import bans on Armenian produce, beverages and other goods over alleged health and safety violations.

Armenia's central bank estimates that the Russian import bans, widely seen as a pressure campaign over Yerevan's pursuit of closer ties with the European Union, impact roughly 2% of the South Caucasus country's gross domestic product.

The EU, which welcomed the results of Armenia's parliamentary elections, has pledged economic support to Yerevan and vowed to remove tariffs from nearly 80% of Armenian imports in response to Russia's restrictions.

On Monday, Pashinyan said Yerevan remains "committed to further developing relations with Russia, is interested in participating in the EAEU," an economic and political bloc of former Soviet countries, including Armenia.

"Some problematic issues have emerged recently," he was quoted as saying by Interfax. "I hope that following today's talks, we will be able to resolve specific issues."

Friction between traditional allies Russia and Armenia has grown since Azerbaijan regained control of the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023. Armenia accused Russia and its peacekeeping forces of failing to deter Baku's military offensive and, in 2024, froze its participation in a Moscow-led regional security bloc.

Pashinyan has since skipped a number of summits and events hosted or attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

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