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CSTO Strips Armenia of Voting Rights

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Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. **primeminister.am**

The Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) on Wednesday stripped Armenia of its voting rights for failing to pay membership dues.

The move comes three years after Armenia accused the military alliance of failing to intervene when Azerbaijan launched a surprise offensive to seize control of the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has since effectively frozen his country's involvement in the CSTO. He told journalists last week that Armenia no longer has "any interests related" to the organization, whose five member states are all former Soviet republics.

Kremlin spokesman told a state media reporter that the decision to strip Armenia of its voting rights was made based on the fact that the South Caucasus country "has not fulfilled its obligations for several years, as outlined in the [CSTO] charter."

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Secretary-general of the military alliance, Taalatbek Masadykov, stressed that the move does not mean Armenia's membership has been nullified.

"As soon as it decides to settle its dues, Armenia can be reinstated in terms of sending its employees and participating in the CSTO's work," Masadykov said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said earlier this week that Armenia was expected to maintain its baseline security guarantees under the collective defensive treaty despite the anticipated decision to take away its voting rights.

Armenia, once a close ally of Russia, has slowly fallen out with Moscow since Azerbaijan's military offensive in September 2023. The country has sought to build stronger relations with the EU, including a membership bid by 2028.

Meanwhile, Russia has issued sweeping bans on a range of Armenian products this year, widely viewed as retaliation for its pivot toward Europe.

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