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Armenia's Pre-Election Narrative Intelligence: Diaspora Mobilisation and Domestic Narratives in Armenia's Pre-Election Environment

Executive Summary

Situation Overview

With Armenia's national election set for 7 June 2026, the country's information environment has become a contested battlefield. This report covers six weeks of monitoring across nine platforms and four languages. The central finding is unambiguous: the information space is structurally anti-incumbent at every layer. The ruling Civil Contract party (PM Nikol Pashinyan) dominates overall media mentions at 64.6%, but that visibility is overwhelmingly negative - and the party is nearly absent in the short-form video channels that will matter most in the final weeks of the campaign. A major new variable entered the picture on 28 February, when war broke out between Iran and Israel.

Key Findings

1. Short-form video is overwhelmingly anti-government.

Of the 444 videos mentioning Pashinyan, 85.8% carry anti-government framing. The dominant attack is not economic hardship - it is the loss of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh), which appears in 59% of attack content. Security failure accounts for a further 28.8%. Economic failure - despite polling as a top voter concern - appears in just 3.4% of attack videos. The opposition is targeting emotional grievance, not household concerns.

2. A critical 45-day window opens in late April.

Based on Repsense's analysis of the 2025 Moldovan elections, algorithmic amplification of political video content accelerates sharply in the 45 days before polling day. That window opens late April 2026. The infrastructure for this amplification is already in place: the "vote for Pashinyan = vote for Aliyev's constitution" frame appears in at least nine separate video summaries and pan-Armenian nationalist content dominates geopolitical labelling by 52 instances to pro-Western content's 1.

3. The Church controversy is the single highest-risk narrative.

It is the only narrative with confirmed full-stack, cross-platform presence: 969 Telegram messages; 452 Facebook posts (including genocide-era comparisons and quotes from

the imprisoned Archbishop Galstanyan); 45 short-form videos linking Church attacks directly to alleged instructions from Aliyev and Erdoğan to Pashinyan; and consistent coverage across every monitored TV channel. No other topic achieves this reach.

4. The Russian-language diaspora Telegram ecosystem is being used as an active mobilisation channel against the incumbent.

Six identical copies of the message - "We Denounce Russian Meddling In The 2026 Elections In Armenia. But Do We Have To Tolerate French-Anglo-US Interference?" - were identified on Facebook. Though small in number, this framing is strategically significant: it is designed to neutralise Armenia's own request to Brussels (documented 24–25 February) for a Hybrid Rapid Response Team against foreign information manipulation, by equating Western counter-measures with Russian interference itself.

Recommendations

1. Address the economy gap directly.

The opposition attack ecosystem focuses on identity and territorial grievance. Polling consistently shows economic concerns rank alongside national security for voters. Pro-government and neutral civic voices have an opening to engage on household concerns that the current information environment is not filling.

2. Counter the "both-sides interference" framing proactively.

The equation of Western counter-FIMI (Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference) activity with Russian interference is a pre-emptive move to discredit election integrity efforts. Public communication around the Brussels Hybrid Rapid Response Team request should be clear and pre-emptive, not reactive.

3. Strengthen diaspora-facing credible voices.

The Russian-language diaspora ecosystem is dominated by anti-incumbent framing with near-zero pro-government counter-narrative. Credible Armenian voices - journalists, civil society, independent analysts - need visibility in the channels where diaspora audiences are active, particularly ahead of voter registration deadlines.

4. Track the Church narrative as a leading indicator.

Given its unique cross-platform penetration, movements in Church-related content volume or framing should be treated as an early warning signal for broader narrative escalation. Any new institutional development involving the Church - legal, political, or clerical - should be assessed for its information environment impact.