

February 2, 2026

Mr. Vice President,

I greet you in the name of our crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

I do so from Yerevan Kentron Prison in Armenia, as a political prisoner of the regime of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Using the time-honored methods of his communist predecessors, Pashinyan has ordered his security apparatus to spy on me, to falsify evidence, to interrogate me, to slander me and incarcerate me.

Why? The answer is simple. I have spoken uncomfortable truth to power on the byways and highways of Armenia, all in the non-violent spirit of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

In doing so, I have exercised my fundamental human right to bring my Christian faith and testimony into the public arena, in the hope that the Armenian nation and state remain true to their historic Christian tradition at a time of national crisis.

I am not alone. Others are similarly incarcerated by the Pashinyan regime, and for much the same reason. Some are my brothers in the clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church: Archbishop Mikael Ajapajyan, Archbishop Arshak Khachatryan and Bishop Mkrtych Proshyan.

There is also the lay patron of the Church, Samvel Karapetyan. Not only has he been imprisoned, but his company has been nationalized by the state, Soviet-style.

Prime Minister Pashinyan has imprisoned us as part of his campaign to assert state power over the Armenian Apostolic Church. Violating the constitution and all principles of religious freedom, he is demanding that the Catholicos, the head of the worldwide Armenian church, be replaced by someone under his influence.

The reason is simple: the church is defending our flock. We are speaking for the right of Armenians from Artsakh to return to their homes, after they were ethnically cleansed by Azerbaijan two years ago. We are demanding the

return of our hostages from Azerbaijan. We are speaking out against the abandonment of our homeland and its sovereignty to Azerbaijan.

For this, both Prime Minister Pashinyan and the Azerbaijani government have labeled the church “an obstacle to peace.”

But the Apostolic Armenian Church is simply doing what it has done for 1,700 years: safeguarding the Armenian nation, the world’s first Christian nation. For most of those 1,700 years, the church was the only national institution which bound Armenians together.

The church is under attack today precisely because it protects Armenian identity. An effort is underway to strip Armenia of its Christian heritage and integrate it into the Turkic, Islamic world of Turkey and Azerbaijan as an economic and military vassal.

You, Mr. Vice President, have rightly warned the EU that it has been committing civilizational suicide by giving up Europe’s Christian identity and opening its borders to those who do not share the values rooted in Europe’s Judeo-Christian tradition.

This is precisely what the Armenian Prime Minister is engineering in Armenia.

Throughout its history, there have always been Armenians, even churchmen, who became the instruments of the persecutors of the Church. They have often done so in the name of peace.

“They say, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace.” Such was the case in the time of the Prophet Jeremiah. Such is the case in Armenia today.

President Trump has invested a great deal of his time and political capital to make peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. But there can be no peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan if the Armenian nation ceases to exist. If the Armenian church is successfully neutralized, nothing less than that will be at stake.

I know that you will soon travel to Armenia and to Azerbaijan. You will contribute greatly a genuinely historic, lasting peace if you: 1) secure release of the Armenian Christian political prisoners held in Yerevan and Baku, and 2) obtain guarantees for the safe return, with fundamental

human rights intact, of the 150,000 Armenian Christians who were forced out of their homes in Nagorno Karabakh.

As you depart on your important mission to Armenia and Azerbaijan, please keep in mind the words of the Prophet Isaiah, which were read by our Lord at the onset of his earthly ministry:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free” (Luke 4:18).

May you be animated by this Spirit while engaging with the authorities in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Sincerely, *with love and prayer*
Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bagrat Galstanyan', with a stylized flourish at the end.