



By: TA | AP Brief

A former Armenian president is detained in a corruption investigation



Former Armenian President Robert Kocharyan and his eldest son were detained Tuesday after law enforcement officers raided businesses linked to the family, the country's Anti-Corruption Committee said.

A case was opened against Kocharyan, 71, who leads parliament's second-largest **opposition bloc**, on charges of abuse of authority, bribery and large-scale money laundering, according to Armenia's Prosecutor General's Office.

Besides Kocharyan and his eldest son, Sedrak, four other people were detained as part of the investigation, the office said.

The raids came less than 24 hours after Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan clashed with Kocharyan's younger son, Levon, in a fiery exchange in parliament.

Armenia's Anti-Corruption Committee said it was investigating allegations that state assets had been illegally sold to private companies for under market value during Kocharyan's time in office from 1998 to 2008.

Former President Serzh Sargsyan, who served under Kocharyan before taking office himself from 2008 to 2018, also is facing charges as part of the case, the committee said.

Bagrat Mikoyan, who heads his office, described the detentions as "yet another attack on President Kocharyan and his family" by authorities.

He added that Kocharyan felt ill after his detention and was taken to a hospital.

Kocharyan's son accused prime minister of political pressure

During a parliamentary question-and-answer session, Levon Kocharyan accused Pashinyan of pressuring the courts and law enforcement agencies to open investigations against individuals.

Pashinyan responded by asking Levon

Kocharyan the source of his family's wealth, saying that any assets acquired at public expense should be returned to the state.

In a social media post Tuesday, Robert Kocharyan's Armenia Alliance said the case was one of personal vengeance and "another cynical manifestation of a regime that has lost its legitimacy."

"This is not a legal process; this is the open subjugation of the state apparatus," it said.

Kocharyan effectively positions himself as a Russian proxy - Alexander Iskandaryan

Robert Kocharyan went on trial in 2019, accused of ordering the illegal use of force by security officers against demonstrators protesting alleged fraud in the 2008 presidential election.

At least 10 people were killed in the clashes. The charges were later dropped, and the legal proceedings ended in 2021.

Analyst Alexander Iskandaryan, director of the Caucasus Institute in Yerevan, told The Associated Press that critics have long accused Kocharyan of corruption while in power.

He said the case will intensify the conflict between the **pro-Russian opposition**, where Kocharyan is a key figure, and Pashinyan's government, which is pursuing a pro-Western course and prioritizing closer ties with the European Union.

"Of course, this is a signal to the Kremlin," Iskandaryan said. "Kocharyan effectively positions himself as a Russian proxy, and we see a trend where the authorities have begun to fight — intensively and by all possible means — against political forces aligned with Russia."