
GAREGIN BEKCHYAN: NO PROBLEM WITH TURKEY GOVERNMENT ON ELECTION OF ARMENIAN PATRIARCH

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There is no problem with the Turkish government regarding election of the Armenian patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Garegin Bekchyan, the patriarchal locum tenens of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, told Armenian News-NEWS.am.

His remark came as a comment to the recent statement by Archbishop Aram Ateshyan who said the elections would not take place because Turkish officials banned elections of a new patriarch.

I listened to the interview of Aram Ateshyan. There is much to talk about. The state has no problem whether to ban it or not. We have not received any information from the authorities. We sent an inquiry following the elections of locum tenens and we are waiting for a response, Archbishop Bekchyan said, adding there is time until February, and the government has not provided any dismissal.

Ateshyan says that the state does not accept locum tenens, but the locum tenens did not apply for his recognition or non-recognition by the state, Bekchyan added.

In addition, as Bekchyan noted, Ateshyan said that during the elections of the locum tenens the authorities wrote a letter.

Yes, there was a letter, But what was the purpose? The previous patriarch, by decision of the church council, resigned a year ago, but this information was not submitted to the authorities in the form of a written statement, Archbishop Garegin Bekchyan explained and expressed bewilderment at the reason why this creates such a confusion.

The second part of the interview is as follows:

- Did Ateshyan provide wrong information?

-- He provided completely incorrect information, it is not true. He is doing wrong things. Why did he give such an interview in Yerevan? He has no office now, he is no longer an archbishop. When he says that he remains an archbishop, I am surprised * It is necessary to take into account the will of a church and the will of a state. The state can think differently, but the will of the church authorities was completely differently interpreted and did not proceed from the interests of the church. He is no longer an archbishop, but a church minister who must obey the decision of the

church authorities, especially if we spoke with the Catholicos in Etchmiadzin. It was clarified and further stated that the work of the archbishop is completed after the elections of the locum tenens, therefore, it turns out that he does not obey the will of the church authorities.

- Aram Ateshyan also said that Turkey only recognizes him as a locum tenens of the Constantinople Patriarchate of the Armenian Apostolic Church [factual error of the news source: Aram Ateshyan is recognized as the General Vicar/Acting Patriarch, not Locum Tenens/Trustee].

-- This is a fairy tale, this is untrue. The axis of the states interest is our activities, not Ateshyan. Ateshyan has no right to give incorrect information, especially to the public.

- It was announced in advance that the election of the Patriarch would be held on December 13. What is the reason for canceling the elections?

-- The initiative group noted that it only suggested that elections might be held on that day, but no final decision was made. It was only a proposal that if they received a written permission from the state, the elections could have been scheduled for this day. We can get a written response next week or in February.

<http://araratnews.am/garegin-bekchyan-no-problem-with-turkey-government-on-election-of-armenian-patriarch/?lang=en>

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