
FORMER ARMENIAN PRESIDENT KOCHARIAN GRANTED BAIL OF MORE THAN \$4 MILLION

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An Armenian court has granted bail to former President Robert Kocharian, who is standing trial on charges of overthrowing the constitutional order and bribery.

The criminal court of appeal in Yerevan on June 18 ruled that Kocharian, who is currently undergoing treatment at a hospital in the capital, should be released after posting bail of 2 billion drams (\$4.2 million).

His lawyer, Aram Vardevanian, welcomed the court decision to grant bail to his client but called its amount "unprecedented."

Kocharian was taken to Yerevans Izmirlian Medical Center in April to undergo surgery for the second time in seven months.

On May 13, a Yerevan district court denied Kocharian's release on bail pending the end of his trial.

Two weeks later, another court ruled that the 65-year-old ex-president should not be sent back to prison as long as he remains at risk of contracting COVID-19 □ a ruling that is being challenged by the Penitentiary Service.

Prosecutors have opposed Kocharians release, saying the man who served as president for a decade (1998-2008) could flee prosecution or obstruct justice.

Kocharian was arrested in July 2018 and is now standing trial along with three other former officials on charges stemming from his alleged role in a 2008 postelection crackdown on the opposition, as well as for taking bribes.

The former head of state faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted of the charges, which he rejects as politically motivated.

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