
BELEAGUERED ARMENIAN PM STAYS AWAY FROM CHURCH ON CHRISTMAS

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Armenia's prime minister, who is under harsh criticism from the country's dominant Orthodox Christian church in connection with the recent war with Azerbaijan, stayed away from Christmas services on Wednesday.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan was self-isolating due to the coronavirus pandemic, spokeswoman Mane Grigoryan said. Pashinyan contracted the virus in June, and it was not clear if he had been reinfected.

The prime minister has been widely denounced in Armenia for signing a November ceasefire agreement that ceded parts of the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region and large swaths of surrounding territory to Azerbaijan. The areas had been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces for a quarter-century before full-scale fighting broke out in late September.

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