Armenia's Top Court Upholds Re-Election of Sargsyan

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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YEREVAN — Armenia's Constitutional Court on Thursday rejected claims by two unsuccessful presidential candidates that the Feb. 18 vote was rigged, upholding the re-election of incumbent Serzh Sargsyan.

The main election body had said there were no violations during the vote that could have influenced its outcome, while international monitors said the ballot was an improvement on previous ones although it lacked real competition.

Investors worry over signs of instability in the South Caucasus region, a key transit route for Caspian energy resources to Europe. Violence after the 2008 election that first brought Sargsyan in power left 10 people dead.

This time around, Sargsyan won 58.6 percent of votes, but his second-placed rival, opposition leader Raffi Hovannisian, asserted that he was the real winner and began a declared hunger

strike on March 10.

"The decision is to uphold the federal election committee's decision from Feb. 25 on the results of the presidential elections from Feb. 18," said Constitutional Court President Gagik Harutyunyan. The decision cannot be appealed.

Hovannisian, who secured 37 percent of the vote, has staged several peaceful protests in the capital, Yerevan, over the lost race and has called on Sargsyan to resign.

"We will continue our political fight within the framework of law and constitution until we win," said Hovsep Khurshudyan, a spokesman for Hovannisian's Heritage Party.

Armenia, a landlocked former Soviet republic with a population of 3.2 million, has a common security treaty with Russia and hosts of one Moscow's few foreign military bases.

It remains in territorial dispute with neighboring Azerbaijan two decades after a war between the two over the enclave of Nagorno–Karabakh killed some 30,000 people.