

# ARMENIA

Edition 2, updated January 2021

Country name in English (PCGN recommended name)	Armenia
Country name in Armenian (romanized in brackets) <sup>1</sup>	Հայաստան (Hayastan)
State title in English (PCGN recommended name)	Republic of Armenia
State title in Armenian (romanized in brackets)	Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն (Hayastani Hanrapetut'yun)
Official language	Armenian (hye) <sup>2</sup>
Script	Armenian
Romanization System	<a href="#">BGN/PCGN 1981 Romanization System for Armenian</a>
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	AM/ARM
Capital	Yerevan
Capital in Armenian	Երևան(Yerevan)
Population	2,965,100 <sup>3</sup>

## Introduction

Armenia is a landlocked country in Transcaucasia<sup>4</sup> (see map on next page). Until September 1991, Armenia was one of the fifteen Soviet republics incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The region of Nagornyy Karabakh in western Azerbaijan is a partially Armenian-populated breakaway “republic”, internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, ethnic tensions between the two former Soviet Socialist Republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia led to conflict over / in Nagornyy Karabakh. A ceasefire was agreed in November 2020, that returned control of some parts of the region to Azerbaijan.

## Geographical names policy

Geographical names in Armenia should be taken from official Armenian-script sources produced by the Centre of Geodesy & Cartography (Geodeziayi ev Kartezagrut' yan Kentron), and romanized as per the [BGN/PCGN 1981 Romanization System for Armenian](#). It should be noted that some unofficial sources may contain names in other languages e.g. Russian or Azerbaijani and these names should not be used. Although there might be Armenian names for places in Nagornyy Karabakh, it is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, therefore PCGN recommends using the names as

<sup>1</sup> Using the BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Armenian 1981:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810208/ROMANIZATION\\_OF\\_ARMENIAN.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810208/ROMANIZATION_OF_ARMENIAN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> ISO 639-3 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.

<sup>3</sup> As of January 1, 2019, <http://www.gov.am/en/demographics/>

<sup>4</sup> Also known as Southern Caucasia, it is a region to the south of the Caucasus mountains situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea consisting of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

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found on official Azerbaijani sources. The NGA GEONet Names Server (GNS) may also be used <http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/index.html> as a source for names in Armenia.

### Armenia



Map of Armenia and surrounding countries, including enclaves, exclaves and the region of Nagornyy Karabakh (this map shows the boundary of the former Soviet-established Nagorno-Karabakhskaya Avtonomnaya Oblast')

### Language

Armenian is the official language of Armenia<sup>5</sup>. It belongs to its own independent branch of the Indo-European group of languages, which includes all Latin, Germanic, Indian, Slavic and Hellenic languages, among others. It is also spoken in the *de facto*, though unrecognised, independent region of Nagornyy Karabakh that is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan. There are two dialects of Armenian language: Eastern Armenian (hye) and Western Armenian (hyw). For most Armenians, the dialects are not mutually intelligible. Eastern Armenian is the most commonly-spoken language in Armenia (by 2.9 million people<sup>6</sup>) and underwent an orthographic reform during Soviet times making it further different to Western Armenian. Western Armenian is spoken in small parts of Armenia, but is mostly spoken by the Armenian diaspora in places such as Turkey, Lebanon, United States, Georgia, Syria, Iraq, Uzbekistan and France (total number of speakers is about 1.2 million<sup>7</sup>). Kurdish is spoken by the Yezidi minority in Armenia and Russian is still widely spoken.

The Armenian alphabet was created by the scholar and monk Mesrop Mashtots in 405AD.

### Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings<sup>8</sup>):

The BGN/PCGN Romanization system for Armenian<sup>9</sup> contains the basic Roman letters plus ' (a right single quotation mark, Unicode encoding 2019) that is transcribed after the letters  $\text{թ} = \text{t}'$ ,  $\text{չ} = \text{ch}'$ ,  $\text{գ} = \text{ts}'$ ,  $\text{ւի} = \text{p}'$ ,  $\text{ք} = \text{k}'$  to represent aspirated<sup>10</sup> consonants.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.president.am/en/constitution-2015/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/hye>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/hyw>

<sup>8</sup> See [www.unicode.org](http://www.unicode.org)

<sup>9</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810208/ROMANIZATI\\_ON\\_OF\\_ARMENIAN.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810208/ROMANIZATI_ON_OF_ARMENIAN.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> An aspirated consonant is accompanied by a strong burst of air as you say it.

**Administrative structure**

Armenia is divided into 11 first-order administrative divisions (ADM1s): the capital region (Armenian: *k'aghak'*) Yerevan, plus 10 districts (Armenian: *marz*, plural: *marzan*). The districts are further sub-divided into urban and rural communities. In the Armenian language, when generics are added to place names, another letter ի (i) is added to the proper name to demonstrate the possessive form, e.g. Aragatsotn becomes Aragatsotni Marz. If the proper name ends in ի (i), the ի (i) is replaced by ու (u), e.g. Lorri becomes Lorru Marz.

**1. Aragatsotn (40° 25' 00" N 044° 10' 00" E)**

Name in Armenian Script	Արագածոտն
Long form name	Aragatsotni Marz
Long form name in Armenian Script	Արագածոտնի Մարզ
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-AG
Variant Name(s)	Aragatzotn
Centre	Ashtarak (40° 17' 57"N 044° 21' 43"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Աշտարակ
Website	<a href="http://aragatsotn.mtad.am/">http://aragatsotn.mtad.am/</a>

**2. Ararat (39° 55' 00" N 044° 50' 00" E)**

Name in Armenian Script	Արարատ
Long form name	Ararati Marz
Long form name in Armenian Script	Արարատի Մարզ
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-AR
Centre	Artashat (39° 57' 41"N 044° 32' 40"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Արտաշատ
Website	<a href="http://ararat.mtad.am/">http://ararat.mtad.am/</a>

**3. Armavir (40° 07' 00" N 044° 00' 00" E)**

Name in Armenian Script	Արմավիր
Long form name	Armaviri Marz
Long form name in Armenian Script	Արմավիրի Մարզ
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-AV
Centre	Armavir (40° 09' 16"N 044° 02' 17"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Արմավիր
Website	<a href="http://armavir.mtad.am/">http://armavir.mtad.am/</a>

**4. Geghark'unik' (40° 15' 00" N 045° 25' 00" E)**

Name in Armenian Script	Գեղարքունիք
Long form name	Geghark'unik'i Marz
Long form name in Armenian Script	Գեղարքունիքի Մարզ
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-GR
Centre	Gavarr (40° 21' 14"N 045° 07' 26"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Գավառ
Website	<a href="http://qegharkunik.mtad.am/">http://qegharkunik.mtad.am/</a>

**5. Kotayk' (40° 25' 00" N 044° 45' 00" E)**

Name in Armenian Script	Կոտայք
Long form name	Kotayk'i Marz
Long form name in Armenian Script	Կոտայքի Մարզ
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-KT
Centre	Hrazdan (40° 29' 39"N 044° 45' 37"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Հրազդան
Website	<a href="http://kotayk.mtad.am/">http://kotayk.mtad.am/</a>

**6. Lorri (41° 00' 00" N 044° 30' 00" E)**

Name in Armenian Script	Լոռի
Long form name	Lorru Marz
Long form name in Armenian Script	Լոռու Մարզ
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-LO
Centre	Vanadzor (40° 48' 16"N 044° 29' 38"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Վանաձոր
Website	<a href="http://lori.mtad.am/">http://lori.mtad.am/</a>

**7. Shirak (40° 45' 00" N 043° 50' 00" E)**

Name in Armenian Script	Շիրակ
Long form name	Shiraki Marz
Long form name in Armenian Script	Շիրակի Մարզ
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-SH
Centre	Gyumri (40° 47' 39"N 043° 50' 43"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Գյումրի
Website	<a href="http://shirak.mtad.am/">http://shirak.mtad.am/</a>

**8. Syunik' (39° 20' 00" N 046° 15' 00" E)**

Name in Armenian Script	Սյունիք
Long form name	Syunik'i Marz
Long form name in Armenian Script	Սյունիքի Մարզ
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-SU
Centre	Kapan (39° 12' 27"N 046° 24' 21"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Կապան
Website	<a href="http://syunik.mtad.am">http://syunik.mtad.am</a>

**9. Tavush (40° 55' 00" N 045° 10' 00" E)**

Name in Armenian Script	Տավուշ
Long form name	Tavushi Marz
Long form name in Armenian Script	Տավուշի Մարզ
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-TV
Centre	Ijevan (40° 52' 44"N 045° 08' 55"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Իջևան
Website	<a href="http://tavush.mtad.am/">http://tavush.mtad.am/</a>

**10. Vayots' Dzor** (39° 45' 00" N 045° 25' 00" E)

Name in Armenian Script	Վայոց Ձոր
Long form name	Vayots' Dzori Marz
Long form name in Armenian Script	Վայոց Ձորի Մարզ
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-VD
Centre	Yeghegnadzor (39° 45' 50"N 45° 19' 57"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Եղեգնաձոր
Website	<a href="http://vdzor.mtad.am">http://vdzor.mtad.am</a>

**11. Yerevan** ((40° 11' 00" N 044° 30' 00" E)

Name in Armenian Script	Երևան
Long form name	K'aghak' Yerevan
Long form name in Armenian Script	Քաղաք Երևան
ISO 3166-2 code	AM-ER
Centre	Yerevan (40° 10' 52"N 044° 30' 49"E)
Centre in Armenian Script	Երևան
Website	<a href="http://www.yerevan.am">http://www.yerevan.am</a>

**Territorial and toponymic issues**

**Nagornyy Karabakh**

The region of Nagornyy Karabakh (or Nagorno-Karabakh Republic) in western Azerbaijan (known as Artsakh in Armenian), is a partially Armenian-populated breakaway “republic”, internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan. The Azeri translation of Nagornyy Karabakh is Dağlıq Qarabağ, the Armenian translation is Lerrnayin Gharabagh<sup>11</sup>. Nagornyy Karabakh covers a similar area to the former Soviet-established Nagorno-Karabakhskaya Avtonomnaya Oblast<sup>12</sup>, and it is this name that is used as the basis for the name recommended for use on HMG products: **Nagornyy Karabakh**.

The administrative centre of Nagornyy Karabakh is Xankəndi, although the Armenian population use the Armenian name Stepanakert<sup>13</sup>. Though there might be Armenian names for places in Nagornyy Karabakh, it is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, therefore PCGN recommends using the names as found on official Azerbaijani sources.

**Exclaves**

**Kərki** (renamed Tigranashen by the Armenian government) is an exclave of Naxçıvan, outside of its northern border, that is controlled by Armenia.

**Yuxarı Əskipara** (Armenian: Verin Voskepar) is an exclave of Azerbaijan within Armenia. The exclave is administered by Armenia, though the village has been destroyed.

**Sofulu** and **Barxudarlı** are exclaves of Azerbaijan within Armenia. They are both administered by Armenia.

<sup>11</sup> All three names mean “mountainous Karabakh” or “mountainous black garden”.

<sup>12</sup> It does not refer to the area beyond the former Soviet oblast' that was either previously claimed by, or under *de facto* control of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic between 1994 and 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Following the 2020 ceasefire, the Armenians retained control of Xankəndi. Reference can be included to the Armenian name Stepanakert (as widely used in the media) if considered necessary. It may be added in brackets after Xankəndi.

**Artsvashen** is an exclave of Armenia which has been occupied by Azerbaijan since 1992. The Azerbaijani name is Başkənd. Mostly populated by Azeris.

There are two small farms south of Yaradullu (in northwest Azerbaijan). It is assumed that Armenia controls them and that Azerbaijan claims them.

**Other Significant Locations**

PCGN Recommended Name	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Armenia: Arak's (Aras) Azerbaijan: Araz (Aras) <sup>14</sup> Turkey: Aras Iran: Rūd-e Aras (Aras)	Araks, Arax, Erez	40° 01' 04" N, 048° 27' 12" E	River
Sevan	Sevana Lich (Armenian)	40° 23' 19" N, 045° 19' 47" E	Lake
Caucasus	Kovkas (Armenian) Qafqaz (Azerbaijani)	42° 00' 00" N, 045° 00' 00" E	Region
Lesser Caucasus	P'ok'r Kovkas (Armenian) Kiçik Qafqaz (Azerbaijani) Malyy Kavkaz (Russian) Küçük Kafkasya (Turkish) (Mtsire K'avk'asioni (Georgian)	41° 00' 00" N, 044° 00' 00" E	Mountain range

**Useful references**

Administrative divisions - Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia:

<https://www.armstat.am/en/>

BBC Country Profile: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17398605>

CIA World Factbook – Armenia: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/armenia/>

International Organization for Standardization (ISO): [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

Languages: [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com) , [www.omniglot.com](http://www.omniglot.com)

Unicode Consortium: [www.unicode.org](http://www.unicode.org)

US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: <http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/>

US Board on Geographic Names Geographic Names Standardization Policy for Armenia:

[http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/Policies/Armenia\\_Country\\_Policy\\_WebVersion\\_Sept\\_2018.pdf](http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/Policies/Armenia_Country_Policy_WebVersion_Sept_2018.pdf)

Compiled by PCGN and BGN  
Edition 2, January 2021  
Tel. 0207 591 3120  
[www.gov.uk/pcgn](http://www.gov.uk/pcgn)  
[info@pcgn.org.uk](mailto:info@pcgn.org.uk)

<sup>14</sup> The Araz river flows along the boundary between Iran and the Naxçıvan area of Azerbaijan and then into Azerbaijan, where it joins the Kura river.