

We endorse, October 22, 1925, Holy Etchmiadzin  
Sorrowful George V Catholicos of All Armenians

**SPECIAL BYLAWS FOR CONVENING A NATIONAL-ECCLESIASTICAL  
ASSEMBLY**

**A.**

1. The supreme legislative body of the Armenian Apostolic Church is the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.
2. The National-Ecclesiastical Assembly is convened at [Holy] Etchmiadzin.
3. The Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians summons the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.
4. The Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians is the president of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.
5. The Catholicos of the [Great] House of Cilicia, the Armenian Patriarches of Jerusalem and Constantinople are the foremost members of the Assembly.
6. When the Catholicos of All Armenians is ill, the Catholicos of Sis or the Patriarch of Jerusalem preside over the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly. In case of their absence, the Locum Tenens of the Catholicos of All Armenians presides.
7. Subject to the jurisdiction of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly are the following fundamental issues:
  - A. Election of the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians (after the death of the incumbent);

B. Election of the members of the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Etchmiadzin;

C. Confirmation of a National-Ecclesiastical Constitution;

D. Examination of and resolution about issues concerning Ecclesiastical reforms;

E. Putting the financial state of the Church in order;

F. Resolution about all matters concerning the Church.

8. The National-Ecclesiastical Assembly decides the agenda of its business and the internal rules of procedure.

B.

9. The National-Ecclesiastical Assembly membership consists of:

A. The members of the Supreme Spiritual Council of Etchmiadzin;

B. All the primates of the Armenian Church;

C. All the bishops of the Armenian Church;

*Note—Should a primate be unable to attend the Assembly in person, an elected representative of the diocesan clergy participates.*

10. Single representatives elected by the Brotherhood of Holy Etchmiadzin, the [St. James Brotherhood] of Jerusalem and the Joint Session of the [Patriarchate] of Constantinople are members of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.

11. Qualified parishioners who have completed their thirtieth year and are elected by the people can be members of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.

12. The people of each Diocese could participate in the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly through one or more delegates they elect.

13. A diocese with as many as twenty-five people elects one delegate. Each diocese elects as many delegates as its population can be divided by twenty-five thousand. The [leftover of the] final twenty-five thousand may not be complete, but must be no less than ten thousand.

*Note A.—Each diocese elects as many alternates as it can elect delegates. The alternates substitute for those delegates who are for some reason unable to attend the Assembly.*

*Note B.—Based on census, each diocese is divided into regions with the understanding that each region would consist of twenty-five thousand people.*

14. Participants in the election of delegates for the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly include the clergy and the qualified parishioners of both sexes who are adult citizens.

15. Each community of one thousand people elects a proxy.

16. The proxies can elect as a delegate one of their group or someone from outside.

17. The election of the delegates, alternates and proxies for the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly in dioceses outside the boundaries of the USSR is done according to the local Armenian bylaws, constitutions or traditional ways, guided by this present Bylaws.

18. The travel expenses of the delegates of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly will be taken care by the diocese that has elected the delegate and that of the proxies by the churches.

19. The solution for all kinds of problems that may rise on the occasion of the election of the delegates for the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly is provided by the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Etchmiadzin.

20. When there is need, the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Etchmiadzin gives the necessary explanations and directives.

### C.

21. When the Catholicos of All Armenians passes away, the Locum Tenens of the Catholicos of All Armenians, together with the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Etchmiadzin, summons a National-Ecclesiastical Assembly for the election of a new catholicos.

22. The election of a new catholicos shall take place no later than six months after the death of the Catholicos.

23. The election of the Catholicos of All Armenians takes place in the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin, with the Locum Tenens of the Catholicos of All Armenians presiding.

24. The National-Ecclesiastical Assembly decides the agenda of the election of the Catholicos of All Armenians.

25. The present bylaws are in force until the next National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.

Members of the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Etchmiadzin:  
Archbishop Mesrop, Archbishop Khoren, Archbishop Bagrat, Bishop Garegin, Bishop Giwt.

The Supreme Spiritual Council endorses the authenticity of this copy by means of signatures and the seal of the Council. July 3, 1930, Holy Etchmiadzin.

Member of the Supreme Spiritual Council

(seal) Archbishop Matt'éos

Secretary H. K'och'arian

Catholicos Géorg V passed away on May 8, 1930. Several years prior to his death, the catholicos had already appointed Archbishop Khorén Muratbékian as locum tenens. After the Catholicos' death, the locum tenens took into his hands the administration of the Church and in a letter dated May 28, 1930, he wrote to Sargis Kasian, the President of *Kentgortskom* [Central Executive Committee, and Sahak Tér-Gabriélian, the President of the *Zhoghkomkhorh* [Committee of the People's Commissars], informing them that the Supreme Spiritual Council had decided to follow the instruction of the new Bylaws and hold the election at the end of October or early November 1930. The locum tenens sought the cooperation of the Soviet Armenian government to facilitate the transit of Soviet as well as foreign citizens and perhaps intervene with the central government so that the delegates from other republics would not have difficulties in attending the Assembly.<sup>317</sup> Archbishops Khorén Muratbékian and Géorg Ch'éórék'chian met S. Kasian in person on May 29. The latter assured them that the government of Armenia had no objection to holding an Assembly and that it would assist in making arrangements so that the delegates would have entry to and exit from the Soviet Union

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<sup>317</sup> *Documents*, 1994, no 117, pp. 215-216.

**23. Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոսի ընտրութեան կարգը որոշում է Ազգային-  
Եկեղեցական Ժողովը:**

**Սոյն Կանոնադրութիւնը ընդունուած եւ վաւերացուած է 1945 թ. յունիս 19-ին  
տեղի ունեցած Ազգային-Եկեղեցական Ժողովի երրորդ նիստում:**

**Դիւան Ազգային-Եկեղեցական Ժողովոյ**

**Տեսնել «Էջմիածին» ամսագիր, 1945, օգոստոս-սեպտեմբեր-հոկտեմբեր միացեալ  
թիւ, էջ 17-18:**

We endorse [this document] to be put to use,  
George VI Catholicos of All Armenians  
June 25, 1945  
Holy Etchmiadzin

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ASSEMBLY**

1. The supreme legislative body of the Armenian Apostolic Church is the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.
2. The National-Ecclesiastical Assembly is convened at [Holy] Etchmiadzin.
3. The Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians summons the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.
4. The Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians is the president of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.

5. The Catholicos of the [Great] House of Cilicia, the Armenian Patriarches of Jerusalem and Constantinople are the foremost members of the Assembly.

6. When the Catholicos of All Armenians is ill, the Catholicos of the [Great] House of Cilicia or the Patriarch of Jerusalem or that of Constantinople preside over the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly. In case of their absence, the Locum Tenens of the Catholicos of All Armenians presides at the instruction of the Catholicos.

7. Subject to the jurisdiction of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly are the following fundamental issues:

A. Election of the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; B. Election of the members of the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Etchmiadzin;

C. Confirmation of a National-Ecclesiastical Constitution;

D. Examination of and resolution about ecclesiastical, other canonical and general issues;

E. Putting the financial state of the Church in order;

8. The National-Ecclesiastical Assembly decides the agenda of its business and the internal rules of procedure.

9. The National-Ecclesiastical Assembly membership consists of:

A. The members of the Supreme Spiritual Council of Etchmiadzin;

B. The Catholicos of the [Great] House of Cilicia with his bishops and the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople;

C. All the primates of the Armenian Church;

**D. All the bishops of the Armenian Church;**

*Note—Should a primate be unable to attend the Assembly in person, an elected representative of the diocesan clergy participates.*

10. Single representatives elected by the Brotherhood of Holy Etchmiadzin, the [St. James Brotherhood] of Jerusalem and the Joint Session of the [Patriarchate] of Constantinople are members of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.

11. Qualified parishioners who have completed their thirtieth year and are elected by the people can be members of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly.

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*Note A.—Each diocese elects as many alternates as it can elect delegates. The alternates substitute for those delegates who are for some reason unable to attend the Assembly.*

*Note B.—Based on census, each diocese is divided into regions with the understanding that each region would consist of twenty-five thousand people.*

14. Participants in the election of delegates for the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly include the clergy and the qualified parishioners of both sexes who are adult citizens.

15. Each community of one thousand people elects a proxy.



*Note—the smaller communities are united, as it may seem fit, in order to elect proxies.*

16. The proxies can elect as a delegate one of their group or someone from outside.

17. The election of the delegates, alternates and proxies for the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly in dioceses outside the boundaries of the USSR is done according to the local Armenian bylaws, constitutions or traditional ways, guided by this present Bylaws.

18. The solution for all kinds of problems that may rise on the occasion of the election of the delegates for the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly is provided by the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Etchmiadzin.

19. When there is need, the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Etchmiadzin gives the necessary explanations and directives. As for the Catholicate of the [Great] House of Cilicia, and the patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople, they decide according to their own bylaws.

20. When the Catholicos of All Armenians passes away, the Locum Tenens of the Catholicos of All Armenians, together with the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Etchmiadzin, summons a National-Ecclesiastical Assembly for the election of a new catholicos.

21. The election of a new catholicos shall take place no later than six months after the death of the Catholicos.

22. The election of the Catholicos of All Armenians takes place in the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin, according to these bylaws.

23. The National-Ecclesiastical Assembly decides the agenda of the election of the Catholicos of All Armenians.

These bylaws were accepted and confirmed in the third session of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly of June 19, 1945.

Executive Officers of  
the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly

The election of June 22 took place in the Cathedral. According to a bishop who participated in the Assembly, 112 delegates represented the four sees and all the dioceses under the immediate jurisdiction of Holy Etchmiadzin, the diocese of Iraq being the only one that did not send a representative. Our source does not state if there was a preliminary election to determine the candidates for the highest office, nor does it mention the name of any other candidate. We learn that Archbishop Géorg was unanimously elected Catholicos of All Armenians, carrying 110 of the 111 votes.<sup>323</sup>

Catholicos Géorg VI passed away on May 9, 1954. According to the existing bylaws, the election of the new catholicos should have taken place six months later, that is, in November, 1954. The funerary rites were held between May 25 and 27. In an extended meeting of the Supreme Spiritual Council from June 5 to 7, 1954, diocesan primates and the representatives of the sees of Cilicia and Jerusalem deliberated on the state of the Armenian Church, the patriarchal office and the Holy See. From the minutes of this gathering we learn that in his encyclical of April 30,

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<sup>323</sup> *Catholicos Géorg VI*, 1955, pp. 58-70. See also the journal *Etchmiadzin*, 1945, November-December issue.