



Flag of Armenia

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The national **flag of Armenia**, the **Armenian Tricolour** (known in Armenian as **Էրրազյոն**, *erraguyn*), consists of three horizontal bands of equal width, red on the top, blue in the middle, and orange on the bottom. The Armenian Supreme Soviet adopted the current flag on August 24, 1990. On June 15, 2006, the Law on the National Flag of Armenia, governing its usage, was passed by the National Assembly of Armenia.

Throughout history, there have been many variations of the Armenian flag. In ancient times, Armenian dynasties were represented by different symbolic animals displayed on their flags.^[1] In the twentieth century, various Soviet flags represented the Armenian nation.

Flag of Armenia



Use	National flag. ☐☐☐
Proportion	1:2
Adopted	August 24, 1990
Design	A horizontal tricolour of red, blue, and orange

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Symbolism

The meanings of the colors have been interpreted in many different ways. For example, red has stood for the blood shed by Armenian soldiers in war, blue for the Armenian sky, and orange represents the fertile lands of Armenia and the workers who work them.^[2]

The official definition of the colors, as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, is:

“ Red symbolizes the Armenian Highland, the Armenian people's continued struggle for survival, maintenance of the Christian faith, Armenia's independence and freedom. Blue symbolizes the will of the people of Armenia to live beneath peaceful skies. Orange symbolizes the creative talent and hard-working nature of the people of Armenia.”^[3]

Design

Since the Armenian government does not specify the exact shades of red, blue, and orange, two different versions of the flag are in common use. The more common version consists of brighter shades, whereas the colors of the less common version are more muted. The following table gives the approximate RGB values of the colors used in those two versions:^[4]

	More common version	Less common version
		
Red	255-0-0	216-28-63
Blue	0-0-170	85-117-196
Orange	255-153-0	239-107-0

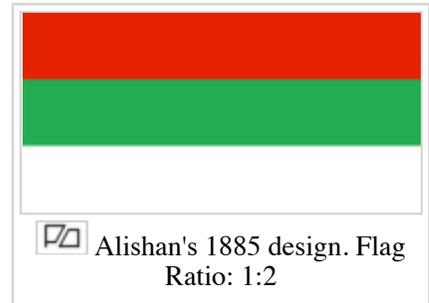
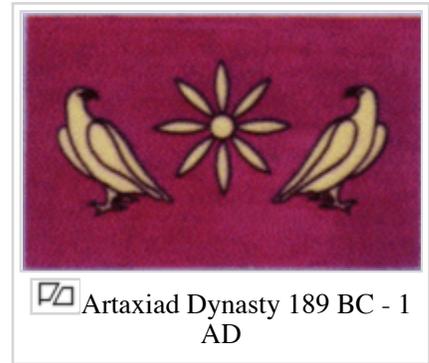
History

See also: **List of Armenian flags**

Today's tricolor flag bears little resemblance to the earliest Armenian 'flags'; in ancient times, armies went into battle behind carvings mounted on poles. The carvings might represent a dragon, an eagle, a lion or "some mysterious object of the gods."^[1] With the advent of Christianity, the Armenian empire adopted many different flags representing various dynasties. The Artaxiad Dynasty's flag, for instance, consisted of a red cloth displaying two eagles gazing at each other, separated by a flower.

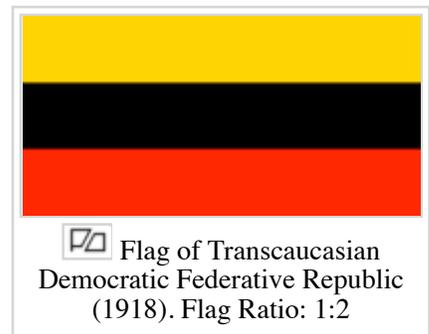
19th century

After Armenia was split between the Persian and Ottoman Empires, the idea of an Armenian flag ceased to exist for some time. The Armenian Catholic priest Father Ghevont Alishan created a new flag for Armenia in 1885, after the Armenian Students Association of Paris requested one for the funeral of the French writer Victor Hugo. Alishan's first design was very similar to today's Armenian flag: a horizontal tricolor. However, it looks more like an upside-down variation of the current flag of Bulgaria. The top band was red, symbolizing the first Sunday of Easter (called "Red" Sunday), followed by a green band to represent the "Green" Sunday of Easter, and finally an arbitrary color, white, was chosen to complete the combination.^[1] While in France, Alishan also designed a second flag, identified today as the "Nationalist Armenian Flag." It too was a tricolor, but unlike the previous design, this one was a vertical tricolor similar to the French flag. Its colors were red, green, and blue, from left to right, representing the rainbow that Noah saw after landing on Mount Ararat.^[1]



Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic

In 1828, Persian Armenia was annexed to the Russian Empire after the last Russo-Persian War, and became known as Russian Armenia. When the Russian Empire collapsed, Russian Armenia declared its independence and joined the short-lived Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic, together with Georgia and Azerbaijan. This unified state hardly lasted a year and was soon dissolved. Since the Republic was short-lived, it did not use any flags or symbols. Nevertheless, some historians consider a horizontal gold, black, and red tricolor, similar to that of the German flag but arranged differently, to have been flag of Transcaucasia.^[5] The federation was dissolved on May 26, 1918, when Georgia declared its independence as the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan declared their independence two days later, on May 28, 1918, as the Democratic Republic of Armenia (DRA) and the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR), respectively.



Democratic Republic of Armenia

After gaining independence, the Democratic Republic of Armenia adopted the modern Armenian tricolor. Upon Stepan Malkhasyan's appearance in the Armenian National Council,^[6] the independent Armenian government selected the colors used during the last period of Rubenid Dynasty, red, blue and yellow. They chose to replace the yellow with orange "because it merged better with the other two colors, presenting a more pleasing composition."^[1] The flag of independent Armenia then had a ratio of 2:3, but on August 24, 1990, when the Armenian Supreme Soviet adopted it as the flag of the Republic of Armenia, the ratio was changed to 1:2.^[7] An earlier prototype, which was eventually rejected, was a rainbow flag. This prototype can be seen at the Martiros Saryan House Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.

Early Soviet Armenia and the Transcaucasian SFSR

On November 29 1920 Bolsheviks established the Armenian SSR. A new flag was introduced and fixed in the constitution, accepted on February 2 1922 by the First Congress of Soviets of the Armenian SSR.^[8] That flag existed only for a month, because on March 12 the Armenian SSR united with the Georgian SSR and the Azerbaijan SSR under the Transcaucasian SFSR (TSFSR). On December 30 1922 the Transcaucasian SFSR became one of the four Soviet republics that united to form the USSR. The flag of the republic had a hammer and sickle inserted into a star with initials "ЗСФСР" (ZSFSR) written in Russian sans-serif script. These letters stand for *Закавказская Советская Федеративная Социалистическая Республика* (*Zakavkazskaya sovetskaya Federativnaya Socialisticheskaya Respublika*, "Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic").^[8] In 1936, the TSFSR was broken up into its three constituent regions, which were named the Georgian SSR, the Armenian SSR, and the Azerbaijan SSR.

Armenian SSR

As a republic of the USSR, the Armenian SSR introduced its first flag in 1936. Very similar to the flag of the Soviet Union, it was red and featured a yellow hammer and sickle in the corner. Underneath that, there were "H-Kh-S-H" initials written in Armenian serif script. These initials, in the Western Armenian language, stand for "*Haygagan Khorhurtayin Sodzialistakan Hanrabadutyun*," or the "Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic." In the 1940s, the flag was altered to use the Eastern Armenian language spoken in the Republic. The initials were changed to "H-S-S-R" meaning "*Hayastani Sovetakan Sotsialistikakan Respublika*" in the Eastern Armenian pronunciation. In 1952, a new flag was introduced. The initials were removed completely and in their place a horizontal blue stripe was added.

In late May 1988, amid rising nationalist tensions, Armenia's new Communist party leader allowed the banned tricolour of the DRA to fly in Yerevan for the first time in over sixty years.^[9] A year later,



following a Nagorno-Karabakh-themed mass demonstration where the tricolour was flown, he urged its official recognition.^[10] This came on August 24 1990, a day after the Armenian Supreme Soviet declared the republic's sovereignty and renamed the country the Republic of Armenia. At that point, just over a year before Armenia declared its formal independence from the USSR, the tricolour replaced the 1952 flag.

Usage

The 2006 law concerning the national flag of Armenia advises that it be hoisted daily from:

- public buildings
- the seat of the presidency of Armenia;
- the National Assembly of Armenia;
- the Constitutional Court of Armenia;
- offices of the bodies representing Armenia.

The law allows private citizens to fly the flag on their houses, provided the flag is hoisted higher than 2.5 m (98.42") above ground level.^[11] It forbids the use of dirty, faded or tarnished flags.

National flag days

The daily display of the Armenian flag is encouraged, but legally required only on the following days:^{[12][13]}

- January 1, January 2 – New Year
- January 6 – Christmas
- March 8 – International Women's Day
- April 7 – Motherhood and Beauty Day
- May 1 – International Worker's Solidarity Day
- May 9 – Victory and Peace Day
- May 28 – First Armenian Republic Day, 1918
- July 5 – Constitution Day, 1995
- September 21 – Independence Day, 1991
- December 7 – Spitak Earthquake Memorial Day, 1988

Influence



The flag waving at the Armenian Embassy in Washington, D.C.

On June 2, 1992, the self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh adopted a flag similar to the Armenian tricolor. A white, five-toothed, stepped carpet pattern was added to the flag, beginning at the two verges of the cloth's right side and connecting at a point equal to one-third of the distance from that side.^[14] The white pattern symbolizes the current separation of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) from Armenia proper (since it is *de jure* part of Azerbaijan) and its aspiration for eventual union with "the Motherland."^[15] The ratio of the flag's breadth to its length is 1:2, same as the Armenian Tricolor.^[14]



In addition to the flag of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian flag colors influenced the design of the Pan-Armenian Games flag. In the center of the light blue flag are six interlocking rings, derived from the Olympic rings. The sixth, orange-colored ring, interlocks with the blue and red rings, which symbolize Armenia. Above the rings is a flame in the colors of the Armenian flag.^[16]

The national flag is also mentioned in the song "Mer Hayrenik", the national anthem of Armenia. Specifically, the second and third stanzas sing about the creation of the national flag:

Here brother, for you a flag,
That I made with my hands
Nights I didn't sleep,
With tears I washed it.
(repeat previous two lines)

Look at it, three colors
It's our gifted symbol.
Let it shine against the enemy.
Let Armenia always be glorious.
(repeat previous two lines)^[17]

See also

- Coat of arms of Armenia
- List of Armenian flags



References

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- ↑ Armenia (http://www.vexilla-mundi.com/armenia_flag.html) . *Vexilla Mundi*. Retrieved on 2007-01-06.
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- ↑ The Jasc Paint Shop Pro program was used to collect the RGB values for the listed flags.
- ↑ Закавказская Федерация (Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic) (<http://hrono.rspu.ryazan.ru/heraldicum/flagi/gruzia/federat.htm>) (Russian). Russian Centre of Vexillology and Heraldry (2003-05-30). Retrieved on 2006-12-27.
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 13. ↑ About Armenia (<http://un.cti.depaul.edu/public/Armenia/1/English/>) . Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations. Retrieved on 2006-12-29.
 14. ↑ ^{14.0} ^{14.1} Attributes of Statehood (<http://www.nkr.am/eng/gov/atributy.html>) . Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nagorno-Karabakh. Retrieved on 2007-01-09.
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 16. ↑ Armenia: Sport flags (<http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/am@.html>) . Flags of the World. Retrieved on 2007-01-09.
 17. ↑ Lyrics of Mer Hayrenik (<http://www.nationalanthems.info/am'.htm>) . National Anthems.net. Retrieved on 2007-01-10.

External links

- *Armenia* (<http://www.fotw.net/flags/am.html>) at *Flags of the World*
- The Evolution of the Armenian Flag (<http://www.armenianheritage.com/hiflag.htm>)
- **(Russian)** Flags of Armenia (<http://www.hrono.ru/heraldicum/flagi/armenia/index.htm>)
- Armenica.org (<http://www.armenica.org/armenia/gerb.html>) - Symbolic values and information about the Armenian flag and coat of arms

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