

## **L'ancien président d'Arménie Robert Kotcharian en détention préventive (article en français et en anglais)**



Les autorités arméniennes ont arrêté vendredi l'ancien président Robert Kotcharian pour avoir "renversé l'ordre constitutionnel" en truquant la présidentielle de 2008 en faveur de son allié.

Un tribunal d'Erevan a accédé à la demande des services d'enquête du pays demandant l'arrestation de M. Kotcharian, au pouvoir de 1998 à 2008, qui devra faire face à la justice.

L'homme politique risque jusqu'à 15 ans de prison s'il est reconnu coupable d'avoir fait basculer en 2008 le vote en faveur de son allié de l'époque, Serge Sarkissian. Le candidat de l'opposition Levon Ter-Petrossian avait alors dénoncé la fraude électorale.

R. Kotcharian, 63 ans, a qualifié de « fausses » et « politiques » les accusations contre lui. "Je vais aller en prison et je vais me battre jusqu'au bout..."

A Yerevan court has ordered the arrest of former President Robert Kocharian and

placed him into custody for two months. The ex-president's attorney Aram Orbelyan told reporters outside the courthouse shortly after midnight Friday.

"Tomorrow me and the [defense] team will present details at 12:00 at a press conference," Kocharian's attorney said.

Kocharian was charged on Thursday by the Special Investigative Service (SIS) with "overthrowing constitutional order of Armenia" during the final weeks of his rule. The SIS asked a Yerevan court to remand him in pre-trial custody.

The extraordinary move followed Kocharian's first-ever interrogation by SIS officials investigating the use of lethal force against supporters of Levon Ter-Petrosian, the main opposition candidate in the February 2008 presidential election.

Kocharian rejected as baseless and politically motivated coup charges levelled against him by Armenian law-enforcement body investigating the 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan.

"This is an absolutely fabricated accusation," Kocharian told the Yerkir Media TV channel in an interview.

"This is clear political persecution, a vendetta by the 'velvet revolution,'" he said, adding that Armenia's new government wants to "neutralize" him ahead of parliamentary elections expected in the coming months.

Kocharian said that the coup charges brought against him ran counter to the decisions of Armenia's Central Election Commission and the Constitutional Court that validated the official election outcome. He insisted that Ter-Petrosian garnered only 21.5 percent of the vote.

"As incumbent head of state, I was the carrier and guarantor of constitutional order. Did I overthrow myself in some strange way?" he said.

Kocharian said SIS investigators told him right at the beginning of the interrogation that they now consider him a criminal suspect. "As soon as they changed my status I decided not to give testimony because when I read that indictment I was stunned," he said.

The ex-president also made clear that he will not try to flee the country to avoid

arrest. "I will go to jail and will fight till the end," he said. "Where would I flee?"

source : Massis