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## Washington Armenian Community Unites in Support of Artsakh

**By Aram Arkun**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WASHINGTON – Upon the initiative of the representation of Artsakh in the United States, the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) organized a reception and banquet for the Armenian community on March 17 at the University Club in Washington D. C. to honor the visiting delegation of the Republic of Artsakh led by President Bako Sahakyan.

The bilingual event was moderated by Annie Simonian Totah, board member of the Armenian Assembly, and Aram Hamparian, executive director of the ANCA. Ambassador Grigor Hovhannisian of the Republic of Armenia to the United States welcomed the guests, after which Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Director for the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), gave the opening prayer. Totah expressed her happiness that the



Annie Totah receives a medal from President Bako Sahakyan, while Aram Hamparian holds the medal he just got (photo: Aram Arkun)

two Armenian lobbying organizations of the United States have joined together to organize this event, and said that the more Armenians worked together, the more success they would find while presenting Armenian issues in Congress and the White House. She presented a brief history of the humanitarian aid to Artsakh that the Armenian Assembly helped to initiate and

pointed out that the ANCA and the Assembly work with Congress to try to increase travel and communication with Artsakh, an OSCE-monitored system to try to stop the gunfire and other violations of the truce with Azerbaijan. Totah concluded that the next challenge for the Armenian lobbies would be to have President

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## Berge Setrakian Honored on the 30th Anniversary of the Artsakh Movement

WASHINGTON – On March 15, a special reception was organized in honor of a governmental delegation from Artsakh, led by President Bako Sahakyan, at the embassy of the Republic of Armenia. The reception coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of the Artsakh independence movement.

One day earlier, the delegation met with Congressmen in the US Capitol Building. While speaking to American diplomats, President Sahakyan articulated the right of the people of Artsakh to live in independence.

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Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan bestows AGBU President Berge Setrakian with the Mesrop Mashtots Medal of the Republic of Artsakh.



ADL members with the official delegates of the Republic of Artsakh

## ADL Supreme Council Meets with Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan

WASHINGTON – A governmental delegation of the Republic of Artsakh led by its president Bako Sahakyan has been in the American capital for a week, establishing political contacts. In addition to meeting with members of Congress, the delegation had consultations and receptions with the leaders of a number of Armenian organizations.

Members of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) Supreme Council Vartan Nazerian and Edmond Y. Azadian had come to Washington on this occasion to join with local Supreme Council leader Kevork Marashlian. These ADL representatives were invited on March 15 to the Armenian embassy for a reception organized by the Artsakh delegation.

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## The Plight of Afrin Reverberates Across Europe

BERLIN – On March 18, the Sunday edition of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) carried a bold banner headline: “Battle for Afrin Now Also in Germany.” That night, television news reporters announced the fall of Afrin. And the violence on German soil has not abated. Over recent years,

German politicians have increased their warnings that the political conflict inside Turkey, between AKP loyalists and opposition groups, could spill over onto German soil. Now it is the war-ravaged parties in Syria whose proxies and sympathizers are clashing here.

Since Turkey began its military cam-

paign, named “Operation Olive Branch,” targeting the Kurdish YPG on January 20, protests have spread across Germany, led by members of the Kurdish community, supported by Turkish and German opponents of the Ankara regime. Most of the demonstrations have been peaceful and without incident; others have turned violent, as clashes have erupted between sympathizers of the outlawed Kurdish

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Aliyev Insists on ‘Historic Azeri Lands’ In Armenia

BAKU (RFE/RL) – Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev has stood by his claims that much of modern-day Armenia lies in “historic Azerbaijani lands.”

“I have repeatedly said and want to say once again that the territory of contemporary Armenia is historic Azerbaijani lands. There are numerous books and maps confirming that,” Aliyev said on Monday, March 19, at the start of official celebrations of Nowruz, the ancient Persian New Year marked as a public holiday in Azerbaijan.

“The Azerbaijani youth must know this first and foremost. Let it know that most of modern-day Armenia is historic Azerbaijani lands. We will never forget this,” he said.

Aliyev has repeatedly made such statements, most recently on February 8. Speaking at a pre-election congress of his Yeni Azerbaijan party, he pledged to “return Azerbaijanis” to Yerevan, Syunik province and the area around Lake Sevan.

Armenia condemned that statement, with President Serzh Sargsyan saying it shows that Baku is not committed to a compromise solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It was also criticized by the Russian Foreign Ministry.

The US, Russian and French mediators co-heading the Organization for Security of Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group urged the parties to the Karabakh conflict to avoid “inflammatory statements.” The statement failed to satisfy Yerevan. Armenian officials called for an explicit condemnation of Aliyev’s claims.

“As expected, lack of proper international reaction to [the Azerbaijani president’s] territorial claims towards Armenia inspired him to claim larger territories,” Tigran Balayan, the Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesman, tweeted on Monday.

### Brussels Airlines to Start Yerevan Flights

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Brussels Airlines, Belgium’s national carrier, received a permission from Armenia’s General Department of Civil Aviation to operate Brussels-Yerevan-Brussels regular flights from June 2, the General Department told Armenpress.

During the period from June 2 to July 2, from August 29 to October 27, the flights will be operated once a week, but from July 3 to August 28, the flights will be carried out twice a week.

Sergey Avetisyan, the head of Armenia’s General Department of Civil Aviation held a meeting with Brussels Airlines Vice President Herman Carpentier on February 28. During the meeting the sides discussed re-launching the Brussels-Yerevan-Brussels flight by the Belgian national carrier.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Sargsyan Congratulates Putin on Re-election

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan on March 19 held a telephone conversation with Vladimir Putin, during which he once again offered his congratulations on Putin's re-election as president of the Russian Federation.

The heads of the two strategic partner and allied states reaffirmed their readiness to further deepen and strengthen interstate relations and interactions, as well as to achieve a lasting peace and stability in the region.

## Armenia Participates in German Wine Trade Fair

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – ProWein International Trade Fair for Wines and Spirits, opened in the German city of Düsseldorf on March 18.

This year as well Armenia took part in the Trade Fair and was represented by 20 companies, the Armenian Foreign Ministry announced.

The opening ceremony was attended by Armenia's Ambassador to Germany Ashot Smbatyan who was introduced on the production of the companies, information and advertisement materials at the Armenian pavilion.

The exhibition ended on March 20.

## Armenia Eyeing Wine Tourism

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia is trying to transform several regions into winemaking centers and attracting new tourism as the country is being positioned on the world tourism map as the birthplace of wine.

A development program for local producers is underway in the Vayots Dzor province, which is widely known for the Areni grape variety. As a result, locals will present their own wine to tourists in a more attractive way.

Zaruhi Muradyan, director of the Viticulture and Winemaking Foundation of Armenia, said they have designed the project with assistance from GIZ, and is being implemented by the Union of Young Winemakers.

"Beneficiaries are provided with consultation ranging from cultivation up to bottling", she said.

Organizers want to show local home producers that cultivation of grapes is profitable and it is possible to transform into a small and medium business. The program will be completed in 2019.

"In addition to being a very interesting region, it is also a transit route to Artsakh and Tatev, and since the road is long, tourists will have the opportunity for accommodation and rest," she said.

The same program is to be implemented in Tavush.

## Armenia-Italy Trade Turnover Increases

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan received Ambassador of Italy to Armenia Giovanni Ricciulli this week on the occasion of completion of his diplomatic mission in Armenia.

Karapetyan thanked Ricciulli for the work carried out since December 2013, the contribution to developing the Armenian-Italian ties and wished him success in his future activities. Karapetyan praised the cooperation of the two countries in political, cultural fields and attached importance to the steps aimed at deepening the economic ties.

"We have much greater potential in this sense than we utilize. In 2017 we have 25-percent growth in trade turnover between Armenia and Italy and we hope this growth will continue as a result of the activity of the inter-governmental commission," he noted.

Ricciulli thanked the prime minister for the close cooperation, stating that good business development trends are noticed in the Armenian-Italian relations especially in the recent period. The Ambassador stated that thanks to the active work of the Armenian government the interest of Italian businessmen towards Armenia has increased. "I am confident that this interest will lead to good results in the future," he said.

# Armenian Opposition Activist Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Zhirayr Sefilian, a radical opposition figure, was sentenced to 10.5 years in prison on Tuesday, March 20, nearly two years after being arrested on charges of plotting an armed revolt against the Armenian government.

A court in Yerevan also handed down prison sentences ranging from 2 to 5.5 years to six other defendants who went on trial with Sefilian last May.

The shortest jail term was given to Hovhannes Petrosian, the sole defendant who has testified against Sefilian. Petrosian has said that the latter had told him to prepare for the seizure for a television tower in Yerevan.

The prosecutors claim that Sefilian formed an armed group to attack this and several other "strategic" facilities, including a military base just outside the capital, with the aim of forcing the Armenian authorities to take "certain actions." They also say that he planned to organize "mass disturbances" in Yerevan during the April 2015 commemorations of the centenary of the Armenian genocide in Ottoman Turkey.

Sefilian and all other defendants except Petrosian have strongly denied these accusations as politically motivated.

Speaking at the end of his trial, Sefilian called the criminal case against him and the other men a "fairy tale." The jailed leader of Founding Parliament, a radical opposition movement, also accused the presiding judge, Tatevik Grigorian, of resorting to "illegal actions" throughout the trial.

Sefilian has frequently and bitterly argued with Grigorian during court hearings in the high-profile case. The Lebanese-born oppositionist has been repeatedly banned from the courtroom as a result. The 30-year-old judge has also sanctioned his and other defen-

dants' lawyers for contempt of court.

The lawyers, backed by some human rights activists, have decried what they call serious violations of due process. They have insisted that the prosecution

ment union of fellow war veterans. The authorities claimed that they planned to mount an armed uprising against then President Robert Kocharyan.

Sefilian was cleared of the coup



Opposition leader Zhirayr Sefilian waves to supporters at the end of his trial.

has failed to substantiate its grave accusations. Grigorian claimed the opposite in her ruling, however.

Sefilian, 51, was arrested in June 2016 less than a month before three dozen members and supporters of Founding Parliament seized a police compound in Yerevan's Erebuni district to demand his release and President Serzh Sargsyan's resignation. The gunmen laid down their weapons after a two-week standoff with security forces which left three police officers dead. They are now standing three separate trials.

A well-known veteran of the 1991-1994 war in Nagorno-Karabakh, Sefilian has been a vocal critic of both the current and previous Armenian governments. In 2006, he was arrested shortly after setting up an anti-govern-

charge during his subsequent trial. Still, he spent 18 months in prison for allegedly illegal arms possession.

Sefilian was again detained along with his four associates in 2015, ahead of a series of anti-government rallies planned by them in Yerevan. They were charged with plotting street violence but were set free a month later.

## World Bank Delegation Meets with Prime Minister Karapetyan

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan received a delegation led by World Bank Yerevan Office Head Sylvie Bossoutrot on March 20.

During the meeting Bossoutrot presented the partnership framework between WB and Armenia for 2018-2022 and the proposed reform agenda, based on the government's five-year plan. She underlined that the World Bank is ready to build on the ties of effective cooperation with the Government of Armenia in a number of areas, including public administration, infrastructure, export promotion, human capital development, sustainable environment and natural resource management.

The WB Yerevan Office Head appreciated the ongoing transformations in Armenia and complimented the Prime Minister for achieving high rates of growth. Highlighting the successful course of constitutional reforms, the completion of our country's transition to the parliamentary system, the signing of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, the high rates of economic growth and the rising tide of Diaspora's involvement in various spheres of the economy, Bossoutrot noted their positive impact on the ongoing reform process in Armenia.

Karapetyan attached importance to the deepening and expansion of bilateral cooperation, welcomed the draft partnership program and the proposed reforms. The head of the Armenian government suggested continuing discussions on various projects with the government agencies and thanked the World Bank for supporting the reform of the water resource management system. He noted that his government will continue to reform this sector and take further steps towards its optimization.



Henrikh Mkhitaryan meets with wounded and disabled soldiers.

## Henrikh Mkhitaryan Visits Armenia, Donates Car to Veterans' Group

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian national football team captain, and Arsenal midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan visited Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) on March 19 and met with students and teaching staff, the Football Federation of Armenia said. The main goal of the visit was to meet with wounded and disabled soldiers.

Mkhitaryan arrived in Armenia to prepare for friendly matches with the national teams of Estonia and Lithuania on March 24 and 27.

Accompanied by YSMU Rector Armen Muradyan, Henrikh Mkhitaryan got acquainted with the Rehabilitation Center for wounded and disabled soldiers, and talked to patients and students.

He donated his car, which he had received for being included in the 2017 list of top 10 athletes of Armenia, to the Rehabilitation Center.

On March 17, the 19th round of the Armenian Football Championship kicked off with Yerevan's Pyunik FC clashing with Alashkert FC – another Yerevan-based team. Pyunik defeated Alashkert 3-1.

Mkhitaryan took in the game at the Pyunik Stadium.



## INTERNATIONAL

# ‘Trust No One’: Exiled Azerbaijani Reporter Says He’s Being Hunted In Kyiv

KYIV, Ukraine (RFE/RL) — Fikret Huseynli, a journalist who fled his homeland of Azerbaijan over a decade ago, says he got word early on March 5 that suspicious-looking men were trying to track him down in Kyiv.

Later that day, Huseynli said in a recent interview, four men whom he suspects were linked to the Azerbaijani security services turned up at the door of his rented apartment in the Ukrainian capital.

Claiming to be police and speaking both Ukrainian and Azeri, they told him they had been sent to detain him and that he’d be extradited “within 48 hours” back to Azerbaijan, where Huseynli faces what he and supporters call trumped-up charges linked to his past reporting, much of it focusing on corruption at the highest echelons of power in the energy-rich Caucasus country.

“They tried to break down the door. They punched me, and I lost three teeth. With the help of others, I managed to close the door, and I escaped through the balcony,” Huseynli said on March 14.

Huseynli, a correspondent for the independent Azerbaijani online television channel Turan, has been stuck in the Ukrainian capital since October, when authorities stopped him from boarding a flight to Germany, seizing his documents under an Interpol red notice requested by Baku. He remains in legal limbo as Ukraine decides what to do with him.

International media watchdogs have urged Kyiv not to aid Baku in its efforts to track down critics beyond its borders, and to return Huseynli’s passport and other documents to him so he can return to the Netherlands, where he currently resides.

Ukrainian officials have been conspicuous in their silence, releasing few if any statements on Huseynli’s plight.

It’s not the first such case in Ukraine. An Uzbek journalist was detained at an airport in Kyiv in September on the basis of an Interpol red notice, an alert sent out to police worldwide notifying them about an arrest request from one of Interpol’s 192 member countries. Critics charge is often abused by repressive governments in order to pursue dissidents after they have fled abroad.

Huseynli says that after the attack he headed for the embassy of the Netherlands, the country that first granted him asylum, then citizenship, after he went into self-exile in 2008.

Along with human rights campaigners in Ukraine, staff at the embassy urged Huseynli to report what had happened with the police, advice he did not take.

“I don’t trust the police, the courts, no one. I’ve been in Ukraine for six months without any documents, completely helpless,” explains Huseynli.

Huseynli, describing himself as a “political hostage,” claims suspected security-service agents have been shadowing him in the Ukrainian capital.

“I continue to be watched. Some of them are Slavic looking, some are similar to Azeris. And these aren’t street thugs. I think they work for security services; maybe Azerbaijan’s, maybe Ukraine’s or Russia’s,” says Huseynli.

Huseynli has said elsewhere that on the day of the alleged attack, unidentified men approached him with an offer: report positively on the Azerbaijani government and negatively on the opposition. Do this, they allegedly said, and the extradition request is dropped. If you don’t, they warned, unclear repercussions would follow.

International press watchdogs have highlighted Huseynli’s predicament.

“We call on Ukrainian authorities to immediately return travel documents to Fikret Huseynli and allow him to leave Ukraine,” said CPJ Europe and Central Asia Program Coordinator Nina Ognianova. “Kyiv must not be complicit with Azerbaijan authorities’ persecu-



Fikret Huseynli

tion of critics beyond its borders. We also call on Ukrainian police to investigate the March 5 physical attack on Huseynli, and bring the perpetrators to justice.”

Ukraine’s prosecutor-general did not respond to questions about the case.

Huseynli, the current head of the Amsterdam bureau of Turan, a Baku-based news agency that offers reporting in Azeri, Russian and English on its website portal, arrived in Kyiv on October 7, 2017, to check out possibly opening a bureau in the Ukrainian capital.

Huseynli was about to board a flight to Dusseldorf at Boryspil International Airport on October 14 when he was arrested under a red notice issued by Interpol at the Azerbaijani government’s request. It accused him of “crossing a border illegally” and “fraud.”

Following his arrest, a Kyiv court ordered him held for 18 days pending examination of his appeal.

A Kyiv court on October 27 ordered the journalist’s release on bail but ruled

that Huseynli should remain in Ukraine for two months while the Prosecutor-General’s Office investigated Azerbaijan’s extradition request, according to reports.

Ukrainian courts have twice extended the investigation term; the new deadline is March 20, 2018, according to the journalist.

“If I am killed or kidnapped or extradited to Azerbaijan in the near future, all responsibility lies with the Ukrainian authorities. What awaits me in Azerbaijan is a long prison term or death,” Huseynli wrote on his Facebook page on March 13.

Huseynli, who formerly worked for Azerbaijan’s opposition Azadliq newspaper, fled to the Netherlands after he was stabbed, beaten, and left for dead by unknown assailants in Baku in 2006.

His fears of being abducted appear well-grounded.

In May 2017, his colleague, the independent Azerbaijani investigative journalist Afgan Mukhtarli, disappeared in Tbilisi, Georgia, where he lived in exile, and reemerged two days later at a detention center in Azerbaijan.

On September 20, Ukraine detained Uzbek journalist Narzullo Akhunjzovov when he arrived in Kyiv from Turkey on September 20, also on the basis of an Interpol red notice.

The number of Interpol red notices has skyrocketed in the past decade — from 2,804 in 2006 to 12,878 in 2016, according to Reporters Without Borders. The watchdog and other NGOs charge that the alert has been abused by repressive governments to hunt down dissidents abroad.

Huseynli says he feels betrayed by Ukraine, whose “territorial integrity” he’s always backed amid the country’s conflict with Russia, which seized Crimea in 2014 and has backed separatist fighters in eastern Ukraine.

“But now the Ukrainian government is doing this to me,” he says. “They just want to sell me out.”

## Closer Economic Ties with Vietnam Explored

HANOI (Armenpress) — Armenian Ambassador to Vietnam Raisa Vardanyan on March 16 met with members of the Armenia-Vietnam Friendship Association and business representatives in Vietnam, the Armenian Foreign Ministry reported.

During the meeting, a range of issues relating to promoting the Armenia-Vietnam relations agenda were discussed. The meeting also touched upon the humanitarian, investment and tourism projects and the steps aimed at promoting the bilateral cooperation at

these directions.

The participants exchanged views on a number of regional developments. In this context Ambassador Vardanyan presented the process of transition to a parliamentary system in Armenia, the efforts of Armenia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group Co-Chair countries aimed at peacefully settling the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, as well as Armenia’s positions on regional issues and their solutions.



Ambassador Raisa Vardanyan with members of the Armenia-Vietnam Friendship Association

## International News

### Turkish Embassy in Denmark Attacked

COPENHAGEN (Armenpress) — At least two people attacked Turkey’s embassy in Copenhagen with petrol bombs early on Monday, March 19, causing some minor damage to the exterior of the building but no injuries, police in the Danish capital said.

No injuries were reported.

Police were at the scene investigating and no one had been arrested, a police official told Reuters.

### Artsakh Forces Down Azeri Drone

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) — The Armed Forces of Artsakh downed an Azerbaijani unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) or drone around 18:30, March 19, in the north-eastern (Talish) section of the line of contact.

The Azerbaijani drone violated the airspace of Artsakh and was deployed to carry out a reconnaissance operation, the Artsakh defense ministry said.

### ‘Yeva’ Banned in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) — The International Filmmor Women’s Film Festival announced on March 20 that the Governorship of Istanbul banned on Saturday, March 17, the planned screening of an Armenian-Iranian movie titled “Yeva” over security concerns.

Melek Özman from Filmmor told Bianet that the Consulate of Azerbaijan first sent an official letter to French Institute, the venue of the festival, and asked them to cancel the screening. “Later, they applied to Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they even applied to the Minister,” said Özman.

Eventually they received a written order from the authorities banning the screening.

According to the government of Azerbaijan, the movie creates the perception that Karabakh is an Armenian territory.

Filed by Armenian-Iranian director Anahit Abad, “Yeva” is about a woman, who escapes her influential in-laws with her daughter Nareh, after her husband’s death and takes refuge in one of the villages of Karabakh, Armenia, where she has to live in disguise.

### Arthur Abraham Fight On April 28

BERLIN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Former two-time World Champion Arthur Abraham (46-6, 30 KOs) will meet Denmark’s Patrick Nielsen (29-2, 14 KOs) in a make or break Super Middleweight showdown on April 28 at the Baden Arena in Offenburg, Germany, Boxing News reported.

Abraham returns to the ring having dropped a points decision to Chris Eubank Jr. in an IBO World title contest on July 15 at The SSE Arena, Wembley, while Nielsen is back in action after a knockout loss to John Ryder at the same London venue on October 14.

Following these defeats, both men are now eager to re-establish their World title credentials in this crunch Super Middleweight clash.

Having consulted his long-term coach and mentor, Abraham, the former IBF Middleweight and WBO Super Middleweight World Champion, says he is ready to get back on the World title trail in an attempt to reclaim his 168-lbs crown.

“After my last fight, I spoke to my coach Ulli Wegner and he helped me reach a decision,” said Arthur said. “I am not ready to retire! There is still more I want to achieve in boxing, and most of all I want to become World Champion again. I’m looking forward to fighting Patrick Nielsen, and putting on a good performance for my fans. I know Patrick is a good boxer. This will be a good test for me and a chance to prove I’m ready to challenge for World titles again.”

Nielsen, the former WBC Silver Middleweight and WBA International Super Middleweight Champion, says he is looking forward to facing Abraham in Offenburg, and having learnt a lesson from the Ryder loss, believes he has what it takes to defeat the German boxing icon and get his career back on track.



## INTERNATIONAL

# The Plight of Afrin Reverberates Across Europe

AFRIN, from page 1

Workers Party (PKK) and nationalist Turks. Whenever flags and posters of PKK leader Ocalan have been displayed, German police have intervened.

The closer Turkish tanks approached Afrin, the more exasperated the political confrontation in Germany became. Among the targets are not only Turkish institutions but also offices of German parties, seen as supporting the Erdogan campaign. According to the FAZ, acts of violence attributed to radical supporters of the Kurds have multiplied. These range from “balloons filled with paint being hurled at Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD) offices, windows of bank branches being smashed, police and army vehicles attacked, and arson attacks against Turkish cultural associations and mosques.” An Internet site called “fight4afirin” has been identified as the transmitter of messages urging violence, and the German authorities believe that German left-wing extremists have been heavily involved. The blog reports on actions against “Turkish fascism” being organized not only here but throughout Europe. It has been mooted, at the same time, that Turkish nationalist elements have staged attacks, in an attempt to discredit the opposition. It also cannot be excluded that right-wing extremists are exploiting the situation to target Turks.

In Germany incidents have been reported in various cities and federal states, among them, Berlin, Lower Saxony, Hamburg, Baden-Württemberg, Hesse and North Rhine Westfalia. According to the magazine *Der Spiegel*, the German authorities estimate that there are in Germany 14,000 supporters of the PKK, which has been outlawed since 1993.

Yet, this does not mean that the Kurdish community in Germany is prone to violence. On the contrary, as *Der Spiegel* also documents, their umbrella organization, Nav-Dem, is committed to non-violent resistance. “Our protest must remain peaceful,” says Azad Yusuf Bingöl, who broadcasts on the Munich-based Radio Lora every week. “We have to exert more pressure on those politically responsible, but we will not leave the framework of legitimacy.”

## Anti-Terrorism or Territorial Expansion?

On March 18, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was shown on television evening news celebrating the conquest of Afrin, which happened to coincide with the 103rd anniversary of the victory in Gallipoli in World War I. Erdogan praised the sacrifice of the Turkish soldiers, “martyrs” in the conflict, and appealed to mothers of the dead troops to be proud of their sons. Interspersed with coverage of Erdogan hailing the victory, were scenes of the conquered city: emptied of its inhabitants, and with Turkish and Syrian Free Army militants roaming the streets, or hoisting their flags atop central buildings.

Erdogan announced proudly that “many of the terrorists had turned tail and run away.” In fact, the Syrian Kurdish forces, the YPG, had decided to withdraw from the city, knowing full well that its fighters, who had been victorious against the Islamic State,

would be no match for the second largest army in NATO. To avoid a massacre, they withdrew, and an estimated 200,000 civilians sought refuge elsewhere. There is no doubt that this was a rational decision; 1,400 YPG fighters had been reportedly killed (though Erdogan boasted that more than 3,000 had been “neutralized”) and vital facilities including a hospital had been bombed.

The YPG did not have a chance in Afrin. The American air cover it had enjoyed in its successful campaign to drive the IS out of Kobane, was nowhere to be seen. As the FAZ noted days before the siege, “Washington, forced by Ankara to decide between the guerillas and a NATO partner, did not intervene in Afrin.” And Russia, which controls the airspace in the region of Afrin, left it open to Turkish planes. The only humane choice for the YPG was to withdraw, to protect as many civilian lives as possible. Now, it will reportedly move into a “new phase” of “hit-and-run tactics” in an attempt to liberate the city from Turkish occupation.

For it is now an occupied city. If remarks made by Turkish politicians are any indication, their aim is to move from occupation to annexation. It is not only the presence of Turkish flags, alongside those of the FSA, on public buildings that hints in this direction. In response to a European Parliament resolution demanding Turkey stop the offensive, Erdogan was quoted as saying, “We will stay until our work is done.” There was “nothing the European Parliament could tell Turkey,” and whatever that body said, would “go in one ear and out the other.”

## Today Afrin, Tomorrow Manbij...

There is good reason to believe that Erdogan intends to annex Afrin, as well as Manbij, also held by the YPG. Michael Martens, writing in the FAZ on March 17, quoted a former high-ranking Turkish diplomat to the effect that Erdogan intended to keep Afrin, as well as territory around Idlib. And Manbij. Martens also reported that Erdogan’s speaker and leading foreign policy advisor, Ibrahim Kalin, had spoken of an agreement struck with Rex Tillerson, who was the then US Secretary of State. The deal would have the US and Turkey setting up a “security zone” in and around Manbij, which implies the ethnic cleansing of the area, through expulsion of the Kurds.

And for whom are these zones to provide security? It may well be that Erdogan plans to resettle Syrian refugees from their current homes in camps to the areas cleansed of the native Kurdish population. Turkey, as Erdogan never fails to stress, has been hosting 3.5 million Syrians in refugee camps, financed largely by the European Union. There is good reason to believe this is the plan. Erdogan and other government officials have often spoken of their intention to repatriate the refugee “guests” to Syria, whenever possible. Ibrahim Kalin and Erdogan have both stated that they have no intention of handing Afrin (and presumably other conquered territories) back to the Assad regime. They have suggested that such a resettlement program might be in Europe’s interest, as it would alleviate pressure from refugee flows. Not only: reportedly, the Turkish agency responsible for disaster control, AFAD, has

announced it wants to set up nine new refugee camps in the Idlib province and nearby areas that came under Turkish control during the “Euphrates Protective Shield” operation. Martens reports that the Red Crescent and AFAD are already preparing to receive 3,000 internally displaced persons.

The Erdogan project may involve even greater ambitions. Rainer Hermann, an area specialist who was a correspondent in Turkey for many years, suggested in an article on March 20, that the precedent for Turkey’s current military campaign may be the “National Pact” of 1919. In autumn of that year, he writes, Mustafa Kemal “Ataturk” and his companions agreed on a set of demands for their national resistance movement, accompanied by a map. The demands were then endorsed by the last Ottoman parliament on January 20, 1920. According to the document, which distinguished between Arabs and Turks, but not between Kurds and Turks, the jurisdiction over some areas inhabited by Arabs was to be decided by referendum. Other areas, however, were claimed as territory for the new Turkish republic. These included northern Syrian, with Aleppo and Afrin, as well as northern Iraq, with Mosul, certain Aegean islands and western Thrace.

The map, writes Hermann, fell into oblivion for decades, until the coup attempt in 2016 and the recent military campaigns, which seem to express “great empire phantasies.” Does Erdogan plan to annex these territories?

## 100 Years Later

“Never again”: more than a slogan, the phrase is a pledge, a commitment on the part of the survivors of genocide, that such crime shall never be repeated. A precondition for the prevention of such crimes is the recognition that they have occurred, and the acknowledgement on the part of those successor states of what their predecessors had perpetrated. Thus, the crucial significance of the recognition of the Holocaust on the part of the post-war German political class. Turkey has thus far refused to take similar steps in recognizing the genocide perpetrated by the Young Turk regime during World War I. One should not lose sight of the fact that, following the expulsion of the Armenians from their historical homelands, as they were deported and sent on death marches to concentration camps in Der el Zor (Syria), many of their homes were handed over to ethnic Turks, resettled from the Balkans (or to Kurds who had collaborated with the regime).

At the time, the Great Powers let it happen. Can it be that today entire populations can be shoved from one place to the next, expelling the lawful inhabitants? Azad Yusuf Bingöl, broadcasting from Munich, recently read out a statement of the Kurdish umbrella group Nav-Dem, which said, “The western governments are silent. This makes the EU, the USA, Russia and the UN accomplices in this murder of the children of Afrin.” And, one might add, accomplices in the next, planned “population exchange.”

(Muriel Mirak-Weissbach is a regular contributor to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. She is based in Germany.)

# The Russian Billionaire Cupid Behind The Biggest Dating App in the World

By Angel Au-Yeung

LONDON (Forbes) — Russian entrepreneur Andrey Andreev is as close to a modern-day cupid as it gets, but instead of shooting bows and arrows he’s employing geolocation tools and facial recognition software.

He has helped build five successful online dating apps, including Badoo, the largest such app in the world, with 380 million user sign-ups and counting. His developers built and manage the infrastructure for Chappy, a dating app for gay men, and Huggle, an app that matches people based on the locations they frequent – in exchange for a cut of those apps’ profits. Badoo also has a 79-percent stake in Bumble, America’s fastest-growing online dating app, which puts the courtship in the hands of women, since only Bumble’s female users can make the first contact with a potential date.

All of this is enough to earn Andreev, age 44, a spot among the world’s richest for the first time. Forbes estimates his fortune at \$1.5 billion.

For someone who built his career around interactions and connections, Andreev kept a very low profile for years and was rarely written about in the press. Forbes Russia once called him “the most mysterious businessman in the West.” But Andreev refutes that description.

“Any Russian who achieves anything outside of Russia, it’s a big deal,” he tells Forbes, calling from London, where he lives and works. “This is why they called me mysterious. I’m not mysterious. I live in London and people see me every day – nothing mysterious here.”

He’s come a long way from Moscow, where he

was born. His real name is Andrey Ogandzhanyants, and both his parents were scientists. He later switched his last name to his mother’s maiden name, which is easier to spell and pronounce. “My passion for technology has been since day one,” he said. “My dad was involved in technology, so in our Moscow flat I had a million toys around me.”

He attended University of Moscow briefly before dropping out in 1992 at age 18 to move to Spain. “I wanted to travel and see the world,” he said. He took out a loan from his parents to support his travels around Europe before starting Virus, an online store that sold computers and computer accessories to internet users in Russia in 1995. He sold it “for a few hundred thousand” dollars in 1997, enough to pay his parents back in full.

Then in 1999 he founded SpyLog, a software tool that webmasters could use to track visitors to their sites. “It is the grandfather of Google Analytics,” Andreev boasts. He doesn’t claim that Google copied him, but he does believe Google was inspired by his project. Larry Page and Sergey Brin founded Google in September 1998; Google Analytics launched in 2005. Andreev exited his position in SpyLog in December 2001 for an undisclosed sum.

A year later in 2002, he built contextual ads company Begun. Finam Holdings, a Russian investment firm, had a majority stake in Begun in 2008 when Google expressed interest in acquiring it. “We almost closed the deal for \$140 million, but unfortunately the deal never happened,” Andreev said. It was reported that Russia’s competition agency blocked the deal. “We had an issue,” Andreev began to explain, before stopping himself. Begun still exists but

Andreev exited in January 2004 and is no longer affiliated with the company.

It’s been 10 years since he last visited Moscow, Andreev says. His father passed away and his mother now lives in Paris. He became a British citizen “in 2008 or 2009.” Has he given up his Russian citizenship? “I would rather not comment on that.”

Badoo, founded in 2006 from Spain but launched in 2009, is headquartered in London with an office in Moscow. Today it employs 300 developers, 80 of whom are women, who run Badoo and also provide support to Huggle, Chappy and Bumble.

“We build these apps together,” Andreev said. “There’s a million different apps in the app store and it’s difficult to be successful. But with Bumble, Huggle, Chappy – they don’t need to worry about money or developers. We have that. We can build the wireframes [prototypes] and design everything together. We just need the idea, direction, vision, and a strong person who will defend the idea and make this idea massive.”

In Bumble’s case, that person is its founder, Whitney Wolfe, a former cofounder at Tinder. Wolfe had sued her ex-boss and ex-boyfriend Justin Mateen for sexual harassment in June 2014 and settled later that year. Andreev convinced her to work with him on her next venture. “I told her, you have huge potential and I have the best infrastructure,” Andreev recalled. “Let’s do something.”

That something began in August 2014 on a Greek island. “We flew to Mykonos with a few of the original Tinder designers,” he said. Why Mykonos? “I don’t know, we just decided to go somewhere and not be distracted by phones and things, and we thought Mykonos would be good

for inspiration.” Three months later Bumble was born.

“Thanks for taking the chance on me when no one else would,” Wolfe wrote in a birthday message to Andreev on Instagram in February.

A month earlier, it was reported that Andreev was looking to sell his Bumble stake for an estimated \$1.2 billion. He denies those reports.

Valerie Stark, cofounder and CEO of Huggle, who now also runs communications for Andreev, describes his contribution to her company. “I drew my project literally on a piece of paper and he perfected it and made it real,” she said. “There were moments where I would argue and try to defend my vision regarding some features, but he by adding some tweaks and showing some [A/B testing] results would make it even better.”

Andreev’s biggest business continues to be his flagship Badoo, which launched a facial recognition feature in late 2017. The feature allows users to upload an image of a person they like and find other Badoo users who look similar.

He refuses to share revenue figures for Badoo, but said that Match Group, the publicly traded American company that operates online dating sites including OkCupid and Tinder, was a good comparison. Match Group, which has a \$12.2 billion market cap, reported \$1.3 billion in revenue for 2017. “We are smaller,” Andreev said. “But we are still a pretty big player.”

Andreev, who has a girlfriend but didn’t meet her on any of these apps, is also mum about his next apps or features other than to say that whatever it is will enhance human connection. “I sound like a product guy, I know, but what we’re really doing is creating strong tools to facilitate people interaction,” he said. “This is all about connecting people. It always has been.”

# Community News

## How Near East Rice Pilaf Became a New England Staple

By Keith Pandolfi

WORCESTER (*Boston Globe*) — Today, Near East is a New England staple.

Growing up in Shrewsbury in the 1970s, our weeknight dinners were pretty straightforward affairs: chicken Kiev or London broil; Prince spaghetti or tuna casserole. And while we often switched up the side dishes from Birds Eye frozen corn to Birds Eye frozen peas, one thing remained consistent — we always had Near East rice pilaf, and it was always prepared in the same Revere Ware saucepan that my parents received as a wedding gift in 1966.

I loved Near East as a kid. In fact, I still do. That

salty, nutty mix of rice and toasted orzo along with its accompanying paper flavor pack of onion, garlic, and bouillon. So in love was my family with Near East that when



we left Shrewsbury for Cincinnati in 1979, my mother packed a case of the rectangular white boxes, with their famous wheat stalk illustrations and simple earth-tones, into our station wagon, fearing we wouldn't be able to find it in the Midwest. Luckily we did, and Near East remained a dinnertime staple well into my 20s, when I started eschewing frozen vegetables and pre-made rice mixes for fresh roasted green beans and arugula salads.

I still pick up a box of Near East every once in a while, mostly for nostalgia's sake; a reminder of simpler times, and simpler dinners. But it wasn't until recently I learned the company itself was started out of an Armenian grocery store in Worcester — just a few miles from our old house in Shrewsbury — in 1962. It was the brainchild of one of America's most unsung female entrepreneurs, an Armenian immigrant named Hannah Kalajian. And while her story once appeared on every box of Near East, these days it's largely been forgotten. That's a shame, since — at a time when some question whether or not the American Dream still exists — her story is an encouraging reminder of just how potent, and how possible, that dream can be.

In her out-of-print autobiography, *Hannah's Story Escape from Genocide in Turkey to Success in America* (Armenian Heritage Press; 1990), Kalajian writes that she was born Heranoush (Armenian for "sweet fire") Gartatzoghian, one of five children, in Duzce, Turkey, in 1910; that in 1915, her father, Mateos, a beloved local butcher, was taken away to a labor camp by Turkish soldiers, where he would perish. By 1920, Kalajian and her family were forced to flee their hometown as word spread that the Turks were coming and the realities of what's now

see HANNAH, page 6



NAASR Headquarters Design-Exterior Side View

## NAASR to Build New Global Armenian Center

BELMONT, Mass. — By the end of April, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) expects to begin demolition of its aging and cramped headquarters on Concord Avenue, to make way for all-new construction at the site, which will create a new three-story building with a soaring glass wall extending the full three floors in front and illuminating the interior with natural light. "This will be one of the most beautiful buildings in the country," said NAASR Chairman Yervant Chekijian, "and a true global center for the Armenian community."

The plans call for a variety of Armenian features incorporated into the design. The lead building donors are Edward and Pamela Avedisian. The two other lead-

ing donor families are Margaret C. and Leon J. Atamian and Family, and Marta and James Batmasian. Many NAASR members and the community have also made significant gifts. "We are honored and grateful to the many generous families who have put their trust in NAASR as one of the world's leading institutions to preserve Armenian heritage for generations to come," said Chekijian.

The Belmont Planning Board approved the new construction plans after a presentation from Ara Krafian, CEO of the architectural and engineering design firm of Symmes, Maini & McKee (SMMA) of Cambridge, on December 19, 2017. Recently,



Margaret C. and Leon J. Atamian

NAASR selected a general contractor, Altair Construction, and anticipates a start date for site work and demolition in April. Meanwhile, NAASR has continued to raise funds for the \$6.5-million campaign and, to date, has financial commitments for more than \$4.8 million. "We invite the community to become part of NAASR's inspiring plans for our headquarters and create a lasting way to recognize your family," said Chekijian.

NAASR's rare book Mardigian Library is one of the top five Armenian libraries open to the public in the diaspora, soon to total 40,000 books, with books dating back to the 1600s, and rare periodicals dating to the 1800s, as well as unique personal archives of prominent scholars, early Armenian-Americans, and religious leaders. The new building will have ample space to accommodate existing holdings and allow for substantial growth, within a secure and up-to-date environment.

NAASR's new headquarters will be a central gathering space and world-class research center for Armenian Studies. Plans call for an expanded and secure library; an expanded event hall for diverse programming and community events; a welcoming bookstore; a new classroom; a Shoah Foundation video archive viewing room; a spectacular Garden Atrium; an Armenian Alphabet Wall alongside the monumental stairway; an Atrium Overlook; and a top-floor Solarium for study and receptions before and after events, with full accessibility under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

see NAASR, page 7

## Holy Trinity Pays Tribute to Fr. Mampre Kouzouian for a Life Of Service, Ministering To Those in Need

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On Friday, May 11, under the auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), a Celebration of a Life of Service on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Ordination to the Priesthood of Rev. Father Mampre A. Kouzouian will take place at Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St.

Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, will be present to celebrate this significant milestone marking Father Mampre's 60 years of dedicated service and commitment to the Armenian Church and its people.

The traditional Hrashapar Service will be held at 6 p.m. in the sanctuary to welcome the catholicos. Clergy from New England will be called on to participate. Doors to the Sanctuary will open at 5:30 p.m. All are invited to attend.

The 60th Anniversary Celebration Banquet follows in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall at 7:15 p.m. Advance reservations are required for the Banquet. To receive an invitation to attend the Banquet, please contact the Holy Trinity Church Office by emailing [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

At Father Mampre's request, funds will be raised to support two causes, "close to my heart:" the children at the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic of Yerevan State Medical University, a pediatric oncology clinic that treats children from all over Armenia, as well as homeless individuals and families in the Vagharshapat region surrounding Holy Echmiadzin.

"In May 2017, I was in Armenia," as Father Mampre shares. "This was my 16th visit to our Motherland and I chose to journey to the hospitals and the abandoned buildings where the



Father Mampre A. Kouzouian Prays with Little Ones at Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic Photo courtesy of Cynthia Kazanjian

homeless dwell in Yerevan. During my visit to the Muratsan Children's Cancer Clinic, innocent young children living with cancer, without their hair as a result of their treatment, were with their parents on their routine visits. The children were in pain, suffering from this cancerous disease. I couldn't stand it. After I said my prayers on each child, I came out of their rooms and cried like a child. I couldn't accept what I saw. These children are God's gifts to their parents, to our Nation, to our Motherland, and to our Churches. During that stay, I also went to visit the homeless individuals and families of the Vagharshapat region surrounding

see TRIBUTE, page 7



# How Near East Rice Pilaf Became a New England Staple

HANNAH, from page 5

known as the Armenian genocide became all the more palpable. Her mother, Cohar, knew that if they didn't leave Duzce right away, they would face the same fate her husband did. Or even worse.

After securing refuge in Constantinople, Cohar, unable to care for all her children, placed Kalajian in an orphanage. They would reunite a year later only to flee the Turks again, this time to Lebanon. In 1924, Kalajian secured passage on an ocean liner bound for New York, where she lived with a married older sister. She applied for a job at Bloomingdale's, and when the hiring manager couldn't pronounce "Heranoush," she changed her name to Hannah. Soon after, she met George Kalajian, a family friend and fellow Genocide survivor. After a 10-day courtship, they married and, by the early 1940s, ended up in Worcester, where George opened an Armenian grocery store and luncheonette called George's Spa and Market. While the luncheonette started out selling mostly coffee and doughnuts (its most avid customers being the employees of a nearby lumber mill), it expanded to daily specials of chop suey,

beef stew, baked beans, and Armenian rice pilaf, a customer favorite.

It was Kalajian's favorite, too. After all, pilaf had always played a special role in her life; just the idea of it nourishing her through the turmoil of her childhood. While enduring the 100-mile walk from Duzce to Constantinople, her mother provided her starving children a glimmer of hope by setting an imaginary pot over an imaginary fire, and stirring it. "Now the pilaf is cooking," she would say. "It will be ready soon! . . . Can you smell it?" In her book, Kalajian writes that the tactic worked. "I am sure I can smell the hot pilaf and see the glow of the flames," she writes. "Somehow it is easier to go to sleep with the taste of home in our heads."

Kalajian first came up with the idea of selling a pilaf mix commercially on a visit to California. As she told a newspaper reporter in 1974, "In the markets, the big thing was package mixes. . . . I said to myself, Why not a pilaf mix, a real one? If they can do it, so can I." Her idea came just in the nick of time, too. In the mid-'70s, the roads around the Lincoln Street market were rerouted, leaving it on a dead-end street with little foot traffic, and cutting it off from the lumber mill entirely. Fearing their market could soon go out of business, Kalajian got to work developing a perfect package-friendly recipe that would become the Near East pilaf we know today.

"It took her a year," her daughter Carol Kasparian told me on the phone recently. "She researched every aspect of the business. She talked to the rice commissioner to learn more about packaging; she learned about shelf life — she even designed the box!" Originally, the pilaf was made in the market's second-story apartment with dried brown rice, broken vermicelli noodles, and Lipton chicken stock. "It was a real Mickey Mouse operation," Kasparian remembers. "All these Armenian ladies working in that tiny room."

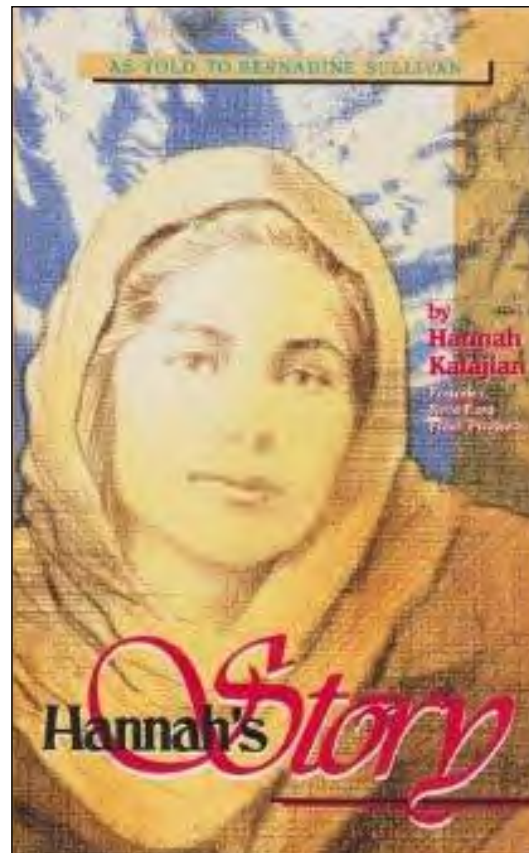
To market their product, Kalajian relied on Kasparian (her only child still living at home) to

drive her to grocery stores and markets all over the East Coast with a card table and an electric pot packed in the trunk for cooking demos. "Even though Mom had a license, she was

Leominster. By the 1980s, Near East was among the top-10 best-selling supermarket items in Boston.

Kasparian, who lives in Northborough, has been out of the rice business for a long time. (Near East was sold to the H.J. Heinz Co. in 1986, and is now owned by PepsiCo.) When I asked her if she still buys the pilaf, she said she prefers making it from scratch, the way her mother, who died in 1990, once did: frying some hand-crushed vermicelli noodles in butter, adding brown rice and a few cups of chicken stock, and simmering it for about a half hour. When I asked what she thought about the billion-dollar multinational corporation her mother's small Worcester-based business is today, she voiced but one concern: While Kalajian's story is still mentioned on Near East's website, her name no longer appears on the packaging as it once did. "I worry that most people who buy it now don't know who she is," she says. "Or who she was."

Browsing the aisle of my local grocery on a recent Friday, I noticed there were several varieties of Near East pilaf to choose from — Mushroom & Herb; Roasted Chicken & Garlic; and Toasted Almond among them — but I went straight for the one marked "Original." It had been a tough week and I was craving something simple and familiar. Back home, I simmered the pilaf in the same Revere Ware pot my mom used when I was a kid and served it to my wife and daughter alongside a pre-cooked rotisserie chicken and some fresh green beans. Sitting at the table with my small family, I thought about my own parents and those dinners we shared back in Shrewsbury more than four decades ago. I went to sleep that night happy — a taste of home in my head.



## ATP Partners with Kanayan Family to Honor 1918 Centennial

By Jason Sohigian

GLENDAL — Armenians around the world are celebrating the centennial of Armenia's declaration of independence on May 28, 1918, the birth of the First Republic.

On May 21, 1918, an Ottoman Turkish division attacked Armenian forces at Bash Aparan, with the intent of pushing towards Yerevan. After three days of fierce combat, the Armenians, led by General Drastamat "Dro" Kanayan, began to repel the Turkish regiments and they retreated on May 29, 1918. The victory at Aparan, along with Armenian success at Saradarabad and Karakilisa (known today as Vanadzor), was instrumental in the formation of the First Republic of Armenia.

The Kanayan Family is partnering with Armenia Tree Project (ATP) to create a living memorial to General Dro and his victory in Aparan.

The overall goal is to plant 2,500 trees to improve the site. Already 1,700 of ATP's trees have been planted by local residents in partnership with volunteers from Birthright Armenia and the tech company Monitis Armenia. An additional 800 trees will be planted this spring as part of a visit by the Kanayan Family.

ATP organized a series of educational and fundraising events to support these programs. The first was a lecture about the Battle of Bash Aparan by Dr. Dikran Kaligian at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research in Boston, followed by a fundraising reception at the Papken Suni Agoump which included remarks by Dro's daughter Olga Proudian and Tatul Sonentz-Papazian.

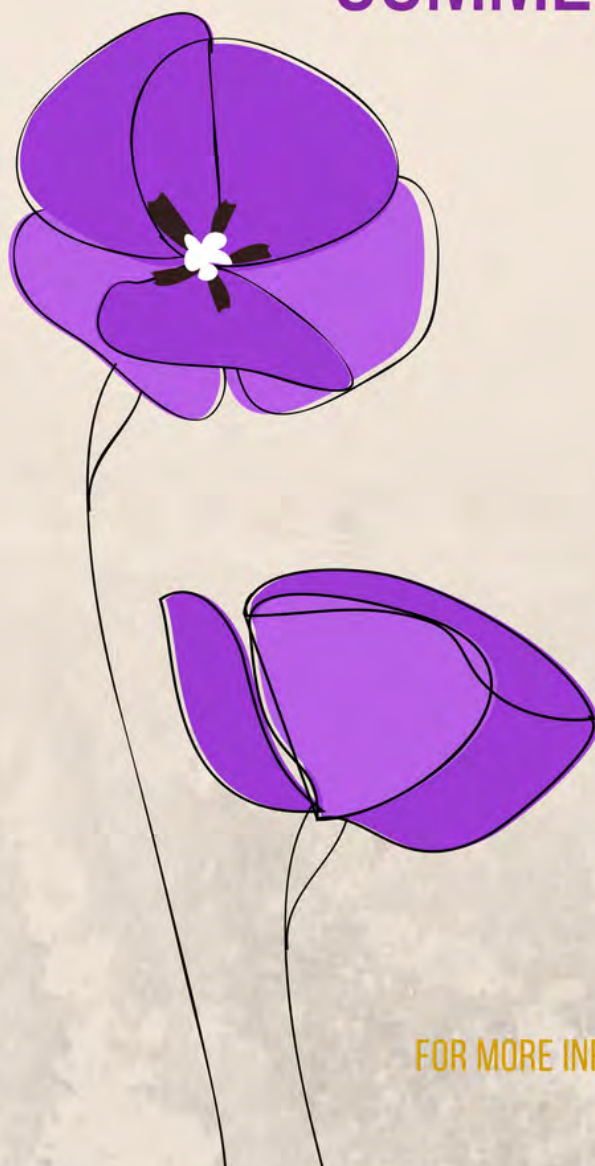
General Dro's grandson and namesake, Dro Kanayan of Massachusetts, says that planting trees in his grandfather's honor is appropriate because he had a strong connection to the land: "Dro understood the importance of what the land can provide for the people. My family believes that planting trees for the future of Armenia is a fitting tribute to the bravery and sacrifices of General Dro and his troops. We are proud to continue our grandfather's tradition of service to the Armenian Nation in this way."

The next series of events are in Los Angeles. The first, a lecture by Dr. Garabet Mouldjian co-hosted by the Woodbury University Armenian Students Association, was held on March 7.

The next event is a fundraising reception at the Oak and Vine in Glendale on Thursday, April 12. Philip Kanayan is planning to attend, along with leaders from the local Armenian community.

Ticket and sponsorship information is available via [www.ArmeniaTree.org/1918](http://www.ArmeniaTree.org/1918)

## 103<sup>RD</sup> ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATIVE WEEKEND



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Holy Week at St. Vartan Cathedral Observed March 25-April 1

NEW YORK — St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral will observe Holy Week, March 25 through 31, with a series of special services, culminating in the Easter Sunday celebration on April 1.

Holy Week is the sacred commemoration of the dramatic events leading to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, His victory over death and the redemption of humanity and the fallen world. The Armenian Church re-enacts these episodes in the days leading up to Easter.

Palm Sunday, the commemoration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, falls on March 25. Fr. Mamigon Kiledjian (dean of St. Vartan Cathedral) will be the celebrant for the services, which will begin with a Morning Service at 9:30 a.m., and will continue with the Divine Liturgy at 10:30 a.m. The Turun-patzek or "Door-Opening" Service will be held after the Divine Liturgy.

The St. Vartan Cathedral Council will host a special "Children's Day" program on Palm Sunday, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Children ages 5 and older are invited to take part in the Palm Sunday procession, and create arts and crafts.

March 29 is Great and Holy Thursday and the day's services memorialize the Last Supper, Jesus' vigil in the Garden of Gethsemane, his arrest and trial. Two separate services will be celebrated on this day. In the morning, the Divine Liturgy will begin at 11 a.m. This will be followed by a luncheon.

In the evening, the "Washing of the Feet" ceremony will start at 7 p.m., with the Khavaroom or Vigil Service following at 8:30 p.m. During the Washing of Feet ceremony, twelve individuals will serve as surrogates for the apostles.

The crucifixion and death of Christ will be observed on March 30 — Great and Holy Friday — and again two services will occur. The Order

of the Crucifixion of Christ will begin at noon. This will be a short service enabling working people in Manhattan to attend, and it will be followed by a luncheon in the Diocesan Complex.

That same evening, at 7:30 p.m., the Order of the Entombment of the Lord, or Taghoom Service, will take place.

On Great and Holy Saturday, March 31, the Divine Liturgy will be preceded by a scripture-reading ceremony at 6:30 p.m.

Easter Eve Liturgy will begin at 7 p.m., celebrated by Fr. Mamigon Kiledjian. Students from the Diocesan Khrimian Lyceum and the St. Vartan Armenian Saturday School will provide the Scripture readings. A reception will follow the services.

The drama of Holy Week will culminate on Easter Sunday, April 1. Easter is the central holy day of the Christian calendar, and commemorates the discovery of Christ's empty tomb and the news of His glorious Resurrection. Matins will begin at 9:30 a.m. The Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:30 a.m. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, will celebrate the liturgy and deliver the homily. The St. Vartan Cathedral Choir will sing the Divine Liturgy under the direction of Khoren



Melanie Dadourian and Oscar Tatosian with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian during the releasing of the doves ceremony at Easter last year at St. Vartan Cathedral.

Mekanejian. Florence Avakian will accompany on the organ.

Immediately following the service, the Release of Doves ceremony will go forth on the cathedral plaza. This year, Adrienne Alexanian will serve as godmother of the doves ceremony.

An Easter Sunday reception and program will follow the services, in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium. The reception will include a home-

blessing service, and the recognition of the various names associated with the holiday. The reception is free and open to the public.

For information on these observances—and on the cathedral's 50th anniversary weekend of May 5-6, call the Diocese of the Armenian Church or visit its website, [www.armenianchurch.us](http://www.armenianchurch.us).

St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral is located at 630 Second Ave. (corner of 34th Street).

## Holy Trinity Pays Tribute to Fr. Mampre Kouzouian For a Life Of Service, Ministering To Those in Need

TRIBUTE, from page 5

Holy Echmiadzin. I went to the dilapidated old buildings where homeless people dwell in very small rooms. There were young children with one or both parents living in these run-down, vacant buildings without water, electricity or bathrooms. For me, it was totally unacceptable to see human beings living in these conditions. Here too, I cried like a child feeling so sorry for our own people living in these conditions. I started thinking of how I can be of help to our children and our people that I visited. I thought that the gifts that my friends would want to send me, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of my ordination, should be used to support both the cancer-stricken children being cared for at the Muratsan Children's Cancer Clinic in Yerevan as well as the homeless individuals and families with children in the Vagharshapat region surrounding Holy Echmiadzin. That's the reason why I am appeal-

ing to you for your financial support to join in my cause to help our children and homeless of our Motherland."

For information on ways to support, email the Holy Trinity Church office, [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org). The Fund is being administered by Holy Trinity Armenian Church and will support its intended purposes at the request of Father Mampre and in collaboration with the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

The catholics will be visiting the United States to preside over the 50th anniversary of the consecration of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York City. That celebration will include a Concert of Sacred Music and historical photo exhibit on the evening of Saturday, May 5; and a Pontifical Divine Liturgy on Sunday, May 6. For information on St. Vartan Cathedral's 50th Anniversary Celebration, log onto the website of the Eastern Diocese, [www.armenianchurch.us](http://www.armenianchurch.us).

## NAASR to Build New Global Armenian Center

NAASR, from page 5

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has given full support with a capital grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Cultural Facilities Fund of \$225,000 awarded in 2017, primarily for installation of an elevator and other accessibility features under the ADA.

NAASR will move to temporary offices at the AGBU-New England headquarters on Mt. Auburn Street in Watertown. NAASR's library and bookstore will go into storage for a year while the building is under construction,

although NAASR will operate its bookstore online, at [www.naasr.org](http://www.naasr.org).

NAASR will continue to offer programming and co-sponsor conferences nationwide during construction. NAASR plans to hold programs in the Boston area with Armenian community partners and educational institutions in the region, and will continue its national programming at venues around the country.

To become a lasting part of NAASR's new headquarters, please contact Sarah Ignatius, Executive Director, at [sarah@naasr.org](mailto:sarah@naasr.org).

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(left to right) Marta and James Batmasian, and Edward and Pamela Avedisian



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Jirair and Anahid Nishanian Honorary Co-Chairs at Soorp Khatch

WASHINGTON — Soorp Khatch Church of Bethesda, Md. recently celebrated its 53rd anniversary gala dinner, which was attended by nearly 200 parishioners. Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan presided over this truly special event, and was recognized for his 50 years of service to the Armenian Church.

Jerair and Anahid Nishanian served as the honorary co-chairs for the evening.

Also speaking at the event were Deputy Chief of Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United States Hrachia Tashchian as well as the Representative of the Republic of Artsakh to the US Robert Avetisyan.

Choloyan presented Letters of Recognition to Arsen Sayan, Ara Sahagian, Rose Balian and Hinazant Arabian.

One of the highlights for the evening was a medley of traditional Armenian Songs performed by Emma Soghomonian and Pamela Tossounian. They were accompanied by Armik Khachatourians on drums and Mihran Kochyan on oud. The national anthems, Star Spangled Banner and Mer Hairenik, were performed by Sareen Balian and Arya Balian.

Anto Tossounian was master of ceremonies.

The anniversary dinner was co-chaired by Elda Hacopian and Jemma Simonian.

Jirair Nishanian is the founder and president of the Jirair Nishanian Foundation (JNF). The JNF came to be through Jerair Nishanian's profound sense of duty inherited from his parents, who were the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and a deep desire to assist the underprivileged young Armenians, in particular, the ones talented, so they can achieve their potential so that they can contribute to the advancement of their motherland, Armenia.



Jerair and Anahid Nishanian, the Honorary Co-Chairs

The Primary Mission of JNF is to facilitate an opportunity for underprivileged, talented young Armenian students in Armenia to receive higher education and achieve their inherent potentials, and in turn, contribute to the welfare of their motherland and the future generations.

JNF is also committed to religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, translations, publications, and educational endeavors, and grants scholarships and financial aid to the talented underprivileged young Armenians to

attain higher education in various disciplines in liberal arts, law, sciences, engineering and architecture; therefore, exclusively preserve their Armenian heritage, and build a strong generation of Armenians armed with higher education.

The foundation awards scholarships to attend Gavar State University and the State Engineering University in Yerevan.

Since its formation in 1993, JNF has been granting scholarships to undergraduate students in Gavar State University in Gavar, Armenia, but since 2011, JNF expanded its scholarship program to include students majoring in engineering and architecture in National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia, located in Yerevan. To secure the continuity of the JNF scholarship program, Nishanian on May 2013, donated \$1,000,000 to establish an endowment fund.

Since 2007, the JNF scholarship program in Armenia has been managed by the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America's Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) in New York and its branch office in Yerevan. The JNF currently provides scholarships to more than 70 college students in Armenia, and is anticipated to increase the number of the students to 80 within the next two years.

The Jerair Nishanian Foundation was one of the six major donors in the US for the Centennial Memorial of the Armenian Genocide which took place in Washington D.C. in May 2015.

The foundation has also funded several special projects, including the remodeling and construction of the Main Altar of Saint Mary Armenian Apostolic Church, Washington DC.; the translation of the book from Turkish into English by Dr. Taner Akcam, titled The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity, as well as The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity.

Nishanian is the recipient of several medals, certificates of appreciation and commendations from universities in Armenia and different orga-



St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal

nizations which include: St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal from Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians; Erakhtagitutyun Medal (The Medal of Gratitude) from the president of the Republic of Armenia; Medal of Recognition and Gratitude from the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Armenia; the Ellis Island Medal of Honor; Appreciation Medal from St. Nersess Seminary; Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy from Gavar State University in Armenia and St. Nersess Shnorhali medal from the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.

Jerair Nishanian is married to Anahid Nishanian and they have three children and five grandchildren.

— Diramayr Anahid  
JNF Board Member

## OBITUARY

### Mary D. Mingain Vero Beach Resident

VERO BEACH, Fla. — Mary D. "Doris" Mingain, 91, of Vero Beach, passed away peace Sunday, March 11, with her family by her side.

She was born to the late Perous and Karekin Mavian on March 1, 1927 in Brantford, Ontario,



Canada and later relocated to Windsor, Ontario. She married the late Henry Mingain in 1963, and they made their life together in North Providence, RI. They later retired and wintered in Port Charlotte, Fla.

Early in Mary's career she was a hair stylist and then a draftsman in Detroit. After moving to Rhode Island, she worked at Rhode Island College as an administrative assistant.

Mingain was a member of St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church in Providence. She was an amazing artist, with oils and water colors. She loved to sew, cook, laugh, travel and spend time with her family. She had a proud love of her Armenian heritage and spent time educating people on the genocide.

She is survived by her loving son Mark and his wife Karen of Vero Beach. Dearest sister of Joe (the late Dorothy) Mavian, Dick (the late Sue) Mavian, the late Michael (Delores) Mavian, the late Zorek (Alice) Mavian; grandchildren Randon Mullins and Nikayla Brown and three great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be private.

### Karen Jean (Goshgarian) Smith

PLYMOUTH, Mass. — Karen Jean (Goshgarian) Smith, 67, died on March 4, 2018, at the Harborside Healthcare in Plymouth. She was the devoted wife of William F. Smith of Plymouth.

Born in Boston on January 11, 1951, she was daughter of Knarig R. "Kay" Goshgarian and her husband the late Casper Goshgarian.

She was educated in Framingham, a graduate of Framingham North High School. She graduated from Lasalle Jr. College, where she received her associate's degree in early education.

She was the owner and president of Pilgrim Pressure Cleaning.

Besides leaving her husband William "Bill," she was the mother of Michelle N. Smith of Plymouth and sister of the late Sarkis Goshgarian.

The Funeral Service took place in the Cartmell Funeral Home with interment in Vine Hills Cemetery, Plymouth.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Assembly Delegation Attends California Senate Hearing Chaired by Sen. Portantino

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — On Wednesday, February 28, a delegation from the Armenian Assembly of America attended a hearing initiated by the CA State Senate's Select Committee on California, Armenia and Artsakh Mutual Trade, Art and Cultural Exchange, under the leadership of Committee Chair, California State Sen. Anthony J. Portantino (D-25).

The committee convened its inaugural hearing at the State Capitol in Sacramento, and covered a wide range of subjects, including the reinvigoration of trade between California and Armenia, the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Sumgait Pogrom by way of testimony from human rights activist, author, and refugee from Baku, Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte, and an enlightening discussion on the University of California (UC) system's and UC students' respective positions vis-a-vis divesting approximately \$75 million from the Republic of Turkey. The latter discussion was precipitated by a successful grassroots divestment campaign on every UC campus by UC student activists of Armenian descent. The Armenian Assembly of America extends its profound gratitude to State Senator Portantino for chairing the hearing, and commends State Senators Scott Wilk, Ben Allen, and John Moorlach for their participation.

Armenian Assembly delegates provided statements during the public comment period of the

hearing. Assembly delegation members included Southern California Regional Council member Helen Haig, Assembly Central Valley activists Daniel Aydenian and Helvina Grikoryan, and Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan.

Assembly delegation members are also grateful to have privately met and discussed a wide range of issues with Members of the California State Assembly and State Senate, including California State Assemblymembers Dante Acosta (R-38), Laura Friedman (D-43), Heath Flora (R-12) and Jim Patterson (R-23), and California State Senators Scott Wilk (R-21), John Moorlach (R-37) and Tom Berryhill (R-8).

Among the issues discussed with members of the state Senate is the status of AB-1597, authored by California State Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian (D-46), which, if approved and signed into law, would prohibit California's public employee retirement systems (CalPERS and CalSTRS) from investing new or renewing existing public funds in Turkish government-issued, owned, controlled, or managed bonds and assets. AB-1597 overwhelmingly passed (67 - 0) during a floor vote in the California State Assembly on June 1, 2017 and is currently pending in the California State Senate's Committee on Public Employment and Retirement. The Armenian Assembly of America has submitted a written statement for the record in support of AB-1597.



From Left to Right: Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan, Assembly Southern California Regional Council member Helen Haig, CA State Assemblymember Heath Flora (R-12), Helvina Grikoryan, and Daniel Aydenian



From Left to Right: Daniel Aydenian, Helvina Grikoryan, Assembly Southern California Regional Council member Helen Haig, CA State Senator Tom Berryhill (R-8), and Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan



From Left to Right: Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan, Assembly Southern California Regional Council member Helen Haig, Fresno Mayor Jim Patterson, Helvina Grikoryan, and Daniel Aydenian



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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Washington Armenian Community Unites

WASHINGTON, from page 1  
Sahakyan invited again to the US, this time officially by the White House.  
Totah invited Hamparian to speak. Hamparian thanked Sahakyan for making his work in Washington easy. He said, "Artsakh is on the right side of the defining issues that matter here in Washington DC, on questions of peace, on questions of dialogue and on questions of democracy..." Artsakh wants accountability on questions of peace and truce violations, open communication and dialogue. Hamparian said that Artsakh is an American story: it is the victory of a free people over foreign rule.  
Hamparian declared that in honoring President Sahakyan, they were honoring a generation, starting in the late 1980s, that turned the tide of one thousand years. Armenians went from losing land and hope to a rebirth

thanks to the people of Artsakh. He encouraged the guests to honor the president and his coevals by showing their support through money, time and effort to those on the frontlines of Armenian independence.  
Totah then invited Sahakyan to speak. Deputy Head of the President's Administration David Babayan, translated his remarks into English. Sahakyan said that the American-Armenian community was one of the most powerful and accomplished segments of the Armenian diaspora, and was carrying out important work in developing Artsakh-US and Armenian-American relations and supporting Artsakh.  
In particular, Artsakh, he said, is interested in developing a partnership with the United States. The peoples of the two countries share much in common in their system of values, Sahakyan continued, including dedication to

the principles of democracy, freedom, and initiative, and the unacceptability of stereotypes.  
Sahakyan then bestowed Artsakh state medals of gratitude to the ANCA and its representatives for their consistent support and services rendered to the Artsakh Republic. The same awards were previously awarded to the Assembly. ANC American-Armenian activist Dr. Sarkis Agasarkisian of Georgia was called to the front to receive the medal of gratitude, while Kaspar Karampetian, president of the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy, visiting from Belgium, was given the Mesrop Mashtots Medal by the Artsakh president.  
At this point, Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny declared that it was truly an honor to come together as one community united in support of Artsakh on this auspicious occasion. He called up Annie Totah, and together with Aram Hamparian, the three organizational leaders toasted the president.  
Totah repeated that they would be working for the president's next visit to be on the invitation of the White House. Hamparian concluded the evening by emphasizing that our community is deeply united when it comes to issues like Artsakh.  
During the banquet, a 20-year-old pianist from Artsakh, Anahit Arushanyan, performed three musical selections for the gathering during a break in between speeches.

The Artsakh delegation, in addition to the president and Babayan, included Foreign Minister Masis Mayilian, parliamentarians David Ishkhanyan and David Melkumyan, and was accompanied by Artsakh's Permanent Representative in the United States, Robert Avetisyan.  
In the audience were several clergymen, including, in addition to Archbishop Aykazian, Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar General of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America. Aram Bakshian, a speechwriter for US Presidents Nixon, Ford and Reagan, and former US Ambassador to Armenia John Evans were present. The leaders of Armenian political parties like the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, cultural organizations like the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada and the Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural Association of the Eastern United States, as well as service organizations like the Knights of Vartan were in attendance.

**Next week's Mirror will have a special interview of President Bako Sahakyan conducted by Aram Arkun of the Mirror staff]**



From left, Bryan Ardouny, Annie Totah, Mrs. Victoria Hovhannisian, and Aram Bakshian



Amb. Grigor Hovhannisian welcomes the guests (photo: Aram Arkun)



From left, Robert Avetisyan, Masis Mayilian and David Babayan



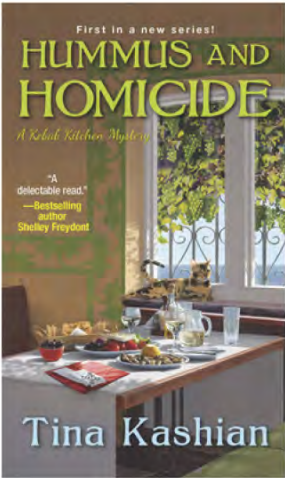
Annie Simonian Totah (photo: Aram Arkun)



Archbishop Vicken Aykazian



Aram Hamparian (photo: Aram Arkun)



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COMMUNITY NEWS

in Support of Artsakh



From left, Aram Hamparian, Bryan Ardouny and Annie Simonian Totah prepare to make a joint toast



Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan, left, with David Babayan (photo: Aram Arkun)



From left, Nora Nazerian Vartkessian, Vartan Nazerian, President Sahakyan, Edmond Azadian, Kevork Marashlian

ADL Supreme Council Meets with Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan

ADL, from page 1

On March 16, the ADL representatives had a private meeting with President Sahakyan's group in the office of the Artsakh Republic representative to the United States. ADL Supreme Council President Nazerian welcomed the guests from Artsakh to the United States and then reported on the activities of ADL members in Artsakh. The meeting turned into a substantive discussion of the political situation of Artsakh. A number of plans which will be implemented in Artsakh in the near future by the ADL and associated organizations were discussed.

After the conclusion of the meeting, the ADL Supreme Council invited the Artsakh delegation to a special dinner at an elegant Washington restaurant.

The members of the visiting Artsakh delegation included, in addition to President Sahakyan, Artsakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Masis Mayilian, members of Parliament David Ishkhanyan and David Melkumyan, and Deputy Head of the President's Administration David Babayan.



The meeting with the Artsakh delegates

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Berge Setrakian Honored on the 30th Anniversary of the Artsakh Movement

SETRAKIAN, from page 1

A number of representatives from the Armenian-American community were invited to the March 15 reception along with the Armenophile former US Ambassador to Armenia John Evans. Ambassador of Armenia to the United States Grigor Hovhannisian served as the master of ceremonies, first welcoming the official representatives of the Republic of Artsakh and then inviting a number of representatives of the Armenian-American community to themselves deliver their words of greetings to the guests.

At the end, President Sahakyan spoke and declared that he had visited America on a variety of prior occasions. However, this visit is the first to bear both political and historical significance. He then thanked the Armenian General Benevolent Union and its president, Berge Setrakian, who was sitting next to him at the table of honor. He then ceremoniously pinned the Mesrob Mashtots Medal of the Republic of Artsakh on Setrakian's lapel and gave him an official governmental decree in recognition of his years of assistance to Artsakh.

Moved by this unexpected act of appreciation, Setrakian spoke emotionally, stressing that whatever the diaspora provided to the heroic people of Artsakh was insufficient. The diaspora was obligated to do much more because the Artsakh independence movement gave pride to the diaspora, and inspired its youth to continue to live their lives as Armenians.



COMMUNITY NEWS

# How an Armenian Soldier Saved the Life of a Future US Senator

WASHINGTON (Armenpress) – Former US Sen. Mark Kirk says he owes his life to an Armenian soldier. The American politician made the remark in his speech March 9 when the Armenian parliamentary delegation awarded Kirk with the Medal of Honor of the Armenian National Assembly in Washington D.C.

Many years ago when Mark Kirk visited Armenia as an ordinary staff member of the Congress, he went to the frontline to get acquainted with the situation, and if it weren't for an Armenian soldier standing next to him, this could've been the last visit of the US politician, Voice of America reports.

"We were in a trench near Terter, we were looking at Azerbaijani positions. I mistakenly raised my head up and right at that moment I felt the hand of the Armenian soldier on my collar, who pulled me back. An Azerbaijani bullet passed through the very place where my head was seconds ago. The Armenian soldier saved my life, and it was a lesson for me that you can't raise your head from a trench," Mark Kirk said.

The Senator learned another lesson from this visit also. He emphasized that history has been unfair towards the Armenian people and that historic justice should be restored, firstly by recognizing the Armenian Genocide. "Who remembers the Armenians" – the Senator repeated the infamous statement of Adolf Hitler. "Who remembers the Armenians? I remember the Armenians, and none of us should forget the Armenian Genocide, the Armenian people, the wonderful, creative people," Kirk said.

Bryan Ardouny, Executive Director of the Armenian Assembly of America, and Aram Hamparian, Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee – two most



Sen. Mark Kirk

important organizations of the Armenian community of the US, say that the volume of pro-Armenian work of Mark Kirk in the capacity of Senator was unprecedented. Armenia's Ambassador to the US Grigor Hovhannisyan thanked the US politician on behalf of Armenia.

"You have captured your unique place in our hearts, and we hope that Armenia has its place in yours," the Ambassador said.

Upon bestowing Mark Kirk with the medal, Vice Speaker of Parliament Arpine Hovhannisyan said that many years ago when she was following Mark Kirk's activ-

ities she couldn't imagine that she would be the one awarding the medal to him.

"I couldn't even dream about having the honor to award the Senator with his medal," she said.

Upon knowing that Arpine Hovhannisyan is representing the Republican Party of Armenia, the party which holds majority in the parliament, the Senator, who is a Republican, immediately joked: "If things go bad in the US and Donald Trump's Republican administration fails, we, US Republicans, will probably move to Armenia to request asylum."

# Genocide Commemoration at Heritage Park on April 21

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee will host a commemoration of the Armenian Genocide on Saturday, April 21, at the Armenian Heritage Park on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway at 3 p.m. and is expected to conclude at 5 p.m.

This year will mark the 103rd anniversary of the 1.5 million Armenians massacred by the Ottoman Empire in 1915. The focus of this year's program will be on coming togeth-

Buses will leave from the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, St. James Armenian Apostolic Church, and Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church.

For more information e-mail BostonAGCC@gmail.com.



Singer R-Mean



State Rep. David Muradian

er as a community, united against genocide.

The event, open to the public, will feature as speakers Massachusetts State Rep. David Muradian, editor of the Armenian Weekly Rupen Janbazian, and more. Singer R-Mean and the Zangakner Performing Arts Ensemble will perform.

# ARF Eastern US Announces Schedule for First Republic Centennial Conference

WATERTOWN – The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Eastern US has announced the program schedule for the First Republic of Armenia Centennial Conference, taking place May 11-12 at Columbia University in New York.

The conference will feature several speakers including Hagop Balian, Richard Hovannisian, Ashot Melkonyan and Ronald Grigor Suny.

The event is co-sponsored by the Armenian Review and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) on the occasion of the republic's centennial.

"An international cast of speakers has been assembled, not just to explain the historical events and significance of the First Republic, but also to reflect on how what happened 100 years ago has impacted Armenia and Armenians in the past thirty years," said conference programming chair Dikran Kaligian.

The conference begins at 7 p.m. Friday, May 11, with a plenary roundtable session titled "The First Republic of Armenia: 100 Years Later." Professors Richard Hovannisian, Ronald Suny, Stephan Astourian, and Dikran Kaligian will lead the roundtable.

On Saturday, May 12, the full-day program

will start at 9:30 a.m. Sessions include "Key Figures and Events of the First Republic" with speakers for the Armenian-language session Amaduni Virabian (Armenia), Hagop Balian (France), Raymond Kevorkian (France) and for the English-language session: Tatul Sonentz-Papazian (US), Khatchig Mouradian (US), Vartan Matiossian (US), Nareh Kupelian (US).

Another session that day will be "Terra Irredenta: The Struggle to Secure Armenia's Borders" with Ruben Safrastyan (Armenia), Ashot Melkonyan (Armenia), Lernik Hovhannisyan (Artsakh), Robert Krikorian (US), Stephen Jones (US) and Pietro Shakarian (US).

Other sessions that day will feature Ara Sanjian (US), Marc Nichanian (Portugal), Hayk Demoyan (Armenia), Alla Mirzoyan (US), Henry Theriault (US), Gregory Aftandilian (US) and Marc Mamigonian (US).

There will also be a keynote luncheon on Saturday featuring Hovannisian. A full listing of speaker topics and presentations will be available soon.

Registration details for the conference will be announced next week.

The conference is part of a larger series of activities devoted to the Republic of Armenia's centennial.

# Virginia D. Bandazian Scholarship Fund Applications Available for 2018

WASHINGTON – Grant applications are being accepted from prospective candidates of the Virginia D. Bandazian Scholarship Fund for 2018. Her children established the fund after the 1997 passing of Virginia D. Bandazian. The foal of this fund is for the education of Armenian Women whose legal residence is in the Communities of Virginia, Maryland and/or Washington, DC area.

The scholarship is an open grant awarded to full-time undergraduate or graduate female students of Armenian descent on the basis of merit and need, attending an accredited university or college in the United States of America. At least two letters of recommendation must be received from Armenian Organizations and/or Armenian community leaders or parish priest of the Virginia, Maryland and/or Washington, DC

area verifying the involvement of the applicant in Armenian activities and good standing.

The application can be found and printed from the official webpage, virginiabandazianfund.square-space.com. The current grants are One \$1,000 and will be awarded prior to May 31. Applications must be filed before April 30, with all information, picture, documents and transcripts. Applications may be mailed to 2801 West Grace Street; Richmond VA

23221 or emailed to virginiabandazianscholarship@gmail.com.

For additional information and application forms, contact the Scholarship Trustees at virginiabandazianscholarship@gmail.com.

Virginia D. Bandazian was an advocate for the education of Armenian Women and believed "Without its women being educated, a society cannot advance."

# Arts & Living

## BOOKS

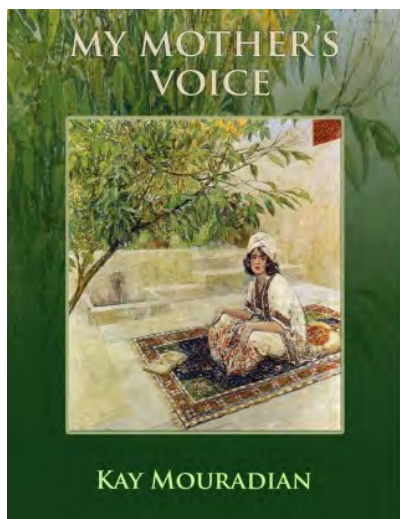
### Mouradian's Book Shines Light on Armenian Genocide

By Cameron Vernali

LOS ANGELES (*Daily Bruin*) — Kay Mouradian's mother survived the Armenian Genocide at the age of 14.

However, while Mouradian heard stories of her mother's experiences as a child, the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) alumna wouldn't really learn about the details of the horrific event until she began writing a book on the subject called *My Mother's Voice* in her 50s.

The novel and accompanying documentary focus on her mother's life during the Armenian genocide, which Mouradian researched for 10 years in libraries, book shops and other countries. Mouradian won the Armenian Genocide Awareness Legacy Award at the Armenian National



University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) alumna Kay Mouradian wrote a novel and released a documentary describing her mother's experiences during the Armenian Genocide, both titled *My Mother's Voice*.

Committee of America Western Region's annual awards banquet on February 24 for spreading awareness of the topic and said she hopes a personal focus on the Armenian Genocide will help people, especially teachers, remember a part of history that is often forgotten.

Mouradian said the idea for the book first came from her mother, who was suffering from severe dementia. As her condition got worse, she told Mouradian to write a book about her life and the Armenian Genocide. However, Mouradian was teaching throughout Los Angeles and had plans to go to Beijing to teach overseas at the time.

But her plans changed — Mouradian never went to Beijing and ended up writing the novel instead. Mouradian said she wanted to help the Armenian Genocide retain its place in history, and as a former teacher, she wanted to give other educators a more accessible way of understanding the genocide.

The Armenian genocide began in 1915, during which the Ottoman Empire — which includes modern-day Turkey — committed genocide of more than 1.5 million Armenians residing in the empire. However, Mouradian said people

see BOOKS, page 14



Co-Chair Nina Festekjian

## Evening of Art and Food Raises Funds For YerazArt

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — On March 11, a capacity crowd gathered at anoush'ella saj kitchen restaurant in the South End for a fundraiser to benefit YerazArt,

an organization helping young musicians in Armenia.

The event netted \$20,000.

Chairing the event this year were YerazArt board members Nina Festekjian and Anna Afeyan.

Festekjian and her husband, Raffi, are the proprietors of anoush'ella, which opened several months ago.

Afeyan spoke about the track record of the artists supported by the organiza-

tion, who have achieved a high level of success internationally. Among those are Narek Arutyunyan, a young clarinetist who graduated from the Juilliard School, and Diana Adamyan, a young violinist who has won several competitions and has been selected to participate in the International Menuhin Competition in April.

Afeyan said that the organization has given grants and scholarships to many young musicians and that since 2006, it has supported more than 100 artists so that "young musicians grow up and become very accomplished. There are several who hold PhDs now both abroad and in Armenia."

She noted that the group now wants to focus on musicians playing wind and brass instruments. "There are no students, no teachers and even the National Philharmonic has European players" for those instruments, she said.

"We also pay stipends to teachers so that they teach year-round," Afeyan said. "And we donate the instruments. They are no less expensive in Armenia than here," with instruments costing between \$2,000 and \$5,000. "We donate the

see YERAZART, page 16



Co-chair Anna Afeyan

## 'Intent to Destroy' to Be Shown On Starz

LOS ANGELES — Starz, an American entertainment company that owns U.S. pay television channels, has acquired the Armenian Genocide film "Intent to Destroy" along with seven other exclusive first-run documentaries, *Deadline* reports.

Director Joe Berlinger embeds himself on the epic film set of Terry George's "The Promise" (2016) to take an unwavering look at the Armenian Genocide. Historians, scholars and filmmakers come together in Berlinger's cinematic exploration of the tangled web of responsibility that has driven a century of denial by the Turkish government and its strategic allies.

"Intent to Destroy" (2017) is a timely reckoning with the large-scale suppression of a historical tragedy. Berlinger confronts the fraught task of shedding light on the Armenian Genocide — whose witnesses and descendants are still fighting to be officially acknowledged as such by the international community — how it was carried out during World War I as the reign of the Ottoman Empire drew to a close, and how it laid the groundwork for the genocides that followed.

"We are acquiring an eclectic slate of documentaries that not only strategically align with Starz Original series but also present engaging subjects, provocative conflicts and authentic storytelling," said C. Brett Marottoli, Head of Program Acquisitions for Starz.

"Intent to Destroy: Death, Denial & Depiction" will premiere on April 23, 2018.

## Glendale Exhibits Explore Concept of Inherited Trauma of Armenian Genocide

By Jeff Landa

GLENDALE (*Los Angeles Times*) — The Downtown Central Library will host two simultaneous art exhibits that explore the concept of generational trauma associated with the Armenian Genocide.

The main exhibit, "Nonlinear Histories," is co-curated by Ara and Anahid Oshagan as well as Isin Önel and features the works of seven artists who examine their generational ties to the Armenian Genocide by reimagining inherited artifacts.

It will run through May 6.

The collections are inspired by the theory of "postmemory" by literature scholar and author Marianne Hirsch, which refers primarily to how the children of Holocaust survivors cope with inherited trauma.

Artists featured include Jean Marie Casbarian, Eileen Claveloux, Didem Erk, Hrayr Eulmesekian, Silvina Der Meguerditchian, Hrair Sarkissian and Glendale resident Harry Vorperian.

Ara Oshagan said there has been no "postmemory" exhibit on the Armenian Genocide, adding that it's one of the most important concepts that tries to address ways in which second- and third-generation survivors deal with trauma.

see LIBRARY, page 14





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# An Evening of Reflection ‘In the [Spring] Time of Your Life’

By Michael Rettig

FRESNO – In an increasingly fast-paced world in which success is often measured by one's monetary gains it is important to remember to live with intention and awareness. On Tuesday, March 6, 2018, Megan A. Jendian delivered an apt reminder of this “intentional living” in her multimedia presentation, “In the [Spring] Time of Your Life,” an exploration of the concept of “time” as expressed in both William Saroyan's literary writings and in unique features of the Armenian liturgical tradition.

On behalf of the Armenian Cultural Conservancy (ACC), Dr. Matthew Ari Jendian, professor and department chair of sociology and director of Humanics at Fresno State, welcomed nearly 100 guests to the enrichment program at Woodward Park Regional Library, encouraged supporters to become members of ACC, and introduced his sister Megan as the evening's presenter.

According to neuroscientific research, the brain perceives time differently based on one's awareness and engagement with the present. Through highlighting the significance of the name, characters, and content of Saroyan's 1939 play, “The Time of Your Life,” Jendian shared several examples of his sophisticated understanding of time and art which is often overlooked by his reviewers. Saroyan believed that successful art alters one's awareness of time by intensifying one's experience in the moment, thus creating a sense of timelessness.

As noted by Jendian, and detailed in David Calonne's study of Saroyan's writings, *My Real Work is Being*, the central philosophical con-



Megan A. Jendian

cern in “The Time of Your Life” was the struggle for “true being” against the spiritual desert of modernity. Saroyan clearly stated “My intention in creating art is to remind people to focus their attention on the splendid things purity, innocence, natural humor, and the indistinctive

capacity for renewal in the spirit of man.” This point is encapsulated by Joe, the main character in “The Time of Your Life,” “I want to live while I'm alive.”

In the second part of her presentation, Jendian shared four of many features of the

Armenian faith tradition that exemplify their ancient “theology of time,” the cross and architecture, the alphabet, specifically the seventh letter, “eh”, the liturgical calendar, and the elaborate hymnography. Jendian noted that numerous hymns include the refrain “Today” and that the Armenian musical heritage serves as a point of connection that facilitates participation in a present moment that is both historical, yet not fully past.

“Connecting us to the presence of the eternal, both Saroyan's writings and the Armenian faith tradition remind us to awaken, open our eyes, and pay attention so we may revel in life's moments of grace, truth, and life,” Jendian encouraged during the dandelion tea reception. “Let this reflection be an invitation - in the springtime of your life - to look more deeply, see more clearly, and perhaps live your life as magnificent art.”

A native of Fresno, Megan A. Jendian is a Saroyan literary enthusiast, graduate of the University of California, Irvine, and holds Master of Arts degrees from St. Nersess and St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminaries. She currently contributes as an editor and consultant for several publications. Over the last decade, Jendian has co-created and implemented Diocesan curricula for retreat programs in New York, New England, the South, and the Midwest, provided 2017 Lenten presentations within Armenian communities of Racine, WI and Charlotte, NC, and continues to facilitate adult education seminars for parishes and organizations upon invitation.

Fresno's Armenian Cultural Conservancy, a 501 nonprofit, community benefit organization, welcomes your membership. For further information, visit <http://armenianculturalconservancy.org>.

St. James Armenian Church

## GREAT GATSBY GALA

SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 2018  
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THE JOHN BABOIAN QUARTET WITH VOCALIST STEVE MARVIN

LIVE ARMENIAN MUSIC  
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## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

### Grilled Eggplant, Tomatoes and Cheese Mezze With Yogurt Mint Salad

#### INGREDIENTS

6-8 Japanese eggplants, sliced thinly  
6 medium tomatoes, sliced thinly or 2 boxes of cherry tomatoes, halved  
1/2 cup olive oil  
1/2 cup black or green olives, finely chopped  
2-3 cloves garlic, minced  
2-3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (to taste)  
12-16 slices of rustic Italian bread, 1/2-inch thick, or 8-10 pita breads cut in half  
Mozzarella or Jack cheese, cut in thin slices  
Roasted red pepper slices, diced  
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese or crumbled feta cheese  
Fresh basil leaves (torn)  
Minced flat-leaf parsley, green onions, and mint (to taste)  
Olive oil, kosher salt, black or white pepper (to taste)

#### PREPARATION:

Preheat a grill or grill pan to medium heat.  
In a small bowl, combine the olive oil, salt, pepper, and garlic, and set aside.  
In a medium bowl, combine tomatoes, olives, lemon juice, basil, and a few tablespoons of olive oil, toss, and set aside.  
Brush bread or pita slices with olive oil and garlic mixture, and grill until toasted, turning one time, about 5 minutes (do not burn); remove bread from grill and keep warm. (Or you can bake bread slices in the oven arranged on a baking sheet, oiled side up).

Brush eggplant slices with olive oil and garlic mixture, and grill for 5-8 minutes or until browned. Turn eggplant slices over and top with thin sliced cheese. Grill for another 2-3 minutes or until cheese melts.

Arrange grilled eggplant on top of sliced bread, and top with the tomato and olive mixture and the roasted peppers. Sprinkle with kosher salt and Parmesan or feta cheese, and garnish with parsley, mint, and green onions.

Serve maza hot or cold with a warm tomato sauce on the side, if desired, and the Cucumber Mint Salad.

Serves 6-8.

\*Christine's recipes have been published in the *Fresno Bee* newspaper, *Sunset* magazine, *Cooking Light* magazine, and at <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Evening of Art and Food Raises Funds for YerazArt

YERAZART, from page 13

instruments to the schools and they are dedicated to a promising young artist," Afeyan said. Once the student leaves, they cannot take the instrument with them.

Many of the instruments were more than 50 years old and in rough shape, she said.

Festekjian thanked the local artists who had donated artwork for the silent auction: Levon Gyulkhasyan, Tamara Wolfson, Hagop Keledjian, Karine Makartichian and Sirarpi Heghinian Walzer.

Noubar Afeyan added that another item up for auction was a signed early copy of Hayk Demoyan's *Armenian Legacy in*

*America: A 400-Year Heritage.*

Festekjian then invited Nicole Babikian Hajjar, who for more than a decade has chaired the fundraisers for YerazArt, and presented to her a Michael Aram decorative piece as a token of thanks.

Hajjar said, "I am very happy to YerazArt is in the best hands possible" and congratulated the founders of the organization, Raffi Festekjian and Noubar Afeyan, and their spouses.

Nina Festekjian said she was happy with the program. "I am thankful to have this today. It has been great to raise as much as this. This year we are doing it in a public place where usually it is in a house."

Sylvie Zakarian, a YerazArt board member and a faculty member in the percussion department at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Afeyan said, is helping the group focus its scope in Armenia.

Zakarian said that for several summers YerazArt has set up a two-week summer music school for gifted students high school age and younger for wind and brass.

Guests mingled and munched on Lebanese and Armenian food passed around on trays.

Music was provided by Oriental Trio.

For more information or to donate, visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/364699393999850/>



This year's co-chair, Nina Festekjian, left, presented a Michael Aram decorative dish to chair for the past decade, Nicole Babikian Hajjar.



Dr. Knarik Arkun, left, and Seza Seraderian



Dr. Noubar Afeyan



Dr. Armineh Mirzabegian and Harry Glorikian



Carine Avakian and Anahid Mardiros



From left, Dr. Noubar Afeyan, Anna Afeyan, Dr. Jean-Jacques Hajjar and Raffi Festekjian



From left, Aurelio Sahagun, Piruz Bogossian, Nano Akhian, Anahid Yapoudjian and Ghina Sahagun



From left, Houry Boyamian, Zepour Kouyoumdjian, Sarine Kroshian and Arev Der Vartanian



Members of the Oriental Trio perform.



Sylvie Zakarian, left, with Arlette Yegumians



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

**APRIL 8 — St. David Armenian Church of Boca Raton will celebrate the 30th Anniversary** of its Consecration on Sunday, with a Celebratory Banquet in the Church Mardigian Hall at 1 p.m., presided by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. All are invited to this special occasion. Donations for adults \$45, children under 14, \$10 Contact the church office 561 994-2335, or Sonig Kradjian 607 727-8786 and Emma Pilikyan 561 414-1182.

**JANUARY 20-27, 2019 — Armenian Heritage Cruise XXII Western Carribean Cruise aboard Royal Carribean's Allure of the Seas.** Traveling to Nassau/Cozumel/Roatan/Costa Maya. Cabin rates starting from \$949 per person based on double occupancy, including port charges and ACAA registration fee. Government taxes of \$137.45 are additional. Armenian entertainment, cultural presentations, festival day, tavlou and belote tournaments and much more. Call Travel Group International 561-447-0750 or 866-447-0750 ext. 108. Contact person Jaïne.

ILLINOIS

**APRIL 15 — Book presentation by Adrienne Alexanian (editor) on her father's memoir Forced into Genocide:** Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army, Sunday, 3 p.m. sharp. The Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center 9603 Woods Drive Skokie, Il. 60077—RSVP (847) 967-4800. There are no other books in literature on this aspect of the Genocide. The book also contains rare documents and pictures which will be shown during a power point presentation. Book signing during reception.

MASSACHUSETTS

**APRIL 8 — Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture,** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Sunday, 7 am Rain Date: Sunday, April 15

**APRIL 10 — Armenian Business Network (ABN) Winter Business Networking event.** Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. The Sheraton Commander, Cambridge. Stephen Demirjian, guest speaker from the Achieve Institute shares methods on creating greater personal and work life success. This event is free of charge. RSVP: armenianbusinessnetwork@gmail.com

**APRIL 11 — A recap on the status of the documentary project “Neighbors in Memory,”** accompanied by a panel of community members shedding light on the state of Armenian-Turkish relations as they live and witness it. Wednesday, 7 p.m., Capitol Theatre, 204 Mass. Ave., Arlington. Screenings, discussions and refreshments. For more information: gonca59@gmail.com

**APRIL 12 — “A Farewell to Arms: Broken Hopes and Total Departure from the Homeland,” Ümit Kurt's** presentation on Aintab with slides of his translation of Baboian's The Heroic Battle of Aintab. Presented by the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Armenian Museum of America (AMA), at AMA, 65 Main St, Watertown, MA, 7:30 pm, Free admission. For information, email tcadirector@aol.com

**APRIL 14 — Saturday, St. James Great Gatsby Gala! A Roarin' 20s Celebration!** Live Jazz & Armenian Music, Passed Hors D'oeuvres, Mezza and Dessert Stations and more. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, 8 p.m., Tickets \$100. Purchase online at [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org) or contact info@stthagop.com.

**APRIL 15 – Vase Painting, Wine & Unwind, 5 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall,** Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge MA. Vase painting led by artist Arevik Tserunyan, entertainment, food and wine. All proceeds to benefit medical outreach for the Karahunge and Shirak regions in Armenia. Donation: \$35; limited seats. To reserve a seat, call/text: Amalia, 617.669.7444; Marianna, 617.966.1339; or Naneh, 857.389.8362. Sponsored by Watertown Armenian Club and Holy Trinity Armenian School.

**APRIL 20 – Raffi Bedrosyan of Toronto lecture: “Islamized Hidden Armenians of Turkey - Living Victims of a Genocide,”** organized by the Tekeyan Cultural Association for the Armenian Genocide

Commemorative Committee, Friday, 7:30 pm, Watertown/Belmont location to be announced. For more information, emailtcadirector@aol.com

**APRIL 20-21 — Commemorating the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, first at the State House,** on Friday, April 20, 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., Boston. A free reception will follow. Then on Saturday, April 21, a Commemoration at the Park, 3 to 5 p.m. Further details will follow. For more information, visit [bostonagcc@gmail.com](mailto:bostonagcc@gmail.com).

**APRIL 21 – Annual Procession and Raising of the Armenian Flag at Lowell City Hall in commemoration** of the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Procession to be led by the Lowell Armenian-American Veterans Honor Guard. Participants should meet at the corner of Merrimack and John Sts. in Lowell at 9:30 a.m. Sponsored by the Armenian National Committee, Merrimack Valley (ANCMV) with the participation of all area Armenian Churches and Organizations.

**APRIL 28 – Trinity Talent Showcase, 7 p.m., doors open; 7:30 p.m., Showcase begins;** Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge MA. All invited to an evening of entertainment featuring talent from the Holy Trinity Church community; Robert Clarke, magician and juggler; and music by the Black Sea Combo. Cabaret Table Seating: \$20 per person/\$100 for table of 6 max. (RSVP deadline April 15); Auditorium seating: \$10 in advance; \$15 at the door. For further information or to reserve online, log onto <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/trinity-talent-showcase-tickets-43801836472>, or call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

**MAY 5 — Saturday, Kentucky Derby Watch Party,** Fun and festivities to support Armenia Tree Project, At the elegant/historic Gore Place in Waltham. Details to follow.

**MAY 5 — Save the date! Annual Meeting, Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA).** Details to follow. Contact: [info@aiwainternational.org](mailto:info@aiwainternational.org) or 617-926-0171.

**May 5 — Celebrate Public Art during Artweek on Saturday at the Park, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, 1 p.m.,** World Labyrinth Day: Walk As One in peace & harmony with people in cities and towns worldwide including the labyrinth in Gyumri. At 12:45 p.m., introduction to Walking a Labyrinth, 1:30 pm - Reception to View the 2018 Configuration of the Abstract Sculpture. Remarks: Sarah Baker, editor-in-chief, Art New England magazine. Introduced by Lucas Cowan, Public Art Curator, Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy. Tea & Desserts, hosted by MEM Tea Imports & Eastern Lamejun Bakers. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**MAY 6 — “Celebrating 400 Hundred Years of Armenian American Heritage: 1618-2018” Exhibition and the launching of Armenian Legacy in America: A 400-Year Heritage** by Dr. Hayk Demoyan in an illustrated talk. Other speakers include Robert Mirak, Barbara J. Merguerian and Nubar Afeyan. Sunday, 3 p.m. Admission free and open to the public. Book sale and reception to follow. Organized by Armenian Cultural Foundation, co-sponsored by the Amaras Art Alliance, and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, 441 Mystic Street (Route 3), Arlington. Tel. (781)-646-3090 [armeniancultural.fdn@gmail.com](mailto:armeniancultural.fdn@gmail.com)

**MAY 11 — Welcome His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians,** to Celebrate with Rev. Father Mampre A. Kouzouian on the 60th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Hrashapar Service in the Sanctuary followed by a Celebration in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall. Details forthcoming.

**MAY 19 — Hai Guin Scholarship Association Annual Luncheon & Fashion Show,** Saturday, 11:30 a.m., at Montvale Plaza, Stoneham. Fashions by Soft Surroundings of Chestnut Hill, MA. Tickets: \$60 per person. Please call Lisa at 781-729-6333; Becky at 508-651-8893;or Marilyn at 978-818-9098 for tickets.

**JUNE 6 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Wednesday, 5-6:30 p.m.** Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**JUNE 9 — The Friends of Armenian Culture Society will host the 67th annual Armenian Night at the Pops**

on Saturday, at 8 p.m. at Symphony Hall in Boston, to celebrate the achievements of one of Boston's own – the talented violinist Haig Hovsepien. A winner of the 2017 Boston Symphony Orchestra's Concerto Competition and a rising sophomore at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Hovsepien will appear as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra under the direction of Keith Lockhart. He will perform the Sibelius Violin Concerto in D-minor. The Boston Pops will present Dance to the Movies where top choreographers bring to life classic movie dances of yesterday, starring the Boston Pops, Dancing Celebrity Pros, So You Think You Can Dance top finalists, and singing stars from American Idol and The Voice. Tickets \$95, \$70 and \$35, and are available at: [www.FACSBoston.org](http://www.FACSBoston.org)

**JUNE 28 — Under a Strawberry Moon, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Thursday, 8:30– 9:30 p.m.** Meet & Greet! Moonlit Labyrinth Walk. Enjoy chocolate-dipped strawberries, hosted by Vicki Lee's and Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**JULY 18 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Wednesday, 5- 6:30 p.m.** Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**AUGUST 15 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Wednesday, 5-6:30 p.m.** Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**SEPTEMBER 16 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park for Families & Friends. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway. 2-4 p.m.** Enjoy Boston Hye Guys Ensemble with Ron Sahatjian, clarinet; Joe Kouyoumjian, oud; Art Chingris, percussion. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

NEW JERSEY

**SEPTEMBER 30 — Save the date! Armenia Fund USA and Ardzagang Armenian TV** are proud to present Artash Asatryan and Band, guest singer Grisha Asatryan, from Armenia! The concert is dedicated to the Armenia's and Artsakh's Independence Celebration. Don't miss the performance by the son and grandson of the legendary Armenian singer Aram Asatryan. Proceeds will benefit Fruitful Artsakh Project. 4 p.m. Location: Bergen PAC, 30 N Van Brunt St, Englewood.

NEW YORK

**MARCH 28 — Taner Akçam, “Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide,”** at Columbia University. 6:00 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Columbia Armenian Center and NAASR. (Venue TBA.) Further details to follow.

**APRIL 21 - MAY 13 — Off-Broadway production by Pan Asian Repertory Theatre of Joyce Van Dyke's play, DAYBREAK:** the lyrical story of two Armenian women friends, survivors from 1915, who are transported with their families into the 21st century future. Performances at the Beckett Theatre (on Theatre Row), 410 W. 42nd St., New York, Tuesdays through Sundays; weekend matinees. Discount tickets for seniors, students and groups. For tickets and information: [www.telecharge.com](http://www.telecharge.com) or call (212) 239-6200. For discount tickets: [www.telecharge-offers.com](http://www.telecharge-offers.com) or call (212) 947-8844. Or contact the theatre: [info@panasianrep.org](mailto:info@panasianrep.org), (212) 868-4030.

**Calendar items are free. Entries should not be longer than 5 lines. Listings should include contact information. Items will be edited to fit the space, if need be. A photo may be sent with the listing no later than Mondays at noon.**



## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# Armenia's Diplomatic Initiatives in the Nascent Cold War

By Edmond Y. Azadian

It looks like the Cold War is back with a vengeance; Western capitals and Moscow are trading accusations or counter-accusations, and the recent poisoning of a former Russian intelligence officer in London has amplified the Cold War rhetoric to the extent of lining up major Western capitals to combine their salvos against Russia.

These intensifying international tensions have only contributed to President Putin's popularity domestically, netting him a landslide victory in his last term as president.

In the meantime, other nations whose destiny depends on these major forces are wondering where all the tensions eventually may lead. Armenia has certainly to be counted among those.

But ironically, Armenia and Artsakh have been taking initiatives which would not have been possible in the past under the same circumstances.

Frederica Mogherini, the high representative of the European Union for foreign affairs, has announced that never before have Armenia and the EU been as close. That relationship has already been reflected in the exchange visits of high-level political delegations between Armenia and European countries.

It looks like developing relations with the EU is also extending to cover the US-Armenia relations.

Indeed, in these tense international relations, a parliamentary delegation from Armenia is visiting the US, while simultaneously a ministerial delegation headed by Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan is in the US, despite having triggered an angry diplomatic note from Baku to the US government. The US ambassador was called to the Foreign Ministry in Baku to protest the visit.

In the same vein, Azerbaijan's ambassador to the US lodged a protest at the State Department.

The Azerbaijani government's objection is based on the presumption that offering a US visa to the de facto president of Artsakh is an implicit recognition of the breakaway state. There was also a threat in the Azeri protest, which said, "In response to this behavior by the US, Azerbaijan will proceed from the principle of reciprocity."

Similar visits are motivated by political factors and eventually can be justified by policy. However, in this case, there was a legal fig leaf to justify the US stand. Rep. Frank Pallone, speaking at the meeting with President Sahakyan delegation stated: "One of the reasons that we introduced this bill [H. Res. 697] is to make it clear that the travel and communication with Artsakh – even though it is not recognized by the US – is very important."

Support for H. Res. 697, introduced in January 2018, is growing, with 12 co-sponsors to date.

Incidentally, a timely piece also appeared in the media, signed by the former US ambassador to Armenia, John Evans, calling Washington to formally recognize Artsakh.

"It is time for the international community to welcome the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh/ Artsakh into the community of nations," the ambassador wrote.

That piece certainly had its resonance in the diplomatic circles. But above all, the State Department's response to the Azeri protest was interesting in the fact that it took a step further to assert to the Azeri government that the people of Artsakh have the right for a free and peaceful life.

During a Congressional luncheon and briefing in Washington this past weekend, President Sahakyan awarded medals of gratitude to a number of legislators, namely Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Ed Royce (R-CA) and ranking Democrat Eliot Engel (D-NY), Representatives David Cicilline, Jim Costa, Brad Sherman, Adam Schiff and David Valado. They all have contributed meaningfully to Artsakh or some have personally visited the unrecognized republic. In thanking the visiting dignitaries, they all expressed strong sentiments regarding the people of Artsakh and its political future.

President Sahakyan did not meet administration representatives – which anyway was not on the agenda – but most of the legislators he met are movers and shakers in the nation's capital.

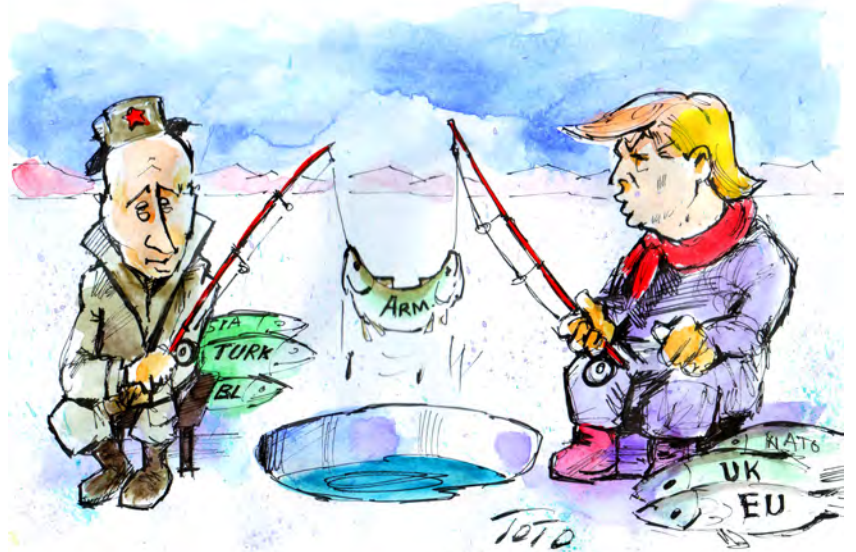
At the same time that the Artsakh delegation was visiting Washington, a parliamentary delegation from Armenia was also in the US. It included members of the ruling coalition as well as opposition party members. The delegates met their counterparts in the US, as well as with lobbying organizations, and went to community centers. The latter received more muted attention

from the media because the US recognizes Armenia and such exchanges are within the scope of normal international relations. One outcome of this meeting was the activation of a trade commission to promote business and interests in Armenia.

But all these movements indicate that there is a change in the atmosphere. In the past, Western governments would not have welcomed such visits, especially within the context of deteriorating East-West relations, because Armenia was considered solidly in the Russian camp. But, at this time, when the West's surrogate, the Turkish government, is after its own selfish interests while using the West's political and military assets, the US and the EU have to promote their own interests, by themselves. Some of these interests are confined to weaning Armenia and the Caucasus from the Russian embrace and encouraging regional powers to honor economic sanctions instituted against Iran. Firing Secretary of State Rex Tillerson seems to have shifted the priorities of Washington with regard to the Iran nuclear deal, and in the coming days, may bring a more explicit policy change in that area.

As far as Armenian-Russian relations are concerned, some movement is also visible. Until recently Moscow had treated Armenia in a cavalier manner. In that context, the present rapprochement between Armenia and the West would have triggered angry reactions from Moscow. But at this time, the Kremlin is treating Armenia's European aspirations with kid gloves.

While Armenia's and Artsakh's delegations are visiting the US, a Russian parliamentary delegation is in Yerevan meeting its counterparts in the Armenian Parliament. The delegation is



headed by the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Upper House of Russia's Parliament, Constantin Kosachev.

In the past, the major sticking point between the relations of the two allies was the scale of modern weaponry sold by Russia to Azerbaijan. And always, the cynical answer from Moscow was that those sales constitute business transactions and sometimes, adding insult to injury, the answer would be that if Moscow refrains from selling those arms to Baku, the latter would only purchase them on the international market, policy postures notwithstanding.

The visiting delegation has toned down its previous arguments. When challenged during the interparliamentary meeting, Mr. Kosachev explained: "Russia is fulfilling its contracts with Azerbaijan that were concluded before April 2016, and we are obliged to do so in accordance with the provisions of those contracts. But this is a situation that existed up to the moment and according to the information I possess, it will not continue on the existing scale. Of course, we are reacting to the situation that occurred in April 2016. There is no doubt about it."

This statement looks like a concession to Armenia's concerns. The first question that comes to mind is that Moscow was not able to predict the results of its arms sales to Azerbaijan, and that they found out the truth after 200 Armenian victims shed their blood on the front lines and border villages as a result of an unexpected and brutal Azeri attack at that time.

The next question is the veracity or the motivation of this concession. Many in Armenia believe that this policy shift is not Moscow's doing because as the sanctions against Russia are tightening, Azerbaijani leaders themselves would like to avoid offending their friends in the West by buying Russian arms in violation of the sanctions regime.

Whatever the motive, it is a welcome development which will eliminate a major hurdle in relations with Russia. Armenia's modest diplomatic initiatives will be evaluated in the near future, within the context of developing political storm.

# Mirror Spectator



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EDITOR  
Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR  
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR  
Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:  
Edmond Y. Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:  
Florence Avakian, Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:  
Armenia - Hagop Avedikian  
Boston - Nancy Kalajian  
New York/New Jersey - Taleen Babayan  
Berlin - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Contributing Photographers:  
Jirair Hovsepien

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Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

[www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com)

E-Mail: [editor@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:editor@mirrorspectator.com)

For advertising: [mirrorads@aol.com](mailto:mirrorads@aol.com)

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## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## How Azerbaijan Distorts UN Security Council Resolutions

The Armenian National Committee of America, San Fernando Valley West chapter, held an all-day conference on March 17 on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Artsakh (Karabagh) liberation struggle. The conference was held at the Ferrahian Armenian High School in Encino. The speakers were: historian Garo Moumdjian, PhD, California Courier publisher Harut Sassounian, ANCA National Board Member Steven Dadaian, Esq., ARF Western US Central Committee Member Levon Kirakosian, Esq., and ARF Western US Central Committee Member Vache Thomassian, Esq.

Here are excerpts from Harut Sassounian's remarks at the conference:

The United Nations Security Council adopted four Resolutions during the Artsakh (Karabagh) war in 1993 calling for the withdrawal of Armenian forces, cessation of all hostilities and urging a negotiated settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

These four Resolutions are often cited by the Azerbaijani media which is under the strict control of the government of Azerbaijan. In the past 25 years, the Azeris have repeatedly condemned Armenia for not abiding by these UN Security Council Resolutions, and have made them a part of their continued propaganda war against Armenia.

However, Azerbaijan has distorted the contents and context of these Resolutions, trying to deceive the international public opinion. Azerbaijan itself has not complied with these Resolutions. When one side (Azerbaijan) violates these Resolutions, it cannot accuse the other side (Armenia) of not complying with them.

The UN Security Council is composed of 15 States: Five of them are permanent members who have a veto power (United

States, Russia, China, Great Britain, and France) and 10 of them are rotating members. The UN Security Council is charged with maintaining peace and security among nations. UN member states are obligated to carry out the decisions of the Security Council.

It is particularly hypocritical of the Turkish government to blame Armenia for not complying with the four UN Security Council Resolutions, when Turkey itself has violated over 60 UN Security Resolutions adopted since Turkey's invasion of Northern Cyprus in 1974.

Let us now review each of the four UN Security Council Resolutions which were adopted unanimously by all 15 member states. I have added my comments in bold letters at the end of some of the clauses of these four Resolutions:

Excerpts from UN Security Council Resolution 822, adopted April 30, 1993:

"Demands the immediate cessation of all hostilities and hostile acts with a view to establishing a durable cease-fire, as well as immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from the Kelbadjar district and other recently occupied areas of Azerbaijan." Azerbaijan has violated the cease-fire for 25 years on a regular basis by continuously shooting across the borders of Artsakh and Armenia.

"Urges the parties concerned immediately to resume negotiations for the resolution of the conflict within the framework of the peace process of the Minsk Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and refrain from any action that will obstruct a peaceful solution of the problem." The Minsk Group of CSCE, subsequently renamed OSCE, is composed of three co-chairs: the United States, France and Russia which are the official mediators to help resolve the Artsakh conflict, not the United Nations Security Council!

"Calls for unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts in the region, in particular in all areas affected by the conflict in order to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population and reaffirms that all parties are bound to comply with the principles and rules of international humanitarian law." Despite this clause, Azerbaijan has tried to undermine the delivery of international humanitarian aid to the people of Artsakh.

Excerpts from UN Security Council Resolution 853, adopted July 29, 1993:

"Expressing once again its grave concern at the displace-

ment of large numbers of civilians in the Azerbaijani Republic and at the serious humanitarian emergency in the region." The reference to "the serious humanitarian emergency in the region" also applies to Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan.

"Reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic and all other States in the region." This clause applies to both Armenia and Azerbaijan.

"Reaffirming also the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory." Artsakh Armenians have the right to self-determination under international law and UN Protocols.

"Reiterates in the context of paragraphs 3 and 4 above its earlier calls for the restoration of economic, transport and energy links in the region." This clause is violated by Azerbaijan and Turkey by their blockades of Armenia and Artsakh.

"Urges the parties concerned to refrain from any action that will obstruct a peaceful solution to the conflict, and pursue negotiations within the Minsk Group of the CSCE, as well as through direct contact between them, towards a final settlement." The reference to "the parties concerned" and "direct contact between them," implies Artsakh's inclusion in the negotiations, as was the case earlier. Azerbaijan blocked Artsakh's participation in the negotiations.

"Urges the Government of the Republic of Armenia to continue to exert its influence to achieve compliance by the Armenians of the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic with its resolution 822 (1993) and the present resolution, and the acceptance by this party of the proposal of the Minsk Group of the CSCE." Armenia coordinates its negotiating position with the government of the Republic of Artsakh. However, Artsakh's exclusion from the negotiations makes the task of coordination more difficult. Furthermore, Artsakh not being a recognized state and not a member of the UN is under no obligation to comply with any of these Resolutions.

"Urges States to refrain from the supply of any weapons and munitions which might lead to the intensification of the conflict or the continued occupation of territory." This clause is violated by Turkey, Russia, Israel, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Pakistan, and several others, which have supplied billions of dollars of weaponry to Azerbaijan.

(Continued next week)

# Armenian Turks And Other Roots Stories

By Raffi Bedrosyan

Recently the Turkish government opened a website where Turkish citizens can look up their ancestral roots until mid-1850s. There are hundreds of stories in printed and social media that this caused disappointment and shock among several Turks who discovered that instead of coming from purely Turkish origins, they had Albanian, Arabic, Pontic Greek, and worst of all, Armenian roots. There are even reports that some members of an ultra-nationalistic and racist Turkish party were ostracized, thrown out of the party, went into depression and even committed suicide upon finding Armenian roots.

Whether these stories are true or not, the subject of one's roots is deadly and critical in Turkey. The late Hrant Dink was persecuted, prosecuted for "insulting Turkishness" and eventually assassinated after revealing that Ataturk's adopted daughter and first female military pilot in Turkey, Sabiha Gokcen, was in fact an Armenian girl orphaned during the 1915 genocide. A former president of Turkey had sued an opposition member of parliament for "accusing and insulting" him by stating that "he came from an Armenian family in Kayseri." And yet, in a country where calling someone Armenian is the biggest insult, there are numerous documented and undocumented stories about prominent Turks having Armenian roots, including a past president, another former president's wife, and several opposition politicians. In one of the documented stories, the family of a past opposition leader who is an ultra-nationalistic Turk, is an Armenian convert to Islam from a family in the Black sea region, whose Armenian descendants now live in Canada.

When this official genealogy website was opened, I immediately wondered how our hidden Armenians' roots were recorded. A quick survey revealed that absolutely none of them were recorded as Armenian. Their family history started only with their adopted Muslim Turkish names. Although there is past evidence that the government keeps detailed records of converted Armenians among Turks and Kurds, these records are not made public and are not revealed in

this new website. Interestingly, it became evident that many Armenians killed, lost and deported during the 1915 genocide are still shown as "Alive" in the website. Many Armenian families who knew the tragic 1915 fate of their grandmothers or grandfathers, born all the way back in 1850s, are now finding out that these people are still miraculously alive, according to the doctored records of the website.

I wish to relate two interesting – and little known – stories about roots.

An Armenian wealthy family lives in a village of Malatya in the 1880s. The region is terrorized and harassed by Kurdish tribesmen who regularly raid the villages. Armenians have started organizing defense forces by banding together fedayis, to protect the Armenian villages. An Armenian fedayi leader approaches the head of this wealthy Armenian family and asks for money to buy weapons and horses. The wealthy Armenian states he will decide in two days whether to comply with this request or not. At the end of two days, the fedayi returns, the wealthy Armenian refuses to give any money, and the fedayi promptly shoots the man. The widow of the killed Armenian flees with her newborn son to Izmir, where she converts to Islam and raises the boy with complete hatred of Armenians. The boy grows up to be Ismet Inonu (1884-1973), the second president of Turkey after Kemal Ataturk. He is perhaps the worst enemy of the Armenians and other minorities in Turkey, after the Ittihadist leaders. He brought a legislation called Wealth Tax in 1942, ostensibly to help Turkey cope with the war economy, but with the real aim of ruining the minorities. The taxes were assessed based on ethnic origin, 5 percent from Turks, 156 percent from Greeks, 179 percent from Greeks and 232 percent from Armenians. The payment deadline was 15 days and anyone who couldn't pay was arrested and sent to the eastern provinces to work as laborers in stone quarries, building roads or tunnels. This was in effect a wealth transfer from the minorities to the Turks. Many Armenians, after selling all their assets at dirt cheap prices, went bankrupt and still couldn't raise the required amounts and ended up going to the labor camps and died there. In 1964, Inonu took further revenge on Greeks when he deported 45,000 Greeks with dual Greek and Turkish citizenship during the Cyprus crisis. These people were given 10 days to leave behind all their properties, assets and belongings to leave the country with the allowed \$20 and 20 kilograms (45 lbs) of possessions within 10 days. The story of Ismet Inonu's Armenian roots was corroborated by prominent historian Prof. Pars Tuglaci (Parsegh Tuglaciyan) (1933-2016), a family friend of Inonu.

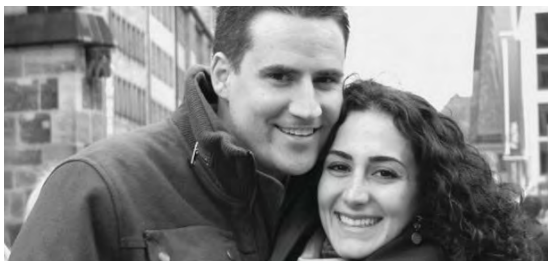
Ali Kemal is a prominent liberal Ottoman journalist and editor of the *Ikdam* newspaper in the 1910s. He is also a member of the opposition Liberal Union (Itilaf) party and severe critic of the ruling Ittihad Terakki party. He fiercely

criticizes the ruling party for entering the war, and especially for committing "war crimes and massacres" against its own Armenian citizens. His editorials and brilliant political speeches defending the Armenians are so vehement that the pro-Ittihadist media dub his name as "Artin Kemal" (Artin is an Armenian name, short for Harutyun). After the war, when Ottoman Turkey is defeated and the Ittihadist leaders flee, the Sultan appoints a new government and Artin Kemal even becomes Minister of Interior for a short while. Artin Kemal relentlessly demands prosecution and punishment of the Ittihadist leaders. While he continues his attacks on the Ittihad leaders and defends the Armenians' rights, he decides to send his British wife and children to England for safety reasons. Unfortunately, the tide turns against Artin Kemal when the resistance started by Kemal Ataturk in Ankara gains power and sweeps the Sultan and the Istanbul government away. Artin Kemal gets caught in the barber shop of Tokatliyan Hotel in Istanbul. While he is being taken to Ankara for trial, one of Ataturk's commanders, "Red" Nureddin Pasha (dubbed red for his red beard as well as his bloody cruelty) orders his soldiers to lynch Artin Kemal, who is torn apart limb by limb while still alive, and Artin Kemal dies tragically in 1922. It seems this Nureddin specializes in lynchings because when his forces enter Izmir (Smyrna) in 1922, he does the same to the leading Greek bishop in the city, now named Saint Chrisostomos of Smyrna, only this time he orders the bishop's eyes gouged before tearing him limb by limb.

Back to Artin Kemal's British wife and children in England, the family raises several prominent politicians. The latest? Former mayor of London, and the current Foreign Minister of Britain, Boris Johnson, who happens to be Artin Kemal's great-grandson. As a master diplomat, Boris Johnson tells Turkish President Erdogan that UK will do everything possible to get Turkey into the European Union, but at the same time, he advocates Brexit by arguing that if Turkey enters EU while Britain is part of EU, Britain would be flooded by Turkish immigrants.

If it weren't for the tragic roots stories, politics would be fun.

(Raffi Bedrosyan is a civil engineer and a concert pianist, living in Toronto. Proceeds from his concerts and CDs have been donated to the construction of school, highways, and water and gas distribution projects in Armenia and Karabagh – projects in which he has also participated as a voluntary engineer. Bedrosyan was involved in organizing the Surp Giragos Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd Church reconstruction project. He is the founder of Project Rebirth, which helps hidden Islamized Armenians reclaim their original Armenian roots, language, and culture.)



David Bequette and his wife Irina Ghaplanyan

## Founder of Yerevan Café Chain Running for US House in Illinois

COLUMBIA, Ill. – David Bequette, founder of The Green Bean Café chain in Yerevan, Armenia, is running for United States House of Representatives in Illinois’ 12th Congressional District. On Thursday, the Illinois Board of Elections confirmed Bequette’s place on the ballot, along with one other candidate, going into the March 20th Democratic primary.

David and his wife, Irina Ghaplanyan, and their three children, spent several years in Armenia building the café chain, which is responsible for providing jobs for dozens of Syrian Armenian refugees. Irina, was born and raised in Yerevan, and recently published a book on Armenian politics.

Professionally, Bequette holds a bachelor’s degree from Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville, and is a marketing consultant and entrepreneur. He worked on several projects in Armenia to include the Smithsonian Institution’s My Armenia program as well as the non-profit organization One Armenia. Bequette also taught Marketing and Management at the Agribusiness Teaching Center, a Texas A&M degree program in Yerevan.

Bequette, a Democrat will face one primary opponent, and then challenge incumbent Republican Mike Bost.

For more information, visit [www.bequetteforcongress.com](http://www.bequetteforcongress.com)

## Prime Minister Visits Armavir, Gets Familiarized with Ostrich-Breeding, Pistachio Orchards and Winemaking

YEREVAN – During his March 17 trip to Armavir, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan got acquainted with a number of investment programs underway in the region.

He first visited an ostrich-breeding farm in Pshatavan community.

He was told that owing to investments made since 2008, the number of ostrich has reached 500 at the farm. The production of basturma, sujukh and ghaurma started late last year. At this point, the products are only sold on the Armenian market, but steps are being taken to arrange their export abroad.

Welcoming the development of ostrich-breeding in Armenia, Karapetyan suggested cooperating with the Business Armenia Foundation (Armenian Development Fund) to promote the exports.

The premier next visited Artamed, where Iranian-Armenian investors are implementing a large-scale pistachio gardening project. Karapetyan was informed that a 590-hectare pistachio garden with a drip irrigation system will be established in Armavir through a \$10-million investment program. Seedling processing activities have already started. The whole range of the output will be exported to different markets.

Karapetyan stressed that the government is prepared to make use of its toolkits in order to assist the company with their investment program and the projected exports.

The premier’s next port of call was Voskeni Wines Company in Sardarapat community, where he was introduced to the winery’s ongoing activities and future plans. The production is based on modern equipment imported from Germany. Grape purveyance contracts have been signed not only with the local entities, but also with farmers from Vayots Dzor. Voskeni Wines is going to expand the use of the drip irrigation system. Exports shall be enhanced as the range of wines expands. The output is currently marketed in Armenia, Russia and the Netherlands. Steps are being taken to master new European markets.



Some of the processed meats sold at the ostrich farm



Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan plants a pistachio seedling.

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