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Schiff, Pallone Support Aid to Armenia, Artsakh in Fiscal Year 2018 US Budget

WASHINGTON – Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and House Intelligence Committee Ranking Member and Armenian Caucus Vice Chair Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) provided testimony in support of aid to Armenia and Artsakh as the Administration released the budget blueprint for Fiscal Year 2018.



Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA)

Schiff told the Armenian Assembly of America that “I remain deeply troubled by the ongoing cease-fire violations, including attacks against civilians, and the strong evidence of human rights abuses on the part of Azeri troops. I will continue to work with my colleagues to advance key priorities to ensure peace and stability in the region. I also look forward to strengthening and expanding the Armenian Caucus.”

In his testimony, Schiff discussed priori-

tization for Armenia and the people of Artsakh for the FY18 budget before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.

“I was deeply disturbed by the escalation of violence in the last year and the major military assault by Azerbaijani forces against the people of Artsakh...In light of the escalating violence and aggression, I

urge the Subcommittee to support implementation of the Royce-Engel peace proposals, prioritizing the placement of independent monitors and equipment to determine the source of attacks along the line of contact; suspend US military aid to Azerbaijan until its government ceases its attacks against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, and agrees to the peaceful see BUDGET, page 2

Jewish Right-Wing Extremists Riot During Performance by Armenian Choir in Jerusalem

By Nir Hasson

JERUSALEM (*Haaretz*) – Right-wing extremists rioted during a performance by a Christian choir at a contemporary arts event in Jerusalem on Thursday, March 16. The police arrested two members of the anti-assimilationist Lehava organization, including its leader, Bentzi Gopstein.

Dozens of extremists infiltrated the

Manofim contemporary arts festival event, being held in the Clal Center mall, and clashed with attendees. The event was the finale of Manofim’s ninth annual festival. Organizers had wanted to take advantage of the circular shape of the Clal Center interior, one of the oldest commercial centers in Jerusalem.

Various choirs performed on the ground floor during the evening while hundreds of people stood on the floors above to watch.

The right-wing demonstration erupted during the performance by the city’s Armenian Church Choir. An eyewitness said the disruption started when the choir began singing, and that it took a long time for the police to arrive.

see RIOT, page 4



Turkish Authorities Interfering In Patriarchal Election Process

ISTANBUL (*Agos*) – The Clerical Assembly of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul elected Archbishop Karekin Bekjian, Primate of the German Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church as Locum Tenens – a patriarchal alternate on March 15. (See related editorial on page 18.)

The voting was seen as the first step of patriarchal elections.

Thirty members of the Clerical Assembly participated.

The Locum Tenens is responsible for managing the process of electing the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul.

Vicar General Aram Ateshyan, Bishop Sahak Mashalyan and Archbishop Karekin Bekjian were initially named as candidates. However, Mashalyan, in a statement before the election, declared that would withdraw and supported Bekjian. Still, Ateshyan is not stepping down as Vicar General.

see INTERFERENCE, page 5



Archbishop Karekin Bekjian

Analysis:

The Sick Man on The Bosphorus

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the *Mirror-Spectator*

BERLIN – In the late 19th century, the cliché phrase making the rounds of the imperial palaces in Europe, was that the Ottoman Empire, a creature in which they all had their vested interests, was the sick man of Europe. The means the Great Powers devised to cure the problem led to world war, in the course of which they divvied up the dismantled empire, carving out new puppet states on the geopolitical map. Not a few of our contemporary political analysts trace the origins of the current wars and crises ripping through the region back to that catastrophic conflict a century ago. Today leading figures in European democracies are beginning to wonder if there might be a new form of illness manifesting itself, this time in modern-day Turkey. This time the threats of conflict are emanating from the palace of the would-be new sultan.

Referendum for Dictatorship

The ostensible casus belli in the escalating conflict between Turkey and Europe, especially Germany, is the April 16 referendum on the introduction of a presidential system which would grant the Turkish president powers so vast as to eliminate checks and balances on the part of other institutions like the judiciary and parliament. In what is shaping see CONFLICT, page 20

NEWS IN BRIEF

Paris Street to Be Named for Zabel Yesayan

PARIS (*armedia.am*) – A street in Paris will be named for the late Armenian writer, Zabel Yesayan in honor of the official visit of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan to France.

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo made the announcement last week during a meeting with the president in the Paris City Hall, the official website of Sargsyan noted.

“We have decided to rename one of the streets of Paris after Zabel Yesayan. She was in the midst of the suffering of the Armenian people and symbolizes all these sufferings. In Paris we retain the memory of all the sufferings of rebellions, struggles endured by the Armenian people, but at the same time we are opening the possible roads which will express hope, discoveries and initiatives also in Yerevan,” Hidalgo said.

Yesayan was the only woman to be rounded up on April 24, 1915. She was a novelist, translator and activist for women’s rights.

Chairman of Turkish Azerbaijani Union Sentenced for Hate Speech

THE HAGUE (*Public Radio of Armenia*) – Ilhan Askin, chairman of the Turkish Azerbaijani Cultural Association in The Hague, has received the sentence of 120 hours of community service as well as a suspended imprisonment of four weeks in the Netherlands after being found guilty of hate speech and inciting violence for his “Karabakh will be Armenians’ grave” chants, the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (EAFJD) reports.

Askin led the chants during a Turkish rally in Almelo in June 1, 2014 at the Genocide memorial erected in the churchyard of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

The Federation of Armenian Organizations in the Netherlands (FAON) and Dutch Armenian Committee for Justice and Democracy (Hay Tad), had filed a complaint against the statements made during that demonstration.

The court hearing on the case on March 3 was attended by many Armenians and Turks, as well as Dutch, Armenian and Turkish media. The video played during the session showed Askin chanting “Karabakh will be the grave of the Armenians” several times, and a crowd of a few thousand people repeating the slogan.

Askin stated that he doesn’t consider his statements offensive. He said that his expressions relate to a specific region, where due to the current situation war will possibly break out and blood will be shed. He believes that he has not done anything wrong. He said he does not regret his statements.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Protest Erupts in Armenia over Activist's Death in Jail

YEREVAN (AP) – Protesters demonstrated Friday, March 17, for a second consecutive day over the death in prison of an opposition activist.

More than 1,000 people gathered in downtown Yerevan to criticize the government and demand a proper investigation into the death of 49-year old Artur Sarkisyan, who was in prison on charges of aiding terrorists.

Sarkisyan went on a hunger strike last month to protest his incarceration. He died of heart failure on Thursday after being transferred from prison to a hospital, where he immediately underwent emergency surgery.

Investigators have opened a criminal case into his death.

Senior Armenian officials have expressed regret over his death. Armenian Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan said Friday he was experiencing “deep pain” about what happened.

The demonstration Friday was significantly larger than a smaller protest Thursday evening in Yerevan. The unrest comes ahead of a parliamentary election on April 2.

Sarkisyan had been accused of breaking a police cordon to deliver food to gunmen amid a two-week standoff in July.

Two people died and several were wounded in the standoff, when about 30 armed members of a radical opposition group took hostages and barricaded themselves inside a police station. The group was calling for the release from prison of their leader and the resignation of the Armenian government.

EU, Armenia Seek Closer Ties

YEREVAN – On March 21, at a ceremony held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yerevan, representatives of Armenia and the European Union signed an agreement for closer ties.

Representing the Republic of Armenia were Garen Nazarian, Deputy Foreign Minister and Trade lead negotiator Garegin Melkonian, First Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Investments and on behalf of the European Union (EU) Chief negotiator Luc Devigne, Deputy Managing Director in the European External Action Service and Trade lead negotiator Petros Sourmelis, Head of Unit in the European Commission, initialed the Armenia – EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

The agreement will be an important step to broaden the scope of bilateral relations between Republic of Armenia and the European Union.

It will strengthen the political dialogue and set a solid basis for the continuation of economic and social reforms. Strong commitments to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, underpin the new agreement and Armenia-EU future cooperation. The CEPA will also create the framework for stronger cooperation in sectors such as energy, transport and the environment, for new opportunities in trade and investments, and for increased mobility for the benefit of the citizens.

Cloudflare to Launch Data Center in Armenia

YEREVAN – Multinational content delivery network (CDN) provider Cloudflare has announced that it plans to launch a series of new data centers across five continents, beginning with a facility in Yerevan, Armenia.

The new center will be Cloudflare's 103rd data center globally. The company hopes that the new deployment will allow for greater speed, agility and security for approximately 6 million internet platforms, serving traffic to Armenia and neighboring countries.

“Yerevan, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, has a rich history going back all the way to 782 BC. Famous for its cognac, lavash flatbread, and beautiful medieval churches, Armenia is also home to more chess grandmasters per capita than most countries,” Cloudflare said in a statement.

Aurora Initiative Donates \$1 Million in Scholarships to American University of Armenia

YEREVAN – The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative in cooperation with Scholae Mundi Armenia will grant one million dollars in scholarships to students from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt to study at the American University of Armenia (AUA) between now and 2023. This scholarship fund is created as part of the Aurora Gratitude Projects.

The scholarships are for citizens of the above-mentioned countries who wish to pursue the following degrees: BSc in Computer Science, Engineering Science, Data Science (starting 2018), Master of Public Health, Master of Engineering in Industrial Engineering & Systems Management, Master of Science in Computer and Information Science, Economics, Strategic Management, Master of Political Science and International Affairs, and Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

“Armenia has a potential to become a global educational hub and we encourage the engagement of young people from the Middle East to come and study in Armenia. This scholarship offers opportunities to talented youth who have been affected, directly or indirectly, by wars in their region. We believe that it makes an impact not only on these young people who come to the country and benefit from its hospitality and qualitative education but enriches the AUA community with highly motivated international students who will become ambassadors of Armenia and its culture in the future. The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative thus not only offers scholarships to individual students, but also expresses gratitude to the nations who were the first to open their doors to offer a helping hand to the survivors of the

Armenian Genocide,” said Veronika Zonabend, the co-founder of Scholae Mundi Armenia Foundation, and, together with her husband Ruben Vardanyan, co-founder of the RVVZ Foundation which helped create the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and the Aurora Gratitude Projects.

“The American University of Armenia is extremely grateful to the creators of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, specifically Ruben Vardanyan and Veronika Zonabend, who through their immense generosity have created an opportunity not only for students from the countries that hosted Armenian refugees from the Genocide to study in Armenia, but also afforded AUA an opportunity to serve these students. Their presence on our campus

will provide enhanced diversity and enrich the lives of all students. We are proud to be a part of this initiative and, through our educational programs, be able to express gratitude to the descendants of the people who sheltered Armenians during the most tragic part of their history,” said Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, president of the American University of Armenia.

The recipients will continue to receive the scholarships throughout their study at AUA as long as they are in good academic standing. The scholarship will cover tuition fees, travel and housing costs of the students. The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and Scholae Mundi Armenia have committed to granting the scholarship through the year 2023.

Young Wrestlers Win Three Medals in Tournament

YEREVAN – One hundred and sixty five wrestlers from 14 countries took part in the Roman Dmitriev International junior freestyle wrestling tournament in Yakutsk, Sakha Republic earlier this month. There were 11 young Armenian wrestlers led by Avetik Vardanyan, head coach of the Armenian national youth freestyle wrestling team.

At the two-day competition, Armenian athletes managed to win three medals out of 32 in 8 weight classes. Hovhannes Mkhitarian (w/c 84 kg) and heavyweight Hovhannes Maghakyants (w/c 120 kg) managed to overpower all their competitors in the initial bouts and made it to the final round.

In the decisive bouts, their rivals claimed victories. Mkhitarian lost the bout to our compatriot representing Belarus Arkadi Poghosyan and Maghakyants was defeated by Naeim Hassanzadeh from Iran. Both Armenian wrestlers won the silver medals. Another Armenian wrestler Mher Markosyan (w/c 84 kg) won a bronze.

After Yakutsk tournament, on April 6-8, Armenian wrestlers will take part in 2017 Armenia Junior Wrestling Championship on the basis of the results of which the team of the RA young wrestlers will be formed.

Schiff, Pallone Support Aid to Armenia, Artsakh in FY 2018 Budget

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resolution of regional conflicts; [and] continue and expand on the humanitarian assistance provided to Artsakh's civilians, including the continuation of de-mining programs as well as support for development, assistance to people living with disabilities, and water supply systems,” Schiff said.

He urged the Appropriations Committee to support economic and military assistance, which enables Armenia's membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace and participation in peacekeeping operations. In addition, he requested specific language in FY18 to recognize “Armenia's efforts to serve as a regional safe haven for Christians and other at-risk populations fleeing violence in the Middle East, and supporting these efforts through aid and international organizations.”

Pallone submitted his testimony and similarly pointed out that Armenia is an important safe haven for refugees and a strategic American ally, adding that “US aid has also provided critical support for US-led peacekeeping deployments and NATO interoperability in the region.”

Pallone requested \$40 million in economic aid and \$11 million in military aid for Armenia, including funds for the Foreign Military Financing program and the International Military Education and Training program. He also recommended suspending military aid for Azerbaijan until its government ceases its attacks against Armenia and Artsakh and agrees to the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts.

“Taking these steps will continue to

build on the US-Armenia strategic relationship and showcase its importance. I urge this committee to invest in peace, show our commitment as a nation toward stable and pro-democracy nations, and help support Armenia's continued growth and development,” Pallone concluded.

“We commend Congressmen Adam Schiff and Frank Pallone for their testimony before the House Appropriations Committee outlining key policy goals with respect to Armenia and Artsakh,” stated Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “As Congressman Schiff stated, ‘the US-Armenia relationship is founded upon a shared commitment to freedom and democratic values,’ with which we strongly agree. We also concur with House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) that the US ‘has a vital role to play in advancing democracy, protecting the innocent, and offering diplomatic solutions to crisis, unrest, violence and economic challenges.’ As the appropriations process continues, the Armenian Assembly of America looks forward to advancing our shared goals.”

In addition, the Armenian Caucus circulated a “Dear Colleague” letter to urge fellow Members of Congress to sign a letter in support of strengthening American diplomacy and reinforcing ties with Armenia. The letter stated: “It is critical, in light of recent events, that we provide assistance to support our allies and stand up for our nation's core democratic principles. Our requests this year for the FY18

State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs appropriation bill hold particular importance given the urgent challenges facing the nations of the Caucasus and Eurasia. American leadership can and must play a vital role in promoting freedom in this strategic region. It is for this reason that we request continued US assistance for Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh, and at-risk minorities in the Middle East, as well as for other foreign aid-related priorities.”

The actions of the Members coincided with the release of the Administration's budget blueprint, which envisioned a 28 percent reduction for funding for the Department of State and USAID and as a preliminary document, did not detail assistance to the South Caucasus region. Many Members of Congress commented on the Administration's budget noting the importance of maintaining robust funding for US diplomacy and humanitarian assistance. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA), who headlined the Assembly's recent Gala, said, “I am very concerned that deep cuts to our diplomacy will hurt efforts to combat terrorism, distribute critical humanitarian aid, and promote opportunities for American workers. Especially when the US is fighting ISIS and millions are at risk of starvation around the world,” Chairman Royce said. “We need a strong reform budget that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of foreign assistance. And we can achieve this without undermining vital US economic and national security interests.”



ARMENIA

Simple Liquids Battery Makes A Splash

By Hripsime Mkrtychyan

YEREVAN – A new type of battery, the Simple Liquids Battery (SLB), offers an ecofriendly, safe and easily-chargeable device for emergency power generation.

SLBs offer safe, non-toxic, eco-friendly electric power banks, which can be stored and activated when needed for emergency situations. They are energized by adding any of a number of commonly available liquids into the device. The



In Estonia (from left to right): Yervand Sarkisyan (UK, jury member), Hripsime Mkrtychyan (SLB project, Armenia 1st place), Alon M. Cohen (Vienna), Hasmik Barseghyan (Energy Globe project, Armenia 3th place), Barбора Pollack (Vienna), Sveta Jaghatspanian (Green Technology, Armenia, 2nd place)



(Left to right): Hripsime Teryan, Hermine Gharagulyan, Hripsime Mkrtychyan

batteries are light, flexible, easy to use, and safe; they can be conveniently taken on trips - even on airplanes.

The battery is activated by adding any of a number of liquids including saltwater, buttermilk, vinegar, tea, coffee, beer, rainwater, and even urine to the device. A harmless chemical reaction then produces electricity, which may then be used to operate a cell phone, a light or other electrical devices.

The project is now in pre-prototyping process. The initial funding for the research phase of this project was made by Dr. Vahan Chakarian, the Founder and CEO of Technology and Science Dynamics (TSD) Company in Yerevan. The team consists of five specialists: two engineers, two physicists and

an electrochemist. The business idea of the battery was developed during the special courses organized by New Technology Education Fund (NTEF), a charitable organization with a sister foundation in Santa Clara, CA. NTEF's Armenian office promotes technology education and development in Armenia and Artsakh.

This year TSD participated in the Climate Launch Pad competition in Estonia, and the project was selected as one of the top 15 from a field of 88 semi-finalists. There were initially about 1,000 startups from Europe.

To learn more about the project, contact Levon Galstyan (levong@tsd.am), the Vice President of Technology & Science Dynamics.

Another Stabbing Linked to Armenian Election Campaign

By Narine Ghalechian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – An activist with businessman Gagik Tsarukian's electoral alliance was stabbed and seriously wounded by men allegedly linked to the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) on Sunday, March 19.

Aram Asatrian, head of the Tsarukian Bloc's campaign office in the central Armen village of Kuchak, and one of his friends were attacked near their community late on Sunday. They both were rushed to a hospital in the nearby town of Aparan.

Asatrian was transferred to the Astghik Medical Center in Yerevan the following morning. The chief doctor there described his condition as "grave" but said the 32-year-old does not need surgery yet.

In a statement, the Armenian police said the two men were stabbed by "an unknown individual." It said nothing about possible reasons for the dispute. Nor did the police report any arrests.

The mayor of Kuchak, Hovik Amirian, also would not say whether the stabbing is linked to campaigning for the April 2 parliamentary elections. Amirian said only that Asatrian is a "decent" and peaceful person.

Some Armenian media outlets claimed that Asatrian and his friend Manuk Hovsepian were attacked by rival election campaigners from the HHK. The ruling party did not immediately react to those allegations.

The Tsarukian Bloc likewise did not issue any statements on the incident as of Monday evening. Its representatives could not be reached for comment.

The incident occurred two days after the bloc, which claims to be in opposition to President Serzh Sargsyan, said one of its election candidates, Vahan Karapetian, was "ambushed" and assaulted in Yerevan's Ajapnyak by a group of HHK activists. Karapetian claimed later on Friday, however, that the violence had nothing to do with the election campaign.

The weekend stabbings were the latest in a series of violent incidents widely linked to the

Armenian parliamentary race. Virtually all of them reportedly involved loyalists of wealthy HHK candidates.

In another incident, a 23-year-old activist from Tsarukian's bloc was stabbed in a village near Yerevan on March 1. A top Tsarukian aide said the attack was the work of men campaigning for a local HHK candidate.

The HHK was also blamed for even more serious pre-election violence that occurred in another village on March 14. Three local opposition supporters were attacked and seriously injured there. One of them was shot in the leg while another stabbed in the back. The party denies any involvement.



Sam Simonian, left, and Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan meet

Italian Firm to Build New Power Plant in Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – An Italian company officially started building on Monday, March 20, a new thermal power plant in Yerevan that will further diversify foreign ownership in Armenia's energy sector.

The company, Renco S.p.A, held a groundbreaking ceremony attended by President Serzh Sargsyan and other senior Armenian officials.

Renco's chief executive, Giovanni Rubini, and Italy's ambassador to Armenia, Giovanni Ricciulli, were also in attendance. In a statement on the ceremony, Sargsyan's press office said the construction will take just over two years and cost around \$285 million.

The gas-powered plant will have a capacity of nearly 250 megawatts and use "the most advanced" technology of power generation, it

said.

Renco has done business in Armenia since the early 2000s. It has not been involved in the local energy sector until now, investing instead in luxury housing, hotels and office buildings. But the company has built, installed or operated power generation and distribution facilities in other parts of the world.

Two new gas-fired plants have already gone on stream in Armenia in the last few years. One of them was built in Yerevan in 2010 with a \$247 million loan provided by the Japanese government. The state-owned facility has a capacity of 242 megawatts. The new plant to be built by Renco will be adjacent to it. The other, more powerful thermal-power plant is located in the central town of Hrazdan. The Russian gas monopoly Gazprom inaugurated it in 2013.

Sam Simonian, Prime Minister Meet On Educational Projects

YEREVAN – Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan received this week the founder of Tumo Center for Creative Technologies, Sam Simonian.

The two men discussed issues related to the establishment of the Inter-University Center for Higher Education. Highlighting the importance of reforms in higher education, Karapetyan welcomed Simonian's initiative in this area.

The Premier stressed that the Government is prepared to support the implementation of the program, adding that it will help not only raise the quality of education, but also improve the overall environment and promote the younger generation.

Simonian thanked the prime minister for his willingness to support the cause and noted that the project also will be supported by the European Union.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Czech Truck Company to Establish Factory in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – An agreement reached between the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments of Armenia and Czech company Tatra engaged in truck production is now being implemented. Armenian Minister of Economic Development and Investments Suren Karayan said the factory will be established in Kotayk.

“In a meeting with the representatives of the company we discussed the possibilities of starting production in Armenia,” Karayan said. The minister had met with Czech businessmen on January 18. A representative of the Tatra company, Jiri Vabra, had presented a preliminary proposal to develop Yerevan’s public transportation. He stated that Armenia is the first post-Soviet state with which the company plans to cooperate.

Tatra was established in 1850. The capitalization of the company amounts to 3.7 billion Czech Krona \$148 million.

Turks ‘Detached from Reality’ Says Tusk

BRUSSELS (BBC) – Turkey is “completely detached from reality” in calling the Dutch fascists, European Council President Donald Tusk has said, the BBC reports.

His remarks come amid a row between Turkey and European nations over campaigning for a Turkish referendum.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has accused the Dutch government of being “Nazi remnants.” He was infuriated when a minister was barred from addressing a Rotterdam rally, sparking clashes with police.

Erdogan’s rhetoric intensified when he accused the Dutch of carrying out the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia in 1995.

In his remarks to the European Parliament on Wednesday Tusk said the Netherlands was “a place of freedom and democracy. And for sure Rotterdam,” he said.

“The city of Erasmus, brutally destroyed by the Nazis, which today has a mayor born in Morocco,” he added. “If anyone sees fascism in Rotterdam, they are completely detached from reality.”

Germany and Austria have also acted to stop Turkish rallies aimed at stirring support for a “yes” vote in an April 16 referendum on giving Erdogan greater powers.

Six New Suspects Nabbed In Dink Case

ISTANBUL (Public Radio of Armenia) – Six suspects, including a journalist, were detained on March 21 as part of an ongoing investigation into the murder of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, Anadolu Agency has reported.

An Istanbul prosecutor issued a detention warrant for eight suspects for publishing images and footage of murderer Ogün Samast in some media outlets in 2007 and 2016 in front of a Turkish flag shortly after his apprehension in the Black Sea province of Samsun.

Police later detained journalist Muammer Ay and other suspects Murat Bayrak, Yüksel Avan, Birol Ustaoglu, Yakup Kurtaran and Ahmet Çetiner in simultaneous operations conducted in six provinces.

The search for the other two suspects is ongoing.

Meanwhile, the Istanbul public prosecutor’s office also demanded another arrest warrant for the Gülenist prosecutor Zekeriya Öz, lawyer Halil Ibrahim Koca, and journalists Faruk Mercan, Adem Yavuz and Ekrem Dumanlı.

Dink was shot dead at the age of 52 in broad daylight outside the offices of the Turkish-Armenian newspaper *Ağos* in central Istanbul on January 19, 2007.

Ogün Samast, then a 17-year-old high-school dropout, confessed to the murder and was sentenced to almost 23 years in jail in 2011.

But the case grew into a wider scandal after it emerged that the security forces had been aware of a plot to kill Dink but failed to act.

Pope Begs Forgiveness for Church Role in Rwanda Genocide

VATICAN CITY (AP) – Pope Francis on Monday, March 20, begged forgiveness for the “sins and failings of the church and its members” during Rwanda’s 1994 genocide as the Holy See sought to open a new phase in relations nearly a quarter-century after the slaughter.

In an extraordinary statement after Francis’ meeting with Rwandan President Paul Kagame, the Vatican acknowledged that the church itself bore blame, as well as some Catholic priests and nuns who “succumbed to hatred and violence, betraying their own evangelical mission” by participating in the genocide.

During the 100-day genocide, more than 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed by Hutu extremists. Many of the victims died at the hands of priests, clergymen and nuns, according to some accounts by survivors, and the Rwandan government says many died in the churches where they had sought refuge.

During the 25-minute meeting in the Apostolic Palace, Francis “implored anew God’s forgiveness for the sins and failings of the church and its members,” the Vatican said.

He “expressed the desire that this

humble recognition of the failings of that period, which unfortunately disfigured the face of the church, may contribute to a ‘purification of memory’ and may promote, in hope and renewed trust, a future of peace.”

The Rwandan government has long pressured the church to apologize for its complicity in the genocide, but both the Vatican and the local church have been reluctant to do so. The church has long said those church officials who committed crimes acted individually.

In 1996, St. John Paul II refused to take blame on the church’s part for what transpired in Rwanda, saying in a letter to Rwandan bishops that: “The church in itself cannot be held responsible for the misdeeds of its members who have acted against evangelical law.” Four years later, however, he did make a general apology for a host of Catholic sins and crimes over its 2,000-year history.

Amid continued pressure from the government, Rwanda’s Catholic bishops last year apologized for “all the wrongs the church committed.”

The ministry of local government rejected the apology then as inadequate. During Rwanda’s annual dialogue in December, Kagame said he didn’t understand why the church was so

reluctant to apologize for genocide when popes have apologized for much lesser crimes.

“I don’t understand why the pope would apologize for sexual offenses, whether it is in the U.S., Ireland or Australia, but cannot apologize for the role of the church in the genocide that happened here,” Kagame said at the time.

On Monday, he tweeted his appreciation for Francis’ words and said “a new chapter in relations” had begun.

He said that Francis’ willingness to apologize was “an act of courage and moral high standing” that was typical of the pope.

Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwab, however, repeated charges that even before 1994, Catholic institutions helped divide Rwandans and “laid the intellectual foundation for genocide ideology.”

“Today, genocide denial and trivialization continue to flourish in certain groups within the church and genocide suspects have been shielded from justice within Catholic institutions,” Mushikiwab said in a statement.

AP writer Tom Odula contributed from Nairobi, Kenya.

Lebanese-Armenian Composer Gélalian Honored by AGBU Lebanon

BEIRUT – On March 8, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) of Lebanon – in collaboration with the Embassy of Armenia in Lebanon and under the patronage of the Lebanese Minister of Culture Ghattas Khoury – organized a lecture entitled “Boghos Gélalian et son apport à la musique au Liban” [Boghos Gélalian and his contribution to music in Lebanon] as a tribute to the famed Lebanese-Armenian composer Boghos Gélalian.

Boghos Gélalian (1927-2011) is known for his blend of musical influences, including Armenian and Middle Eastern melodies. During the 1960s and 1970, Gélalian composed pieces for piano, violin, cello, oboe, flute, voice and orchestra for some of the greatest Lebanese musicians, such as Fairouz. He is known for having left a strong imprint on the field of music in Lebanon.

Among the guests at the tribute evening were Gélalian’s wife and son, Raymonde and Serge; the Consul of the Embassy of Armenia to Lebanon, Ashot Vartanian; representative of the Armenian Catholic Church, Monseigneur Krikor Assadourian; the Vice Governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon, Haroutiun Samuelian; Cultural Officer of the French Institute of Lebanon, François Tiger; the representative of Minister of Culture, Dr. Nizar Daher; and the AGBU Lebanon District’s interim chairperson, Sylva Libaridian. “Gélalian’s music strives to transcend all national and cultural barriers to reach a universal public,” said Mireille Khanamirian, the cultural advisor to the Armenian Ambassador Samvel Mkrtchyan. “Furthermore, his work reflects the image of a civilized Lebanon, a Lebanon we all dream of.”

The event took place as part of the Mois de la Francophonie [Month of the French-Speaking World] in Lebanon, a series of events designed to promote the French language as well as cultural diversity. AGBU Lebanon director Anita Lebiar not only emphasized the importance of the participation of AGBU in the

Francophonie events, but also highlighted the collaboration with the embassy of Armenia to Lebanon and the Ministry of Culture and the important role that such collaborations play in bridging cultures.

Lebiar then introduced the panelists who discussed Gélalian’s work: Etienne Kupelian, professor of piano and theoretical subjects at the National Conservatory of Lebanon and the brother-in-law of Gélalian as well as Ghady Rahbani, the son of the prominent Lebanese composer Mansour Rahbani. While Kupelian touched on the personal side, Rahbani spoke about his experience growing up under Gélalian’s tutelage in music. “The entire Rahbani family has grown thanks to Gélalian and his family,”

added Rahbani. On the occasion, both speakers requested that Gélalian’s compositions be performed more often at the Lebanese National Conservatory.

AGBU Lebanon will continue its participation in the Mois de la Francophonie with a lecture on April 5 about the influence of Armenians on Lebanese architecture by architect Raffi Gergian entitled “L’architecture arménienne au Liban : une question d’identité.” The lecture will discuss eminent Lebanese-Armenian architects of the 20th century, who produced monuments that marked the history of Lebanon, such as the Lebanese Parliament, El Aabed clock, St Peter’s Basilica and Paul de Harissa, among others.

Jewish Right-Wing Extremists Riot During Performance by Armenian Choir in Jerusalem

RIOT, from page 1

Meanwhile, Gopstein and other activists allegedly shouted at the choir, “Christians,” “Go to Syria,” “Jew murderers” and more. The choir was forced to stop performing after one song.

Following the event, security guards and police blocked the entrance, and several Lehava members gathered in front of the building and protested that they were not allowed to go inside.

“Two right-wing activists were arrested after they refused to obey police orders, and continued to interfere with the event and disrupted the public order with shouts and confrontations with police,” the police said in a statement.

Rinat Edelstein and Lee He Shulov, the directors-curators of the Manofim festival, said in a statement: “We are still shocked and pained about the violent and vulgar behavior of Lehava, headed by Bentzi Gopstein. We wish to express our solidarity with the Armenian choir that was forced to leave the event because of Lehava’s violence against them.

Rabbi Noa Sattath, executive director of the Israel Religious Action Center, which organized a counterdemonstration against Lehava on Thursday evening, said, “The fact that Lehava thugs do not rest for a moment, and that while hundreds of citizens – Jews and Arabs – demonstrate against them, they choose to violently interrupt religious Christian activities, is clear proof that the head of this criminal organization, Bentzi Gopstein, should be prosecuted as quickly as possible, before more blood is spilled in the capital.”



INTERNATIONAL

Haigazian University Celebrates International Women's Day

BEIRUT – On Thursday, March 9, Haigazian University celebrated the International Women's Day, at Le Royal Hotel, Dbayeh – Lebanon, by honoring four accomplished women from diverse backgrounds and experiences, who had great impact on the Lebanese society in concrete ways. They were: May Makhzoumi, Cynthia Sarkis Perros, May Menassa and Dr. Arda Ekmekji.

The event which was under the patronage of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, Jean Oghassabian, and organized by the joint efforts of the Haigazian University Women's Auxiliary and the Public Relations Department attracted a capacity audience of 250 attendees – women representing various organizations, institutions, unions and friends of the University.

After the National Anthem, chairwoman of the Haigazian University Women's Auxiliary (HUWA), Terine Hasserjian opened the official ceremony with her welcoming words. She underlined the substantial importance of this occasion sharing with the audience the history of this celebration which dates back to 15 years, during which more than 45 women from different Lebanese denominations and regions have been honored in recognition of their achievements, welfare, and breakthroughs in service of



The honorees with President Paul Haidostian and Minister Jean Oghasabian as well as members of the Women's Auxiliary

their communities and Lebanon.

Public Relations Director Mira Yardemian presented the lives and major milestones and accomplishments of the honorees: President of the Makhzoumi Foundation, May Makhzoumi has dedicated herself for the past 20 years, to helping the people of Lebanon. The foundation has provided 2.5 million services to 750,000 people in the areas of health care, vocational training, micro credit and development programs. Cynthia Sarkis Perros is a successful entrepreneur, who, through her company, Luxury Limited Edition, has invested her longterm relationships and connections with internationally influential people in politics, business, media, film industry, as well as world-renowned luxury brands in organizing big pro-



The Armenian Youth Quartet



The honorees with President Paul Haidostian and Minister Jean Oghassabian

jects and events, mainly related to fundraising and welfare. May Menassa is a prolific writer who had a lifetime career and tremendous input to the Lebanese literary and cultural life as an author, critic and journalist. Dr. Arda Ekmekji is a powerhouse in the field of academia and civic engagement in Lebanon for 45 years, and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Haigazian University for 20 years.

"The best of things are fruits of genuine conviction, not simply duty. We get tired of duty but never of conviction. And the role of the community of women who surround us is a testimony of that conviction," said University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian in his remarks, thanking the Haigazian University Women's Auxiliary, both in Beirut and Los

Angeles for more than 50 years. On this special occasion, Haidostian paid tribute to two women who had incorporated the concept of devotion and conviction throughout their life. Sisters Elizabeth and Mary Webb were American missionaries, who more than half a century ago saved, fed, educated and raised a generation of girls in their house of refuge on Mexique Street in Beirut. The will of the Webb sisters stipulated that proceeds from the sale of their house be used for the education of girls or that the house itself be used. It was in this site, the Webb Building, that Haigazian University was founded 62 years ago.

The celebration was musically animated by the newly formed Armenian Youth Quartet, under the supervision of Garo Avessian.

Turkish Authorities Interfering in Patriarchal Election Process

INTERFERENCE, from page 1

The Clerical Assembly is expected to form a commission comprising clergymen and secular figures to organize the transfer of power from the General Vicar to the Locum Tenens.

The elections of the initiative group will be organized within 10 days after the election of the Locum Tenens. The group will, in turn, organize the elections of the Patriarch of Istanbul within a six-month period.

However, immediately following the election, a notice was handed out by Archbishop Aram Ateshyan to the Clerical Assembly that stated that it was illegal to start the election process, according to Agos. The notice was from the Governor's office to the press and was signed by Deputy Governor Aziz Mercan.

"Given the reports in the media, it is understood that the procedure of patriarchal election is intended to be started virtually by electing a deghabah on March 15.

"Considering the unfavorable developments that took place during the meeting on February

16 at the patriarchate, it is determined that starting the election process is legally impossible given the facts that this process might cause disturbance and divisions in the society, that there is already an incumbent vicar and that your society knows the basic proceedings and practices concerning the patriarchal election," read the statement.

In a response, Arch. Bekjian stated that a group including Ateshyan and Mashalyan will go to the Istanbul Governor's office to explain the situation.

"In this planned meeting, our party will explain the logic of election of the Locum Tenens," read Bekjian's statement. "Then an announcement will be made within the next couple of days." Bekjian added that he will not be attending the meeting.

Archbishop Karekin Bekjian, who elected as the deghabah by the Clerical Assembly, made a statement about the notice from the governor's office which states that "the election is legally impossible."

Bekjian stated that a group including Ateshyan and Mashalyan will go to Istanbul governor's office. Bekjian said, "I won't be there. In this planned meeting, our party will

explain the logic of election of deghabah. Then, an announcement will be made. This will happen within a couple of days. I will be here in the meantime."

Greece Eyes Strategic Partnership with Armenia, Foreign Minister Says

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Greek foreign minister Nikos Kotzias on Friday, March 10 expressed hope for establishing strategic relations and partnership between the Hellenic Republic and Armenia.

At the meeting with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan in Yerevan, Kotzias said that Greece possesses the political will to deepen cooperation with Armenia in a variety of areas.

Sargsyan, in turn, hailed the friendly relations between the two states, stressing the need for giving a new impetus to economic relations.

The sides agreed to further cooperate in the fields of education, military training, as well as culture, economy, transport and tourism.

Kotzias, who arrived in Armenia on Friday, earlier met foreign minister Edward Nalbandian to discuss diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Community News

Armenian Assembly Urges Investigation Of Azerbaijan Ties, Compromising Materials on US Officials

WASHINGTON – Earlier this week, the Armenian Assembly of America sent letters to the Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence expressing concern regarding the undue influence of Azerbaijan on America's democratic institutions.

In their letter to the Senate Intelligence Chairman Richard Burr (R-NC), Vice Chairman Mark Warner (D-VA), House Intelligence Chairman David Nunes (R-CA), and Ranking Member Adam Schiff (D-CA), Assembly Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian stated: "We are writing to express our concern regarding the undue influence of yet another foreign government on America's democratic institutions, namely Azerbaijan. We are deeply troubled by recent reports about Azerbaijan's ties to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its nexus to both the Mammadov family and the highest levels of the Azeri government. We therefore respectfully request that the congressional investigations of Russian influence be expanded to include Azerbaijan's influence peddling and any materials it may have potentially compromising US officials."

The Justice Department has previously brought some cases involving Azerbaijan through the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), but much more is needed. According to the "Azeri Oil Money Got a Pass From This Ethics Committee" article in Bloomberg News, Azerbaijan continues to shell out over \$45,000 monthly to the Podesta Group, of which the columnist states "It's hard to tell whether it's this creativity and generosity or any real US strategic interest that makes the US overlook the country's brutal dictatorship. A combination of both is likely: Without the 'caviar diplomacy,' Azerbaijan might be considered too small to defy declared US values and principles for its sake."

"When it comes to the integrity of America's democracy, the rule of law, and our governance process, we must not turn a blind eye to Azerbaijan's influence peddling, authoritarian regime and human rights atrocities," Assembly Co-Chairs Barsamian and Krikorian said. "Further, we must ensure that Azerbaijan's rampant corrupt practices do not compromise US policies and objectives. Additional evidence on Azerbaijani as well as Turkish wrongdoing is available and growing; we would welcome the opportunity to help advance a thorough investigation and United States response."

In addition to the US, Azerbaijan's caviar diplomacy is also amply documented in the December 2016 European Stability Initiative (ESI) report, wherein expensive watches, jewelry, computers, and large sums of money, among other gifts, were provided to several politicians from a number of countries in Europe. ESI states that "the ease with which democratic institutions and safeguards can be undermined has emerged as a fundamental threat to European democracy."



Guests enjoyed bidding on a wide array of items from Valentino, Hermès, Vartan Geudelekian, Gregg Emery, and many others.

AGBU Young Professionals of Greater New York Raise \$50,000 For Syrian Armenians

NEW YORK – On February 4, the AGBU Young Professionals of Greater New York (YPGNY) held their 16th annual silent auction and cocktail party at the Redbury in New York. The event raised \$50,000 for the AGBU Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund for Syrian Armenians and drew 200 young professionals from throughout the tristate area as well as members of the AGBU Central Board. The event was sponsored by Tito's Handmade Vodka, Manhattan Beer Distributors and Liquor Land.

Throughout the evening, guests listened to music by Greg "DJ Glo" Stepanian and enjoyed bidding on an array of gifts, luxury items and services donated by businesses and individuals in the fields of fine art, fashion, sports, dining and entertainment. These included items from Valentino, Hermès, Christian Louboutin, Vartan Geudelekian, Gregg Emery and many others.

"The support of the non-Armenian community is what truly allowed us to make this year's event so successful. Being able to connect with them on a human level and bringing them on board to further such an important cause made all the difference. 2017 marked the fourth consecutive year that YPGNY has donated the auction proceeds to the AGBU Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund for Syrian Armenians. The need today is greater than it has ever been and continues to grow more and more each day. This year's event raised \$15,000 more than last year, and as the need continues to grow, we strive to increase the amount raised each year," said YPGNY chairman William Nazarian.

Together with the 2017 proceeds, YPGNY has raised over \$125,000 for Syrian Armenians in need over the last four years. In past years, the YPGNY Silent Auction & Cocktail Party has raised funds for the AGBU Children's Centers in Armenia and the AGBU Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund for Iraqi Armenians.

To learn more about YPGNY, visit www.ypgny.agbuyp.org



The AGBU YP Greater New York Committee.

HALO Trust Campaign Raises \$1M, Appoints Festekjians as Campaign Co-Chairs

LONDON – The Safe Steps for The People of Karabakh campaign run by the HALO Trust – the world's largest humanitarian mine clearance organization catapulted to prominence by Princess Diana of Wales in the 1990s – will work with Nina and Raffi Festekjian as campaign co-chairs to achieve a landmine-free Karabakh by 2020.

The Festekjians will help raise awareness and support in the United States and in the world-wide Armenian Diaspora. They will host a fundraising event debuting Scout Tufenkjian's latest photographs from Karabakh which will then travel to New York and Los Angeles for exclusive showings and events as part of its North American tour.

The people of Nagorno Karabakh are more likely to be the victims of landmines than almost any other country in the world. The area is heavily fortified with mines as a result of the Nagorno Karabakh/Azerbaijan conflict of 1994. The extensive presence of landmines has crippled the population's ability to farm the land and claimed the lives and livelihoods of many inhabitants.

"One-third of landmine victims in Artsakh are children and that haunts me," said Nina Festekjian.

"Nina and I have become staunch supporters of the 'Safe Steps' Campaign as we strongly believe that restoring a sense of security and safety for Armenians living in the affected regions is not only a fundamental human right, but also critical to their livelihood which is a key factor in the economic growth and stability of the region," said Raffi Festekjian.

Since 2000, the HALO Trust has cleared more than 445 minefields, 11,200 landmines, and 25,300 cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance in Karabakh. To remove the remaining 70 civilian minefields, HALO Trust has secured an anonymous donor who has committed \$4 million in match funding specifically for Karabakh.

"Every contribution to the 'Safe Steps' campaign will be matched by an anonymous foundation that is committed to achieving a mine-free world. The donor has pledged half of the \$8 million required to clear Karabakh's remaining 70 minefields – if we can raise matching funds. We are grateful to the Festekjians who have taken a leadership role in this effort, the global Armenian diaspora, and others from around the world enthused by this lifesaving project. We've raised \$1 million of our \$4-million match-funding goal and we must now keep up the momentum to meet the match challenge and seize this opportunity to make Karabakh Mine Free," said James Cowan, HALO Trust CEO.

The Festekjians have spearheaded numerous philanthropic efforts, ranging from the arts to economic development including, the Raffi and Nina Festekjian Foundation and the YerazArt Foundation. Additionally, Raffi Festekjian has served as chair of the Armenia Fund and most recently has been a board member of the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia (NCFA). Professionally, he is the executive Chairman and managing partner of Emyrean Solutions and Nuarca LLC. He earned an MBA from J.L. Kellogg Graduate School, Northwestern University, and a civil engineering degree from the American University of Beirut.

Nina Festekjian is the co-founder of Anoush'ella restaurant and leads numerous charitable ventures including YerazArt and Aragil Foundations supporting emerging artists in Armenia.



COMMUNITY NEWS



From left, Vatche Mankerian, Caroline Lais-Tufenkian, Cynthia Norian, Silva Katchiguian, Carla Garapedian and Greg Hosharian

AIWA-LA Laurel Karabian Fund Arts Advisory Council Members Meet

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA), Los Angeles Affiliate and members of the newly established Advisory Council to the Laurel Karabian Fund for the Arts came together to discuss the criteria for the allocation of grants to creative professionals in all art disciplines. The meeting took place over breakfast at the home of Margaret Mgrublian, vice president elect of AIWA-LA Executive Committee. Advisory Council members present were Carla Garapedian, producer and filmmaker; Greg Hosharian, composer, orchestrator and keyboardist; Vatche Mankerian, pianist and composer; and Caroline Lais-Tufenkian, curator and arts professional. Unable to attend were Karen Kondazian, actress and author; and Karin Mushegain, mezzo soprano; and Madeline Karabian, daughter of AIWA-LA's first president, the late Laurel Karabian in whose honor and memory the Fund for the Arts has been established. The fund is earmarked to support cutting-edge, high-quality young and emerging female talents that reflect the creative aspirations of the Armenian-American community. All art disciplines within a symphony, opera, theatre and museum will be considered.

Cynthia Norian, sister of the late Laurel Karabian and liaison between the Council and the AIWA-LA Executive Committee said she is excited to see the Fund for the Arts finally move toward its intended purpose. "I am excited by the prospect of reviewing applications from budding artists in all fields. Through this fund we hope to showcase talented young women as they develop and pursue their chosen field of creative art," said Norian.

AIWA-LA is now accepting applications for the Laurel Karabian Fund for the Arts. For Criteria and requirements as well as applications, visit AIWA-LA website through www.aiwainternational.org. Fill the "Request for Funding" form and submit via email to aiwalosangeles@gmail.com.

Submit requests by June 30 for funding of projects in September.

AIWA Hasmik Mgrdichian Scholarship Applications Available

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles Affiliate of the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) announces that applications are now being accepted for the Hasmik Mgrdichian Scholarships. The Hasmik Mgrdichian Scholarships were established in 2011 to annually award scholarships to university students. Thanks to the continued generosity of the Hasmik Mgrdichian Foundation, her legacy of philanthropy and goodwill continues to provide \$5,000 scholarships awarded to five students each year.

Applications are now available on line and are open to all California women residents of Armenian descent who are applying for education in an accredited college or university. Applications are also accepted from students applying for graduate or undergraduate programs. Applications must be received no later than April 15. Applications are available on aiwala.org and AIWALosAngeles.org.

Silva Katchiguian, president of AIWA-LA stated: "We take great pride in our scholarship program which was created by Hasmik Mgrdichian, one of the founders of the Los Angeles Affiliate of the Armenian International Women's Association. We are also very pleased to have Hasmik's granddaughter Lysa serve on the scholarship selection committee. It is gratifying each year to receive applications from young Armenian women and to learn of their scholastic achievements and goals for the future."

The Scholarship Committee, chaired by Lily Balian, and with Committee members Hermine Janoyan, Cindy Norian, Diana Hekimian, Diane Cabraloff and Houry Aposhian, are committed to reaching out to all California universities and colleges to inform women students of the opportunity to submit applications for scholarship awards. Flyers and notices are sent to

Armenian schools, organizations and churches. The scholarship recipients are recognized and receive their awards at the Los Angeles Affiliate Annual Membership meeting in May 2017.

In addition to the Hasmik Mgrdichian Scholarship Awards from the Los Angeles Affiliate, other scholarships are available through the AIWA National Board in Watertown, Mass. Students in the sciences (including mathematics, engineering, technology, computer science, architecture) are invited to apply for AIWA's Lucy Kasparian Aharonian awards, ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000. Information and applications can be accessed through their website: aiwalnc@aol.com. Young women are urged to apply for both scholarships.

AIWA was established in 1991 to foster understanding among Armenian women worldwide and to address the critical issues facing them everywhere. Headquartered in Massachusetts, the organization has reached out to assist women in Armenia through its Women's Entrepreneurship Program at the American University of Armenia and support of the Women's Support Center project in Armenia which provides a safe haven for abused women. In addition, programs have showcased outstanding women in a variety of fields through workshops, seminars and symposiums. AIWA celebrated its 25th Anniversary this year (September 30 - October 2) in Boston with two days of conferences followed by a gala with the theme "Inspiring our Future, Honoring our Past." Through a network of supporters, friends and members around the world, AIWA has been responding to the needs, interests and futures of Armenian women with International Conferences held in London, Paris, Geneva, Buenos Aires, San Francisco and Yerevan.

Ambassador Evans to Speak at Conn. Genocide Commemoration

HARTFORD, Conn. – The Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee of Connecticut will host its annual commemoration program in the magnificent Hall of the House at the Connecticut State Capitol at 11 a.m. on Saturday April 22.

The keynote speaker this year will be former United States Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, John M. Evans.

Evans, a career Foreign Service Officer who served as the US Ambassador to Armenia from 2004 to 2006, stirred controversy in February 2005 by publicly dissenting from the policy of the Bush Administration on the then 90-year-old issue of the Armenian Genocide. A native of Williamsburg, Va., educated at Yale and Columbia, Evans served in Tehran, Prague, Moscow, Brussels (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, St. Petersburg and Washington, reaching the rank of Minister-Counselor. He is the author of *Truth Held Hostage: America and the Armenian Genocide: What Then? What Now?* (Gomidas Institute) and *Therefore, God Must Be Armenian! Sixteen Talks Given on Armenian Issues (2007-2012)* (Gomidas Institute).

Now retired from the State Department, he lives with his wife, the former Donna Chamberlain, in Washington, DC.

Jack Krikorian, chairman of the Connecticut Committee stated "Ambassador Evans has a distinguished career in the Foreign Service and has demonstrated outstanding integrity and courage. We are privileged to have him serve as our keynote speaker."

The April 22 event at the Capitol is free and open to the public. State Rep. Edwin Vargas Jr., who is hosting the event, has invited a number of Connecticut's civic, political and religious leaders to attend. A large turnout is expected. Additionally, on Friday April 21, the

Connecticut Genocide Commemoration Committee is hosting a fundraiser reception to support its ongoing activities such as developing a Genocide curriculum for public schools and universities as well as for establishing a permanent Genocide monument. The event will take place at the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection in New Britain from 5 to 7 p.m., the evening before the program at the Capitol. Ambassador Evans will also be present at the



Ambassador John Evans

event on Friday and will be available to sign copies of his books, which will be available for purchase.

While no reservations are required for the commemoration at the Capitol, reservations are required for the April 21 Friday night fundraiser reception. For further information about the Friday night event or to purchase tickets at \$25 per person, contact Melanie Brown at mel.brown25@sbcglobal.net

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COMMUNITY NEWS

David Philipps Suggests Turkey Does Not Meet NATO Ideals

By Aline Ozinian

NEW YORK (*Agos*) – David L. Philipps, the Director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights, was interviewed last week about the developments around the triangle of Turkey-US-Middle East, a subject covered more in depth in his recent book, *An Uncertain Ally: Turkey under Erdogan's Dictatorship*. In addition, between 2001 and 2004, he served as the chairman of the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC).

Philipps has served as a foreign affairs expert and Senior Adviser to the US Department of State during the administrations of Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama. In addition to writing for the Huffington Post about the Kurdish question, Turkish politics and fighting ISIS, Philipps worked as an adviser in the internationally known think-tank Atlantic Council and as an adviser to the White House concerning Middle East Balkans.

Philipps was interviewed last week on Turkey's current political situation and foreign policy approach, the US-Turkey relations under Trump administration, US security interests regarding Kurdish unity and the future of the Artsakh (Karabakh) conflict and Turkey-Armenia relations.

What are your thoughts regarding today's Turkey? How would you explain what is happening in Turkey right now?

If NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] were being established today, Turkey would not be eligible to join. President Tayyip Erdogan has revealed his true face as an Islamist who is anti-American, anti-European and who undermines NATO. NATO is more than a security alliance. It is a coalition of countries with shared values. More journalists are jailed today in Turkey than any other country. Recent events during which legitimately-elected members of the parliament were arrested, denied free speech, and deprived of other rights are indicators of Turkey's departure from the democratic mainstream. Using ministers for partisan political lobbying is not welcome in Europe.

What was the motivation for the changes inside the AKP (after 2007)?

Erdogan used his electoral mandate from July 22, 2007 to consolidate his power, attack the judiciary and target Turkey's secular elite. The election put Turkey on the path to the dictatorship that it is today.

How would you describe the relations between US-Turkey today? What are your predictions about future relations?

US-Turkey relations are at a low point. Erdogan demands that the US extradite Fethullah Gülen. This is a legal, not a political decision. Also, Turkey demands that the US abandons the Syrian Kurds who are proven fighters against ISIS. The Pentagon wants to continue US security cooperation with the Kurds over Erdogan's strident objections.



David Philipps

What kind of political changes should we expect from the Trump administration regarding Turkey?

It's too soon to tell. When Trump and Erdogan talked on February 8, they avoided contentious issues like Trump's Muslim travel ban and Turkey's crackdown after the coup. Vice President Mike Pence heralded a "new era" in US-Turkish relations. The rhetoric has changed, but substantive differences still exist.

Why has Turkey become "an uncertain ally" for America? Is Turkey's Kurdish policy the only reason?

Turkey's rapprochement with Russia raises concerns about its response in the event that Russia attacks Ukraine, Poland or the Baltic States. About 140,000 Turks have been arrested or dismissed after the failed coup of July 15, which gutted the Turkish Armed Forces. Targeting Kurdish civilians is a war crime for which Erdogan should be held accountable. Armenians were victims of genocide. Armenians know better than anyone the wrath of Turkey and the duplicity of its leaders.

What about the Kurds? You have spent some time in Iraqi Kurdistan. What do they think and expect from Turkey?

Iraqi Kurds have extensive cooperation with Turkey, including energy transport from oil and gas fields in Kirkuk and Suleimania to the port of Ceyhan. Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan are both antagonistic towards the PKK. When it comes to fighting ISIS, Kurdish unity is critical.

How important are the Kurds and the "Kurdish question" for Turkey's democratization process?

There are about 20 million Kurds in Turkey. However, their political and cultural rights are systematically denied. A dozen members of parliament from the pro-Kurdish HDP are in jail. Kurdish mayors have been arrested or fired. Local community leaders with the KCK are targeted and imprisoned. Turkey cannot be a democracy unless Kurds are fully enfranchised. Instead, the Kurds are victimized. A recent report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights described mass killings and

deportations, despite Turkey's effort to cover up facts on the ground by denying access to UN investigators.

Do you have doubts about Turkey's eligibility as a NATO member?

I propose that the North Atlantic Council establish a Compliance Review Committee to evaluate the performance of NATO members when it comes to democracy and human rights. If a NATO member receives a failing grade two years consecutively, their membership should be suspended. In addition to Turkey, Hungary is also a country of concern.

What do you think will happen after the "April Referendum" in Turkey? In May, what kind of Turkey should we expect?

A majority of Turks will vote "no", rejecting Erdogan's executive presidency. However, Erdogan will steal the vote and declare victory. Constitutional reform establishing a dictatorship has been Erdogan's project for years. There is no way he will lose the vote. Instability and social conflict will ensue.

Turkey has been a geopolitically important country for both Europe and Caucasus. Turkey has a huge influence on Azerbaijan, and as you know, Azerbaijan continues to break the ceasefire agreement on a daily basis. How will Turkish political uncertainties affect the region, especially in regard to the Azerbaijan-Artsakh (Karabakh) conflict?

Turkey will seek to change the Minsk Group by insisting on an expanded role for itself or by trying to shift mediation from the OSCE to the UN. Turkey is a party to the conflict and cannot play a constructive role in mediation. The Minsk group has proven ineffective, but at least it has prevented a spiral of deadly violence from which Azerbaijan and Turkey would seek to benefit.

For many years, you made efforts for Turkish-Armenian reconciliation and opening borders without preconditions. What do you forecast for future relations between Turkey and Armenia?

The Protocols provide a path forward. Turkey should ratify the Protocols, enabling normal travel and trade and enhanced diplomatic cooperation. Erdogan does not share my view. His idea about reconciliation is to humiliate and abuse Armenians. Reconciliation is a process not an event. Turkish and Armenian civil society should expand their interaction and explore areas for cooperation. We have already seen progress when people get together and can relate in human terms, independent of their governments.

(*An Uncertain Ally: Turkey under Erdogan's Dictatorship*, which was published recently, discusses rise of political Islam in Turkey, Erdogan's political life and ISIS. The "Kurdish question," which Philipps has been dealing with for years, is one of the main topics in the book. The book also covers Erdogan's childhood, teenage and high school years in a detailed way. The author also covers Erdogan's introduction to Necmettin Erbakan, his role in the National Vision movement and his days as the Mayor of Istanbul.)

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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COMMUNITY NEWS

CYSCA, NAASR, MIT Armenian Society to Present Panel on Climate Change

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – The Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA), along with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Armenian Society and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) announces a panel discussion on lightning, climate change and other exciting scientific challenges.

This event is being held as part of the annual Cambridge Science Festival on Monday, April 17, 7-9 p.m. at MIT



Prof. Ashot Chilingarian

Building E51, Room 315, 70 Memorial Drive, Cambridge. The moderator will be Mike Wankum, meteorologist, WCVB-Channel 5 Boston.

The panel of scientists will consist of Prof. Ashot Chilingarian, director of the Yerevan Physics Institute and head of its Cosmic Ray Division (CRD) in Yerevan, who has been invited to Cambridge specifically for this event. The five other panelists will include: Dr. Areg Danagoulian, assistant professor, nuclear science and engineering at MIT; Dr. Joseph Dwyer, professor and holder of the Peter T. Paul Chair in Space Sciences, Department of Physics, University of New Hampshire; Dr. Bagrat Mailyan, from the Cosmic Ray Division in Armenia and the Geospace Physics Laboratory, Florida Institute of Technology; Dr. Ningyu Liu, associate professor, Department of Physics, University of New Hampshire; and Dr. Earle R. Williams, research scientist at MIT whose studies include physical meteorology, cloud microphysics, radar meteorology, and volcanology.

The discussion is intended for the general public and will explain recent research topics dealing with atmospheric physics, thunderstorms, lightning initiation, and the influence of powerful solar storms on the near-earth environment. Much of this research is intended to allow prediction of dangerous weather events such as lightning, hail storms, radiation storms, and geomagnetic storms; all of which can cause immense physical and economic damage.

Admission is free and the public is invited. Refreshments will be provided after the program. For questions or more



Mike Wankum

details, contact Alisa Stepanian at asteoanian@aol.com. This event is sponsored by CYSCA, the MIT Armenian Society and NAASR.

Dr. Melissa Bilal to Speak at NAASR on Recording of Armenian WWI POWs

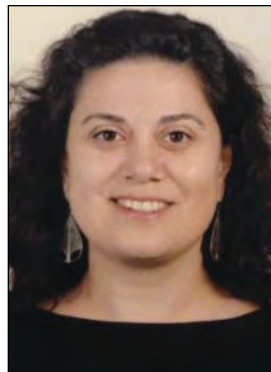
BELMONT, Mass. – Dr. Melissa Bilal, currently a visiting scholar in the Department of History at MIT for Spring 2017 of the Institute for Liberal Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies, Emerson College, will give a lecture titled “Voice Signatures: Recordings of Russian Armenian POWs in German Camps, 1916-1918,” on Thursday, March 30, at 7:30 p.m., at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, 395 Concord Ave.

During World War I, the initially secret Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission (Königlich-Preußische Phonographische Kommission) made recordings of prisoners of war held in various different camps across German territories. Among the detainees held in these camps were Russian Armenian soldiers.

In this lecture, Bilal will present samples of

songs and speech in Armenian, Georgian and Turkish captured a century ago from these men by the use of phonograph and gramophone technologies and provide information about the lives of these soldiers. While

questioning the conditions under which captives were turned into research subjects, Bilal will interpret the repertoire through which the Armenian soldiers expressed themselves in the



Dr. Melissa Bilal

specific historical moment of 1916-1918, and she argues that the written documents and the voices passed onto us by the phonographic commission challenge the idea of an “archive” and/or a “museum” that the commission originally intended to put together.

Bilal received her BA and MA in sociology from Istanbul’s Bogaziçi University and her PhD in music from the University of Chicago. She was a Mellon Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in Music at Columbia University and has also taught at the University Chicago and Bogaziçi. Commissioned by Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv

in partnership with the Orient-Institut Istanbul and Lautarchiv of Humboldt University, she prepared the CD “Voice Signatures: Recordings of Russian Armenian POWs in German Camps, 1916-1918” (forthcoming, 2017) and is now planning to extend the project into an exhibition and a documentary film. She is the co-author of two books in Turkish and is currently working on her monograph *The Wake Up Lullaby: Gender Politics of the Armenian Revolution* and a co-authored book (with Lerna Ekmekcioglu), *Feminism in Armenia: A Sourcebook*.

Dr. Keith Watenpaugh Lecture to Focus on Genocide And Foundations of Modern Humanitarianism

FRESNO – Dr. Keith David Watenpaugh (University of California, Davis), will give a presentation titled “The Drowned, the Saved and the Forgotten: Genocide and the Foundations of Modern Humanitarianism” at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, at the California State University, Fresno, in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191.



Dr. Keith Watenpaugh

The lecture is part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring 2017 Lecture Series and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation. The lecture is co-sponsored by the Department of

History, the Islamic Studies Speaker Series, and the College of Social Sciences.

Genocide is unparalleled in its horror. It is the ultimate crime against humanity, but it is also a problem of humanity that evokes a problem for humanity. In this talk, drawn from his award-winning book, *Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (2015) Watenpaugh exam-

ines the particular questions that arise when the problem of humanity motivating a problem for humanity is the crime of genocide. Looking at international humanitarian responses to the genocide of the Ottoman Armenians (1915-1922), he argues that modern humanitarianism and genocide have a complex and intertwined history that has shaped the critical modern concepts of humanitarian neutrality, humanitarian governance and the role of justice in relief, and human rights-based development.

Watenpaugh studies the history, theory and practice of human rights and humanitarianism and directs the Human Rights Studies Program at University of California, Davis. Author of the award-winning *Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* and *Being Modern in the Middle East*, he has published frequently in scholarly journals. Watenpaugh is the recipient of fellowships from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council, and he is immediate past-president of the Syrian Studies Foundation. He also directs a global project supported by the Carnegie Corporation and the Open Society Foundations to address the higher education needs of Syrian refugee university students.

The lecture is free and open to the public. Free parking is available.

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Professor of Anthropology, Sabancı University

Gerard Libaridian

Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History, University of Michigan (retired)

Etiyen Mahçupyan

Journalist

Malika Zeghal

Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Life, Harvard

Free and open to the public. Seating is limited.

Arts & Living

AIWA Presents 'Broadway in LA' Evening with Andrea Martin, Seth Rudetsky

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles Affiliate of the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) announces that it will present "Broadway in LA: An Evening with Andrea Martin" hosted by Seth Rudetsky, on Saturday, May 27. Guests do not have to journey to 42nd Street or Times Square to enjoy Tony and Emmy award winning actress, Andrea Martin and Seth Rudetsky, musician, actor, writer and host of "Seth's Big Fat Broadway" and "Seth Speaks" on Sirius/XM Satellite Radio's on Broadway. Martin is also known to millions as "Auntie Voula" from "My Big Fat Greek Wedding." This amazing duo will be traveling to Los Angeles for a one-night comedy show in the heart of the NoHo Arts District appearing at the El Portal Theater, 5269 Lankershim Boulevard, North Hollywood. The evening will begin at 7 p.m. with dinner followed by the performance at 8:30 p.m. Dessert and coffee will be served after the show with an opportunity to meet and mingle with the stars.

Silva Katchiguan, president of AIWA-LA, reports that this star-studded event is in honor of AIWA's 25-plus years of accomplishment in serving Armenian women across the globe. Katchiguan stated "We are truly honored that Andrea Martin has generously offered to take time from her busy schedule to perform her one woman show for the benefit of AIWA. Martin has been a longtime strong advocate and supporter of AIWA.

This fundraiser will assist the Women's Support Center in Armenia which provides a safe haven for abused women and children;



Andrea Martin

the Women's Entrepreneurship Program at the University of Armenia; and the Women's Health Center, along with the many missions and initiatives of AIWA that address critical issues facing women,"

"We are delighted that Seth Rudetsky will serve as her musical director and MC," stated Katchiguan. "He will interview her on the stage, they will chat informally, she will sing, do comedy routines and talk with the audience."

Martin has received more Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations as a featured actress in a musical than any other actress. She most recently won both awards for the 2013 production of "Pippin." Her career on Broadway began with "My Favorite Year" in 1993 for which she won both awards as well. She has also been nominated for a Tony for "Young Frankenstein," "Oklahoma," "Candide," and "Noises Off." For her work on the iconic comedy series "SCTV," Martin won two Emmy

see AIWA, page 15



Artur Makaryan

On the Wings of a Dream with the Luys Foundation

Scholar Artur Makaryan Reaches for His Dream

NEW YORK – A big dreamer and extremely talented soul, Artur Makaryan likes to say that "if you have a determined mind, you have already done half of the job.

The fulfillment of your dreams requires time and hard work. You can never have more unless you do more."

By Lilit Petrosyan

The academic and professional achievements of a 26-year-old dramatic director, a nominee and a winner of national and international outstanding festivals, are truly inspiring. Makaryan has a bachelor's and a master's degree from Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography. He studied at the "Acting International" professional school in Paris and now (since September 2015) he is one of six theater directors to have been selected as a candidate for a Master of Fine Arts degree at Columbia University. He was also enrolled in the master's program at the Paris-Sorbonne University where he conducted a research in the theater department.

"My passion for classical music, acting and directing inspired me to do a research about where exactly the female performer belongs in the musical theatre," he said. His research project at the Sorbonne is called "The theatre and the feminism" where he tries to unveil the level of a woman's authority and her role in the theatrical environment.

Makaryan said he believes that the theatre should be a thought leader as powerful as the Internet or television is nowadays. The theatre's repertory should address current breaking issues and provide solutions for them. "As artists we are meant to observe. There are so many oppressed nations and minorities around us who don't have the possibility to talk openly about their issues. It is our responsibility to notice and give them the space to be heard," he said.

From Paris to New York, from Stokke (Norway) to Toga (Japan), his international experiences have shaped his personality and theatrical aspirations. French, German and now also Italian are the languages that Artur has recently added to his linguistic bouquet. With every new city and every new language, he has acquired a new understanding and a new appreciation of different cultures and diversity.

During his MFA theatre directing studies at Columbia University, Makaryan has staged a number of plays, including scenes from "Carmen" and "La Traviata." Anne Bogart, a living legend and an award-winning American theatre and opera director, has been Makaryan's greatest nurturers, saying his enthusiasm has no limits. In fact, Makaryan's two big passions of classical music and theatre had always been battling each other for his affections until last year when he learnt about the Opera Directing Fellowship at the Juilliard School in New York. He came to realize that instead of choosing between his two talents he might as well combine them. Makaryan was one of the 1,000 applicants for the fellowship and after a very intense competitive selection, he received the fellowship at Juilliard, one of the most

see MAKARYAN, page 13

ARPA International Film Festival: 20th Anniversary Edition

LOS ANGELES – Arpa International Film Festival is one of the oldest independent film festivals in Los Angeles. On November 3-5, the festival will celebrate its 20th anniversary at the historic Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood, followed by a special Awards Banquet at the Glendale Hilton on November 5.

This year, screenings for the 20th year will bring a diverse tapestry in global cinema, with a stimulating selection of films that cultivate cultural understanding and global empathy. Call for films have been announced and details can be found by checking www.arpafilmfestival.com

The festival has solidified into the leading outlet in Hollywood for international cinema, exploring issues like diaspora, war, genocide, dual identity, exile and multiculturalism, while inspiring our local and global community to connect and advance progressive cinematic art.

The Armin T. Wegner Humanitarian Award is extended to a special filmmaker for their creativity that fulfills our mission. Our International jury from the professional film community acts as a supportive body to encourage filmmakers to re-examine, explore and concentrate on their own creative development.

In previous years the festival has screened hundreds of films that have touched us, and more recently films such as "Women of 1915," "Crows of the Desert," "Hot Country-Cold Winter," "Lost Birds," "When My Sorrow Dies: The Legend of Armen Ra," "Sumbat: The Life and Art" and our special screening at our 19th Annual opening night "Behind the Scenes of the 'Promise'" with Dr. Eric Esrailian and producer Mike Medavoy, and many more have created a great insight to the unbelievable imagination and talent of filmmakers leaving many of us in awe of their creativity.

Arpa International Film Festival committee members spend countless hours working selflessly to make one of the most important forms of art- FILM, reach our community, through this amazingly talented individuals from around to world, to inform, enrich and bring awareness to our community via their art. Yet, in order to continue growing our festival and its positive impact on the multinational film community, and to promote our own filmmakers in their creativity, we need the SUPPORT of our community. Let us join in to bring this branch of the art to amazing levels. It will only happen with togetherness, support, and hard work

Arpa Foundation for Film, Music and Art (AFFMA) a non-profit organization, encourages members of the community to support "The Promise" especially on the very first day of its screening in theaters on April 21.

DON HANNAH PHOTOGRAPHY



Front row from left: Maral Kazazian, Sylvia Minassian(Founder), Don Hannah Second row: Michael Ashjian(Festival Director), Jacqueline Der Mesrobian, Talia Tanielian; Back row: Gregor Zupanc, Vanja Srdic, Lorena Dilanian, Carmen Libaridian, James Ananias



ARTS & LIVING

Scholar Artur Makaryan Reaches for His Dream

MAKARYAN, from page 12

influential conservatories in the world and one of the major institutions of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

"Coming from a non-musical family and from a small village in Echmiadzin, Armenia, I could never ever imagine myself getting to Juilliard, a center where artists are trained for the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Ballet. Starting September 2017, I'll be assisting Steven Wordworth who stages for the Metropolitan, La Scala, Vienna State, Los Angeles and other operas. You should truly dream big."

Despite the outstanding list of excellent academic centers he's attended so far, Makaryan always acknowledges the knowledge he acquired from Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography that created a strong base and gave him the confidence for building on new skills during his further studies abroad. "I had wonderful professors and got excellent education in Armenia. I am heartily grateful for that. Up to date, Hrachya Gasparian, the former rector of the Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography, is one of my biggest advisers and supporters."

The Myth of The Impossible

Makaryan's love for the theatre and the stage has been accompanying him since his childhood. "I used to perform in every single performance at school. Acting on stage was helping me to get away from the reality. Acting made me powerful. Stage was the place where I could play anyone and be anyone," he recalled.

During his freshman year at the Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography, Makaryan started engaging with various international festivals in Yerevan, Armenia. His first interactions with foreign actors, directors, and screenwriters made him feel empowered to realize that the world is much bigger, and that the opportunities are within reach.

"I used to get this strange feeling of abandonment each time the international guests

were gone. I truly felt I belonged to them... or rather I so much wanted to be part of that bohemian society. I was so excited at the prospect of an international experience that one day I decided to write a letter asking for a placement as an assistant director. I literally sent that letter to 36 theatres around the globe," remembered Makaryan, laughing. "Three days after, I was reading a letter from one of the best theatres in France, "Théâtre de

since theatre gives me an unceasing emotional development, I don't get the same emotional connection with films."

During his studies in Yerevan, he created a new musical version of "Woyzeck" with 40 actors, dancers and musicians without any budget. Just after the big success of "Woyzeck," his colleagues and he founded a new musical theater group called Epsidon, the first theatre to perform musicals in Armenia.

ing to be given the opportunity."

Intrigued and inspired by Makaryan's recent visit to Artsakh, American playwright Gordon Penn suggested that he write a play after a play after doing research on Armenian history. They decided to call it "Black Garden" (Karabakh, in literally translation). It's a love story set during the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Makaryan is hopeful to present the full version of the play to Armenian audiences this summer and return to the US with Armenian actors to perform it at Columbia as well.

After graduating, Makaryan thinks of alternating between living in Armenia and New York. He noted that he wants to be flexible enough to direct both dramatic and musical plays. One of his biggest dreams is to direct Armenian opera pieces on international stages and also to turn the elements of Armenian dance into theatre training. He aspires to become the artistic director of the National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet.

Makaryan gives credit to his very demanding parents for his success and the person he has become. He is also very appreciative for the Luys Foundation for development of his academic and professional life.

"I deeply share the Luys Foundation mission for academic excellence. Luys has given me access to one of the best programs in my field and thus has honored me with an opportunity to present Armenia to the world," he said.

For Makaryan, being part of the Luys community means being one of the many peacemakers, healers and restorers that make not only Armenia but also the world more humane. "After collaborating with the Luys team last summer, the word 'a problem' has disappeared from my vocabulary and has been replaced by a more actionable one – 'a challenge,'" he explained.

Makaryan's universe is an interesting combination of different cultural and artistic influences. He is determined in mind and a big



Artur Makaryan

"l'Opprimé" of Paris, with an offer to join them as an assistant director. The first thing I remember me doing is registering for my first French language class."

Makaryan is known to be very good at organizing people around a common cause. His abilities of observing, profiling people and creating space for them to cooperate makes him successful at his job. "I chose theatre over film,

Outside But Always with Armenia

Armenia is Makaryan's greatest source of inspiration and his childhood is where he goes back to find clues to his questions. He believes that living abroad and away from your memories is like being a tree without roots. He confesses to have experienced that very unnatural and uncomfortable state when you've lost a connection with your real self.

"When you are in Armenia, you don't have to present or prove yourself in a wider sense. But when you're outside of Armenia, you want to be at your best in front of other nations. In that regard, we have both the talent and the tenacity to tell our story to the world. We just need to get better exposed to international experiences and feel comfortable to be part of it. We've lived in our own little shell for far too long," he explained.

During the summer of 2016, within the Luys Foundation's Develop Armenia Together (DAT) program, Makaryan was in Stepanakert, Artsakh, where he directed the play "The Persians." With the help of local actors and coordinators, he tried to convey a simple message that, in every aspect of life, diplomacy brings peace and prosperity, whereas aggression leads to a collapse.

The play was a huge success. In fact, Makaryan says that as a director he found this ultimate audience in Artsakh, an audience that is so curious and so ready to be surprised.

"There is a scene in the play 'The Persians,' where in complete darkness one of the actors suddenly starts hitting the drums in the center of the venue. You should have seen how the audience reacted to the sound. I was amazed by how war-conscious these people are. It took us quite some time to calm down the audience."

"People in Artsakh have such a big spark that can make something great. They are just wait-



Artur Makaryan giving direction on stage

dreamer in heart who is able to connect like-minded individuals to fight against stereotypes and the myth of the impossible. His favorite piece of advice is to acknowledge the importance of persistence and embracing the future without fears. "The fulfillment for your dreams requires time and hard work. You can either complain and blame others or face the challenges and go on with a smile. The choice is yours."

Programme of Armenian Studies

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ARTS & LIVING

'Children of a Genocide' Is First Australian Documentary on Armenian Genocide

SYDNEY, Australia — In "Children of a Genocide," Australian-Armenian film-maker Shahane Bekarian eloquently explores the manifestation of the Armenian genocide and identity through second- and third-generation survivors born and raised in the close-knit Australian-Armenian milieu. With compelling mastery, Bekarian uncovers archival footage of genocide survivors interviewed in Australia, including that of his maternal grandfather Boghos Tavrayan, who painfully recount their personal atrocities and inhumanity endured under the Ottoman Empire's brutal 1915 regime to exterminate the Armenian race.

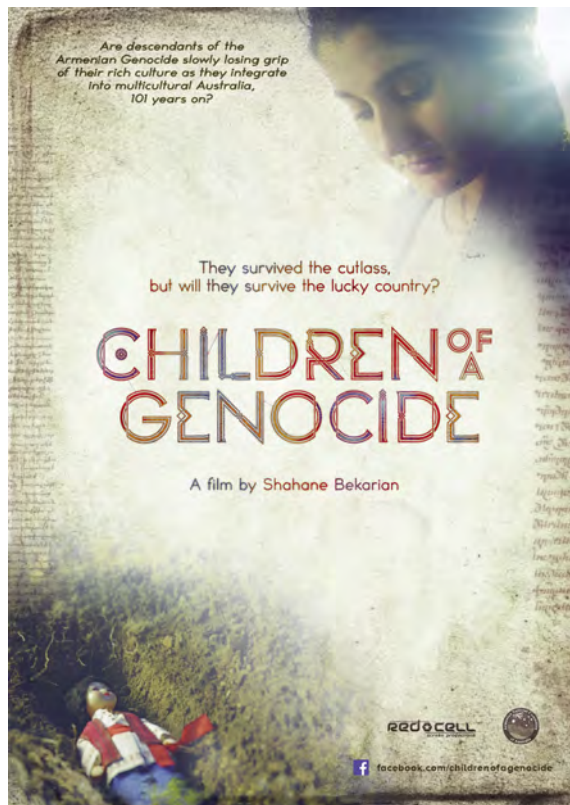
In honouring his grandfather's legacy, Bekarian awakens the conscience of diaspora Armenians, young and old, locally and globally, urging them to re-visit their inherited values and re-examine their personal imprint upon the noble cause to enrich and propel the sanctity of identity and lead the global fight in genocide prevention.

"The personal journey in creating this film helped root my Armenian identity and gives me hope for the future of Armenians around the world," he said.

"Children of a Genocide" is a snapshot of the Australian-Armenian community of 2016. The biggest challenge for Bekarian was the extensive study of the 50 heartbreaking interviews which rang so close to home.

About 500 survivors of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 eventually landed on Australian shores. Now their descendants need to maintain their centuries-old culture in a modern struggle of assimilation, known as "the white genocide" as they integrate into multicultural Australia. In the 1980's, 50 of these survivors were interviewed as elders of the community for documentation purposes by the Armenian National Committee of Australia. Bekarian learned of these tapes and discovered his own grandfather's story amongst them. On the VHS recording he saw his grandfather cry for the first time, but couldn't comfort the poor man who had passed years earlier. This lack of closure led him to make this film.

From the tapes he interviewed eight direct descendant



families. A montage introduction shows a multitude of families, specifically survivor Khosrov Tachjian, his daughter Carolyn and granddaughter Natasha. Khosrov is a distinguished and endearing man of 75, and 12-year-old Natasha honors her grandfather by learning Armenian dance, she has a large concert approaching at the end of the year. The filmmaker's mother teaches him how to make an Armenian dish as they disclose how they came to be in Sydney.

Bekarian works as a screen artist under an umbrella of talents: editor, compositor, motion graphics artist, and film-

maker. Inspired by the history and progression of film as a culture, his work balances forbidding subject matter with gritty textural aesthetics creeping with magic-realism, bringing celluloid nostalgia into contemporary perspectives. Unsatisfied with the rewards of his Bachelor of Commerce in Management Science with a marketing major in 1997, his inner-artist pecked at his soul until eventually finding work at the Computer Graphics College where he also achieved a Diploma in Screen in 2002. During his time there his music video *Slowly Surfacing* for Inga Liljeström won film festival awards. He began his editing work with two shorts, *Dead Tired* and *Tommy The Kid*, the latter winning numerous awards and screening at the prestigious Berlinale in 2007. He left the college to freelance in 2006 starting with small corporate gigs in graphics, compositing and editing.

His latest piece for the NSW Transport Authority was in February 2017 as part of *Wynscreen*, a 27metre wide screen in the pedestrian links of the new Wynyard train station. When the sun goes down, Shahane also works with live improvised projections under the alias "redcell disorder" for local eccentric bands *Toydeath*, *Forenzics*, *Axis*, *Defektro* and *Louis Burdett*. In his "spare time," Shahane works on his own productions, notably the surreal music clip for *Vulnerable Heart* (DoP Tania Lambert) by *She Plays*, about the inner consequences of love lost (2009). In more recent years he made a series of four short self-financed documentaries based around the Armenian Genocide, a topic which burdens and feeds his creative endeavours. His first short fiction, "The Blind Passenger" (DoP Jesse Frazer, Stunt Supervisor Grant Page, Stuntman / Grip Leroy Page), took the people's choice award at the Sydney Underground Film Festival 2013. An avant-garde piece using experimental techniques and stop-motion elements to capture a blind man's struggle for independence lost in the persistence of his memories. Finally comes his first low budget commissioned feature documentary "Children of a Genocide." It looks at the reverberating intergenerational after effects of genocide on both the survivors and their descendants, as they slowly assimilate into multicultural Australia.

Raising Spirits with 'ArmComedy' to Benefit Armenian Assembly and ATP

WINCHESTER, Mass. — The Armenia Tree Project (ATP) and Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) will host the "ArmComedy" duo of Narek Margaryan and Sergey Sargsyan for their first-ever comedy performances in the United States. ArmComedy's benefit events will be held in Boston, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Tickets go on sale to the general public on March 23.

The performances are in English and will take place at Winchester Town Hall in the Boston area on Friday, April 28; at Stars on Brand in Glendale on Thursday, May 4; and in the San Francisco Bay area at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, May 6. The theme of the shows is "Make Armenia Green Again," to emphasize support for the programs of the Assembly and ATP in Armenia.

"We're excited to bring 'ArmComedy' to the US for the first time," ATP Executive Director Jeanmarie Papelian and Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny said. "We like to promote new ideas and support talented young artists such as the thoughtful commentators of 'ArmComedy.' Our audiences will have a great time while supporting a good cause."

Airing three times a week, "ArmComedy" is the first satiric news site in Armenia. It has been dubbed as Armenia's version of "The Daily Show," featuring sharp political humor and wit. Writers and hosts Narek and Sergey have presented their distinctive, often irreverent, and always hilarious talents since 2009 with almost 600 episodes. As they note, their mission is to "restore sanity and embarrass bad governance in Armenia."

During his epic visit to Armenia in 2015 with his assistant Sona Movsesian, comedian and late night show host Conan O'Brien appeared on "ArmComedy." The program was a triumph, resulting in Conan giving the hosts permission



"ArmComedy" comedians Narek Margaryan (left) and Sergey Sargsyan will be performing their first-ever stand-up shows in Boston, Glendale, and San Francisco to benefit the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenia Tree Project.

to spread the rumor that he has Armenian roots. (Watch the episode at bit.ly/ArmComedyConan)

The Armenian Assembly of America has been a non-partisan advocate for Armenia and Armenians for 45 years, and was the first Western private voluntary organization to establish an office in Yerevan. Working with various NGOs, the Assembly is proud of its efforts

in fostering civil society initiatives in Armenia. In addition, the Assembly continues to be one of the most respected advocacy groups in Washington, D.C. and is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Terjening-Thomas Assembly Internship Program this year.

Since 1994, ATP planted more than 5.2 million trees and created hundreds of jobs for Armenians in Armenia. These trees provide

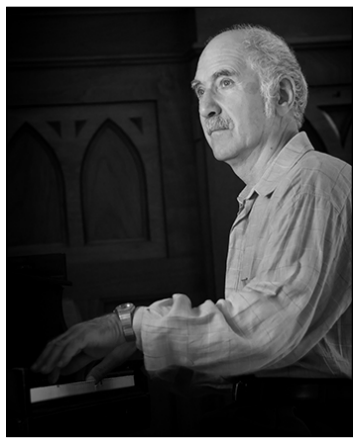
food, environmental benefits, and opportunities for economic growth. ATP's goal is to use trees to improve the standard of living while protecting the environment. In doing so, ATP promotes self-sufficiency, and aids those with the fewest resources while conserving the indigenous ecosystem. Most importantly, ATP's programs allow inhabitants to stay on their ancestral lands.

Boyadjian String Quartet to Be Broadcast on Harvard Radio

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Harvard University's radio station, WHRB-95.3 FM, will broadcast Grammy Nominee Lexington composer Hayg Boyadjian's *String Quartet No. 2 Azad*. The broadcast will take place during the programming of the Afternoon Concert of Monday, April 24, day of the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

The Afternoon Concerts are broadcast from 1 to 6 p.m. and Boyadjian's quartet should fall in the middle period of the afternoon broadcast.

Boyadjian's string quartet is part of a CD recording from Living Music Volume 1 "DDD" titled "In Yet Longer Light's Delay." The quartet was recorded in Saint Petersburg, Russia by the St. Petersburg Mozarteum String Quartet:

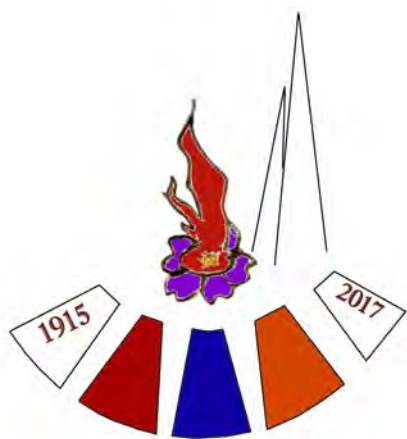


Hayg Boyadjian

Elena Savranskaia and Larisa Borisova violins, Nelli Han viola, and Ildar Huziahmetov cello.

Boyadjian wrote the quartet after his first visit to the then-Soviet Armenia in 1986, where he participated at a concert of his music. The subtitle of the quartet, "Azad," which means free or freedom in Armenian, was a foreshadowing of the events that led to Armenia's independence, or freedom. The music of the quartet reflects that conception in

the manner in which the musical material is presented. Boyadjian wrote "The format of the quartet is one of free musical exposition. each one of a series of unrelated material fights for recognition."



Representatives David K. Muradian, Jr.,
Jonathan Hecht, John J. Lawn,
James R. Miceli, & David M. Rogers
and Senator William N. Brownsberger
Invite you to attend the

102nd Anniversary Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide

Friday, April 21, 2017 at 10:30 am
House of Representatives Chamber

to be followed by a reception at the Grand Staircase
For more information, contact Taylor McCarthy in
Rep. Muradian's office
at 617-722-2240 or at taylor.mccarthy@mahouse.gov

Logo by Jirair Hovsepiyan

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Yellow Split Pea Soup with Mint, Browned Onions and Yogurt Garnish

INGREDIENTS

2 1/2 cups dried split yellow peas, picked over and rinsed
6-8 cups water, chicken or vegetable broth
2-3 tablespoons olive oil
1 large yellow or white onion, chopped
2 teaspoons dried mint, crushed
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 carrots, peeled, thinly sliced or diced
2 stalks celery (and top greens), washed, diced
Extra water or broth, if needed
Kosher or sea salt and white or black pepper to taste
Aleppo pepper, paprika, or red pepper flakes to taste

PREPARATION:

1. In a large pot, sauté the onions, garlic, carrot, celery, and a dash of salt for 3 to 5 minutes over medium heat until the onions are browned and vegetables are tender; stir so garlic does not burn. Add water or broth and the split peas to the pot and stir.
3. Bring ingredients to a boil, reduce heat, and cook for 40 to 45 minutes or until split peas are tender. Stir again, adding more liquid if soup becomes too thick.
4. Season with salt, pepper, mint, and choice of seasonings to taste.
5. Using a ladle, place small batches of soup in a blender. Puree each batch then place in a bowl. Continue until all the soup has been pureed. If you prefer the soup with more texture, puree only half of the soup.
6. Serve with Yogurt Garnish and additional toppings on the side.

Yield: approx. 4 to 6 serving. While the soup is cooking, prepare Yogurt Garnish.

YOGURT GARNISH:

1 cup plain white or Greek-style yogurt
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup fresh mint, chopped or 2 teaspoons dried mint, crushed
Dash of sea or Kosher salt
Juice of 1/2 large lemon and 1 teaspoon olive oil
Combine the yogurt, garlic, mint, salt, lemon juice and olive oil in a small bowl. Cover and chill garnish until ready to serve.

ADDITIONAL TOPPING:

Minced flat-leaf parsley
Olive oil for drizzling
Chopped Kalamata or black olives and chopped Roma tomatoes

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

For Christine's recipes that have been published in Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>
<http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>
<http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>
<http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>

AIWA Presents 'Broadway in LA' Evening With Andrea Martin and Seth Rudetsky

AIWA, from page 12
awards for writing and received the Emmy nomination for "best actress" in a variety series. Her additional television credits include "Hairspray Live," "My Big Fat Greek Life," "Nurse Jackie," "Modern Family," "30 Rock" and the current Hulu series, now in its third season, "Difficult People"

Martin is the recipient of three American Comedy Award nominations for several cable specials, including her own "Andrea Martin Together Again" for Showtime. Her many film credits include: "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2," "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," "Wag the Dog," and "Night at the Museum, Secret of the Tomb." Premiering April 25, Martin will co-star in NBC's new comedy "Great News," in which she plays a devoted mother who rejoins the workplace as an intern at a news network to be close to her daughter. The series comes from Emmy-winning writer Tracey Wigfield, and Emmy winning "30 Rock" Executive Producers Tina Fey and Robert Carlock.

Martin is well known for her continued work with the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF). She grew up in Portland, Maine and her life, in and out of show business, is in her collection of Autobiographical Essays "Andrea Martin's Lady Parts."

For info contact aialosangeles@gmail.com.



Seth Rudetsky

Read News in Armenian at:





ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

MAY 27 — Broadway in LA ... Armenian International Women's Association-L.A. Affiliate present an Evening with Andrea Martin hosted by Seth Rudetsky, at El Portal Theater, North Hollywood; one-night comedy show honoring AIWA's 25 plus years. 7:00 pm. Reception and Armenian tapas; 8:30 p.m. Performance, followed by Dessert and coffee with the stars. Tickets: \$150; sponsorships available. For info and reservations call (909)-625-3413 or (310) 472-2454.

CONNECTICUT

APRIL 22 — Connecticut Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. Connecticut State Capitol, House Chamber. 11:00 a.m. Keynote speaker will be The Hon. John Marshall Evans, former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia. Reception in the Hall of Flags, following the commemoration.

FLORIDA

JANUARY 20-28, 2018 —Armenian Heritage Cruise XXI 2018, 8 night Caribbean Cruise aboard Royal Caribbean's Freedom of The Seas. Fort Lauderdale to: Labadee-Private beach Island / Puerto Rico / St. Kitts / St. Maarten. Cabin Rates from \$919 based on Double Occupancy, including Port Charges and ACAA registration fee. Government taxes of \$108.36 are additional. Armenian Entertainment, Armenian Cultural Presentations, Armenian Festival Day, Tavlou & Belote Tournaments and much more. Call TRAVELGROUP INTERNATIONAL @1-561-447-0750 or 1-866-447-0750 Ext. 108. Ask for Kellie.

MASSACHUSETTS

MARCH 25 —The Armenian Museum of America New Perspectives on Photography in the Ottoman Empire: A Symposium, Co-sponsored by Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, The Armenian Museum of America and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, 2 p.m. Moderated by Prof. Armen T. Marsoobian. Featuring talks by Ruth Thomasian, Prof. Edhem Eldem, Suzanne K. Adams, and David Low. Open to the public

MARCH 25 — Musical Tribute Celebrating Dr. Marine Margarian's 25 years of achievement in music education, service to the local Armenian community. Saturday, 7 p.m., at Nishan and Margrit Atinizian Hall, Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, 200 Lexington St., Belmont. Musical performances of compositions by Margarian. Supported by Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston and Amaras Arts Alliance and Do-Re-Mi Music Studio's students and parents. Open to the public with a reception to follow.

APRIL 1-20 — The Knights of Vartan Arshavir Lodge Presents "Worcester Is America," an exhibit in commemoration of the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Worcester Public Library, Main Branch, 3 Salem Square.

APRIL 2 - Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture, Sunday, 8 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Armenian Heritage Park's Abstract Sculpture, split rhomboid dodecahedron, is being reconfigured on April 2 (rain date: April 23) annually, in celebration of the immigrant experience, the Abstract Sculpture is reconfigured, symbolic of all who pulled away from their country of origin and came to these Massachusetts shores, establishing themselves in new and different ways. A crane lifts and pulls apart the two halves of the split rhomboid dodecahedron, made of steel and aluminum, to create a new sculptural shape.

APRIL 2 — The Armenian Museum of America Concert: April in Paris: Music for Cello and Piano by

French and Armenian Composers, Sunday, 2 p.m. Featuring Kate Kayaian, cello, accompanied by Stephen Porter, piano Co-sponsored by the Composer's Union of Armenia. Funded by the Dadourian Foundation. Concert open to the public.

APRIL 6 — "Changing the Conversation: One Woman at a Time," at Framingham State University, Forum, McCarthy Center, 5 p.m. Turkish Armenian Women's Alliance (TAWA), a grassroots effort to bring together a group of Armenian and Turkish Women in Boston to tackle the subject of the Armenian Genocide. Gonca Sonmez-Poole will screen videotaped interviews with TAWA participants as their "difficult dialogue" was taking place. For further info, contact Kaan Agartan at kagartan@framingham.edu

APRIL 15 — The Armenian Museum of America Film Screening: "The Destruction of Memory," co-sponsored by the Armenian Museum of America and the Harvard University Semitic Museum. 2 p.m. Film screening will be followed by a panel discussion with film director Tim Slade, Andras Riedlmayer of Harvard University, and Joseph Greene, deputy director and curator of the Semitic Museum. This is a free Museum event.

APRIL 17 - Monday, 7 p.m.; Panel discussion on Lightning, Climate Change and Other Exciting Scientific Challenges featuring Prof. Ashot Chilingarian, Director of the Yerevan Physics Institute and its Cosmic Ray Division (CRD), two experts from MIT, two from UNH and one from the CRD. To be held at MIT, 70 Memorial Drive, Building E51, Room 315. For more information contact Alisa Stepanian at asteoanian@aol.com or 617-501-1215. Admission is free."

APRIL 20 — Thursday, at 10 a.m., in front of the Peabody City Hall located at 24 Lowell St., a flag-raising ceremony will be held commemorating the 102nd Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Led by Mayor Edward A. Bettencourt and the family of late Mayor Peter Torigian. After the Armenian and American National Anthems, the ceremony will continue inside. The keynote speaker will be Ann Goolkasian O'Donnell. Her memoir, Holding the Armenian Genocide Up to the Light, appears in the spring issue of American Ancestors Magazine. Prayers will be led by Rev. Father Khachatur Kesablyn of Saints Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church of Chelmsford. All are invited.

APRIL 21 — Annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration at the Massachusetts State House at 10:30 a.m. Keynote speaker, musical program, reception to follow. Free transportation will be available from Watertown.

APRIL 23 — 102nd Armenian Genocide Commemoration. Hosted by the Massachusetts Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee. The program will focus on four pillars; Art, Service, Science, and Commerce. Open to the public. Armenian Heritage Park on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy at 3 p.m. Guests will include Middlesex County Peter Koutoujian, editor and publisher Judith Saryan, and more. Performances by Sayat Nova Dance Company and violinist Sammy Andonian.

APRIL 23 — Former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, John M. Evans, Author of *Truth Held Hostage*, will speak at Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 12:15 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. For Feast of the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide, Holy Trinity Church is honored to have former Ambassador Evans whose ethics and principles enabled him to voice the words "Armenian Genocide." His book, *Truth Held Hostage*, is being hailed as the most important work about the Armenian Genocide by a U.S. diplomat since Ambassador Morgenthau's story in 1918. All welcome to attend. Complimentary light luncheon will be served. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

APRIL 28 — ArmComedy benefit featuring the comedy duo of Narek Margaryan and Sergey Sargsyan,

Winchester City Hall, 71 Mt Vernon St Winchester, Co-hosted by Armenia Tree Project and Armenian Assembly of America. Save the date. Details to follow.

APRIL 30 — The Armenian Museum of America Concert: Spring of Music Featuring Narine Ojakhyan, soprano; Thomas Shahbaghyan, violin; Levon Markosyan, cello; and Prof. Gregory Chaverdian, piano Program of Armenian and Classical Music and Songs. Sunday, 2 p.m., co-sponsored by the Composer's Union of Armenia. Funded by the Dadourian Foundation. Concert open to the public.

APRIL 30 — Lunch with Boston Celtics' Legend M.L. Carr, 12:15 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 12:15 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Sunday. The second in a series of events celebrating books and courage and legends, Boston Celtics' Legend M.L. Carr who will share his inspiring life story. All welcome to attend. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

MAY 4 — Book presentation by Nora Nercessian of The City of Orphans, on Gyumri Near East Relief orphanage after WWI. Sponsored by the Daughters of Vartan, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Tekeyan Cultural Association, Armenian International Women's Association and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research. 7 p.m. Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Complimentary admission.

MAY 6 — Celebrate Public Art! Park's Abstract Sculpture & Labyrinth during ArtWeek Boston. Join us on Saturday, 1:00 p.m. World Labyrinth Day: Walk as One in Peace & Harmony. At 12:45 pm, introduction to walking a labyrinth. 1:30 pm Reception to View the Abstract Sculpture. 2017 Configuration. Remarks: Jared Bowen WGBH Executive Arts Editor and Host, Open Studio. Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports & Eastern Lamejun Bakers

MAY 13 — Mother's Day Dance Featuring Tigran Asatryan & Band! To be held on Saturday, Hosted by The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe ACYOA. Proceeds to benefit brand new Family & Life Center, 1280 Boston Rd, Haverhill, \$100 - VIP with Meet & Greet at 7 p.m., \$75 - General Mezze & Cash Bar, \$40, Students Under 24 - Standing Room. For reservations, please contact HyePointeACYOA@gmail.com or call Mike at 617-240-8266

MAY 15 — St. James Armenian Church of Watertown 18th Annual Open Golf Tournament. Monday, Oakley Country Club, Watertown. Register early.

MAY 19-20 — Armenian Memorial Church Fair, Friday 5-8 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., kebab dinners served Friday and Saturday (starting at 11:30 am). For info: Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown 617-923-0498

MAY 25 — The Armenian Museum of America, Concert: John Hodian and Epiphany 3, Featuring new blends of Armenian music from touring family trio, John Hodian, Bet Williams and Jack Hodian. Thursday, at 8 p.m. The group will perform music blending ancient and modern cultures and musical styles. Funded by the Dadourian Foundation. Concert open to the public.

JUNE 9 — Let's Party! at The KITCHEN, Boston Food Market - Benefit for the Park's Care in partnership with The Trustees of Reservations, Boston Food Market, with Chefs presenting signature dishes we love! and the generosity of so many, all coming together at The KITCHEN to support our Park's Endowed Fund for Year Round Care. 7-10pm Advance Reservations are required. Details forthcoming.

JUNE 19 — The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, at the Marlborough Country Club, 200 Concord Road, Marlborough. Monday. 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., "Shot Gun." All are invited for a day of golf or just for dinner and a social evening. Details to follow. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

TIMES SQUARE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION | SUNDAY APRIL 23, 2pm



ARTS & LIVING

Concert Commemorates 25th Anniversary of Armenia Membership in UN

NEW YORK — On March 16, a concert dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Armenia's membership to the United Nations took place at the Lincoln Center of New York. Edward Nalbandian, Foreign Minister of Armenia, António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the United Nations, high-ranking officials of the UN Secretariat and representatives of the Armenian community attended the concert.

Nalbandian noted: "It is a distinct pleasure to address you on the 25th anniversary of Armenia's membership in the United Nations. I highly appreciate the presence of Secretary General here with us today. I also would like to thank all those who have contributed to the organization of this concert and all of you who join us for the celebration of this festive occasion.

"It was the dream of many generations of Armenians scattered around the world that came to reality. I am glad to see here today many of those who stood by the newly emerging state and I would like to take this opportunity to once again acknowledge their indispensable contribution," he added.

Nalbandian noted, "Armenia acceded to the family of nations during challenging times in its history but that has never diminished our resolve and commitment to the building of a society that fully adheres to the purposes and



Some of the performers at the concert

principles of the United Nations. We remain guided by the UN Charter that calls to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples."

He also alluded to the conflict the country is facing, adding, "Armenia strictly adheres to its obligations in this regard, including in its efforts to ensure an exclusively peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

"As a nation that passed through the horrors of the genocide we feel a moral obligation but also an authority to speak out against recurrence of crimes against humanity."

And finally, he spoke about the many refugees that Armenia has embraced. "From Syria alone, about 22,000 refugees sought shelter in Armenia, on per capita basis making our country the third largest recipient of Syrian refugees in Europe. Our country does its best to contribute to promotion of tolerance and intercultural, interfaith dialogue, combating racism, hate speech and xenophobia."



Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres



Armenia's Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and Armenia's UN Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan

NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 18 — Save the date. Gala banquet celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association. At the Terrace at Biagios. Details will be forthcoming.

NEW YORK

MARCH 25 — Hrant Dink Contemporary Oratorio, Saturday, St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral Complex, New York. Concert at 6:30 p.m. Dinner to follow in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium. Honored guests will be Majag Tshigian and Berchui Berberyan, composer and lyricist of the Oratorio. Tickets are \$40 for concert only and \$60 for concert plus dinner. Participating organizations include AGBU Performing Arts, Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York, Hamazkayin Educational and Cultural Society, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian-American Support and Educational Center, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Gomidas Choir, Essayan-Getronagan Alumni and Tibrevank Alumni. For tickets call (212) 686-0710 or visit www.armenainchurch.net.

APRIL 8 — The Near East Foundation will host the official Film Premiere of "They Shall Not Perish: The Story of Near East Relief." The film, produced by NEF Board Member Shant Mardirossian and award-winning producer, writer, and director George Billard, details the historic events that led to the Armenian Genocide and the consequent rescue that provided assistance to hundreds of thousands of displaced men, women, and children. The

documentary makes extensive use of never-before-seen footage of orphans who were in Near East Relief's care. There will be an afternoon and evening showing, both followed by a panel discussion with notable documentary contributors. www.theyshallnotperish.com. The Times Center, 242 41st St. New York

APRIL 21 - Staged reading of DAYBREAK at Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, 520 8th Ave. betw. 36th & 37th Sts., New York, 3rd Floor, Bruce Mitchell Room, 7:30 PM. Armenian-American playwright Joyce Van Dyke's play about the repercussions of the Armenian genocide on two women friends (formerly titled DEPORTED / A DREAM PLAY), directed by Zoya Kachadurian. Free admission, limited seating. RSVP to info@panasianrep.org, or call 212-868-4030

MAY 21 — A classical concert dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association. "The Armenian Spirit" at Alliance Francaise in New York City at 3pm. With Ani Kavafian, violin, Ani Kalayjian, cello and Orion Weiss, piano.

JUNE 29 — The Freeport Memorial Library will have a lecture on the history of the Armenians, Thursday at 2 p.m. by Dr. Ronald Brown, professor of history and ethnic studies at Touro College and world religions at the Unification Theological Seminary in New York City. Free to the public. The library is located at 144 W Merrick Rd, Freeport, NY 11520, phone (516) 379-3274.

RHODE ISLAND

APRIL 22 — The Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Committee along with the Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence, will show the film, "Alter Ego" or "The

Silence of a Priest." 6:30 p.m. The movie is in Armenian with English subtitles. Producer Vigen Chaldanian from Armenia, will be present. Free admission and refreshments will be served following the movie. The public is cordially invited to attend.

APRIL 23 — North Burial Ground, Providence. On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Monument, and the 102nd commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, the clergy and choirs from the Armenian Evangelical Church, Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church and Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, will be present and well as federal, state and local officials to be part of the days program. 12:45 p.m. Guest speaker is Marc A. Mamigonian, NAASR'S director of Academic Affairs. All are welcome to come and remember or Holy Martyrs and survivors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

APRIL 30 — Performance of the play "Women of Ararat" by Judith Boyajian Strang-Waldau based on her family's survival of the Armenian Genocide, at the Scottish Rite Auditorium, 2115 Broad St., Cranston. Sunday, 3 p.m. For tickets contact Dorothy Martiesian, 401-749-0269 or Naomi Thovmasian Marsh, 401-942-3886. Proceeds to benefit three Armenia-based organization helping women.

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

COMMENTARY

Erdogan Imposes Favorite Candidate on Istanbul Patriarchate

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Byzantine laws in Turkey have contributed to the delays and complications in the election of a new patriarch in Istanbul. For nine years, the authorities have given the runaround to the lay and spiritual leadership of the community and at every stage have further complicated the process.

Archbishop Aram Ateshyan has time and again proven his loyalty to Turkey's rulers to the detriment of his spiritual obligations to his flock. That is why the authorities rewarded him by extending artificially his rule at the Patriarchate, in the meantime using him as a political tool. He has been used on many occasions as the voice of the Armenian community in support of the government's anti-Armenian stance. His rush to apologize for the German parliament's resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide discredited him as a religious leader of the community, but endeared him to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's circle.

The tenuous situation in the community, however, could not last forever, as Archbishop Ateshyan abused his position and resorted to various ruses to emerge as the sole candidate for the office of Patriarch which had been vacant for the last nine years, since the incapacitation of Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan.

The situation came to a boil when an open row developed between Ateshyan and Bishop Sahak Mashalyan, president of the Clergy Council and a potential candidate in the election. That clash took place on February 16 and it shook the entire community.

After long deliberation amongst the community leaderships, it was decided to send both candidates to Holy Echmiadzin and defuse the situation through the mediation of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II. The two men were later joined by Archbishop Karekin Bekjian, Primate of Germany, and

It was "illegal" yet no specific law was cited in support of the decision.

At the conclusion of the election, the entire community had expressed a sigh of relief that the controversies were left behind and a peaceful election process was unfolding.

Mr. Merjan's letter cynically alluded that the election may repeat the turmoil created on February 16 and the annulment of the election would contribute to calm, especially when the community already had a spiritual leader in the person of Archbishop Ateshyan.

Although people are very cautious in their expressions under Erdogan's dictatorship, Bishop Mashalyan blew his top by announcing that the election is the prerogative of the Clergy Council and the government has no right to intrude.

That was the general sentiment of the community, except of some of the more docile leaders, one of them being Bedros Sirinoglu, president of the Holy Cross Hospital and head of the VADIP (group of charitable and religious organizations).

Instead of blaming the government's crude interference in the community's religious affairs, Sirinoglu, in his immense wisdom, has blamed the community for not having patience for a few more months, forgetting clearly that the community has been enduring for nine years the government intrigues with respect to Armenian spiritual matters in Istanbul. He also betrayed the real truth in this charade by making the following statement: "I don't express myself on behalf of Ateshyan nor Bekjian, but if the election had taken place between three candidates, Ateshyan would be the winner. Had Ateshyan won, the government's letter could not have been issued."

The leadership of the community has decided to seek an appointment with the governor of Istanbul for an explanation. While refusing to resign, Ateshyan has cynically agreed to accompany Mashalyan to the governor's office, if and when an appointment is granted. He is already certainly aware what kind of "explanation" the governor has in store.

For all practical purposes, the governor will delay that appointment forever to extend Ateshyan's tenure, until the community is exhausted and is ready to heed the "wisdom" of leaders such as Sirinoglu, advising them to acquiesce to the government's dictate.

Archbishop Bekjian has emerged as a courageous leader. He had announced that he would visit Germany for a few days to take care of some urgent business and return to Istanbul to assume his responsibilities as locum tenens. That is, of course, if the authorities do not detain or deport him.

This interference in the community's religious affairs opens a Pandora's box, especially at this juncture, when Turkey can ill afford more adverse publicity.

By waging a war of words against the major European countries, President Erdogan has become a pariah among world leaders. As if his challenge to Europe were not enough, he is also trying to provoke Russia by closing the Straits to the Russian merchant marine, in

clear violation of the Treaty of Montreux of 1936.

The Turkish government's intrusion in the community's religious affairs also contravenes the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, whereby Turkey must guarantee the freedom of minorities. Article 40 of the above treaty specifically stipulated that they have [non-Muslims, Armenians] "equal rights to establish, manage and control, at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments of training instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and practice their own religion freely."

Turkey has been intervening in Cyprus and occupying one third of that country under the pretext of defending fellow Turks. It has also sent troops to Iraq, despite the vociferous protests of its government, supposedly to protect Turkomans.

If there is such an international law to protect fellow nations, then Armenia must take advantage of it, too. Realistically, Armenia cannot send troops to Turkey because it is no match for Turkey but at least it can raise its voice at international quarters, such as the United Nations, the European Court of Human Rights and the European Union.

In addition, the issue, related to religious freedom, Echmiadzin can appeal to the Vatican, the World Council of Churches and other religious centers.

Also, other groups in the diaspora can and must raise their voices.

Now that Turkey has demonstrated its truce face, our appeals will certainly resonate further in various world quarters.

Erdogan's diktat is not directed only at the Istanbul Armenians. It is a challenge to Armenians around the world.



Archbishop Sebouh Chouljian, Primate of Gougark in Armenia, who also submitted their names for the position.

A deal was struck at Echmiadzin creating a process to hold an election of a Locum Tenens (deghabah) at which time, Archbishop Ateshyan would resign from his position as vicar (patriarchal deputy) and the elected locum tenens would conduct the process of electing the Patriarch.

In the meantime, an electoral committee would be selected and an election request date would be submitted to the authorities. That date was tentatively set for May 29, 2017.

The election of the locum tenens is the prerogative of the Clergy Council.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Chouljian was eliminated from the race and Bishop Mashalyan withdrew his candidacy in favor of Archbishop Bekjian. Therefore, the contest became a race between Bekjian and Ateshyan.

In view of the fact that the members of the Clergy Council are beholden to Ateshyan for their livelihoods and the latter is the perceived favorite of the authorities, it was a foregone conclusion that he would emerge as the victor.

The election took place on March 15 and out of 34 votes, Bekjian astonishingly received 24 while Ateshyan received 11.

The courage and independence of the members of the Clergy Council were celebrated and all the participants, including Ateshyan himself, congratulated Archbishop Bekjian for his election.

The drama began when Ateshyan literally pulled a trick out of thin air. After the election, he returned to his office and emerged with a letter signed by Deputy Mayor of Istanbul Aziz Merjan, stating that holding an election at that date was not permitted.

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, Taleen Babayan, Diana Der Hovanesian, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian
Boston - Nancy Kalajian
New York/New Jersey - Marylynda Bozian-Cruickshank
Berlin - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Contributing Photographers:

Jacob Demirdjian and Jirair Hovsepien

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FAX: 617-924-2887

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E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

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COMMENTARY

Turkey vs. Europe: Any Lessons?

By Raffi Bedrosyan

LAST WEEK, for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic, one of its ministers was declared persona non grata – an undesirable alien – and deported from Netherlands, a state which is a NATO ally of Turkey. Again, for the first time, the Turkish foreign minister was told not to visit Rotterdam in Netherlands, and his flight landing permit was cancelled after he ignored the Dutch orders not to come. The previous week, the same Turkish Foreign Minister's plans to address Turkish/German dual citizens in various rental halls in several German cities were repeatedly cancelled, and he could only speak from the balcony of a Turkish Consulate residence to a few Turks gathered in the garden under the rain. This week, Denmark cancelled the visit of the Turkish Prime Minister. Switzerland cancelled the visit of other Turkish ministers. Austria proposed to have a EU ban on visits of any Turkish politicians to Europe.

Why is this unprecedented humiliation and embarrassment happening to Turkey? What did Turkey do to deserve this? How is Turkey, Turkish government leaders and Turkish people reacting to this humiliation? What are the lessons to be learned by Turkey, and more importantly, how is it relevant to Armenia? This article will attempt to shed light on these questions.

Turkey is getting ready to vote Yes or No on April 16 for a referendum to change the constitution so that all governmental, legislative and judicial powers can be concentrated in one person, President Erdogan. Erdogan had already started exercising most of these powers under a state of emergency, declared after the failed military coup against him on July 15, 2016. And now, it is time for Erdogan to legitimize these de facto dictatorial powers by entrenching them in the revised constitution. Erdogan fully blames the failed coup on his erstwhile ally Fethullah Gulen, an Islamic cleric who lives in exile in Pennsylvania, USA. Once close allies against the previous secular regimes, the Islamic leaders had a falling out a few years ago, and everything wrong happening in Turkey now is blamed on Gulen and his followers.

The witch hunt to identify and punish followers of Gulen has created great turmoil among Turks in all levels of society, the army, academia, government bureaucracy, media and business world. Add to this the ongoing war between the government forces and the Kurdish militants in the east and southeast, the

human toll is unprecedented. As of today and since the July 2016 failed coup, there are 128,625 people fired from their jobs, including state officials, teachers, bureaucrats, security forces, academics, lawyers and journalists. There are 94,224 people, of various professions, arrested and jailed under state of emergency powers. 2,099 schools and dormitories, plus 15 universities have been shut down. 7,316 academics, including many top professors have lost their jobs, resulting in many faculties of still open universities to be closed, with hundreds of thousands of university students left in limbo. 4,070 judges and prosecutors are dismissed, some of them jailed, ironically, in the same prisons as criminals that they had convicted previously. 149 media outlets, TV stations and newspapers have been shut down, allowing only pro-Erdogan media to exist, and even then, any undesirable headlines still resulting in the dismissal of editors. And finally, 162 journalists have been jailed, highest number in the world.

The human toll resulting from the war on Kurds is even more grim. A recent UN investigative report estimated that at least 2000 Kurdish civilians have been killed since 2015. There are an estimated 50,000 injured and more than 500,000 citizens left homeless after Turkish army tanks bombed and burnt several towns in the southeast. The bombardment of hundreds of apartment buildings was followed by the demolishing and bulldozing of the rubble, sometimes still containing burnt bones and body parts. Since 2016, 13 Members of Parliament belonging to the pro-Kurdish political party are arrested and jailed, including the two co-chairs, after their political immunity was removed by dictatorial legislation. The democratically elected Kurdish mayors of 35 municipalities in the east and southeast are removed from their posts and jailed, replaced by Turkish bureaucrats appointed from Ankara.

Against this truly anti-democratic backdrop, Erdogan and his ministers planned to come visit Europe to convince the 3 million Turks living in various EU states to vote Yes in the referendum, in order to give more dictatorial powers to the President. It should be pointed out that EU legislation prohibits political rallies of non-EU persons. What is even more interesting, Turkish legislation, passed in 2008, also prohibits Turkish politicians from holding political rallies outside Turkey. Ironically, this legislation was proposed by Erdogan's party itself, in order to give it an advantage over other Turkish parties. At that time, Erdogan was still allies with Gulen, and could use Gulen's vast network in Europe and US to carry out propaganda rallies for Erdogan. But now, the situation has changed, the Yes and No votes are almost even, and Erdogan desperately needs the support of Turks in Europe in order to win the referendum. So, to hell with any EU or Turkish laws...

It seems the European leaders decided to show some backbone and refrain from participating in Erdogan's mission to become a dictator. Hence, the cancellations of halls, flights and meetings.

Turkish government reaction to these rejections? Blaming German Chancellor Merkel, and Dutch Prime Minister Rutte as Nazis... Accusing them of preventing freedom of speech, freedom of movement. Erdogan stated that 'if he is not allowed to speak in Germany, he will still come to Germany and turn the world upside down'. The Foreign Minister belatedly that 'Nothing and no one can stop him from coming to Holland regardless of what the Dutch say'. In addition to insulting the German and Dutch leaders as Nazis, they also accused the mayor of Rotterdam as an Islamophobe, who hap-

pens to be a well-liked Moslem, originally from Morocco... As a state which has committed and still denies genocide of its minorities, Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks, Alevites and Kurds, the Turkish government officials accused the EU leaders as followers of Nazism...

Turkish public reaction to these rejections? The rabble rousing mobs took to the streets to protest against the Dutch, by burning French and Russian flags... They have the same colours, they look alike, who cares. They also piled up many oranges and repeatedly stabbed them with knives, because orange is the colour of the Dutch. One hero climbed the flagpole of the Dutch Consulate in Istanbul and replaced the Dutch flag with a Turkish one. One unfortunate Norwegian journalist got beaten up by mistake, as the mob thought he was speaking Dutch. But these are normal occurrences in Turkey. A couple of years ago, when the Turks heard that the Chinese government oppressed their cousins the Uyghur Turks, Turks had started beating up many Korean tourists in Istanbul by mistake...They look alike, who cares...

Lessons to be learnt? Based on history repeating itself, it is highly unlikely Turks will learn how to behave democratically. They will either see themselves as poor victims, unfairly and anti-democratically treated by the Europeans who refused them freedom of speech. Or, they will bully, threaten and insult by demanding apologies, ban of flights or sanctions against Netherlands and other EU states, completely ignoring the fact that Turkey is totally dependent on the EU states for tourism, investments and trade. They did the same bullying and bravado against the Russians after downing a Russian plane in Syria, which resulted in the total crippling of Turkish economy due to Russian trade and tourism bans. At the end, Turkish government capitulated by profusely apologizing to Putin and agreeing to Russian terms, especially regarding Syria, before normal relations could resume. The same routine will happen again with EU.

There is, however, a lesson to be learnt by US in these episodes. Rather than giving in to all the demands of an anti-democratic state which behaves like a spoiled child, the US should start behaving more responsibly, fairly and firmly against Turkey. It is scandalous that Mike Flynn, the recently fired nominee for the National Security Advisor post in the Trump Administration, had collected \$530,000 from the Turks for lobbying services. Lobbying for what? Is that money wasted now?

And lastly, lessons for Armenia and Armenians? We have to be well informed about the Turks' weaknesses and strengths. We have to learn from their mistakes. For a nation of 10 million people with a tiny country sandwiched between two beligerent adversary states, we cannot afford to be as divided as the Turks, as anti-democratic as them, as ignorant as them, and most importantly, as mistake-prone as them

(Raffi Bedrosyan is a civil engineer and concert pianist, living in Toronto, Canada. He has donated concert and CD proceedings to infrastructure projects in Armenia and Karabagh, in which he has also participated as an engineer. He helped organize the reconstruction of the Surp Giragos Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd Church and the first Armenian reclaim of church properties in Anatolia after 1915. He gave the first piano concert in the Surp Giragos Church since 1915.)

Azerbaijan: Ties with Pakistan Focusing on Arms and Energy

By Zaur Shiriyev

Azerbaijan's diplomatic contacts with Pakistan have intensified over the past year, with a particular focus on military and energy cooperation. But it remains unclear to what degree this developing partnership is being driven by realism, and how much by romanticism.

The last 12 months have seen a marked increase in diplomatic visits and discussions between the two countries. Pakistan's Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visited Baku in October, and Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev reciprocated with a trip to Islamabad from February 28-March 1, attending a summit of the Organization of Economic Cooperation.

Bilateral trade between the two countries currently stands at a modest \$7.3 million per year, but Pakistan has reportedly drafted a plan to increase that figure to \$500 million over a five-year period. Azerbaijan has for the first time begun to set up permanent trade missions in embassies, and it chose Islamabad as a location for one of the first such missions, along with Moscow, Ankara, and Washington. Long-dormant talks on arms sales have been revived, and new energy projects mooted.

Behind this flurry of activity, there are doubts about the viability of substantive cooperation. Baku's interest may be connected to notions of Muslim solidarity and Pakistan's strong diplomatic stance against Azerbaijan's foe, Armenia.

Pakistan was the second country (after Turkey) to recognize Azerbaijan's independence in 1991, and has still failed to recognize Armenia, saying that Islamabad will not do so until Armenia gives up its claim to Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan has reciprocated with strong support for Pakistan in its struggle with India over Kashmir.

Azerbaijan's courting of Pakistan accelerated after last April's outbreak of violence with Armenia over Karabakh, the worst bout of fighting since a ceasefire was signed in 1994. Pakistan has become one of many sources of contention between the two sides. In November, for example, Armenia blocked Pakistan's attempt to build ties with the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a post-Soviet security bloc that includes Armenia, but not Azerbaijan.

Recent discussions between Azerbaijan and Pakistan have focused primarily on the arms trade, but each side has different interests. From Baku's perspective, it wants to take advantage of Pakistan's relatively highly devel-

oped defense industry to establish joint ventures under which Pakistani firms would set up production or assembly facilities in Azerbaijan. This is the strategy Azerbaijan has used to build up its own domestic defense industry, so far with notable contributions from Israel and Turkey.

"Pakistan has a very developed defense industry. We discussed detailed cooperation in this area... So we can work together to establish joint production," Aliyev said during Sharif's October visit to Baku.

Thus far only one such agreement seems to have been reached, with Pakistan's Global Industrial & Defense Solutions to produce hand-held grenade launchers. "A certain agreement on this issue exists with the Defense Industry Ministry of Azerbaijan," said the company's CEO, retired Major General Tariq Javed.

Pakistan's interest, meanwhile, appears more focused on direct arms sales to Azerbaijan. There is a particular emphasis on marketing the Chinese-Pakistani JF-17 fighter jet to Azerbaijan. This has been discussed between the two sides for at least a decade, but discussions have seemed to pick up steam over the last year. Pakistan intended to display the JF-17 at Azerbaijan's defense expo, ADEX, last September, but "difficulties with delivery and customs forced us to abandon the idea," said

the aircraft maker's sales and marketing director, Sohail Saeed Naik. Pakistan also has been promoting the Super Mushshak trainer aircraft to Azerbaijan.

Fighter aircraft are not a high priority for Azerbaijan, which instead is focusing its procurement attention on ballistic missiles or on offensive weapons. That could include another Pakistani product, one of the Shaheen class of medium-range ballistic missiles. Azerbaijan's interest in Pakistani missiles was first reported in 2014, but talks seem to have accelerated after it emerged last year that Armenia had acquired Iskander missiles from Russia.

Bilateral military cooperation for the moment is limited to relatively modest educational exchanges. In 2015, 130 Azeri defense personnel received training from Pakistan, according to Pakistan's ambassador to Azerbaijan, Khalid Usman Kaiser.

In the energy sphere, too, Azerbaijan and Pakistan have expressed interest in cooperating, but their specific motivations may not be compatible. In April 2016, Pakistan and Azerbaijan drafted an inter-governmental agreement (not yet signed) calling for Azerbaijani sales of oil and gas to Pakistan, as well as Azerbaijani investments in Pakistan's petrochemical sector.

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The Sick Man on The Bosphorus

CONFLICT, from page 1

up as a tight race, the ruling AKP seeks to win over Turkish citizens living abroad for a “yes” vote and therefore demands the right for its politicians, be they government representatives or party officials or not, to campaign freely in Germany, the Netherlands, France and other countries with a Turkish community. The AKP has cheerfully ignored the fact that such campaigning abroad is in flagrant violation of Article 94/A of Turkish electoral law.

It has been more difficult for Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his party to ignore the laws of the countries which would host such campaign rallies. The rallies in the Netherlands and Germany have met resistance, either due to concerns for public safety, or to Turkish non-compliance with formal and logistical conditions for room rentals, etc. The deeper reasons are political. This year is election year in several countries, most recently in the Netherlands, and rightwing populists, like Geert Wilders, have been fueling anti-Islamic hatred and fears in their bid for votes. The concern is that fiery nationalist speeches by Turkish campaigners could provoke violent responses in the streets, and drive panicked voters to support the anti-Muslim populists at the polls.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte won the Dutch elections on March 15, in part thanks to his resolute stand against planned campaign appearances by Turkish politicians. First, Dutch authorities refused to grant landing rights to the plane carrying Turkey’s Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, then Family Minister Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya, who tried to enter Rotterdam by car, had her convoy turned back. The Turkish response to these rebuffs was violent, at least on the verbal plane. During an election rally in Antalya, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu said after the election results had been made known, that there was no difference between the social democrats, Rutte, and the “fascist” populist Wilders: “They are all the same.” The Netherlands was “the capital of fascism,” in his view, and he vowed that “there will be repercussions” for his having been prevented from speaking. Erdogan went so far as to accuse the Dutch of genocide, charging that they had massacred 8,000 Muslims in

Srebrenica in 1995. (In point of fact, it was the Bosnian Serbs who did the killing of the Muslim men and boys, and the Dutch contingent of UNPROFOR soldiers who failed to prevent the slaughter.) Erdogan’s government then announced political sanctions against the Netherlands.

In Germany, the Turkish community is the largest in Europe, with 1.4 million eligible voters, enough to decide the outcome of the referendum. In response to refusals on the part of local and state authorities to allow Turkish politicians to campaign, Erdogan and other leading figures have wielded the “fascist” epithet, and have charged Germany with protecting terrorists. Erdogan first accused the Germans of using Nazi methods, then attacked Chancellor Angela Merkel personally; on March 19 at a meeting of an Islamic organization in Istanbul, he used the familiar “Du” form to say, “You [Merkel] are using Nazi methods. Against whom? Against my Turkish brothers in Germany and the ministers.” He said he “thanked God” that German-Turkish journalist Deniz Yücel had been apprehended, formally placed under arrest and sent to prison. The journalist who writes for *Die Welt* is a “terrorist agent,” Erdogan said, and would have to answer to the “independent” Turkish judiciary. According to a report in the tabloid *Bild Zeitung*, Erdogan also said, referring apparently to the Europeans, “If they could, they would build gas chambers again.”

And Berlin’s Reaction?

Chancellor Merkel is known for her rationality, and her ability to keep cool under exasperating circumstances. During her recent Washington visit, she lived up to this reputation. In the case of Erdogan, she has labored to maintain a rational attitude, resolutely rejecting all slanders he has levelled against Europe, Germany and her personally. To Ankara’s repeated accusations that the Dutch were “fascists,” she pointed out the cruel irony that it was the Dutch who suffered immensely under Nazi occupation, and pledged her total solidarity with the Rutte government. As for “Nazi methods” in the Federal Republic of Germany, she has said it is almost impossible

to reply seriously to such outrages. Her spokesman Stephan Seibert dubbed the name-calling “recognizably out of this world,” (or, to put it more colloquially, “off the wall”). Seibert added that the Chancellor did not have any intention of “participating in a competition of insults.” On March 20, after the umpteenth instance of Nazi-baiting, Merkel put her foot down, reiterating that “the Nazi comparisons from Turkey must stop.... No ifs or buts.” Such comments, she said, “break every taboo, without consideration for the suffering of those who were persecuted and murdered by the Nazis.” She said a verbal note from her foreign ministry had been delivered to Ankara in which the German government “reserved the right to take all necessary measures,” including reconsideration of certain approvals. The “approvals” refer to campaign appearances by politicians and also – most importantly – to facilities to allow Turkish citizens to cast their votes in the referendum, in polling places set up for them in Germany.

Erdogan and company have also blamed the Germans and Merkel personally for “supporting terrorists,” and by this they mean associates of the Gülen movement. In an interview to *Spiegel*, the head of the BND (German Federal Intelligence Service) Bruno Kahl had questioned the credibility of Turkish assertions that the Gülen movement were the driving force behind the failed coup attempt last year. Defense Minister Fikri Isik, according to Anadolu press agency, said this raised the question, “whether the German secret services are not behind the coup.”

Several German political figures have addressed the singular behavior of a national leader such as Erdogan. Newly elected SPD chairman and Chancellor candidate in the upcoming elections Martin Schulz remarked on national television March 19, “That a head of state of a friendly country should insult the head of the government of this country is a piece of impudence.” Someone has to tell Erdogan at some point, he said, that he “cannot trample on all practices of international diplomacy.” But, “that is what he does however.” And such behavior “is not worthy of a head of state,” he said, adding that Turkey was becoming increasingly authoritarian.

What Honor?

Among those who have earnestly sought to understand the bizarre behavior of Ankara’s political elite, Michael Martens of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) has pointed to the misplaced notion of “honor” that several high-ranking representatives have displayed in their objections to being denied campaigning rights abroad. When Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag swears they will “not allow anyone to injure the honor of the Turkish nation and the Turkish state,” or his colleague in the foreign ministry characterizes the Dutch position as “an affront to the honor of the Turks,” Martens says that, to the ears of someone from northwestern Europe, this has a distant ring to it, as if coming from the days of Emperor Wilhelm. Such notions of honor may also be found in southern European countries, Spain, Italy and Greece, for example, but Martens sees this more extreme form as a relic from the heritage of Atatürk – with an Islamic touch. The state, as Martens summarizes the notion, should control everything, and if it does not, it should then rally the people around a strong leader, who defends the honor of the nation against the perceived enemies. His FAZ colleague, Rainer Hermann, a senior journalist and long-term Turkey expert, has identified authoritarian trends in other aspects of behavior among these politicians, including in hand gestures. For instance, Erdogan has been observed raising his right hand, with the four fingers upward and the thumb across the palm – this is apparently a gesture imported from Egypt, where it was used to signal opposition to Al Sisi, before becoming a standard symbol of the Muslim Brotherhood. Other leaders have been using gestures associated with the nationalist Grey Wolves.

Aside from the folkloristic flavor of such details, they serve to underline the trend towards extreme nationalism, which coheres

with the aggressive name-calling directed at Merkel and Europe.

More than Metaphor?

The gutter level to which Ankara has dragged down political discourse is without precedent in the recent period. One is unsure whether to merely chalk up such talk to bad taste, ill manners or the like, or to read more sinister intent into the words. What should one make, for example, of the remarks made by Foreign Minister Cavuşoğlu about the Dutch political players, both populists and not? “They have the same mentality,” he said. “And this mentality will soon lead Europe to the abyss. Soon religious wars could and will break out in Europe.” Is this a threat or a promise? Or should one read the latest directives by Erdogan to Turks living in what he considers “fascist” Europe as sarcastic banter or serious marching orders? Speaking at a rally on March 17, he called out to Turks in Europe: “Don’t have three children, have five,” he said, “because you are the future of Europe.” This would be “the best answer that you could give to the impertinence, animosity and injustice that they are dealing you.” Does he really envision a future Europe dominated by Turks? If so, this would play into the hands of the Islamophobic populists like Wilder, Marine Le Pen and the Alternative for Germany party. Is that the intent?

Or did the CDU deputy chairwoman Julia Klöckner get it right when she asked simply, “Has Mr. Erdogan lost his senses?” Perhaps the man on the Bosphorus is not well. Perhaps he is sick. Or maybe, she suggested, “Mr. Erdogan simply needs a comprehensive seminar in history, manners and understanding among peoples.” Not a bad idea; that history lesson might begin with the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

(The author can be reached at mirak.weissbach@googlemail.com.)

Azerbaijan: Ties with Pakistan Focusing on Arms and Energy

ENERGY, from page 19

Pakistan’s primary interest appears to be in importing oil or gas from Azerbaijan. This is theoretically possible, but it would involve complicated gas swaps with Iran, and Baku seems to have little interest in such convoluted arrangements. Azerbaijani officials question the logistics and economics of exporting to Pakistan, given the export commitments it has already made to Europe.

Azerbaijan, then, has tried to gently downplay the potential for significant energy exports to Pakistan. The Azerbaijan-Pakistan energy deal will “allow companies to start talks, and business and trade would materialize only if found economically and logistically feasible,” Azerbaijan Energy Minister Natig Aliyev said during the ECO summit in Islamabad.

Editor’s note: Zaur Shiryev is an Academy Associate at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House). This commentary originally appeared in Eurasianet.org

Armenian Brandy Festival to be held in Tsaghkadzor

YEREVAN (Panorama) – Armenia’s Tourism Development Fund, in cooperation with the State Committee for Tourism, has organized Armenian Brandy Festival in Tsaghkadzor on May 7.

The Press Service of the festival announced: “The companies engaged in Armenian brandy production and interested in raising the international awareness of the Armenian brandy and publicize Armenian brandy in traditional and new markets, are invited to take part in the festival.”

All the interested companies can apply to the Tourism Development Fund to participate.



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