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**Erdogan Offers 'Condolences' During Armenian Genocide Events**

By Amberin Zaman

ISTANBUL (Al Monitor) – “I am firmly convinced that this is the greatest crime of the ages.” These were the words that Henry Morgenthau, American ambassador to the court of the Ottoman sultan, used to describe the mass destruction of the empire’s Armenian population in 1915.

Since 2010, after decades of frenzied denial, the tragedy has been publicly commemorated in Turkey as well. On Monday, April 24, in Istanbul, where the bulk of Turkey’s shrunken Armenian population, numbering around 60,000, resides, small crowds gathered to honor the dead at organized events. They carried black banners reading, “Armenian Genocide: Recognize, Apologize, Compensate.”



Human rights activists hold portraits of victims during a demonstration to commemorate the Armenian Genocide in Istanbul. See related story on page 4.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent a message to the city’s Surp Vartanants Church, where a ceremony was held. Erdogan said, “Dear esteemed Armenian citizens, I salute you with love and respect. ... I offer my condolences to the grandchildren of the Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives in the harsh circumstances of World War I. ... We have

zero tolerance for a single one of our Armenian citizens being ostracized, marginalized or made to feel a second-class citizen.” (See related editorial on page 17.)

April 24 marks the dark moment when 234 Armenian intellectuals and artists were rounded up by authorities and most of them killed. It was just a taste of the bloodbath to follow. Erdogan’s comments are a far cry from the apology and acknowledgment the Armenians feel they are owed, but that he made them at all marks a radical departure from previous government policy. see CONDOLENCES, page 4

**Catholicos of All Armenians Presides Over Prayer Service on April 24**



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II says a prayer at the Tsitsernakabert Monument for the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide. Fellow dignitaries include, from left, Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan and President Serzh Sargsyan. Story and photos on page 3.

**Paylan Proposes Bill To Study Armenian Deportations**

ANKARA – Garo Paylan, a member of the Turkish Parliament who represents a district of Istanbul, and is in the HDP party, this week presented a bill to the parliament in which he asks that body research the results of the Temporary Deportation Law enacted on May 27, 1915.

In a letter, he wrote, “Subsequent to the Temporary Deportation Law, which was enacted on May 27, 1915 to be in effect after being published in then the official journal Takvim-i Vekâyi on June 1, 1915, the Armenian population residing in the Ottoman Empire was deported. The Deportation Act caused major destruction in Assyrian, Chaldean, Yazidi, Greek and especially Armenian communities. Although 102 years passed over the see DEPORTATIONS, page 4

**Genocide Commemoration after Recognition in Germany**

BERLIN – Since the German Bundestag (Parliament) passed a resolution on the Armenian Genocide last year in June, the focus has shifted from the demand for recognition to other concerns; on the one hand, there has been further study of the role of Imperial Germany in the Genocide and, on the other, there are efforts underway to introduce the theme in history lessons in German classrooms. This shift in focus was perceptible in the commemoration held in Berlin on April 24, where several speakers, remembering the past, looked to the future.

The event was organized by the Central Council of the Armenians in Germany, the Armenian Embassy and the Diocese of the Armenian Church in Germany, and enjoyed the

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

collaboration of the Berlin Armenian Community and the Armenian Church and Cultural Community in Berlin. Opening the program, Ani Smith-Dagesyan, a member of the Board of the Central Council of the Armenians in Germany, spoke of the current situation for the minorities in Turkey. Smith-Dagesyan, a young political scientist specializing in international politics, has been responsible for the political and cultural education of the younger generation at the Council. Armenian Ambassador Ashat Smbatyan addressed his remarks to this younger generation. The culture of memory, he said, was all the more important for those who did not experience the genocide, adding that remembrance must see GERMANY, page 5

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Trump Avoids Use of 'G' Word**

WASHINGTON – On Monday, April 24, President Donald Trump issued a statement commemorating the Armenian Genocide, without using the word genocide.

In his statement, he said, “Today, we remember and honor the memory of those who suffered during the *Meds Yeghern* (sic), one of the worst mass atrocities of the 20th century. Beginning in 1915, one and a half million Armenians were deported, massacred, or marched to their deaths in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. I join the Armenian community in America and around the world in mourning the loss of innocent lives and the suffering endured by so many.

“As we reflect on this dark chapter of human history, we also recognize the resilience of the Armenian people. Many built new lives in the United States and made indelible contributions to our country, while cherishing memories of the historic homeland in which their ancestors established one of the great civilizations of antiquity.

“We must remember atrocities to prevent them from occurring again. We welcome the efforts of Turks and Armenians to acknowledge and reckon with painful history, which is a critical step toward building a foundation for a more just and tolerant future.”

**Power Apologizes for Breaking Promise to Say 'Genocide' After Obama Election**

WASHINGTON (*The Hill*) – Former Obama UN Ambassador Samantha Power on Monday, April 24, apologized for not using the term “genocide” to describe the Ottoman Turks’ massacre of Armenians.

“I am very sorry that, during our time in office, we in the Obama administration did not recognize the #Armenian Genocide,” Power said in a series of tweets.

Power, who served as Obama’s UN ambassador from 2013 to 2017, blamed “ongoing Turkish denial” for leaving an “open wound.”

“Almost every Armenian-American family was touched in some way by the genocide,” Power said.

Former President Barack Obama had promised during his campaign to use the label to describe the mass killings by Ottoman forces of the Armenian in the 1910s, but reversed course in office.

Power’s remarks came the same day that Trump released a statement marking the atrocity, but also kept course with past administrations by declining to call it a genocide.

To date, Power is the only Obama official to express regret over the decision not to use the term genocide.

**INSIDE**

**Phillips the Activist**

Page 6

**INDEX**

Arts and Living . . . . . 12  
Armenia . . . . . 2,3  
Community News. . . . . 6  
Editorial . . . . . 17  
International . . . . . 4,5



## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Man Charged with Killing Russian Soldier In Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The body of a Russian soldier stabbed to death in Gyumri, 22Apr2017.

An Armenian man reportedly suffering from mental disorders was formally charged on Tuesday with stabbing to death a Russian soldier in Gyumri.

The 21-year-old soldier, Dmitry Yalpayev, was found dead outside a shop in Armenia's second largest city on Saturday. According to Armenian law-enforcement authorities, he sustained eight stab wounds to his back, neck and head.

Shortly afterwards, a 20-year-old resident of Stepanavan, a small town 85 kilometers east of Gyumri, was detained as a suspect in the slaying. The man, identified by Armenia's Investigative Committee as A. Janjughazian, was formally charged and remanded in pre-trial custody.

"The suspect has been interrogated and has given testimony in connection with the incident," the committee said in a statement. "Necessary investigative actions are being conducted with the purpose of verifying circumstances pointed out in the testimony."

"A preliminary investigation has established that the suspect has certain problems with mental health," added the statement.

The law-enforcement agency also confirmed media reports that Janjughazian was discharged from the Armenian military last month after being diagnosed with "certain mental disorders." It said he underwent psychiatric evaluation during his compulsory service due to several incidents of self-mutilation.

## Artsakh Soldier Killed by Azeri Sniper

STEPANAKERT (Public Radio of Armenia) – Artsakh Defense Army Private Narek, 20, was killed by Azerbaijani fire at about 6 p.m. on April 24, the Artsakh Defense Ministry reports.

A probe into the incident is underway.

The Defense Army expressed its support to the soldier's family and friends.

The Azerbaijani army violated the ceasefire more than 50 times on April 24 and overnight, firing over 800 shots in the direction of the Armenian positions.

## Court Hears Opposition Election Challenge

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia's Constitutional Court opened on Tuesday hearings on an opposition appeal against the official results of this month's parliamentary elections that gave victory to President Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party (HHK).

The Congress-HZhK alliance led by former President Levon Ter-Petrosian has accused the ruling HHK of systematically bribing and intimidating voters and using its administrative resources otherwise. It presented the court with more than 40 pages of documents as well as video and audio material.

In his opening remarks at the hearing, Levon Zurabian, a senior Congress-HZhK representative, claimed that the April 2 ballot left most Armenians with a sense of déjà vu.

"Every time elections are rigged, every time the opposition appeals to the Constitutional Court, and every time the Constitutional Court concludes that the reported irregularities did not influence the election results or does not look into the presented arguments and evidence on false grounds," Zurabian told the panel of nine judges.

Gagik Harutiunian, the Constitutional Court chairman, interrupted Zurabian, saying that he cannot make political statements and criticize past court rulings. "Instead of delivering a political speech, try to substantiate the claims that you have presented to the Constitutional Court," he said.

The Congress-HZhK bloc also alleged "numerous registered cases of multiple voting."

European election observers did not report significant instances of multiple voting in their preliminary findings released on April 3. They cited instead "credible information about vote-buying, and pressure on civil servants and employees of private companies."

## Five Finalists Selected for Aurora Prize

YEREVAN – The Selection Committee for the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity announced on April 24 the names of the five 2017 finalists who have been chosen for their exceptional impact, courage and commitment to preserving human life and advancing humanitarian causes. They are:

• Fartuun Adan and Ilwad Elman, founders of the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre, Somalia. The mother and daughter are unwavering in their mission to protect human rights, women's rights, and facilitate

Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan. A Catholic missionary and doctor, for nearly a decade he has remained the only permanent doctor to treat the remote and war-torn region's half-million population, performing more than 1,000 operations each year.

• Muhammad Darwish, a medical doctor at the Madaya Field Hospital, Syria. A student of dentistry, he returned to his hometown and took on the full responsibilities of a medical doctor, began to perform medical procedures, offered care and maintained

while fearlessly seeking to bring to justice those responsible.

The finalists will be honored at the Aurora Prize Ceremony in Yerevan on May 28, when one will be chosen as the 2017 Aurora Prize Laureate. The Aurora Prize Laureate will receive a grant of \$100,000 to support the continuation of their work, as well as a \$1,000,000 award, which will give them the unique ability to continue the cycle of giving by supporting organizations that have inspired their work.

The Selection Committee, co-chaired by Academy Award-winning actor and humanitarian George Clooney, includes Nobel Laureates Oscar Arias, Shirin Ebadi and Leymah Gbowee; former president of Ireland Mary Robinson; human rights activist Hina Jilani; former Foreign Minister of Australia and President Emeritus of the International Crisis Group Gareth Evans; and former president of Mexico Ernesto Zedillo. The Committee shortlisted the five finalists from more than 550 nominations for 254 unique candidates submitted by the general public from 66 countries and in 13 languages.

Speaking on behalf of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, Vartan Gregorian, Committee Member, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative said, "We are gratified by the enormous response generated by the call for nominations. It is an acknowledgment of our shared humanity and values. While geography and circumstances differ for each nominee, it is the similarities that unite them all. Individual human beings risk their own well-being and safety in order to rescue those in desperate need of help, and it is Aurora's mission to support these saviors. We believe that those who are rescued will themselves continue the cycle of gratitude and giving."

Marguerite Barankitse from Maison Shalom and REMA Hospital in Burundi was named the first Aurora Prize Laureate on April 24, 2016 in Yerevan.



The Aurora finalists

peace building, development and the rehabilitation of child soldiers amidst insecure and dangerous conditions.

• Jamila Afghani, chairperson of the Noor Educational and Capacity Development Organization, Afghanistan. She is a polio victim who accidentally received the gift of reading and has dedicated her life to bringing reading and education to girls and women, while enlisting the help of Muslim leaders of faith in her mission.

• Dr. Tom Catena, surgeon at the

meticulous documentation of the conditions of patients, many of them children, affected by persisting violence, thus bringing international attention to the besieged area.

• Dr. Denis Mukwege, gynecological surgeon and founder of the Panzi Hospital, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. An obstetrician-turned-gynecological-surgeon, he provides physical, psychological and legal support to more than 50,000 survivors of sexual violence in the war-torn country

## AUA Hosts First Conference on Empowerment Of Girls and Women in Armenia

YEREVAN – On April 21 and 22, the American University of Armenia (AUA) organized and hosted a conference on the empowerment of girls and women in Armenia. The two-day event brought together students, faculty, civil society representatives, successful female

from Armenia and around the world to offer a holistic perspective on the status and role of girls in women in Armenian society, including in the military, workplace, healthcare society and society at large.

The conference was the first stage in

for research, social activism and academic programming.

In her opening remarks, Conference Chair Dr. Shakhé Kaftarian noted that "the conference is dedicated to learning about the immediate and long-lasting impact of gender inequality, dis-

ussing local models, which have been effective in enhancing female empowerment, and learning about international strategies addressing women and gender studies, along with their records of sustained success." Kaftarian believes that a continuous effort must be made extending beyond the conference in order to put Armenia on the path toward gender-based equality in healthcare, employment, economic strength, as well as participation in social and political life.

Minister of Justice Arpine Hovhannissyan also addressed conference attendees. "One of the key indicators of a society's development is the role of women and how said society treats them. I firmly

believe that society needs to realize the full potential of women, however it is

*continued on next page*



Alis Marashlian from Washington, DC presenting the empowering of women in the health-care system

entrepreneurs, community leaders and members of the both the public and private sector. More than 50 speakers

AUA's Women's Empowerment Initiative, which will identify issues, foster awareness, and help set an agenda



## ARMENIA



The dignitaries, led by Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and President Serzh Sargsyan make their way at the Tsitsernakabert Monument.

## Catholicos of All Armenians Presides Over Prayer Service on April 24

ECHMIADZIN – On April 24, religious ceremonies were held both in Yerevan and Holy Echmiadzin.

Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, visited Tsitsernakabert Memorial Complex along with President Serzh Sargsyan, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan, Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan and many members of the administration and foreign dignitaries.

A mass was performed at Echmiadzin by Bishop Mushegh Babayan.

Said Babayan, “Our nation lost everything, the values of the country and a large part of a generation that instilled it, along with thousands of manuscripts, towns and villages that were burnt, thousands of churches destroyed.”

The ceremony was attended by diocesan leaders, philanthropists, and many pilgrims and the faithful of the Holy See.



President Serzh Sargsyan and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II at the April 24 commemoration of the Armenian Genocide



A march through the streets of Yerevan commemorating the Armenian Genocide

## AUA Hosts First Conference On Empowerment of Girls And Women in Armenia

from previous page

very important that these changes are made knowingly and willingly,” she noted. Hovhannisyan added, as an example of progress in the right direction, that the Ministry of Justice’s main body is made up of 386 employees out of which 208 are women and 35 of whom occupy managerial positions.

After the opening remarks, the day continued with two plenary panels on leveraging mentorship and sharing of experience to empower women and girls. Further break-out sessions addressed targeted topics including the effects of nationalism on women in Armenia, strength-

ening rural communities through empowering rural women, changing gender roles and breaking gender stereotypes, and violence prevention.

AUA President Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian said, “Today in Armenia, of 18 government ministers, two are female and, of 131 members of the Parliament, only 13 are women. In the private sector, while a growing number of top managers are women, many of them AUA graduates, the ratio is still dominated by men. Clearly, there is an enormous pool of human resource and talent that is not fully tapped. This conference aims at examining ways to empower girls and women in Armenia, so they can more fully contribute to the economic and social advancement of Armenia.”

In her keynote address, President of San Jose State University, Dr. Mary Papazian, said, “It is

sobering to realize the extent to which women in America and Armenia face similar issues and challenges. I am confident that we can forge a meaningful, enduring partnership and knowledge exchange between AUA and San Jose State University because of our shared values and enduring commitment to inclusion and equity. This conference is evidence of both. This ongoing exchange will broaden global awareness and understanding of those issues, enrich efforts to identify solutions, and help women and girls in both countries imagine and create brighter futures.”

Founding Partner and Chair of the Board of Governors at UWC Dilijan College and a member of the Board of Trustees at AUA Veronika Zonabend stated, “Education begins in the family, and a great role and responsibility for the next generation lies with women. In today’s

world, in order to be a good mother, a woman has to be appealing to her children; and she can reach her potential in various spheres of life. Education plays an enormous part in this. To date, several successful educational initiatives and development projects have been implemented in Armenia. Among them are the American University of Armenia and UWC Dilijan, which provide the opportunity for girls to fully realize their potential, allow them to know their own strengths and fallibilities, and prepare them for life beyond the classroom.”

To celebrate the various contributions by women to society, the conference also included performances by musicians Lilit Pipoyan, Vahagn Hayrapetyan, book signings, and an art exhibition showcasing the works of female artists in Armenian modern art called “The Spirit of Woman.”



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Tehlirian Square Inaugurated in Marseille

MARSEILLE (Armenpress) – The square located in the intersection of Vallon De Montebello and Cambodia Streets in Marseille has been named after Soghomon Tehlirian as part of the 102nd anniversary events commemorating the Armenian Genocide.

Marseille Mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin, Arrondissement of Aix-en-Provence head Yves Morraïne, politicians and public figures, as well as representatives of the Armenian community were present at the inauguration event. The event was organized by the Marseille City Hall and the Coordinating Council of Armenian Organizations of France.

“This is the acknowledgement of the importance of the Marseille Armenian community’s role. By this we also say to all denialists, Aliyev and Erdogan, that the Armenian people have stood up in a city like Marseille,” Morraïne said.

In 1921, Tehlirian participated in operation Nemesis, tasked with taking down one of the masterminds of the Armenian Genocide – Talaat Pasha. On March 15 he gunned down Talaat in Berlin and was arrested. On June 2, the German Court cleared Tehlirian of all charges.

## Assange Says Turkey Covers up Genocide

LONDON (Armenpress) – Founder and editor-in-chief of Wikileaks Julian Assange tweeted on April 24 that Turkey’s cover-up of the Armenian Genocide is well known.

“The Armenian Genocide killed up to 1.5 million people. I know, I investigated it and Turkey tried to cover it up,” Assange said on Twitter.

Assange also posted a link to his publications with reveal facts on the Armenian Genocide.

## PACE Votes to Monitor Turkey

STRASBOURG (AP) – The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has voted in favor of re-opening monitoring procedures in Turkey.

The assembly’s monitoring committee raised concerns over constitutional amendments that were approved this month in a national referendum amid a state of emergency.

Turkey rapporteur Marianne Mikko said on April 25 the amendments, which expand the powers of the presidency, “do not comply with our fundamental and common understanding of democracy.”

She stressed that the monitoring process is not “punishment” but a bid to strengthen dialogue with Turkey.

The committee was critical of the atmosphere ahead of the referendum and of emergency decrees after the failed coup attempt in July 2016.

The committee pointed to the detention of parliamentarians and journalists and the sweeping dismissals of civil servants allegedly linked to the coup.

The Turkish foreign ministry said it strongly condemned the “unjust decision” of a European rights body to put it on a monitoring watchlist, adding that Ankara was left with no choice but to reconsider its relations with the body.

“Deciding to re-open the monitoring procedure on Turkey... under the guidance of malicious circles at the PACE is a disgrace to this organ,” the ministry said in a statement.

## Macron Pays tribute to Genocide Victims

PARIS (Armenpress) – French presidential candidate and leader of the En Marche Party Emmanuel Macron visited the monument of Komitas in Paris and paid tribute to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide on April 24.

Macron was accompanied by Mourad Papazian and Ara Toranian, co-chairs of the Coordination Council of Armenian organizations of France.

Macron announced that if he is elected president, he would continue the tradition of commemorating the Armenian Genocide, and added that it’s necessary to continue working in the direction of criminalization of the denial of the Armenian Genocide.



Those commemorating the Armenian Genocide with the pictures of Armenian intellectuals arrested on April 24, 1915.

# Genocide Commemoration at Istanbul Calls for Recognition

ISTANBUL (*Washington Hatti*) – A call to acknowledge Armenian Genocide was made during a commemoration of its 102nd anniversary at Taksim Square on April 24.

As part of the 102nd anniversary of Armenian Genocide, a commemoration at Taksim Square was organized by 24thApril Remembrance Platform. Starting with silent protests, many people including HDP Istanbul MP Garo Paylan participated in the commemoration. A placard with a sign “It’s been 102 years, Face It!” was demonstrated while singing Armenian songs. In addition, another huge banner consisted of 234 Armenian politicians, journalists, judges, artists and intellectuals was rolled out while leaving flowers on it.

On behalf of demonstrators, Murat Çelikkhan asked the country to face the genocide by reminding those present what took place 102 years ago. He continued “whether we pay attention or not, life in Turkey has become barren since 24 April 1915. When a section of the public was dismissed with its values, indeed all values of the society were being harmed. While the cultural heritage of a group of people was destructed, the culture of living in together took a big blow. Just like Armenian people, the cultural heritage left behind was being erased. Thousands of historical structures, churches and schools were preemptively turned into ruins. It was portrayed as if they never existed on this soil just like Armenians.”

By repeating the call made during the commemoration of its 102nd anniversary, Murat went on to say “the call or the struggle to face the genocide is our obligation and debt to Hrant Dink, Sevag Balıkcı, Marisa Küçük and to all those brothers spread around the world as they were forced to leave their homeland. It is a responsibility to our own conscience. All of us owned the pain. Such pain will never heal by time, we apologized

and will continue to. We are trying to come to terms with it and will continue to. We will never recess. Now it is your turn. We are done with the words of sympathies, looking for an apology. It has been 102 years. Don’t wait for its 103rd anniversary. Apologize for it!”

The commemoration concluded with applause by chanting “the struggle for the call to face the genocide will go on for those we lost on 24th April, for Hrant and Sevag.”

## Erdogan Offers ‘Condolences’ During Armenian Genocide Events

CONDOLENCES, from page 1

Garo Paylan, a rare ethnic Armenian member of parliament for the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) who last week tabled a motion calling for an investigation of the century-old crime, said in a statement, “Let us not forget that every crime that goes unpunished leads to a repetition of the crime.” Until recently, Paylan would have immediately been hauled off to jail under laws that deemed such assertions an insult to Turkishness and the Turkish nation.

In *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide*, Thomas de Waal wrote, “For Armenians, the name [Deir ez-Zor] represents a nadir of their experience, a kind of black hole in which one life ended and – only if you were a lucky survivor – another barely began.” Most respected historians, including a growing number of Turks, have long concluded that what happened in 1915 was indeed a genocide.

Turkey’s continued denial is driven by paranoia about Western designs and a prickly pride that has bred a culture of impunity. This refusal to face up to past crimes, suggests the activist Nurcan Kaya in the independent online newsportal *ArtıGerçek*, has allowed the state to continue to brutalize its citizens without being called to account.

## Paylan Proposes Bill to Study Armenian Deportations

DEPORTATIONS, page 1

enactment of the law, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey has still not researched the consequences of the mentioned act. It is a known fact that due to the Deportation Law, great numbers of lives were lost. As a result of the execution and application of the mentioned law a large number of cultural assets and property were seized or confiscated pursuant to act of government.

“I hereby submit and propose a Parliamentary Inquiry in accordance with the Turkish Constitution’s 98th, Parliamentary rules’ 104th and 105th articles, aimed at (a) unraveling the responsibilities of public officials and government of the period in regards to the process of annihilation of the

deported population; (b) understanding the consequences of the deportations up to date; (c) establishing social peace and reconciliation as a whole in our country by facing the past and truth; (d) contributing to the unraveling of the ‘truth’ so as to avoid the manipulation and abuse of the conflict in all manners; providing opportunities for the future generations to live together, freely and in peace in Turkey.”

He refers to a 2008 book by journalist Murat Bardakçı including Ottoman Minister of Domestic Affairs Talât Pasha’s personal papers and documentation and correspondence on the Armenian deportations. The report, is “beyond a reasonable doubt, produced by Talât Pasha, and, demonstrates the distribution of Armenian

population within certain Ottoman provinces based on a comprehensive and extensive research,” he writes.

According to Talât Pasha’s numbers, between 1914 and 1917 1.150.000 (or 77 percent of the total Armenian population residing in Ottoman territories) “disappeared,” Paylan writes, quoting from Bardakçı’s book.

Talât Pasha’s report openly shows that the deportation of Ottoman Armenians in 1915 was aimed at the annihilation of Armenians rather than necessary military security measures. The difference in numbers between the deported Armenians and exiled Armenians in the re-settlement regions in 1917 shows how this policy was administered and concluded.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Indian Vice President Visits Armenia, Signs Agreements

YEREVAN — On Tuesday, April 25, India's vice president, Mohammad Hamid Ansari, and a large delegation visited Armenia. He first met privately with Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan, after which the talks continued in an extended format.

Welcoming Ansari's delegation, Karapetyan expressed confidence that the visit would give a new impetus to the development of the Armenian-Indian economic cooperation.

"The relations between our two peoples boast a long history. The Armenian-Indian relations are characterized by high level of mutual understanding and trust. This year we are marking the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Armenia and India. Despite the high level of political dialogue between our countries, there is still much to be done in the field of economic cooperation, as there is a lot of potential," Karapetyan said.

The prime minister suggested enhancing efficiency in economic cooperation by targeting two areas: exchange of technologies and agriculture. At the same time, the Premier stressed the need for continued cooperation in all other prospective sectors. According to him, cooperation in the aforementioned two areas may cover information technology, pharmaceuticals, healthcare and engineering. The Prime Minister added that the two countries have been boasting successful and exemplary cooperation in the IT sector in the face of the Armenian-Indian Excellence Center in Information and Communication Technologies. As Karen Karapetyan said, it has great potential as a business project, and its subsequent operation and modernization should be approached from that perspective.

The head of the Armenian government highlighted the use of new technologies in the health sector and thanked the Indian side for the assistance provided for the creation of the telemedicine network.

"We are ready to provide the necessary conditions for Indian companies to do business in Armenia. In this context, I would like to mention the free economic zone on the border with Iran in Syunik, which will be operational this fall. Armenia's joining the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union's GSP + trade



Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan and Indian Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari

regime will allow unimpeded access to these markets. Also, we suggest considering the involvement of Indian companies in jewelry, watch-making and precious stones processing activities in Meridian free economic zone in Armenia," Karapetyan said, adding that agriculture is a sector with great potential and Armenia is interested in developing cooperation in this field.

Karapetyan stressed the need to provide conditions for the import agricultural equipment from India and establishment of agro-machinery centers in Armenia. Priority was given to the development of cooperation in the field of seed production.

Karapetyan highlighted the North-South Road International Transport Corridor project, noting that India is one of its co-founders. He said that in this framework Armenia has initiated a project that will make of Armenia a transit point for implementing swift and cost-effective multimodal shipments of Indian products on the way to Russia and European countries.

Thanking the Armenian government for the warm welcome, Ansari stressed the close, friendly ties that bind both people and both countries.

"Our countries have always identified goals and ways for cooperation in every stage of rela-

tionship. This was the case in the past and will continue in the future. Today's world is a world of technology and we have achieved progressive growth in terms of adapting to the technological world. India has the capacity and is ready to share them out with Armenia in engineering, mechanical engineering, information technology and healthcare, including pharmaceuticals, agriculture and other sectors," he said.

According to Ansari, India attaches great importance to bilateral cooperation in different directions. Convinced that the proposal to attract Indian capital to Armenia's free economic zones was promising, he assured his hosts that he would convey the message to his country's business circles.

"What matters most is that Indian businesses have the ability and willingness to invest outside of India. We will closely monitor to ensure that our two countries find out new opportunities for interaction," Ansari noted, expressing willingness to closely cooperate in the field of agricultural supplies and other industries.

In Indian Vice President's words, Armenia and India boast long-standing and promising ties of friendship, and India is willing to fully cooperate with Armenia.

The parties took the opportunity to discuss the possibility of establishing direct air commu-

nications, which is a good way to develop trade and economic cooperation, facilitate tourism and the visa regime. In this context, the interlocutors touched upon the need to hold an Armenian-Indian business forum, expand and deepen exchanges in education and culture.

Attended by Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan and Indian Vice President Hamid Ansari, the following cooperation instruments were signed between the two governments: a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of youth affairs between the Armenian Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of India as signed by RA Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs Hrachya Rustamyan and Indian State Minister for Small and Medium Enterprise Giriraj Singh; practical program of cultural cooperation in 2017-2020 between the Armenian and Indian Ministries of Culture as signed by Minister of Culture Armen Amiryan and Indian Ambassador Yogeshvar Sangvan; a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space between the governments of Armenia and India as signed by RA Minister of Education and Science Levon Mkrtchyan and Secretary for East of the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Priti Saran.

## Genocide Commemoration After Recognition In Germany

GERMANY, from page 1  
include other genocides as well. Smbatyan stressed the importance of the speech delivered last year by then-President Joachim Gauck on the genocide, a speech which paved the way for recognition and changed the situation in Germany.

Edelgard Bulmahn, Social Democrat who is vice president of the Bundestag, delved more deeply into the events of the past, emphasizing the importance of studying and acknowledging the role of Germany in those historical developments. She too spoke of the interest that young people today display in understanding their own past. Prof. Garabed Antranikian, president of the Technical University in Hamburg, had personal remarks to offer. As the son of a survivor who migrated to Jerusalem and then to Jordan, where he was born, he praised his father's commitment to his own education, which allowed him to study and achieve an academic career.

Archbishop Karekin Bekdjian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church in Germany, offered prayers.

A day earlier, also in Berlin, a ceremony was held at the Ecumenical Memorial for the Genocide Victims of the Ottoman Empire, with a speech by Dr. Tessa Hofmann, a genocide researcher and co-founder of the initiative. The memorial is made up of three altars in memory of the Armenians, Greeks and Syrian Christians. Following an address by Hofmann, titled, "The Books are not Yet Closed," participants marched in a procession to the monument, where Archbishop Emmanuel Sfiatkos, chairman of the Ecumenical Council of Berlin-Brandenburg, delivered a blessing.

A new book is to be released soon in German, edited by Rolf Hosfeld and Christin Pschichholz, which contains essays by numerous genocide scholars on the theme of the German role. The volume, *Das Deutsche Reich und der Völkermord an den Armeniern*, is a further example of the interest being devoted to this aspect, which has come to the fore since the Bundestag resolution. And, also stimulated by the same ferment, a debate around genocide studies in schools has been spreading among educators. As an example, the German-Armenian Society is organizing a presentation this week by former minister Stephan Dörgerloh on "Genocide as a Topic in Schools in Sachsen-Anhalt."

## Uruguay Commemorates the Armenian Genocide

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay (Agencia Prensa Armenia) — On Friday, April 21, the Armenian community of Uruguay rallied for the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in a large demonstration that gathered in Plaza Independencia and made its way towards the esplanade of the Intendance of Montevideo.

The march was organized by Young Armenians of Uruguay, a space that groups the youth organizations of the community.

The march culminated in the reading of a proclamation by Mikael Demirdjian, who

thanked Uruguay for its countless signs of support, also condemning the atrocities that the Syrian people are living today and expressing solidarity with all the causes of the world that still await justice.

"Our steadfast steps are united year by year in this march to remember the 1,500,000 Armenians who were exterminated more than a century ago, but above all to protest against a State that not only systematically denies its responsibility in the first genocide of the twentieth century, but also pursues today its own

people. Day after day, activists, journalists and oppositionists in general to the government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan are persecuted, imprisoned and many have had to exile just for not having guaranteed their right to dissent," said Demirdjian.

"Ours is not only a claim for truth against Turkish denialist policies and justice for the murdered Armenians. It is also the demand for moral, territorial and patrimonial reparation as an integral stage of the process of truth, memory and justice."

## Yazidi Survivor Offers Message of Compassion to Armenians Worldwide

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Nadia Murad, a Yazidi human rights activist, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and since September 2016 the first Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking of the United Nations, addressed a message to the whole world to recognize the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire on April 24.

She said in her statement, "On behalf of the Yazidi community, I wish to extend our compassion and understanding to our Armenian sisters and brothers, who are today commemorating the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Just over a century ago, the Ottoman Turkish authorities perpetrated a genocide against Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks, and Yazidis. Millions were killed or perished on death marches without food or water, just as our Yazidi people were murdered on Mt. Sinjar in 2014 at the hands of ISIS. Armenian women and children were abducted,

forcibly converted, raped, trafficked and forced to marry their perpetrators, tortures that thousands of our Yazidi women and children are enduring now. Yazidis and Armenians have been neighbors for centuries. The Armenian Genocide, which began on April 24, 1915, displaced so many. Yazidis numbered more than half a million people in Turkey a century ago. Now there are only a few hundred. In contrast, Armenia is home to tens of thousands of Yazidis and grants them freedom to practice their religion and culture, and to participate fully in political and social life. Turkey still today denies the genocide of the Armenians, a denial that is entrenched in the Turkish establishment and compounds the intergenerational trauma for Armenians.

"As Yazidis, we call on the global community to recognize the heinous crimes committed against the Armenians and other minorities by the Ottoman Turks. And let this also be a

reminder to the world of the importance of recognition and perpetrator accountability.

"I hope that in 100 years, Yazidis are not still asking for acknowledgement of the crimes they endured under ISIS, but rather, that the history books will tell of perpetrators being prosecuted and a Yazidi community that is surviving and flourishing, like the Armenians are today."

Murad was born in the village of Kocho in Sinjar, Iraq. She was 19 when Islamic State fighters rounded up the Yazidi community in the village killing 600 people — including six of Nadia's brothers and stepbrothers — and taking the younger women into slavery. That year Murad was one of more than 6,700 Yazidi women taken prisoner by Islamic State in Iraq. She was held as a slave in the city of Mosul, beaten, burned with cigarettes, and raped when trying to escape. She was able to escape after her captor left the house unlocked.

# Community News

## Wyoming Becomes 45th US State to Recognize the Armenian Genocide

LARAMIE, Wyo. – In a letter dated April 21, 2017 and addressed to the Armenian National Committee of America Western Region (ANCA-WR), Wyoming Governor Matthew H. Mead has recognized the Armenian Genocide and praised the work of Armenian American grassroots.

“The atrocities of both the Armenian and Jewish Holocausts were unimaginable,” reads Governor Mead’s letter, “but it is important for all to remember – history must not repeat itself.” The letter also recalls a meeting with senior ANCA-WR staff earlier this year, when Executive Director Elen Asatryan and Community Development Coordinator Simon Maghakyan visited Cheyenne, adding that “The work of the Armenian National Committee is inspiring.” Referencing the upcoming April 23 commemoration in Denver, Governor Mead concludes his letter with, “My thoughts are with you as you gather for the Colorado State Capitol Armenian Genocide Commemoration.” The full letter is here.

“We thank the Governor of the Great State of Wyoming for standing on the right side of history and adding his voice to the ongoing need to recognize and commemorate the Armenian Genocide,” remarked ANCA-WR Chair Nora Hovsepian. “This recognition is a tribute to the memory of our ancestors and a celebration of the brave work of many Wyomingites who supported the national Near East Relief effort of building and operating 400 orphanages for over 132,000 Armenian children who survived the genocide.”

Wyoming State Sen. Anthony Bouchard remarked, “I congratulate the Governor for his courageous stance on this moral issue amid lavish anti-Armenian lobbying in Wyoming, which has included all-inclusive junkets to the dictatorship of Azerbaijan by legislators across our nation, who should know better than hobnobbing with bloody dictators that behead Christian Armenians and destroy ancient Armenian churches and Djulfa cross-stones. The Armenian Genocide is an unpunished crime that needs to be recognized and accounted for; Turkey’s ongoing denial of this grave crime, illegal blockade of Armenia and support for Azerbaijan’s genocidal policies against Armenia and Artsakh must end.”

## Menendez Introduces Resolution in US Senate To Recognize Genocide

WASHINGTON – US Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) on April 24 introduced a bipartisan resolution in the Senate to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide. The resolution was cosponsored by Senators Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), and Tom Udall (D-N.M.).

“Today, on Armenian Remembrance Day, 102 years after this tragedy took place under the Ottomans, we must call it for what it is: genocide. I believe our continued failure to do so leaves space for barbarism in our present world and I call on my Senate colleagues to correct this shameful oversight,” said Senator Menendez. “This resolution reaffirms in the strongest terms possible that we will always honor the memory of innocent Armenian men, women, and children who were killed or expelled from their homeland, and will always remember this tragedy as a lesson to always stand together against all crimes against humanity.”

see RESOLUTION, page 11



David L. Phillips speaking on April 23 at the annual Times Square commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in New York City

## Activist David Phillips Talks Turkey – and Armenia

NEW YORK – David L. Phillips has been going around the country, and, in fact, a good part of the world, speaking out against the dictatorship of Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He just published a book on this issue (see last week’s *Mirror-Spectator*), and recently has even spoken at Armenian Genocide commemorative events. He has a long history of working both in academia and in advisory positions for the US State

Department on human rights issues and Track II diplomacy, including on the Armenian Genocide.

Phillips entered this career path in part due to his family background. He said, “My family came to the US at the turn of the twentieth century from Eastern Europe as refugees. Our shtetl in Minsk was burned to the ground, and my ancestors fled and came to New York to build a new life. They set up a business which turned into a successful shirt manufacturer and clothing conglomerate [the Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation].”

Phillips recalled that “One of the things that was always a tenet in our family required giving back and remembering our humble origins. Each successive generation was involved in some kind of humanitarian endeavor. My great-grandfather founded Beth Israel Hospital in New York, my grandfather was principally involved in the School of Nursing, and my father founded the American Jewish World Service.”

Consequently, Phillips said, “I was raised with a strong conviction to do good in the world. I was the first generation not to go into the family business, so that created opportunities for me to work fulltime helping others.”

Phillips studied political science and international relations in college, but he also studied Sanskrit poetry and got to know the Dalai Lama. He worked in India with Tibetan refugees, and, he said, these contacts helped awaken his humanitarian instincts. Since then, he said, “I have been committed to helping victims of violence, human rights victims, and those displaced, throughout my career.”

He was fortunate to have the means to act independently, and declared, “I am not really the kind of personality who works well in a bureaucracy.” He was interested in working with the US government, he said, because “I always believed that the US government is a force for good in the world, and by harnessing its capabilities in service of the greater good, I thought we could accomplish things in the world.”

He was never a direct employee of the State Department, but was on various occasions given a special status as a consultant through senior people in different American administrations. Phillips worked with Ambassador Marc Grossman in the European Affairs Bureau on post-conflict issues in the Balkans, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke on Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau and Bill Burns on the Future of Iraq project, and most recently, during the

see PHILLIPS, page 8

## IWitness Launches Armenian Genocide Resource Page

LOS ANGELES – All of the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation’s educational resources about the Armenian Genocide can now be found on the IWitness website that launched on April 17, one week before the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

On the new IWitness Armenia page, educators can find 36 clips of testimony from USC Shoah Foundation’s Armenian Genocide collection, including survivors and witnesses. The clips cover the topics “Forced Marches,” “Adana & Hamidian Massacres,” “Forced Conversion,” “Resistance,” “Rescuers/Aid,” and “Genocide Denial and Memory.”

There is also a section for Armenian Genocide-related activities. Currently this includes the Information Quizzes “The Armenian Genocide,” “I Am Somebody: Identity and the Armenian Genocide” and “Women You Should Know: Aurora Mardigianian.”

The IWitness Armenia page also features a selection of AGBU WebTalks, an online video series from the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) that captures and preserves the insights and passion of engaging, inspiring, dynamic thinkers from around the world, speaking on a wide range of Armenian topics. The videos include historical analysis by scholars Raymond Kevorkian and Geoffrey Robinson, the Armenian folk trio Zulal, and journalists Laure Marchand and Guillaume Perrier.

Finally, the page includes a teacher’s guide for teaching with testimony and Connections Videos for students that can help guide teachers and students as they use the clips and activities in the classroom.

In 2010, the Armenian Film Foundation and USC Shoah Foundation signed an historic agreement to digitize, index and preserve J. Michael Hagopian’s collection of interviews with survivors and witnesses to the Armenian Genocide.

Five years later, the collection was integrated into USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive and the first interviews were made available in IWitness to educators and students worldwide. More about the collection.

The agreement paved the way for the preservation and dissemination of the largest collection of filmed interviews of survivors and witnesses of the Armenian Genocide, the first genocide of the twentieth century.

The interviews were conducted by the late Hagopian, who recorded them on 16-mm film between 1975 and 2005 for a series of documentaries.

Hagopian, who passed away in December 2010 at age 97, ultimately produced 17 films about Armenians and the Armenian Genocide. In the partnership with the institute, Hagopian agreed to turn over raw footage of nearly 400 interviews so they could be integrated into the Visual History Archive.

With the help of AFF Chairman Gerald Papazian and AFF board member Carla Garapedian, USC Shoah Foundation has been digitizing and indexing the interviews to make them searchable as testimonies in the Visual History Archive. Sixty were made available in April of 2015; the rest are in development.

The interviews were conducted in 10 countries, primarily in English and Armenian – some in rare Armenian dialects – though other interview languages include Arabic, Greek, Spanish, French, Kurdish, Turkish, German, and Russian.

The interviewees were between the ages of 8 and 29 at the time of the genocide. Geographic locations discussed in their testimonies include the following cities and towns of Anatolia (mainly Eastern Turkey): Adabazar, Eskisehir, Konia, Sivas, Kharpert, Urfa, Aintab, Marash, Malatia, Dickranagerd, Erzeroum, Van, Bitlis, Der Zor, Smyrna, Erzingan, Musa Dag, Kessab, Aleppo, see SHOAH, page 7



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# A Genocide Remembrance Event: Remembering the Past, Building the Future

By Antranig Kzirian

PHILADELPHIA – The Armenian Inter-Communal Committee of Philadelphia commemorated the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide with a cultural program at St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church on April 23. A crowd of more than 200 was present for the event.

Antranig Kzirian, chairperson of the committee, made opening remarks and was Master of Ceremonies.

Kzirian strongly encouraged those present to attend the Armenian Genocide film, “The Promise” and to take family, friends, and non-Armenians as well. He also mentioned Turkish efforts directed against the film’s success. Philadelphia Armenian Clergy then offered a special prayer in memory of the 1.5 million Armenian Saints who were lost during this heinous crime.

Allan Arpajian and Susan Arpajian Jolly then presented a discussion of their new book, *Out of My Great Sorrows*. The book is about how the genocide impacted their aunt, Mary Zakarian’s paintings. Zakarian’s mother, a Genocide survivor, strongly influenced her daughter’s psychological state and her art. The two also presented three of Zakarian’s paintings and discussed her background.

This discussion was followed by a performance of songs and poetry by students from the Armenian Sisters’ Academy.



Students from the Armenian Sisters’ Academy

Aram Hamparian, executive director of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), next spoke about how the ANCA and the Armenian Assembly of America promote Armenian interests in Washington, DC and within our local communities. He focused on the need to continuously strengthen Armenia and Artsakh through economic support, political activism, and countering anti-Armenian propaganda. Lastly, he addressed how the Armenian

National Committee has encouraged Congress to provide financial support that will help improve the Armenian Economy and its transition to an open market-based system. His presentation was very well received by attendees.

The Inter-Communal Committee was pleased to receive a letter of support from Governor

Tom Wolf of Pennsylvania, expressing his support of the event. Emily Movsesian of the Committee read the Governor’s letter to attendees.

After the program, everyone enjoyed a dessert presentation prepared by the St. Gregory’s Ladies Guild.



Alla Arpajian and Susan Arpajian Jolly

## Boston Concert Features Work by Local Armenian Woman Composer

Piano Concertino by Local Armenian Woman Composer Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee

The Ip Piano School will host its 24th Annual Concerto Concert at the Boston University Tsai Performance Center on Sunday, April 30, 2017, at 3 p.m. The concert features Concertino No. 2 Op. 113 for Piano and String Orchestra composed by local Armenian woman composer Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee. The Concertino will be performed by 11 year old Ethan Kasparian Weisman.



To purchase tickets for the 24th Annual Concerto Concert, please call 617-542-9129 or e-mail

[Winnie@ippianoschool.com](mailto:Winnie@ippianoschool.com). General admission is \$20 and there is free parking at the rear of the Tsai Performance Center.

## St. James Men’s Club Program on May 1 to Feature Dental Care Providers in Karabakh

WATERTOWN – Dr. Berdj Kiladjian, Dr. Arnold Weiss, Dr. George Vosgerichian, and Dr. Alex Bejian will speak on Monday, May 1, at St. James Armenian Church Men’s Club dinner meeting at the St. James Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center in Watertown, MA. Their presentation, “Hand in Hand - Medical Benevolent Non-Governmental Organization,” will discuss the work that several local Armenian dentists are doing to improve dental care in Karabakh.

This St. James Men’s Club dinner meeting will begin with a social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and a losh kebab and kheyma dinner at 7 p.m. The cost is \$15 per person. The location is St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St. All, including women, are welcome.

### Longwood Dental Group Offers Free Care on May 13

BROOKLINE, Mass. – Dr. Berdj Kiladjian will host a “Dentistry from the Heart” event at Longwood Dental Group, 1842 Beacon St., once again this year on Saturday, May 13.

Members of Longwood Dental Group includ-



Dr. Berdj Kiladjian works on a patient.

ing general dentists, specialist dentists, hygienists and dental assistants generously donate their time for this Free Dentistry Event. Those in need, 18 years and older, may receive an extraction, filling or cleaning. Patients will be seen on a first come first served basis.

Sign up begins at 7:30 a.m.

## IWitness Launches Armenian Genocide Resource Page

SHOAH, from page 6

Shabin Karahisar, Guren, Sepastia, Banderma, Yozgat, Everek, Hadjin, Zeitoun, Amassia, and Kutahya.

The Armenian Film Foundation was established in 1979 as a non-profit, educational, and cultural organization dedicated to the documentation in motion pictures of Armenian heritage and life. Its goals are to inspire pride in and to create worldwide recognition of the Armenian people and their contributions, and to preserve the visual and personal histories of survivors and witnesses of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

Born in 1913 to an Armenian family in Kharpert-Mezreh, Hagopian was a genocide survivor who dedicated his life to the visual documentation of the Turkish extermination of up to 1.5 million Armenians in 1915. In all, his work encompassed nearly 400 interviews of survivors and witnesses of the Armenian Genocide and 40 years of research.

He wrote, directed, and produced more than 70 educational and documentary films, which collectively have won over 160 national and international awards, including two Emmy nom-

inations for the writing and production of “The Forgotten Genocide,” the first full-length feature film on the Armenian Genocide. “Germany and the Secret Genocide” received the coveted First Place Golden Camera Award in the History Category from the 2004 US International Film and Video Festival, the largest festival of its kind. “The River Ran Red” was voted Best International Historical Documentary by the New York International Film & Video Festival in 2009, and it won second place in the History and Biography categories at the 2009 U.S. International Film and Video Festival. Several of Hagopian’s films were produced under grants from the U.S. Office of Education and the Ethnic Heritage Program, the MacArthur Foundation, California Endowment for the Humanities, and California State Department of Education.

Hagopian himself was the recipient of numerous honors, including Jewish World Watch’s “I Witness” Award for dedicating his professional life to chronicling the history of the Armenian people and commemorating victims of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian National Committee honored him as Man of the Year in 2000.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Activist David Phillips Talks Turkey – and Armenia

PHILLIPS, from page 6

Obama administration, with the South and Central Asia Bureau on post-conflict reconciliation issues in Sri Lanka.

Phillips said that he only would work with the government when he felt it was consonant with his principles, and in fact resigned in protest after the Iraq post-war fiasco when his concerns about stabilizing the country were ignored. Phillips stressed: "I am always going to do what I think is right, and if someone in the US government asked me to do something that was inconsistent with my beliefs or values I simply would not execute those instructions."

He has worked with both Republican and Democratic administrations, and defines himself as a "principled pragmatist," not a partisan. Yet in some ways he does seem to be an optimist concerning clashes between state interests and moral principles, as when he declared: "I think that fostering human rights, promoting freedom and democracy and open markets are good for humankind and advance US interests. I don't think there is any separation between those principles and US interests and global interests."

As far as US relations with Turkey are concerned, Phillips declares that despite Turkey's being a "serial violator of human rights" under past governments, "there was always a hope that Turkey would change for the better, that the US-Turkey relationship could harness Turkey as a force for good." Nevertheless, Phillips says that Turkey only "went through the motions of being friendly to US interests," and "was always clever in portraying itself as an indispensable partner." However, he declares, "it was not until the elections of 2002 and the rise of Islamism under the AKP [Justice and Development Party] that Turkey's true colors were fully revealed."

In turn, changes in Turkish politics are affecting the US relationship with Turkey. Phillips said, "I think both in Congress and the US government there was a fundamental shift about Turkey after [the 2013 protests in] Gezi Park. ... Increasingly there is a critical mass of truth tellers who are speaking truth to power." Phillips classifies himself as in the vanguard of that group, declaring, "I am saying things that everybody knows are true but they haven't said it themselves."

He has been writing extremely critically of Turkey over the past few years. In a September 2014 paper prepared by his Columbia research program, Phillips wrote of "allegations" of Turkey-ISIS ties. When asked why he used the

word "allegations" he replied, "The report is not based on primary sources. ... We also make clear in the report that we are documenting credible secondary sources, presenting that information and leaving it to the reader to make conclusions. It is abundantly clear that those are not allegations, they are revelations. But for the purpose of presenting the data, I did not want to prejudge the readers' reactions."

Phillips sees some vital issues forthcoming in the US-Turkey relationship involving red lines drawn by Erdogan. The first is the latter's demand for the extradition of Fethullah Gulen. Phillips like many others said, "That is not a political decision. It is a legal decision. I don't think there is legal justification for it. Even if the Trump Administration decides to give away Gulen it still has to be determined by a court of law, and Gulen will have the right to appeal. I am sure he has a lot to say about Erdogan which Erdogan does not want said before a judge."

The other red line concerns US support for Syrian Kurds during the campaign against ISIS. Phillips said, "After the Turkish referendum I expect we will announce our close cooperation with the YGP [People's Protection Units of the Syrian Kurds] including the provision of heavy and offensive weapons. Of course, the goal is to end Syria's war."

Phillips is confident that the US will promote a decentralized Syria including a Kurdish autonomous zone which Turkey will oppose. He said, "We all know what Syria will look like in the future. Over Turkey's objections power will be decentralized from Damascus. There may be autonomy for Rojava which would include a contiguous territory in the provinces of Kobani, Afrin and Jezira. Erdogan will strongly object but the only way you can achieve sustainable peace in Syria is to decentralize and to devolve power."

As far as Turkey's own Kurds are concerned, Phillips said that integration into Euro-Atlantic structures previously might have ameliorated their condition, but such integration seems unlikely now. He said that "because Erdogan has become a serial abuser of Kurds in Turkey, their hope of finding remedy through European integration is increasingly unlikely, and the Kurds in Turkey may in turn seek autonomy or independence." However, when asked whether the US would support that movement, he replied, "Not under current conditions. Turkey would have to really go into the tank before the US would abrogate relations. There will be and should be a consistent effort to bring Turkey

back into the tent."

Phillips exclaimed that despite Erdogan's problematic nature, "The important point is that Erdogan is not Turkey. Turkey is a deeply divided society. Even though it is hard to envision today, there will be a period post-Erdogan. When we reach that point the US can revive its constructive relations with Turkey based on the values that the two countries share."

The situation between Israel and Turkey has changed for the negative just as in the case of the US. Phillips says that though Israeli-Turkish relations have been patched up somewhat, "the reconciliation between the Israeli and Turkish governments is purely transactional. It is a shallow reconciliation based on interests rather than affinities."

When asked whether knowing what he knows now about Turkish president Erdogan he would have run the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC, 2001-2004) differently, he replied that when it was conceived and implemented "conditions in Turkey were different. There was an opportunity for dialogue and reconciliation based on truth-telling around the Armenian Genocide." Today, he said, Turkish civil society cannot operate freely due to the oppressive government.

Phillips said that he has been using the word genocide to describe the events of World War I concerning the Armenians consistently after the analysis of the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) study was issued, and added, "I always identify with the victim, and in the case of the Armenian Genocide, the Armenians were victimized, up to 1.5 million were killed. Mediation only works when it is founded on truth and based on reality."

While he adheres to the ICTJ interpretation that the United Nations Genocide Convention cannot be applied retroactively to seek reparations, he said that "there are other international legal instruments that could be used for this purpose."

As far as efforts at new intergovernmental dialogue are concerned, he added, "I am not sure that at an official level there is much room today for Turkey and Armenia to have any constructive interaction. Turkey's idea of reconciliation today is to humiliate and subordinate Armenians and Armenia and to put its boot on

the neck of Armenians, until they relinquish their campaign to gain greater global recognition of the genocide."

Phillips squarely placed the failure of the Protocols of 2009 to normalize official relations between the two countries on Turkey, saying "The protocols did not go forward simply because Erdogan did not submit them to the Parliament for ratification. And that raises questions about his sincerity towards Armenia in general."

He criticized the stance of the current Turkish regime concerning the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, saying, "The Erdogan government is insidiously trying to control the election of a new Armenian Church patriarch. There had been recent efforts towards objective education of the 1000-year history of Armenians in Turkey, but the Erdogan government is undermining that education. Historically, the Armenian Church owned thousands of institutions and places of religious worship. I don't know the exact number but I think the total is now down to about 50 or less."

Phillips calls for concrete US action on a number of issues pertaining to Armenians. He said, "The US Congress should recognize the Armenian Genocide, and just as Ronald Reagan did in 1981, the US government should do the same today. That would help level the playing field and create better conditions for reconciliation despite the foreseeable response of Turkey, as part of its denial campaign."

As far as the Karabakh issue goes, "More effort should be made by the US through the Minsk Group to try to mediate an end to the conflict, there should be international monitors to verify actual conditions on the ground, and any effort to expand Turkey's role in the mediation should be shot down because Turkey is not an objective party, it is a party to the conflict... A sustainable peace can be achieved by recognizing conditions as they are and enshrining those conditions in international agreements."

Phillips concluded: "To the Armenian people never again means something because of their experience as victims of the Genocide. We do not want to see another genocide of Karabakh Armenians by an aggressive government in Azerbaijan."

## Three Students Graduate from St. Nersess

ARMONK, N.Y. – St. Nersess Armenian Seminary invites the public to A Day of Faith, Hope, Love and Service on Saturday, May 20, to help celebrate the conclusion of its academic year. The highlight of the event will be the 2017 Graduation Ceremony in the newly consecrated

Eric Vozzy, will follow at 7pm. Guests will move into a festive tent to witness the seminarians receive their diplomas from St. Nersess Seminary.

After the graduation, attendees will enjoy a celebratory reception at 7:30 p.m. where they



Levon Asdourian, Dr. Andre Markarian and Deacon Eric Vozzy

St. Hagop Chapel.

The day will commence at 4:30 p.m. with Divine Liturgy followed by the diaconate ordination of seminarian Levon Asdourian, the first ordination on the new seminary campus. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church (Eastern) and President of the St. Nersess Board of Directors, will officiate at the ordination as well as at the consecration of a new baptismal font in the chapel.

The graduation, honoring students Levon Asdourian, Dr. Andre Markarian, and Deacon

can meet the graduates, hear from seminary leaders, and enjoy a bountiful spread of Armenian delicacies. During the Evening Under the Stars portion of the reception, guests will have an opportunity to offer their financial support to the seminary. A special performance by the AGBU Antranig Dance Ensemble will captivate and inspire all those in attendance.

The event is free and open to all. Guests are invited to attend a segment or the entire evening! To RSVP, email [info@stnersess.edu](mailto:info@stnersess.edu) by May 11.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

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# Marchers Gather to Commemorate 102nd Anniversary of Armenian Genocide

By Melissa Etehad

LOS ANGELES (Los Angeles Times) – As they stood underneath a tree to shield their faces from the sun, John gripped an Armenian flag and wore a black shirt with a message calling for justice.

“I enjoy being out here because it shows the world that people are recognizing the Armenian genocide,” the boy said.

They were among tens of thousands of protesters who marched to the Turkish consulate on Wilshire Boulevard on Monday afternoon to commemorate the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

As the sea of protesters began arriving outside the Turkish consulate, the energy grew.

“Fight, fight till the end,” some shouted in Armenian.

“Shame on Turkey,” others said.

Young children sat atop their parents’ shoulders as they listened to speeches from California Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) and L.A. Unified President Steve Zimmer.

People from across generations showed up, many noting that this year’s protest felt more emotional than previous years because of the political debate over immigration.

Throughout the day some called for reparations, while others sought acknowledgment that a crime was committed. The Turkish government disputes that a genocide took place.

“Until justice is served we will continue marching,” said Nora Hovsepian, chair of the Western Region of the Armenian National Committee of America.

The peaceful demonstration was briefly disrupted when participants were confronted by a small group of counter-protesters who came holding a Turkish flag.

Five people were arrested by late afternoon, the Los Angeles Police Department said.

Earlier Monday, President Trump made headlines when he, like his predecessors in the White House, declined to call the mass killings of Armenians a genocide.

“At a time when Christians and minority communities continue to be in imminent danger and under constant attack, the president’s



Thousands gathered in front of the embassy with American and Armenian flags.

asking Congress to formally recognize the genocide.

And in 2015, Glendale Unified became the first school district in the country to dedicate a day in remembrance of the Armenian genocide.

“We are very proud of our state for taking this position and we will continue to work with our elected officials,” Hovsepian said.

For 77-year-old Peter Gebeshian, commemorating the Armenian genocide is a deeply personal moment – one that he doesn’t try to politicize.

His father fled what is now Turkey in 1915, eventually settling in Egypt. The retired aerospace mechanic said his father rarely spoke of the atrocities he faced.

Gebeshian now participates in the Armenian genocide march every year with his son, also named Peter Gebeshian.

“Coming here with my father every year helps build bridges across generations,” the 42-

meditated and were a part of a messy global upheaval during World War I.

“Over 100 years ago, the Ottoman Empire undertook a brutal campaign of murder, rape and displacement against the Armenian people that took the lives of 1.5 million men, women and children in the first genocide of the 20th century,” Schiff said in a statement.

“Genocide is not a historic relic – even today hundreds of thousands of religious minorities face existential threat from ISIS in

Syria and Iraq. It is therefore all the more pressing that the Congress recognize the historical fact of the Armenian genocide and stand against modern-day genocide and crimes against humanity.”

Anna Nenedzhyan, who brought her children to Monday’s march, said she hopes that the tragedy of their familial past can be a lesson in empathy and compassion.

“This history is part of [our family] and I want future generations to know about it,” she said.



Marchers walk towards the Turkish Consulate on Wilshire Boulevard.

statement fails to stand up for human rights,” Armenian Assembly co-chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian said in a statement.

Experts say part of the reason the White House has historically avoided labeling the killings as a genocide is because of the United States’ close alliance with Turkey – a strategic partner in the fight against the militant group Islamic State.

California, however, has been at the forefront of formally recognizing the event as a genocide and asking Congress to condemn it as such.

Schiff and U.S. Rep. Dave Trott (R-Michigan) introduced a resolution last month

year-old English teacher at Glendale High School said.

He feels thankful, he added, to live in a community that allows him to embrace his culture.

Southern California – particularly Los Angeles County – is home to the largest Armenian community outside Armenia. According to U.S. census data, more than 200,000 people of Armenian descent live in the Los Angeles area.

Though many factors played a role in the 1915 genocide that killed 1.5 million Armenians, historians typically cite the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as the main factor.

Turkey has said the killings were not pre-



Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York

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# Truth, Justice and Remembrance Prevail In Times Square

By Taleen Babayan

NEW YORK – The vow to Keep the Promise was in full effect on Sunday, April 23 as an impressive number gathered in Times Square to remember the 1.5 million martyrs and pay homage to their legacy, proving that the Armenian Genocide commemorations have only gained momentum since the centennial.

The relevant and inspiring program, organized by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan since 1985, once again attracted thousands of supporters who waved tricolor flags of Armenia and Artsakh in the heart of New York City as the past was remembered and a renewed effort was made to strengthen the Armenian Diaspora and the homeland.

Steadfast supporters of the Armenian Genocide were once again in attendance to speak, particularly committed elected officials, including Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), who

genocide was over 100 years ago, violence is still being used against the Armenian people.

“Continue your efforts,” urged Pallone. “You being here today helps with genocide recognition and we as a people must speak out against genocide wherever it occurs.”

A fellow member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian issues, Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) promised to “confront a stubborn resistance.”

She said all nations have a responsibility to recognize the systemic extermination of the Armenians and that until the resolution is passed to recognize the Armenian Genocide in the US, “we will not stop.”

Appearing every year without fail, Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), who is the current Senate Minority Leader, pledged to “stand with all of you in acknowledging the Armenian Genocide and nothing less.”

He praised the energy and collective spirit of Armenians a century after the massacres and hailed the production of the major motion pic-

ALBIN LOHRJONES PHOTO



Hovnanian Armenian Day School students singing the Armenian national anthem

acknowledged the accomplishments of the Armenian Diaspora in championing genocide recognition around the world.

“Recognition will happen if all of you continue to march, write letters and take action,” said Pallone, founder of the Congressional Caucus of Armenian Issues, who recently introduced a new resolution for the US Congress to recognize the genocide.

Pallone remarked that conflict in Armenia and Artsakh is ongoing, recognizing the war there last year and warned that although the

ture, “The Promise,” that “finally shines a light on this story and puts it in the mainstream for all to see.”

Honoring the memory of his late friend Sam Azadian, founder of the Armenian Genocide Commemoration in Times Square, Schumer said he attends the commemoration every year “because I believe it is our duty to speak out for the innocent victims of the Armenian Genocide.”

“The Armenian Genocide was the first Holocaust of the 20th century but not the last,”

ALBIN LOHRJONES PHOTO



Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Steven Kradjian with Daughters of Vartan Grand Matron Sona Manuelian with MMA champion Albert Ghazaryan, his coach Hayk Ghukasyan, Olympic wrestler Mihran Arutyunyan and Grand Vice Commander Hunan Arshakian



The crowd at Times Square

said Schumer. “These events are a stain on humanity and I stand with all of you today to remember the pain of the past.”

David Phillips, who worked towards reconciliation with Armenia and Turkey as former chair of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC), said he always believed that “hard problems can be solved through hard dialogue.”

“But dialogue is impossible if one side wants to humiliate the other,” said Phillips, noting the efforts of Armenia’s President Serzh Sargsyan towards reconciliation, while Turkey’s then Prime Minister Recep Erdogan reneged on their discussions.

“It takes two to talk,” said Phillips, who is currently the director of the Peace-building and Rights Program at Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights. “But Erdogan is not reconciliatory.”

He called for Washington to investigate Erdogan for war crimes “to lay the groundwork for accountability.”

“Your work and presence here today is so important,” said Phillips. “For the Armenians today in Nagorno Karabakh, for the Yazidis in Iraq and for all who suffer from crimes against humanity.”

Urging the next generation to take genocide recognition into their own hands, celebrity attorney Mark Geragos told the thousands of young people at the commemoration to “go outside the political process to create a movement to never forget.”

“If you as the next generation don’t keep the promise, we are doomed to repeat it.”

Geragos remarked that Turkey spends millions of dollars to “cover up and perpetuate a lie” and the following generations need to do their part to continue the fight for justice and remembrance.

Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Steven Kradjian and Daughters of Vartan Grand Matron Sona Manuelian recognized and honored Olympic wrestler Mihran Arutyunyan and MMA champion Albert Ghazaryan, along with their coach Hayk Ghukasyan with special

Knights of Vartan medals for their accomplishments in sports.

Dr. Rachel Goshgarian, professor of history at Lafayette College, and Armen McOmer, New Jersey attorney, served as MCs for the program.

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian



Attorney Mark Geragos

Apostolic Church of America, gave the invocation and Very Rev. Vazken Karayan, pastor of Holy Cross Armenian Church, representing Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), offered the benediction. Other clergy in attendance included Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, vicar general of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America.

The winners of this year’s Knights of Vartan Essay Contest were announced at the program: Raffi Salbashian, first place, Stephan Havatian, second place, and Samantha Khorozian, third place.

The Hovnanian Armenian Day School students sang the national anthems of the United States and Armenia, as well as God Bless America.

## Menendez Introduces Resolution in US Senate to Recognize Genocide

RESOLUTION, from page 6

Over the course of eight years, the Ottoman Empire deported nearly 2,000,000 Armenians from their homeland, where they had existed for 2,500 years. Of that population, 1,500,000 men, women, and children were killed. In 1915, England, France and Russia jointly condemned this “crime against humanity,” the first ever such charge against another government.

“We want to thank Senator Menendez and his Senate colleagues for introducing legislation calling for an end to US complicity in Turkey’s denials,” said Aram Hamparian, Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA). “It’s evident, as the authors of this bipartisan resolution clearly articulate, that any meaningful improvement in Armenian-Turkish relations will require that the Turkish government first acknowledge the facts and ongoing consequences of the Armenian Genocide and then accept a just and comprehensive international resolution of this crime against humanity.”

“We deeply appreciate Senator Menendez’s commitment to affirming America’s proud chapter in helping to save the Armenian people during the first genocide of the twentieth century,” stated Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “As we remember the Armenian Genocide today, I am reminded that Christians and other minorities in the Middle East and elsewhere remain at risk. Their plight obligates us to redouble our efforts to prevent further atrocities and restore respect for human rights everywhere.”

# Arts & Living

## Adrienne Alexanian To Present *Forced Into Genocide* at ALMA Talk

WATERTOWN – Adrienne Alexanian will present her father Yervant Edward Alexanian's memoir, *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*, on May 18, at 7:30 p.m., at the Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown. The program is sponsored by the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian Cultural Foundation, the Armenian General Benevolent Union New England District, the Armenian Museum of America, Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

*Forced into Genocide* was published this year by Transaction Publishers and features an introduction by Prof. Sergio LaPorta of Fresno State and a foreword by renowned genocide expert Prof. Israel Charny. Adrienne Alexanian, who served as the editor of her father's previously untranslated and unpublished memoir, is a 2010 recipient of the Ellis Island Medal and an educator. *Forced into Genocide* will be available for purchase the night of the program.

This memoir recalls Yervant Alexanian's death-defying experiences in the center of the Armenian Genocide. Born in Sivas (Sebastia),

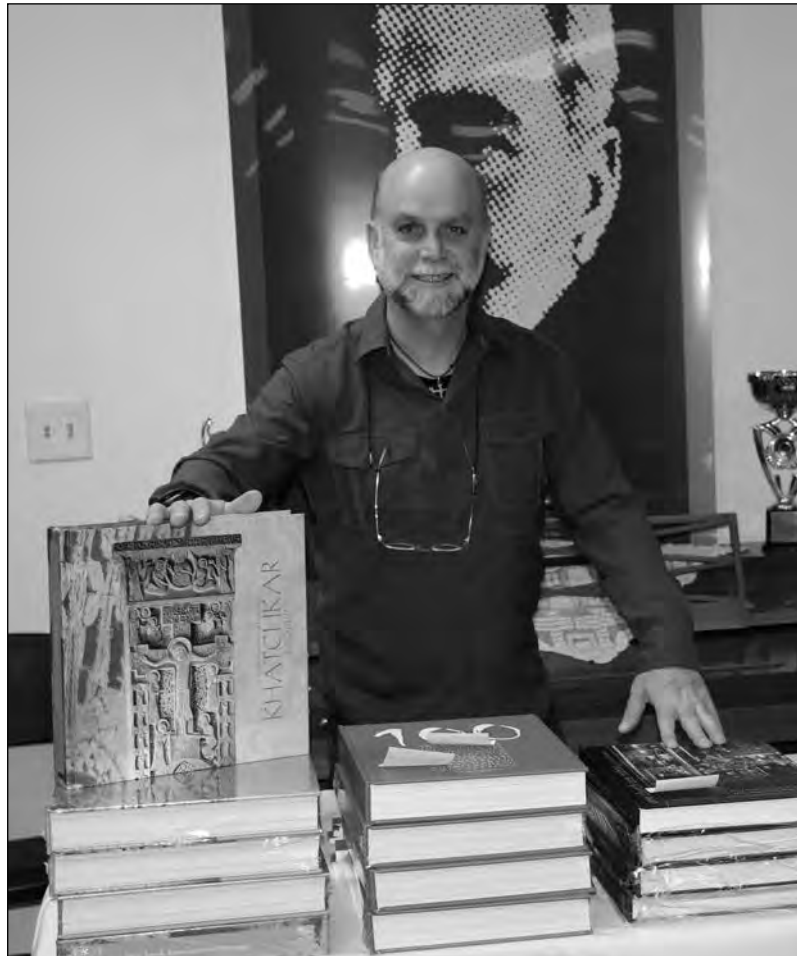
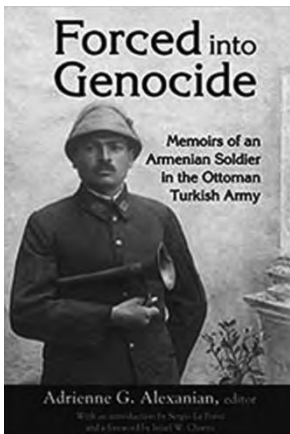
Yervant Alexanian survived the Hamidian Massacres of the 1890s. Like other Armenians of his generation, he was an eyewitness to the massacre and dislocation of his family and fellow countrymen in Ottoman Turkey during World War I. Alexanian was conscripted into the Turkish army – but unlike others so conscripted, he survived.

Alexanian was forced to become an onlooker while he watched the atrocities unfold. His story of resourceful action and fateful turns is a suspenseful "insider's account" of a Genocide survivor. From his singular position, Alexanian was able to document the tragedy of his people in his journals and diaries, but he also offers us a behind-the-scenes look into the motivations and actions of Turkish military officials as they committed the atrocities. His story continues after the war as we follow the trail of his journey through Europe and finally to America, where he found solace and was able to start anew with fellow survivors.

No comparable account exists in the literature of the Armenian Genocide. This edition, translated from Alexanian's handwritten Armenian-language chronicle, includes never-before-seen documents and photos that the author preserved. Through his eyes we relive the astonishing cruelty of the Genocide's perpetrators – but also rare, unexpected acts of humanity between victim and oppressor.

Prof. Taner Akçam writes of *Forced into Genocide* that it "reading about Yervant's story is an inescapable part of understanding the another kind of suffering: suffering of survivors." Dr. Vartan Gregorian states that the book "lovingly memorializes the fate of a family and a community, and adds yet another incredible chapter to the history of the Genocide. This book is moving, uplifting, and richly detailed, and is a gift to the Armenian community and, indeed, humanity."

Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor



Hrair "Hawk" Khatcherian with copies of his new book

## TCA Hosts Debut Presentation of Khatchkar

ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J. – Acclaimed photographer Hrair "Hawk" Khatcherian's new book *Khatchkar* made its United States debut in an event hosted by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York on Friday, March 3 at the TCA Center in Englewood Cliffs.

Khatcherian spoke about the images featured in *Khatchkar*, his 14th publication, which includes stunning shots of *khatchkars* in Armenia, Artsakh, Western Armenia and Cilicia. Khatcherian made special trips to Jerusalem and to the Hermitage Museum in Russia to photograph a *khatchkar* they have on exhibit from Nakhichevan (Old Julfa), where Armenians once created 10,000 *khatchkars*.



He also made visits to the Louvre Museum in Paris, the United Nations and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City to capture the *khatchkars* on display.

The glossy, high quality book, numbering 516 pages, was created over the course of 25 years. Khatcherian's first shots of *khatchkars* were taken in Artsakh in 1992 when he was there photographing the war.

Following an introduction by Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York Chair Hilda Hartounian, who noted this event was the first of the season dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the TCA's founding in Beirut, a book signing and a question-and-answer session followed the presentation.

A busy season filled with culturally rich activities lies ahead for the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York. A piano trio concert titled "The Armenian Spirit" featuring renowned artists Ani Kalayjian on cello, Ani Kavafian on violin and Orion Weiss on piano will be performed on Sunday, May 21st at the Alliance Francaise's Florence Gould Hall.

A 70th anniversary banquet will take place on Saturday, November 18, to celebrate 70 years of cultural excellence since the Tekeyan Cultural Association's establishment in Beirut, Lebanon in 1947. Named after the prolific poet Vahan Tekeyan, the organization's mission is to preserve the Armenian culture and heritage in the Diaspora and promote cultural, spiritual and educational ties with Armenia.



Hrair "Hawk" Khatcherian with members of the Tekeyan Cultural Association committee

## Julia and the Zerounian Ensemble Hold Annual Spring Concert

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – The song-stylist Julia and the Zerounian Ensemble return on May 10 at 7:30 p.m. to the Regattabar for a unique cabaret evening of songs from around the world. According to the *Boston Globe*, "The soulful vocalist is a one woman United Nations of Cabaret," singing French, Italian, Armenian, Russian, Persian, Yiddish and Latin tunes in addition to American Songbook classics, with her husband pianist Sarkis Zerounian leading the versatile and talented ensemble of musicians feature the gifted and unique Jordanian violinist, originally from Iraq, Layth Sidiq, talented guitarist from Brazil Eduardo Mercuri, the seasoned Klezmer music specialist Grant Smith on percussion and from Argentina, Berklee College of Music professor Fernando Huergo on bass.

Julia Zerounian began her singing and acting career at an early age in Armenia, later performing with various professional ensembles and theatrical groups throughout the former Soviet Union. Julia moved to Boston in 1972 after marrying Sarkis Zerounian (who also happens to be a highly regarded structural engineer with numerous award winning projects) whom she met when he was doing graduate studies in Armenian music at the Komitas Conservatory in Yerevan. Since then Julia per-



Julia Zerounian

forming with her husband has become well-known to audiences as a great interpreter of international and contemporary songs performing in many cities in the United States and Canada.

The combination of Julia's soulful, passionate singing and mastery of all the different musical styles has not only gained a large and loyal following, but garnered rave reviews from prominent musicians and music critics as well as her loyal fans. Alexander Korsantia, International prize winning concert pianist, and music professor commented after one of Julia's concerts: "Charming adorable, enchanting and delightful – those are the key impressions after attending the concert of the versatile singer Julia and the Zerounian ensemble... it is a musical trip to different countries, cultures and traditions, revealing the most sensitive, beautiful and sentimentally appealing qualities in each song." Other audience reactions and comments: "Thank you so much for the most wonderful and inspiring, romantic concert. Your concert is always a special evening in the Boston cultural life." - "...how very much we enjoyed your concert. It was one of those evening that you wanted to go on forever. Thank you for sharing your voice and music with us. You bring much happiness and inspiration to your audience"

For reservations, contact [www.regattabar-jazz.com](http://www.regattabar-jazz.com) or email: [sarkisz@verizon.net](mailto:sarkisz@verizon.net)



ARTS & LIVING

# Microcapsule of History the Size of a Postcard

By Arto Manoukian

MONTREAL – The granddaughter of an Armenian family which survived the Genocide recently came across a box of memorabilia from a survivor grandfather.

Mary Alice Selyian is the granddaughter of Megerditch Selyian, then of Boston, who received a postcard from his brother, Haroutyoun Selyian of Ismid, Turkey (Izmit, a city in Turkey, located in the Sea of Marmara, about 100 kilometers east of Istanbul).

On one side of this postcard, there was the image of a young woman sitting among ruins. This picture was familiar. It was an allegorical representation of the city of Ani, “Ani Kaghak Nesder Goula” (The city of Ani has sat down and is crying). On the back of this card there were printed words in various languages: French, *Liberté, Égalité, Justice, Fraternité*, repeated in Arabic and Armenian. Expressions in Armenian meaning Open letter- Long Live the Constitution in Armenian and Arabic letters which were used at the time in Ottoman Turkey, are also remarkable for that tumultuous period. “Long Live the Constitution” was there as a slogan of solidarity for the constitution that was to be the protector of minorities’ rights; a message printed on a postcard printed/sold in Turkey and sent all around the world.

On its back, the postcard had a handwritten message in Armenian by Haroutyoun to his brother Megerdich Selyian. He talks about the formation of dark clouds over Turkey and discourages the return of his brother. He also mentions the existence of external and internal wolf packs presenting a threat to the *Giaours* (meaning “infidel”, an offensive term, a slur, historically used in the Ottoman Empire for Christian and Armenians).



In succinct words, Haroutioun was communicating to his brother the social turmoil in their country which was happening in the aftermath of the New Political Leadership. Was it a coincidence that six months after this postcard was written, the Massacres of Adana started in the Week of Holy Easter- April 1909. Imagine for a moment, that this simple postcard of Haroutyoun is considered a vivid proof of the sad turn of events more than a century ago.

The historical influence of this arguably postcard urges us to ask imperative questions. How many of such proofs are kept hidden in our vaults? How many of them are lost forever? How many will soon be inadvertently lost? or How many of such proofs are falling in Turkish hands, to be obliterated and to be destroyed?

I urge the readers of this article, to make an effort in preserving such patrimony from oblivion. Dig them out, digitalize them, write the

story and attach it to the relic and finally make them public, so that future generations become aware of our history.

For their preservation, such documents, photos, cards, diplomas, contracts, deeds, etc. are to be donated to institutions which are devoted in preserving them for posterity. While you keep the digital versions for your family, you should send the originals to institutions such as the Genocide museum in Yerevan or to Project SAVE in Boston.



(PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARY ALICE SELYIAN, GRANDDAUGHTER OF MEGERDITCH)



Haroutyoun (left), Megerditch (right) and Megerditch's son Yervant Edward, centre (born 1913, five years after the date of the postcard)

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## Imagine Armenia Forum in Boston

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – On May 20, for the first time in Boston, Repat Armenia Foundation, in cooperation with Armenian Business Network will host “Imagine Armenia” forum to share reasons and best ways to get engaged with Armenia.

During the forum the Boston-based Armenian community will have the opportunity to learn about the experiences of different organizations/businesses, who have succeeded in Armenia. Founders of these companies will share their tips for a strong start, vision of progress, also volunteer and professional opportunities for the youth to work and gain experience while they contribute to Armenia’s development.

The keynote speaker of the forum will be Noubar Afeyan, who will address the importance of getting engaged with Armenia.

The forum will have two panel discussions. The first panel is named “Because We Did,” which will be about businesses, education, social initiatives and professional repatriation in Armenia.

The moderator will be Avetik Chalabyan and the speakers/organizations are the following:

- Raffi Doudaklian - Tufenkian Foundation
- Ani Sarkissian - ONEArmenia
- Raffi Kassarian - Monitis / Repat Armenia
- Vartan Marshlyan - Repat Armenia
- Magda Markosyan - MAROG Creative Agency
- Zack Armen - Children of Armenia Fund
- Jeanmarie Papelian - Armenia Tree Project
- The second panel is for young professionals to get involved with Armenia. The moderator will be Vartan Marshlyan with speakers:
- Teny Avakian - Teach For Armenia
- Linda Yepoyan - Birthright Armenia/Armenian Volunteer Corps
- Arina Zohrabian - American University of Armenia
- Araz Chiloyan - Birthright Volunteer / HDIF Volunteer
- Tatev Babayan - Repat Armenia
- Terez Sarkisyan - DEPOP Institute for Governance/ Birthright Volunteer
- Aimee Keushguerian - Keush Wines
- The event will take place at MIT, 77 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA.
- For more information contact [repattarmenia.org](http://repattarmenia.org) and register.

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# One Karsh Heads Back to Ottawa, Courtesy of Armenia

By Jennifer Campbell

OTTAWA, Canada – The capital will soon receive a sculpture of another Ottawa icon – this time, Yusef Karsh. A bronze and granite likeness of the beloved Armenian-Canadian photographer, who has been called one of the great portrait artists of the 20th century, will be unveiled in June, at its permanent location in front of the Château Laurier hotel.

The project came about shortly after Armenian Ambassador Armen Yeganian and his wife, Maria, arrived in Ottawa more than five years ago.

“When we arrived in Ottawa, we met Estrellita Karsh, the widow of Youssef Karsh,” Yeganian said. “And, of course, we were familiar with the work of this famous photographer so we had a very nice visit over lunch, then she showed us the suite at the Château Laurier, where they lived for 18 years.”

After the lunch, Yeganian and his wife were chatting about Karsh, who died in 2002, and his legacy and decided he provided a nice bridge between the two cultures.

“From that moment, we thought it would be nice to have something that reminds people about Yusef Karsh in the nation’s capital,” the ambassador said. “He is beloved, everyone knows him, especially in Ottawa. In the Speaker’s office on Parliament Hill, there’s Karsh’s por-

trait of Winston Churchill, so it’s all here, but there’s nothing to commemorate him.”

Maria Yeganian suggested pursuing the idea of having a statue of Karsh somewhere in the city. About two and a half years ago, the envoys started discussing the idea with the Karsh Foundation, Château Laurier employees and officials from Heritage Canada and the National Capital Commission. The NCC owns the land where they proposed to put the work.

“That’s when the work started and it intensified a year ago because we wanted to leave a gift from the grateful Armenian people to the people of Canada on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Canada, and on the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Armenia.

The sculpture is a likeness of the artist who is holding his large-format square camera in hand while the stand for it is in the shape of a tripod. Armenian-Canadian sculptor and artist Megerditch Tarakdjian, whose work appears at the Armenian embassy, donated his time and the materials for the project and the ambassador headed up a fundraising team that secured donations from private sponsors and public organizations.

“He was a big man, and I admired him, and when I read his biography, I was even more impressed,” Tarakdjian said. “He was a big person with a big heart and pride for Canadians and the Armenian community here, too. When they approached me and asked me if I could work on this,

I said ‘Of course.’”

Tarakdjian is a family physician in Montreal by day, but he works a four-day week and saves Friday and the weekend for his art. Regarding his generous donation of the Karsh statue, he said: “I think we have to give back to the community.”

The ambassador expressed similar thoughts.

“We have such good relations with Canada,” Yeganian said. “Canada was such a big protector of human rights and it recognized the genocide on so many occasions and our countries have great relations within the Francophonie. So this is a little token of appreciation – a gesture – from the Armenian people to the people of Canada; it’s from people to people.”

Yeganian said he had no problem convincing officials at the federal level that this was an important addition to Ottawa’s spate of statues, nor was it difficult to secure the highly desirable location. “Everybody agreed it was something that was missing,” he said. “It takes time for all the permissions, but it was a good experience overall.”

The ambassador’s posting in Canada will soon be over, but he expects to be here to see the statue unveiled in June.

(Jennifer Campbell, a New Brunswick native, is the editor of *Diplomat* magazine (diplomatonline.com). She lives in downtown Ottawa with one husband, two cats and more than 100 works of art.)

## Boston Concert Features Work by Local Composer Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee

BOSTON – The Ip Piano School will host its 24th Annual Concerto Concert at the Boston University Tsai Performance Center on Sunday, April 30, at 3 p.m. The concert will be led by Chilean-born conductor, Gonzalo Farias, and will feature *Concertino No. 2 Op. 113* for piano and string orchestra composed by local Armenian woman composer Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee. The *Concertino* will be performed by 11-year-old Ethan Kasparian Weisman.

A native of Massachusetts, Goolkasian Rahbee began her musical training as a pianist, studying both at Juilliard and the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. She later studied in Boston with Lily Dumont, Russell Sherman and Veronica Jochum.

Goolkasian Rahbee began focusing on composing at the age of 40 and has produced a significant body of works for piano solo, orchestra, instrumental ensembles, percussion and voice. Her music (including this *Concertino*)



Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee

reflects influences of Armenian folk music. Goolkasian Rahbee’s works have been performed in Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Russia, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia and throughout the US.

To purchase tickets for the 24th Annual Concerto Concert, e-mail Winnie@ippianoschool.com. General admission is \$20 and there is free parking at the rear of the Tsai Performance Center.



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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Friends and Pupils Pay Tribute to Dr. Marine Kavlakian

BELMONT, Mass. — On March 25, more than 300 people gathered at the Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church in Belmont, to celebrate Dr. Marine Margarian Kavlakian's 25 years in music education within the Boston community. The tribute, hosted by Holy Cross Church, was also organized by various local



Dr. Marina Kavlakian

organizations, namely, the Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston, the Amaras Art Alliance and the Do-Re-Mi Music Studio's students and parents.

Following an emotional and a nostalgic walk down memory lane, a slide show of memorable photos put together to reminisce the various stages and milestones of Dr. Kavlakian's (also referred to as Miss Marina by all her students) 25-year career, the evening commenced with the opening remarks of Maral Der Torossian, who after welcoming the guests and presenting briefly Kavlakian, the person, the educator and the musician, invited to the stage the master of

ceremonies, Khajag Mgrdichian.

Throughout the evening, Mgrdichian, introduced the various performers and speakers of the program, which started with the delightful performance of the Meghedi Vocal Group, created and directed by Kavlakian. The group performed several songs, composed by the honoree herself. Also performing some of her compositions on stage were her past as well as present, advanced piano students, Narineh Abrimian, Shant Der Torossian, Meghri Der Vartanian and Sonia Ourfalian, who all expressed their great love, respect and gratitude to her.

Former State Sen. Warren Tolman, who was present that evening, awarded Kavlakian with a proclamation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives in recognition of her 25 years of service to the Boston Community.

She was also granted a proclamation from the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia in appreciation of her commitment to music education and dedication to the Armenian culture and community.

The speaker of the day, Avik Derentz Deirmenjian, introduced and presented to the audience Kavlakian's life. Born in Yerevan, Armenia, she received her doctorate in music theory and music education from the Komitas Conservatory and the Armenian Pedagogical University. For six years she was a lecturer at the Armenian Pedagogical University, however, in 1991, she left her career as a professor and moved to the United States to embark on a new endeavor, where she became the founder and educator of Do-Re-Mi Music Studios in Waltham.

Kavlakian currently has more than 40 students in her music school, where she trains both children and adults ranging from pre-school to college-age students. In addition to her private studio, she also taught music at the



Many students and friends gathered to honor Dr. Marina Kavlakian

Armenian Sisters' Academy for more than 20 years, and currently teaches at the Kendall School in Belmont and St. Stephen's Armenian Saturday School in Watertown. She is the organist and music director of the Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church choir, as well as the founder and director of the Meghedi Children's Vocal Group.

Connaught Colbert, assistant director of the Kendall School, as well her brother, composer and pianist Gegam Margarian, both spoke about the honoree.

Lastly, Kavlakian herself addressed the audience, expressed her joy and gratitude to all and performed couple of her own compositions.

The evening ended with Monsignor Andon Atamian's benediction and the traditional anniversary cake cutting ceremony.



Dr. Marina Kavlakian with Warren Tolman

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Documenting the history of Efkere, an Armenian village in central Turkey



Dr. Jonathan Varjabedian  
[jonathan323@mac.com](mailto:jonathan323@mac.com)

Read News in Armenian at:



## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

### Roasted Eggplant and Lamb Omelet

#### INGREDIENTS

1 medium eggplant  
1 medium yellow onion, chopped  
2-3 cloves garlic, minced  
1/2 pound ground lamb  
1/2 green or red bell pepper, seed and finely chopped  
3 eggs, beaten with 2 tablespoons of milk  
Kosher or sea salt, black pepper, Aleppo pepper, cayenne pepper  
Chopped fresh green onions, parsley, walnuts and mint  
Armenian or Greek yogurt  
Sliced tomatoes and cucumbers  
Unsalted butter or olive oil

#### PREPARATION:

Grill or roast the eggplant until the skin is charred and the flesh has softened. Remove from heat, allow to cool, and then peel off the charred skin. Chop eggplant and set aside in a bowl.

In a large pan, sauté the onions and bell pepper with the garlic in a few tablespoons of butter or olive oil until onions are softened; add the lamb, stir, and cook until lamb is browned.

Add a tablespoon or two of unsalted butter at this point, if desired. Add the eggplant to the pan and toss with the meat mixture; add parsley, walnuts, choice of spices, and the beaten eggs, mix, and cook slowly on medium heat until the bottom of the eggplant is firm; flip the eggplant over and cover pan for a few minutes of cooking to steam. Slide the cooked eggplant onto a platter and garnish with choice of choice of green onions, parsley, walnuts, and mint. Cut and serve with sliced fresh tomatoes, cucumbers and yogurt on the side.

Serves 4.

\*Christine's recipes have been published in the Fresno Bee Newspaper, Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines and at [thearmeniankitchen.com](http://thearmeniankitchen.com)

Go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>  
<http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian> or  
<http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/> <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>



## ARTS &amp; 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 — Eastern Caribbean Cruise aboard the Royal Caribbean's Freedom Of The Seas.** Travelling to: St. Kitts / St. Johns, Antigua / San Juan / Labadee, Private Island. Cabin Rates starting from US \$919 / person 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 Janie.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**APRIL 30 — The Ip Piano School will host its 24th Annual Concerto Concert** at the Boston University Tsai Performance Center, Boston, at 3 p.m. The concert will be led by Chilean-born conductor, Gonzalo Farias, and feature Concertino No. 2 Op. 113 for piano and string orchestra composed by local Armenian woman composer Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee, to be performed by 11 year old Ethan Kasparian Weisman. To purchase tickets, call 617-542-9129 or e-mail Winnie@ippianoschool.com. General admission is \$20. Free parking at the rear of the Tsai Performance Center.

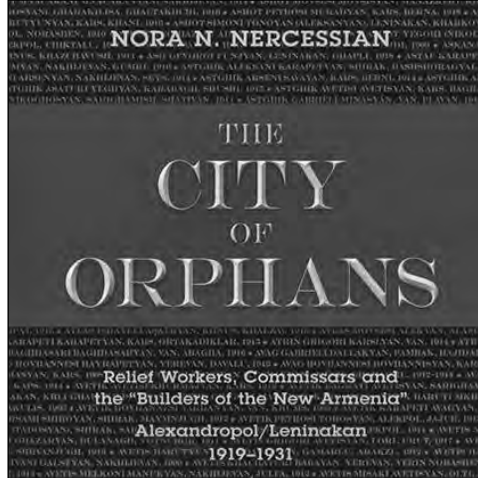
**APRIL 30 — The Armenian Museum of America Concert:** Spring of Music Featuring Narine Ojakhyan, soprano; Thomas Shahbaghyan, violin; Levon Markosyan, cello; and Prof. Gregory Chaverdian, piano Program of Armenian and Classical Music and Songs. Sunday, 2 p.m., co-sponsored by the Composer's Union of Armenia. Funded by the Dadourian Foundation. 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 1 — St James Armenian Church Men's Club Dinner Meeting,** Monday. Speakers: Dr. Berdj Kiladjian, Dr. Arnold Weiss, Dr. George Vosgerichian, and Dr. Alex Bejian. Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center. Their presentation, "Hand in Hand - Medical Benevolent Non-Governmental Organization" will discuss the work that several local Armenian dentists are doing to improve dental care in the Karabakh. Meeting will begin with mezza at 6:15 p.m. and a losh kebab and kheyra dinner at 7 p.m. \$15 per person. Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Public Welcome.

**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



**On Thursday, May 4, Nora Nercessian, the author of *City of Orphans*, will speak at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge, at 7 p.m. The program is sponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association, the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, the Daughters of Vartan, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Tekeyan Cultural Association and the National Association of Armenian Studies and Research.**

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 18 — Adrienne Alexanian, presentation of *Forced Into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*,** by her father, Yervant Alexanian, at the Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown, MA. 7:30 p.m. Co-sponsored by NAASR, the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian Cultural Foundation, the Armenian General Benevolent Union New England District, the Armenian Museum of America, and Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives. Free and open to the public. Contact: hq@naasr.org.

**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 20 — NAASR 63rd Annual Assembly of Members, at the NAASR Center,** 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. 12 p.m. Start. Registration at 11:30 a.m. Featured Presentation by Ara Krafian, CEO, SMMA Architectural, Engineering & Design Firm for NAASR's Building Transformation. To make a reservation contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org.

**MAY 22 — 7:30 pm: Arsen Manukyan, "The Business Environment in Armenia: Legal and Practical Issues for Investors,"** at the NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. Co-sponsored by the Armenia Business Network and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues. Free and open to the public. Contact: hq@naasr.org or armenianbusinessnetwork@gmail.com.

**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 3 — Annual Armenian Night at the Pops, 8 p.m., Symphony Hall,** Boston. Presented by Friends of Armenian Culture Society and featuring Hasmik Torosyan, soprano and the Boston Pops Orchestra in a selection of songs and arias, as well as the spectacular Cirque de la Symphonie. <http://www.facsboston.org/> for tickets and information.

**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 the Armenian Heritage Park's Endowed Fund for Year Round Care. 7-10 p.m. Advance reservations required. Space is limited. To receive the e-invite, please email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**JUNE 17 — The Society of Istanbul Armenian's of Boston will Honor Rev. Arakel Aljalian as the Father of the Year.** Saturday at 7 p.m. Dinner at St. James Armenian Church Hall, Watertown. Donation \$50. For Tickets, call Krikor Shaboian at 617-489-0346.

**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.

## 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

**MAY 20 — A Day of Faith, Hope, Love and Service at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary** starting at 4:30 p.m. This event will include Divine Liturgy, diaconate ordination, and consecration of a new baptismal font (4:30 pm), 2017 Graduation Ceremony (7 pm), and an evening reception (7:30pm). Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, will officiate. 486 Bedford Road, Armonk. RSVP by May 11 to 914-273-0200 or [info@stnersess.edu](mailto:info@stnersess.edu). For more info or to donate go to [www.stnersess.edu](http://www.stnersess.edu). All are invited.

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

**MAY 7 — Sunday, 7 p.m. Hanoian Hall (70 Jefferson St., Providence).** Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presents Two Films screenings: "Where is Euphrates, Son?" - Part 1 and 2 (Armenian with English subtitles) By Rouben Pashinyan, and "Fortresses of Artsakh" (in English) dedicated to 25th anniversary liberation of Shushi (Nagorno-Karabakh). Meet producer Rouben Pashinyan. Refreshments. Donations appreciated.





## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

## Collusion and Delusion

By Edmond Y. Azadian

On the eve of the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, there was a whirlwind of facts and factors about the unhealed wounds – the anticipation of President Trump's statement, Robert Fisk's revival of the 1919 Turkish acknowledgment of the facts, Taner Akçam's confirmation of Ottoman bureaucracy's coding system, Samantha Power's belated apology, the sale of Washington's erstwhile Armenian Genocide Museum property, and to top it all, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's conciliatory message to Armenians.

All those elements are in a whirlwind and one has yet to hit the bull's eye and get the job done once and for all.

Armenians are jaded with the hypocrisy of the world, to President François Hollande's last-minute call for the criminalization of denialism and wreath-laying ceremony of presidential hopeful Emmanuel Macron in France.

To begin with, President Trump's statement, Armenians had almost given up on any positive move from the White House, given the reticence of Trump's predecessors to honor their pledges to recognize the Genocide. However, there was a glimmer of hope. Granted, as a presidential candidate Mr. Trump did not make any commitment on the Genocide issue, ignoring it altogether. But with unpredictability being a hallmark of Trump's policies, some had hoped for a positive development. But this time around, Mr. Trump uncharacteristically followed the script.

Traditionally, every year a high-power Turkish delegation visits Washington on the eve of April 24 to warn the US administration of the consequences of recognizing the Armenian Genocide on Turkish-American relations. This year, that visit was made to the Pentagon by Turkey's Minister of Defense Fikri Isik. The visit lasted 24 hours and certainly it carried on top of the agenda the issue of Genocide recognition. But the official occasion was cited as Turkey's appeal to the US to stop supporting the Kurds in Syria.

To convey a subtle message to Washington, another minister in Ankara simultaneously announced that Turkey had just completed negotiations with Russia to purchase advanced missile systems, and that for the moment, sealing the deal was on hold. The discreet blackmail certainly led Pentagon planners to reach out to the White House. What transpired behind closed doors was that Mr. Trump would refrain from using the term genocide in return for Mr. Erdogan's conciliatory statement. This is a rerun of an old-fashioned scenario, which has its precedent when the White House was able to avoid the issue, heralding a false breakthrough in Armenian-Turkish rapprochement, which in the end never materialized.

This year, this compulsory game can serve well Erdogan's beleaguered administration, which is isolated internationally and strained domestically, both suffering as a result of the recent referendum in Turkey as well as the brutal war being waged against the Kurdish minority.

Erdogan's concession would be fully compensated by Washington's refusal to use the term Genocide. Had Mr. Trump broken tradition by using the word genocide, that would have set the issue on an irreversible course, leading to a domino effect. Israel and other countries could have followed soon, isolating Turkey in its obstinate denialism.

Thus, we can see the collusion between Washington and Ankara, which may lead Armenians to have the delusion that Mr. Erdogan means business.

Washington can afford to play this deceptive game with Turkey with impunity, because it has already gauged the political clout of the Armenians in the US. It is true, Armenians are not politicized enough to use the policy of carrot and stick with any candidate or incumbent.

Therefore, the message is there; if we want change in the policy, we need to mobilize and politicize the community. Because, in politics, change will never come out of charity or historic fairness.

Mr. Trump has not pledged anything to the Armenian community, therefore, he comes out honest by default.

But the courageous British journalist Robert Fisk lambasted Mr. Trump in an article in the UK daily, *The Independent*, even

before the White House released its statement.

Fisk begins his article with the following: "Well, it's now Trump's moment of masculinity. Will he – or will he not – have the guts to call the 1915 Armenian Genocide a genocide? A small matter for a guy who's shooting from the hip across the Muslim world, you may say. But he congratulated the Caliph Erdogan on winning his dictatorial referendum and I doubt Trump has the courage to offend him this month by telling the truth about the slaughter of one and a half million Armenian Christians during the First World War."

Referring to Erdogan's inordinately conciliatory message, which we suspect was the outcome of a deal struck in Washington, we can only characterize it as cynical, because it is not accompanied by a promise of any positive and tangible action.

Turkey's alienation from the West has created a need for a charm offensive, with the first target apparently being the Armenians. Certainly, such outreach to other nations will follow if Turkey does not wish to become a pariah state among civilized nations. A columnist in the *Daily Sabah* has set the next stages of that charm offensive.

"It is our common objectives for these two peoples, who have shared the grief and happiness for centuries, to heal the wounds of the past and strengthen people-to-people ties," said Erdogan.

There are no specific indications leading to define those "objectives." Erdogan himself has threatened to expel Armenian guest workers from Turkey. Those threats certainly do not contribute to meeting those "objectives."

He further states that Turkey has taken steps "to heal the wounds of the past" and strengthen the ties between the two peoples." This statement certainly sounds hollow, while at the same moment, the Turkish military is preparing for joint exercises with the belligerent forces of Azerbaijan on Armenia's borders.

Mr. Erdogan could cite at least one single step to justify his statement. Where and when were those steps taken that no one is aware? Has there been compensation to the Armenians or has there been a plan to preserve Armenian architectural gems within the borders of present-day Turkish Republic?

Most cynical of all is the following statement: "We have no tolerance for the alienation and exclusion of our Armenian citizens and for a single Armenian citizen to feel second-class."



The Turkish government's treatment of the Armenians leaves the latter with nothing but the feeling of a second-class citizen. To begin with, why would Armenians' passports describe the citizen as "non-Muslim?" The wealth tax in the 1940s with its deadly consequences was designed only for Armenian and Greek "second-class" citizens. Similarly, the government-sponsored pogroms of September 6, 1955 targeted these two groups.

Mr. Erdogan's credibility would be restored only if he removes the hateful characterization of Armenians in history textbooks used by all children, including Armenians in Turkey.

Mr. Erdogan has issued his proclamation out of political expediency. In fact, it is not addressed particularly to the Armenians. It is mostly directed to the West to demonstrate its good faith and show that minorities are treated fairly in Turkey. Armenians being the weaker party have no choice but to wait with anticipation that Erdogan's words are followed by solid actions.

However, in light of the Turkish blockade of Armenia and war of words with that government as well as military support to Azerbaijan, only the most naïve can believe that something positive many emanate from Erdogan's statement.

Otherwise, everything remains a delusion, derived from a collusion between the policies of Ankara and Washington.

## Mirror Spectator



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## COMMENTARY

## Will Donald Trump Have the Guts to Call The Armenian Genocide What it Was?

By Robert Fisk

Well, it's now Trump's moment of masculinity. Will he – or will he not – have the guts to call the 1915 Armenian genocide a genocide? A small matter for a guy who's shooting from the hip across the Muslim world, you may say. But he congratulated the Caliph Erdogan on winning his dictatorial referendum and I doubt that Trump has the courage to offend him this month by telling the truth about the slaughter of one and a half million Armenian Christians during the First World War.

After all, Bill Clinton didn't call it a genocide. Nor did George Bush. Nor did Obama. They all promised they would before they were elected. But my guess is that Donald Trump will be as cowardly as them, bowing towards the sensitivities of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his wretched generals, those of them who still have jobs after Erdogan's post-attempted-coup purge of the last nine months.

Yet the deliberate mass slaughter of the Christians of the Turkish Ottoman Empire – the victims had their throats cut, Isis-style, or were shot or tied together and thrown into rivers – was the first industrial holocaust of the 20th century. The women were raped or sold into slavery or starved to death. There were thousands of eyewitness testimonies to these atrocities, including the burning of babies by Turkish gendarmes. And Trump, as we all know, cares very much about “beautiful babies.”

But under no circumstances will the President of the United States, I suspect, have the honor to admit that the Armenian Holocaust – and Israelis use this same word in Hebrew for the Armenian genocide, even though their government does not acknowledge it – was a fact of history. Indeed, it even taught Hitler how to commit the Jewish Holocaust. And quite by chance this April, when the Armenians commemorate the start of their genocide – a word coined by the Polish Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin after the Second World War for the Armenian massacres – up comes more fool-proof evidence of the atrocities committed by Erdogan's Turkish predecessors in the Ottoman Empire which he admires so much.

A copy of the original Turkish pamphlet on the genocide presented to the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 – when the Turkish state

and parliament actually acknowledged the massacres – has been unearthed by Armenian researcher Missak Kelechian, whose earlier work disclosed the existence of a Turkish orphanage for Armenian children in Beirut who were “Turkified” and forced to adopt the Muslim religion after the 1915 massacres. The text of the 1919 document proves beyond a shadow of doubt that the genocide happened, calling it “a great crime” committed at “a time when by the operation of war the laws of humanity in their general acceptance were suspended.”

The same document, sent to Versailles by the Turkish government of the time, refers contemptuously to the “Committee of Union and Progress” which ruled Turkey during the First World War and declared itself an ally of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire during the conflict, as “the Unionist organization” and states that the “guilt” of the three pashas who ran the committee is obvious because it “conceived and deliberately carried out this internal policy of extermination and robbery...”

The paper even admits that the Muslim population of Turkey joined in the extermination of the Armenians with “savagery,” adding that those officials responsible for the massacres had been “arrested.” Alas, most were later freed and when Turkey declared itself independent under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1923 all thought of punishing the murderers of the century's first holocaust disappeared. But the 1919 document, when the Allied powers still controlled Constantinople (now Istanbul) shows clearly that the Turks of that period knew and fully admitted the terrible crimes which had been committed under Ottoman Turkish rule.

At one point in the text, the Turkish government actually refers to “these manifestations of human wickedness surpassing in horror the worst that has been committed in Turkey still fresh in the minds of all.” In another passage the document says that “true it is contended that Musulman [sic] population joined on its own account the massacre of Armenians collectively or individually and therefore that the Turkish people is responsible for the terrible tragedy conjointly with the Unionist organizations and this not only indirectly and materially but directly and morally.”

Turkish and Armenian scholars have referred in the past to the 1919 booklet but with no specific references to the text –



### JOINT DECLARATION OF THE ADL SUPREME COUNCIL AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Following at first-hand the course of the parliamentary elections of the Republic of Armenia which took place on April 2, as well as the preceding and ensuing developments, Studying the conclusions of international, regional, diasporan and local observer missions, the reports of ADL members who participated in the elections, as well as publications in the Armenian and international press,

At the same time taking into consideration the constraints of the fragile and dangerous military and political situation which exists in the region and at the very borders of Armenia, which underscore the primary importance of domestic political stability and make the security of the state a priority above all other considerations,

Also, noting with anticipation the promises made by representatives of the ruling political party in the course of the campaign,

The Armenian Democratic Liberal Party considers the elections which have taken place to not fully correspond to accepted international standards from the point of view of democratic principles. Despite the satisfactory results due to the use of technical innovations during the actual election, and the freedom allowed the competing parties during the campaign process and in general the press, as well as the evidence that incidents of violence and fraud on the election day were comparatively scant, unfortunately it was not possible to overcome the unethical custom of bribes distributed at various levels and the mass use of state employees, leaders of the educational system, the army, internal security forces and, finally, the state executive machinery, which largely predetermined the result of the elections, and formed the future parliament just as was planned.

Moreover, during the preplanning of the elections, the opportunity was lost to bring the entire political potential of the diaspora as a participant in a mediated fashion to the political life of the homeland due to various considerations. Instead, only one force from the diaspora was given preference. In any case, based on its Armenia-centered and patriotic principle, and recording with satisfaction the reality of post-election peaceful coexistence, the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party continues to offer its unconditional support for the prosperity of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh, the peaceful and secure development of the homeland, and, wishing the newly elected parliament success, promises to follow closely the execution of the promises that have been made during the campaign.

ADL Central Committee  
Yerevan, Armenia  
April 11, 2017

ADL Supreme Council  
Boston, United States of America

which led the Polish-Jewish lawyer Lemkin to his creation of the word “genocide.” But alas again, an American president who doesn't read books cannot be expected to weep over the million and a half Armenian men, women, children and “beautiful babies” murdered in that 102-year old genocide – a mass slaughter carried out in some of the lands which

Isis currently controls. So will Trump have the courage to use the word “genocide”? Like most bullyboys, I think he is a coward. So I have my doubts.

(Robert Fisk is a columnist for the *Independent*. This column originally appeared on April 24.)

## Post-Referendum: Uncertain Future after Narrow Win for Erdogan

By Raffi Bedrosyan

The April 16, 2017, referendum in Turkey to revise the constitution giving expanded powers to President Erdogan resulted in a slim majority of Yes votes, 51.3 percent to 48.7 percent, amid claims of significant illegal voting procedures. Opposition parties stated that the winning margin of 1.1 million votes was only achieved by the action of government election officials allowing up to 2.5 million non-registered invalid Yes votes which lacked the official stamps.

The election campaign itself was already deemed to be vastly unfair and uneven, with zero coverage and airtime allowed by the state controlled media and TV stations for the pro-Kurdish party, whose co-chairmen were in jail along with 13 other elected parliamentarians and thousands of party members for “supporting terrorism.”

Despite the crackdown on all propaganda of No supporters, the population of major cities, coastal regions, the Kurdish regions in the east and southeast, and generally urbanized and educated people, voted No. But the central regions of the country, generally less educated and rural people and pro-Islamic masses as well as thousands of Syrian Sunni refugees carried the day, with some help from the voting officials.

Be that as it may, by hook or by crook, the referendum is already declared a victory by Erdogan, who now will have all executive, legislative and judiciary powers in his control after abolishing the prime minister's office and greatly reducing the

role of the parliament.

This concentration of power in one person is already declared as “death of democracy in Turkey” by European statesmen, who are now firmly convinced Turkey can never join the European Union. But trying to get into European Union is no longer an objective for Erdogan. He has called the European leaders Nazis and Crusaders because they prevented his ministers from campaigning to Turkish workers living in Europe.

One of Erdogan's top priorities now is to bring back the death penalty, pushing Turkey further away from European norms. He wants the death penalty in order to execute the perpetrators of the failed coup of 2016. His need to avenge is apparent in every speech that he has made since that event, and put in effect in the continuing purge of hundreds of thousands of people fired from their jobs or tens of thousands of people put in jail, for suspicion of sympathizing with the alleged coup leader, exiled preacher Fethullah Gulen.

Although Erdogan supporters blindly voted to place dictatorial powers in his hand, one wonders what will happen when Erdogan starts losing his grip on power. The steady economic growth from the earlier days of his government, which resulted in higher living standards for the masses helping his popularity, has now ground to a halt, with massive losses in tourism, manufacturing, exports and trade. Record numbers are unemployed and deemed “unemployable” as either Gulen or Kurdish movement supporters. There are grumbings and potential splintering groups forming even in Erdogan's own ruling party.

In the short term, Erdogan seems invincible, but consider

these scenarios for the longer term: Sooner or later, when he loses an election, his all powerful post may be occupied by an anti-Erdogan person. Perhaps not probable now, but the newly elected president may be a secular Kemalist, who will go after Erdogan, and all he stands for, with all his might, especially if he is empowered with the death penalty. Perhaps even less probable, the newly elected president may be a pro-Kurdish politician, who will have the powers to grant local autonomy to the Kurdish regions, even paving the path toward Kurdish independence. Perhaps the least probable, the newly elected president may be a hidden Islamized Armenian politician, who may single-handedly decide to start facing historical truths and stop the denial of the Armenian Genocide with all its consequences.

Never say never in politics...

(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 Karabakh, 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 He gave the first Armenian piano concert in the Surp Giragos Church since 1915 at the 2015 Genocide Centenary Commemoration. He is the founder of Project Rebirth, which helps hidden Islamized Armenians reclaim their original Armenian roots, language, and culture.)



## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## President Trump Succumbs to Turkish Pressures By not Recognizing the Armenian Genocide

Armenians and Turks around the world wait with bated breath each year to see if the President of the United States would use in his annual April 24 statement the word Genocide to describe the mass killings of Armenians.

Armenians and Turks seem to forget that the United States has not only recognized the Armenian Genocide, but has done so repeatedly at the highest levels: The House of Representatives recognized the Armenian Genocide twice in 1975 and 1984. So did President Reagan in his Presidential Proclamation 4838, issued on April 22, 1981. Most importantly, the United States Government officially recognized the Armenian Genocide in a report filed with the International Court of Justice (World Court) in 1951.

Therefore, after all this recognition, as I have repeatedly stated in my columns, Armenians no longer need additional acknowledgments by the President of the United States or the US Congress.

This year, many were curious if President Trump would issue a statement at all on April 24 and whether he will use the term Armenian Genocide. After 84 members of Congress wrote a joint letter to President Trump and private individuals like Mike Sarian of California contacted high level Trump administration officials urging the President to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, the White House issued a statement on April 24, declining to call it genocide.

The good news is that, given President Trump's lack of familiarity with Armenian issues, and not having made any campaign promises to the Armenian community, the Trump administration did not completely ignore the anniversary of

the Armenian Genocide and marked this special day with a statement, as was done by several previous presidents. President Trump's statement mentions the basic facts of the Genocide, describing the Armenian mass killings as "one of the worst mass atrocities of the 20th century. Beginning in 1915, one and a half million Armenians were deported, massacred, or marched to their deaths in the final years of the Ottoman Empire."

While Armenians are disappointed that President Trump shied away from using the term Armenian Genocide, the Turks have no reason to celebrate. On the contrary, they should be ashamed that the President of the United States is accusing their ancestors of committing "one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century" and refers to the killings of 1.5 million Armenians, which the Turkish government denies to this day!

The bad news, however, is that President Trump issued a statement that does not acknowledge the Armenian Genocide as a genocide. President Trump's aides have simply copied the texts issued for eight years by President Obama and before him by Presidents Bush and Clinton, including the reference to the Armenian term "Meds Yeghern," which is not understood by anyone except Armenians, and does not have the legal meaning under international law of the term genocide or 'tsaghbanoutoun' in Armenian. The use of "Meds Yeghern" is simply a clever ploy to avoid the word Genocide. In the past, I have taken the position that if a President cannot acknowledge the Genocide, he should not insult the memory of the Armenian victims and the intelligence of Armenian-Americans by referring to it as 'tragedy' and 'atrocities.' When Sean Spicer, Trump's spokesman was asked about the White House's omission of the term genocide from its April 24 statement, he cynically replied: "it is perfectly in keeping with the language that's been used over and over again [by previous Presidents]." It is shocking that a President Trump who takes such pride in speaking out his mind and strongly criticizes the shortcomings of previous presidents is all of a sudden proud to follow their unacceptable censorship of the Armenian Genocide! President Trump angered a lot of people around the world when he called President Erdogan after the referendum earlier this month and congratulating him on a tainted election that gave Erdogan dictatorial powers! President Trump is scheduled to welcome President Erdogan to the White House in May!

I fully agree with the reactions of the Armenian National

Committee of America (ANCA) and the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) to President Trump's statement. The ANCA stated: "President Trump has chosen to enforce Ankara's gag-rule against American condemnation and commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. In failing to properly mark April 24th, President Trump is effectively outsourcing US genocide-prevention policy to Recep Erdogan, an arrogant and authoritarian dictator who clearly enjoys the public spectacle of arm-twisting American presidents into silence on Turkey's mass murder of millions of Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, and other Christians." The AAA stated: "the President's statement fails to stand up for human rights and is inconsistent with American values, and represents the same kind of capitulation to Turkish authoritarianism which will cost more lives."

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), a long-time supporter of the Armenian community, also issued a statement condemning President Trump's lack of use of the term Armenian Genocide: "Today, we received another disappointing statement from yet another President, refusing to acknowledge the murder of 1.5 million Armenians from 1915-1923 for what it was – a genocide. President Trump now joins a long line of both Republican and Democratic Presidents unwilling to confront Turkey, and by refusing to do so, he has made the United States once again a party to its campaign of denial. How can we speak with the moral clarity we must about the genocidal campaign by ISIS against religious minorities in Syria and Iraq, if we are unwilling to condemn the first genocide of the last century? If the President will not speak out, the Congress must, and I join my colleagues – Democrats and Republicans – in calling on the House to take up the Armenian Genocide resolution."

With all due respect to Cong. Schiff, the Armenian-American community does not need one more House resolution on the Armenian Genocide, on the top of the two resolutions already adopted in 1975 and 1984. What Armenians around the world demand is justice – compensation for their enormous losses, return of their confiscated private and communal properties, and liberation of the occupied Armenian territories. This is what a future House resolution must demand, not more genocide recognition.

Finally, I am very pleased that WikiLeaks tweeted on April 24 to its 4.6 million followers one of my previous columns on Hillary Clinton rejecting the suggestion of her top campaign aides to issue a statement on the Armenian Genocide before last year's presidential elections.

## A Rebuttal

By P. A. Murad

I enjoy reading your newspaper and its information regarding new events occurring in Armenia. Of the articles I often enjoy are written by Harut Sassounian. However, I was disappointed by his article titled: Trump's Attack on Syria: Wrong For so Many Reasons published on Saturday, April 15.

In many situations in the events in the world, you may not know the realities and could only guess at the events. For example: Pres. Trump does not have the requisite background knowledge about the Syrian conflict, except for what he has read in some fringe publications and seen on his favorite TV Channel, FOX News.

Trump has demonstrated that he will listen to his advisors and this is generally good management practice for the commercial realm. Listen before you act. For the situation with the Presidency, he may not have specific knowledge about a particular subject but could easily provide the required expertise. Specifically, this would be with the State Department. Moreover, expertise would be gathered by the Defense Department as well. The same situation occurs for directing policies with evidence provided by the various Intelligence Community; the latter of which includes targeting as well as potential guidance as well. In these discussions, issues are also raised regarding consequences and responses.

These issues are critical to determining how to make the largest impact using minimal resources with whatever is selected. Here, a message was sent to the Syrian President that such activities will require consequences. The attack was launched only at the air base with aircraft that delivered the gas attack. Personally, I would have hit targets to include the President's palace to let him know that he

is vulnerable to his actions. These were most likely, determined based upon intelligence information to include evidence that probably included the timeline when the aircraft left to when the attacks occurred and communications.

The event also sent a message that America will play a more active role in world events. The attack occurred before his meeting with the Chinese President, where Trump would address issues about North Korea. In other words, if a country launches a missile toward America or our allies, there would also be severe consequences. The attack achieved all of these goals by sending messages to include the Iranians that would like to become a nuclear weapon power.

You state: Furthermore, Pres. Trump's actions violated the U.S. Constitution, as he neither sought nor received the legally required authorization from the U.S. Congress to launch a war on another sovereign state.

President Reagan set a precedent for a similar situation to know that America is the new sheriff in town when he invaded Grenada. This, unfortunately, was a situation where more Cuban fighters were there and that these were not only construction types but also soldiers. We did not know how entrenched the region was with Cuba.

Other comments are: Both the White House and many self-declared pundits in the American media, who have made up the most outrageous lies about Syria in the last six years, are now claiming that eliminating the use of chemical weapons in Syria is in the U.S. national interest. They also affirm that the chemical weapons are banned by international treaty and their use is a violation of international law.

1) Why no investigation was carried out of the chemical attack, prior to the U.S. Missile launch?

2) Under what right Pres. Trump has appointed himself the arbiter of international law and policeman of the world?

You have to recognize that if these events occurred, they were not arbitrary but rather carefully examined. The nerve gas attack itself

simply pushed the button too far. Something had to be achieved to set a threshold. Regarding your request for an investigation, I would venture that most of the events occurred are highly classified and should not be revealed because they can be countered in any future event. Furthermore, when America is not the Policeman of the World, you will have the occurrences under the Obama Administration

which, following the Arab Spring, resulted in losses from 100,000 Egyptians, more than half a million Syrians, and at least 100,000 in Libya. Let us not even guess at how many people were forced to move. If Obama stepped into Egypt, these people would still be around or did you forget this?

Harut, you have expertise and wisdom. This, unfortunately, was not with this article.

## Remembering the Horror of The Armenian Genocide

By Meredith Z. Avakian-Hardaway

As a descendant of Armenian Genocide survivors, April 24 is a day of great importance to me.

Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day is a time when people from around the world recognize and mourn the more than 1.5 million Armenians who were savagely and systematically exterminated at the hands of the Young Turks during World War I, all in the name of ethnic cleansing.

Historians mark April 24, 1915 – a day known as "Red Sunday" – as the official start of the Armenian Genocide, as it was the day when hundreds of Armenian intellectuals and leaders were rounded up in Constantinople (Istanbul) and later murdered.

Annually, hundreds of thousands of people now visit the Genocide Memorial in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, to lay flowers at the eternal flame, something I had the opportunity to experience when I was there several years ago.

While April 24 is a somber day of remembrance for those who observe the holiday, it should also serve as a time of deep reflection. For me, it is a day when I not only mourn the lost lives of my ancestors, but those of all per-

sons who have been strategically persecuted and massacred. If anyone cares about a particular holocaust or genocide, then, reasonably, I would hope they should care about all holocausts or genocides.

Interestingly enough, this April 24 is unique, as it overlaps with Holocaust Remembrance Day, which falls on the 27th day of Nisan according to the Hebrew calendar. As many people surprisingly do not know, the Armenian Genocide was essentially the blueprint for the Jewish Holocaust - concentration camps, mass deportations, tattoos, and more. As Hitler is infamously known for saying during his Obersalzberg Speech in 1939, a week before the German invasion of Poland: "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

In response to Hitler's question, I am pleased to note that many more people are talking about what happened to the Armenian people. In fact, on Friday, a historical drama film called *The Promise* was released. It's the first wide-release feature film about the Armenian see REMEMBERING, page 20



## IDEA Foundation presents new initiatives for Armenia's development to Premier Karapetyan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister of Armenia Karen Karapetyan received the representatives of the Initiatives for the Development of Armenia (IDEA) Foundation, led by co-founder Ruben Vardanyan. The meeting discussed the foundation's development programs and new initiatives relevant to various sectors.

Prioritizing the design of a general vision for the development of our nation, Vardanyan stressed the need for public-private sector cooperation in the implementation of development programs. He noted that in cooperation with their partners and donors, IDEA Foundation has implemented different projects since 2007 to a total cost of \$550 million and is going to attract additional \$1.3 billion over the next 15 years that will have a major positive impact on the socio-economic development of Armenia.

Vardanyan presented a package of proposals

for new development projects in Armenia to ensure both continuity of the already-existing programs and embark upon new directions. Noting that IDEA has focused on 10 destinations to serve as a platform for the development of its activities in Armenia, Vardanyan gave details of the programs targeting information technology, education, tourism, healthcare, agriculture, mining industry, telecommunications, infrastructure, cultural heritage and the financial system.

He singled out the investment projects intended for the development of Artsakh. As he said, these programs may have a long-term socio-economic impact and will help enhance Armenia's recognition worldwide.

Addressing issues related to the implementation of the proposed programs, Vardanyan suggested improving management, enhancing the effectiveness of public-private cooperation mechanisms and taking steps toward specifying criteria and approaches.

Welcoming the activities of the IDEA Foundation, Karapetyan deemed them to be crucial for the country's progress and future. "I wish to thank Mr. Vardanyan and his colleagues for their shared concern for Armenia and consistent efforts in our country. We must encourage them with adequate response. The government is keen to see that any investor feels comfortable and protected in our country. That is why public-private partnerships should be understandable and affordable for our counterparts. We are ready to consider any proposal," he said.

Karapetyan instructed the responsible agencies to actively work on each specific program developed by IDEA Foundation. "All programs should be given adequate response so that the initiative group could get clear information on the steps to take. We are using this platform to identify joint projects and develop general approaches to move forward," he said.

## Khachkar Inaugurated in Cordoba

CORDOBA, Argentina (Agencia Prensa Armenia) – On Thursday April 18 a Khachkar was inaugurated in a square of Cordoba.

Cordoba is the second largest city of Argentina with a population of more than 4,000,000 inhabitants and has a very important Armenian community of more than 5,000. It also the place with the remains and a memorial of the Armenian hero Aram Yerganian.

The *Khachkar*, donated by young Argentine-Armenian Cristian Merdinin, was inaugurated with the presence of Vice Governor Martin Llaryora, the Mayor Ramon Mestre, Archbishop Kissag Mouradian, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church for Argentina and Chile, Archbishop of the Catholic Church Carlos Nañez and Eduardo Tutuchian, President of the Armenian Community of Cordoba.

## Remembering the Horror of the Armenian Genocide

REMEMBERING, from page 19

Genocide. Directed by Terry George and starring Oscar Isaac, Charlotte Le Bon, and Christian Bale, the movie is set in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. It is a must-see for anyone who is interested in history, humanity, and civil rights.

Additionally, I would be remiss if I did not note that April 24 also was the day my paternal great-grandfather – Samuel Abdul Avakian – was born. He was a genocide survivor who hand-wrote everything he knew of our family's history. He recalled the villages where our family first resided between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers – the "Cradle of Civilization." He shared the origin of our last name, Avakian - Avak means elder/older and ian is son or family of, so Avakian stands for a family having a higher standing in society. And he recounted how family members lost spouses and children during the "massacres and deportations."

Daddy Sam also was a very talented painter. My favorite painting of his is of Mount Ararat. As described in Genesis 8:4, it is where Noah's ark came to rest. Mount Ararat is now in present-day Turkey ("Western Armenia"), but remains a cultural symbol for Armenians worldwide, as Armenia was the first Christian nation.

Although I share the bloodlines and stories of my ancestors, people still ask me why I care so much about what happened more than a century ago. I tell them it is simple; history repeats itself.

Look at what is happening to the Syrian people. Look at Bosnia, Cambodia, Darfur, Rwanda. Look in our own backyards. Where are the Native Americans who once inhabited the places I have called home? How many more of our brown brothers and sisters will be beaten and killed without cause before some people realize that Black Lives Matter is more than a hashtag? Can you imagine how men and women who are undocumented immigrants feel when they hear of deportations, knowing the history of that word? The world is getting more xenophobic and filled with hate, seemingly daily. We are constantly bombarded with news reports of hate crimes. Now is the time to change the narrative.

On this April 24, I challenge you to combat hate with love.

Learn about a culture that is not yours from someone who does not look like you.

Do something nice for a stranger. Random acts of kindness are priceless.

Expand your prayer list, if you are so inclined.

You can do what my friend Dr. Ai Zhang and I did and give out more than 300 hugs to total strangers, just because. It can save lives. Trust me.

Whatever you do this April 24, on behalf of all victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide, the Jewish Holocaust, and beyond, do something for the betterment of all humanity. Our society is relying on it.

(Meredith Avakian [meredith.avakian@gmail.com] is a Philadelphia writer. This commentary appeared on April 24 in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.)

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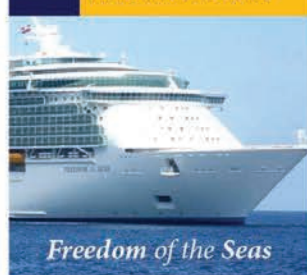
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