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Florida Armenians Shaken but Unharmed after Hurricane

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — After ravaging the Caribbean, Hurricane Irma passed through Florida Sunday, September 11 and Monday, September 12. It then continued through the Southeast. It landed as a Category 4 hurricane with 130 miles per hour winds and storm surges of 10 feet.

The death toll in the United States was 12 by Tuesday afternoon, including seven fatalities in Florida, while more than 5 million people in Florida remain without electricity. Fortunately, Florida Armenians seem to have survived the storm without serious damage or any casualties.

see IRMA, page 20



Damage in Deerfield Beach (Photo: Arsine Kaloustian, Florida Armenians Associate Editor)

Blogger Alexander Lapshin Released

BAKU (RFE/RL and AP) — Russian-Israeli travel blogger Alexander Lapshin, who had been sentenced to three years behind bars in Azerbaijan, was released on September 12, Lapshin's lawyer, Eduard Chernin said, according to RIA Novosti.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev signed an order the previous day pardoning Lapshin.

"Lapshin has been released but he is not likely to be deported from Azerbaijan today," Chernin said.

"There is an 80-percent probability that Lapshin will not be deported from Azerbaijan today," he said.

Lapshin was sentenced by the Baku court on grave crimes on July 20, 2017 over his visit to Nagorno-Karabakh.

The blogger was detained in the Belarusian capital of Minsk in December 2016 at Baku's request. He was flown to Baku on February 7 and handed over to the Azerbaijani State Security Service.

Azerbaijani prosecutors launched a criminal case into "repeated public anti-state calls" and what they claimed as "illegal crossing of Azerbaijan's state border."

The extradition and persecution against Lapshin was widely slammed by international community as a gross violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of speech and movement.

Israel's Foreign Ministry welcomed the pardon, saying it has carefully followed the case while Lapshin was incarcerated. "We look forward to seeing him soon in Israel and we will closely monitor the process of his return," it said.



Three young patients at Muratsan

Local Group Raises Funds for Children's Cancer Clinic in Armenia

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — A pilgrimage to Armenia in 2016 transformed Holy Trinity Armenian Church parishioner Cynthia Kazanjian's life. The change was not so much in religious terms but in terms of igniting passion for a cause that has not left her.

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Kazanjian and a group of visitors from the church were invited to visit the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic in Yerevan, specializing in the treatment of children stricken with cancer. She and a few others agreed to visit. The visit changed her.

Rev. Vasken Kouzouian was a friend of Dr. Gevorg Tamamyan, a pediatric oncologist and hematologist at the hospital, as the latter had been staying at the Holy Trinity parish house for a few months when he was doing a training session at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

"When he heard we were coming, he invited Yeretsgin (Arpi) and Der Hayr (Kouzouian) to visit the hospital. We visited with my grandson. He was telling us about what they do at the clinic and the challenges they face," said Kazanjian.

see KAZANJIAN, page 11

Delegation of Israeli Knesset Members Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (News.am) — A delegation of Israeli Knesset members visited Armenia this week.

The members paid tribute to the victims of the Armenian Genocide. The delegation led by the Israeli Knesset Vice Speaker, the head of Israel-Armenia Parliamentary Friendship Group Tali Ploskov, accompanied by the head of the Armenia-Israel Friendship Group Gagik Minasyan, visited Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide Memorial Complex.

The members of the delegation laid a wreath at the monument to the 1915 Armenian Genocide victim. The guests also visited the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute and left a note in the Commemoration Book.

In addition, on Tuesday, September 12, they attended a session of the National Assembly of Armenia, where members of parliament in attendance welcomed the guests from the Knesset.

The Israeli parliamentary delegation was applauded in the Armenian legislature.



Members from the Israeli Knesset visit the Armenian Genocide memorial in Yerevan.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wings of Tatev Have Transported 100,000 Tourists This Year

YEREVAN (Arka) — The Wings of Tatev tramway in Syunik province has transported 100,000 tourists since the beginning of the year, according to officials.

The 100,000th person was Serob Igityan of Yerevan, who was visiting with his family. Igityan received a certificate as well as a gift package.

The Wings of Tatev reversible aerial tramway was installed in 2010 by the Initiatives for Development of Armenia (IDeA) Foundation within the framework of Tatev Revival Project.

It's the longest reversible cableway in the world. Not only the length (5,752 m) of the cableway is record-setting, but also the period within which it was installed — just 10 months. The aerial tramway was installed by the Austrian-Swiss Doppelmayr/Garaventa Group, the world's leading manufacturer of cable cars.

Armenia Clarifies Stance on Troop Deployment to Syria

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia is ready, in principle, to send a demining team to Syria as part of a multinational "coalition" that could be formed by Russia, the Defense Ministry in Yerevan said on Monday, September 11.

A top Russian military official said late last month that Armenia and Serbia have expressed readiness to join such a coalition which Russia hopes would help its troops clear landmines in the war-torn country. Moscow formally proposed its creation at the United Nations in April.

The Armenian government did not immediately confirm the Russian official's statement. A spokesman for President Serzh Sargsyan said only that official Yerevan will make a statement "when a decision is made and all issues are clarified."

The Defense Ministry noted that the Armenian and Russian militaries already held "preliminary working discussions" last year on the possibility of Armenia's participation in "humanitarian demining efforts in Syria."

"During the discussions, Armenia expressed readiness to consider possibilities of becoming involved with a humanitarian demining detachment — in case of the launch of such an initiative, the Syrian government's consent, and observance of all international legal procedures — in those parts of Syria where there are no ongoing hostilities," said the statement.

The issue was also on the agenda of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's April 2016 visit to Yerevan. Lavrov discussed possible Armenian involvement in demining operations in the historic Syrian city of Palmyra when he met with his Armenian counterpart Edward Nalbandian.

INSIDE

Racing Stripes

Page 12

INDEX

Arts and Living	13
Armenia	2,3
Community News.	6
Editorial	18
International	4-5



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Yerevan Second Most Popular Destination for Russian Tourists

YEREVAN (Arka) – Yerevan was the second most popular destinations in the so-called near abroad (former Soviet republics) for Russian tourists in the January-June 2017 period, according to Lenta.ru. The other most popular destinations were Moldova and Georgia.

Other most popular destinations (not counting former Soviet republics) were Israel, followed by Turkey.

The most popular European city for Russian air travelers was Prague, the Czech Republic. The top three also included Larnaca (Cyprus) and Munich, Germany.

As for Russian cities, the three most popular destinations for air travelers were Sochi, Simferopol and Mineralnye Vody.

Oligarchy and Monopolies Block Flow Of Investments Ex-Governor of Central Bank Says

YEREVAN (Arka) – The Armenian economy is dominated by the oligarchy and monopolies, making competition and attraction of fresh investment impossible, according to the former chairman of the Central Bank Bagrat Asatryan.

Speaking at a news conference, Asatryan described the official statistics on investments as “appalling.” He cited the data of the Ministry of Economic Development and Investment, which says that in the first half of the year the negative indicator of net flows of aggregate foreign investments in the real sector of the Armenian economy totaled \$51.2 million, while direct investments fell to \$35.6 million.

He added that investments come largely from offshore countries. According to official statistics, the most significant amount of aggregate and foreign direct investments came to Armenia in the first half of 2017 from the British Isle of Jersey – \$65.3 million.

“Armenia does not have a favorable investment climate. The Armenian economy has reached a state when it no longer needs money. There are no sectors where investments could be made – the country is closed. The Armenian economy is dominated by monopolies connected with authorities who simply do not tolerate competitors,” he said.

Asatryan also noted that Armenia’s banking system has huge resources for investments, but there is no demand for this money on part of economy.

In general, according to Asatryan, Armenia’s economy is in a political trap. He said he believes that the lack of competition in politics does not allow implementation of systemic economic reforms.

Archeological Finds in Metsamor

YERVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – An Armenian-Polish group of archeologists has restarted its excavations in Metsamor on September 1 and has already registered some results, Artsakhpress reports.

New rooms have been revealed in the municipal part of the territory, as well as graves, human skeletons, metal tools which are preliminary attributed to 8-6th centuries BC.

The archeologists are trying to trace the changes in the territory from the Late Bronze Age to the period of Achaemenides. According to the co-pilot of the expedition, the head of the Institute of Archeology at the University of Warsaw, Prof. Krzysztof Jakubiak, Metsamor has an important role among the settlements of the Ararat Valley in this aspect.

“During the Early Iron Age Metsamor had been a city and was destroyed by the Urartians. New graves are found, other finds are revealed, evidence of demolition is registered. They enrich our understanding of the influence of Argishti the First and the later Urartians on Metsamor,” Jakubiak said.

At the moment anthropological materials are being studied, while organic materials, such as charcoal and others, will be sent abroad for a laboratory study. It will help to date the finds correctly.

Karen Karapetyan Receives World Bank Delegation

YEREVAN – Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan attended this week the opening of a conference dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Armenia-World Bank partnership.

In his greeting remarks, he said Armenia keen to build on the upward trends of the ongoing close cooperation with the World Bank.

“The World Bank is one of Armenia’s

the mobilization of all existing resources, increased efficiency in their use and closer cooperation with our main partners,” Karapetyan said.

Karapetyan added that the key goals of the government and the World Bank were consistent.

“Our ultimate goal for the future is to have an independent, safe, fair and smart Armenia. This must be the pillar

security, we need to have an advanced, competitive and innovative economy, which should be developed owing to dynamic digitization in the 21st century, with a sense of adaptability to the environment at all times. This will be possible only if there is a modern, globally competitive, high-skilled and motivated workforce. The foundations of the future



Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan speaks at a meeting with the World Bank delegation, with Cyril Muller and Silvie Bosoutro

key partners. We are cooperating successfully in all areas of economic management. Many programs have been implemented with the World Bank’s support over the past 25 years aimed at ensuring our country’s socio-economic development and forming modern institutions. The instruments provided by the Bank’s various teams have helped us to ensure economic growth, development and progress. In 2014 we embarked on a new development cycle, shifting from the International Development Agency’s programs towards the programs supported by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The Government of the Republic of Armenia has initiated and is implementing radical reforms and modernization of our economy, which calls for

of cooperation between Armenia and the World Bank. The WB’s extensive experience and knowledge base may assist the government in promoting decades-long progressive development through effective and intelligent use of resources and competitiveness. The World Bank’s support for the past 25 years is very impressive from this point of view; 95 programs have been implemented to a total cost of \$2.3 billion. The Bank’s credit portfolio in the Republic of Armenia makes up nearly \$620 million at this point,” he added.

Karapetyan said the global economic environment calls for an up-to-date competitive economy and effective governance in order to overcome the existing challenges.

“To build our future, to ensure our

Armenia ought to be laid in the school and continue to be strengthened ahead,” Karapetyan stressed.

The prime minister assured that both the WB team and the participants from Armenia will

The World Bank delegation included Vice President for Europe and Central Asia Cyril Muller and newly appointed head of the World Bank Armenia Office Silvie Bosoutro.

Cyril Muller assessed the bank’s relationship with Armenia as effective. He noted that the World Bank wishes to further strengthen the cooperation with Armenia.

During the meeting, the WB delegation presented a report titled “The Future of Armenia,” which describes the country’s problems, capacities and advantages.

Ruling Party Remains Opposed to Armenia’s Exit From Eurasian Union

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – President Serzh Sargsyan’s Republican Party (HHK) dismissed on Tuesday, September 12, an opposition alliance’s calls for an end to Armenia’s membership in the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

The Yelk alliance put forward late last week a draft parliamentary statement demanding that the Armenian authorities embark on a “process” of invalidating Armenia’s accession treaty with the trade bloc comprising five ex-Soviet states. The statement says that EEU membership, effective from January, 2015, has hurt the country’s economy and security.

“Leaving the EEU would be fraught with very serious problems for Armenia,” the HHK spokesman, Eduard Sharmazanov, said. “It would lead to an unprecedented rise in the price of [Russian] gas. Secondly, it would change trade volumes. There are no alternative markets for products which we now sell in the EEU markets. Maybe there will be in five or ten years.”

“Armenia’s authorities see no need

for changing the vector of Armenian foreign policy,” Sharmazanov added. “We should continue deepening our relations with the EEU.”

Russia’s is Armenia’s number one trading partner, having accounted for 26 percent of its foreign trade in January-July 2017, according to official Armenian statistics. Armenian exports to Russia – most of them foodstuffs and alcoholic beverages – rose by almost 31 percent.

By comparison, the European Union’s share in the total stood at 24.3 percent. Armenia’s trade with EEU member states also grew strongly in the seven-month period.

Yelk blames the EEU for the fact that Armenia Gross Domestic Product has shrunk in U.S. dollar terms while public debt increased since 2015. The authorities in Yerevan recorded a real GDP growth of just 0.2 percent last year.

“Had we not joined the EEU that negative dynamic would have been deeper,” insisted Sharmazanov.

Sharmazanov also brushed aside Yelk claims that EEU membership has

not strengthened Armenia’s security as evidenced by continued Russian arms sales to Azerbaijan and the April 2016 fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh.

“Armenia has received [since 2015] many modern weapons and ammunition that ensure, along with the Armenian armed forces, its security. Armenia’s security system has grown stronger since we joined the EEU,” said the HHK spokesman, who is also a deputy speaker of the Armenian parliament.

Russia’s ambassador in Yerevan, Ivan Volynkin, also scoffed at the Yelk initiative. “If they want to come up with such an initiative, no problem, nobody is hindering them,” Volynkin told reporters. “The question is how necessary it is for Armenia.”

“I think that the majority of Armenia’s population disagrees with that initiative because they can see the obvious advantages of Armenia’s membership in the EEU,” he said.

Yelk holds nine seats in the 105-member parliament. None of the other political groups represented in the National Assembly has voiced support for its initiative.



ARMENIA

Valadao Spearheads Bipartisan Measure To Continue Demining Funds in NKR

WASHINGTON – Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Representative David Valadao (R-CA) spearheaded a bipartisan amendment along with Co-Chairs Representatives Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Jackie Speier (D-CA), House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA), and House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and Armenian Caucus Vice-Chair Adam Schiff (D-CA) to ensure con-

amendment. Earlier this year, Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny outlined key priorities in the Assembly's congressional testimony submitted to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, which called for robust funding to Artsakh, including for de-mining purposes. The Assembly's testimony to Congress stated: "For a relatively small

"I commend Congressman Valadao for spearheading this effort along with his colleagues, Representatives Schiff, Royce, Pallone, and Speier, for their steadfast support in buttressing the safety and well-being of the citizens of Artsakh," stated Ardouny. "Funding for de-mining projects helps save countless lives, and we very much appreciate the dedicated work of The Halo Trust in helping the people of Artsakh," he continued.

The HALO Trust has been clearing landmines and cluster munitions in Artsakh since 2000. HALO has cleared 88 percent of the territory's minefields,

with the goal to clear all landmines in Artsakh by 2020. According to The Halo Trust, Artsakh has "the highest per capita incidence of landmine accidents in the world – a third of the victims are children."

The Armenian Assembly of America 2017 Summer Internship Program in Armenia interns met with The HALO Trust this summer to learn more about the deadly realities facing the people of Artsakh every day, and the life-saving work that HALO continues to carry out in Artsakh to ensure a safe environment. So far, between 2000-2016, The HALO Trust in Artsakh has destroyed 180,858 small arms ammunition; 48,572 units of "other explosive items;" 12,423 cluster bombs; 8,733 anti-personnel landmines; and 2,584 anti-tank landmines.

The Assembly has also supported demining in Armenia through the Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) and their Mine Detection Dog Partnership Program (MDDPP). The program trains and delivers Mine Detection Dogs (MDDs) to landmine removal organizations within a mine-affected country. In 2002, the Assembly sponsored six MDDs for Armenia. The accomplishments of the Assembly-sponsored MDDs include clearing landmine areas in Armenia that are today used for farming, grazing, and other agricultural initiatives, as well as for transportation and infrastructure projects.



From left, Valadao, Schiff, Royce, Pallone and Speier

tinued funding for de-mining projects in Artsakh. This amendment was adopted as part of consideration of H.R. 3354, which consolidated numerous Fiscal Year 2018 (FY 18) appropriations bills.

Speaking on his amendment, Valadao stated: "It is a grave reality that families in Nagorno Karabakh live under the very real threat of landmine accidents each and every day." He went on, "However, with the funding secured in my amendment, I am optimistic significant strides will be made to ensure the region is landmine free by 2020, restoring these communities so they may live without fear of mine-related accidents."

Speier added: "I want to thank my colleagues in Congress for providing critically needed funding for the ongoing effort to remove deadly landmines from Artsakh. Given the danger posed to the people of this Republic - an area that suffers the highest per capita incidence of landmine accidents in the world, with a third of these casualties involving children - this modest \$1.5 million amendment is destined to have a major impact on the physical and mental health of the people of Artsakh. It also shows our government's strong and abiding commitment to securing peace and prosperity for Artsakh, which has achieved great progress and has an even brighter future on its horizon."

The Armenian Assembly of America welcomed the adoption of the bipartisan

investment, America has the opportunity to make a significant difference in the everyday lives of the people of Artsakh."

The Assembly participated in the historic and first allocation of \$12.5 million in humanitarian aid for the people of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) "forthwith" some twenty years ago in the FY 1998 appropriations measure. In the Assembly's testimony before the House Appropriations Committee during that time, the Assembly cited a report conducted in association with the Armenian Red Cross highlighting serious humanitarian needs, including the fact that "approximately 100,000 land mines have been laid in the interior of Nagorno Karabakh, directly threatening the lives of the population as well as an indirect threat to food production, development and the public's health." The Assembly concurred with the report's findings "that there must not be further delay in providing humanitarian aid to the people of Nagorno Karabakh..."

During the run-up to the FY 1999 appropriations bill, Assembly Board Member Annie Totah reiterated the Assembly's strong support for funding to Artsakh in her testimony to the House Appropriations Committee, and urged the Committee to "broaden the scope of assistance to Nagorno Karabakh to include rebuilding and reconstruction of infrastructure damaged in the war."

Armenia to Move Closer to European Union

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A landmark agreement to deepen the European Union's relations with Armenia will most likely be signed as planned in November, Germany's and France's ambassadors in Yerevan said on Tuesday, September 12.

"At the moment there are no circumstances that could hamper that process," the German envoy, Matthias Kiesler, said at a joint news conference with his outgoing French counterpart, Jean-Francois Charpentier.

"I consider the new agreement a great success and believe that if signed, it will open up new and multiple opportunities for deepening EU-Armenia cooperation," added Kiesler.

Charpentier likewise said that "all prerequisites are in place" for the signing of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) during an EU summit in Brussels slated for November 24. Armenia would thus become the first member of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union to have such an "ambitious" deal with the EU, he said.

The CEPA, which was finalized in March, is



Ambassador Matthias Kiesler

meant to deepen the EU's political and economic relations with Armenia. It reportedly contains the main political provisions of a more far-reaching Association Agreement which the two sides nearly concluded in 2013.

President Serzh Sargsyan prevented the signing of that agreement with his unexpected decision to seek Armenia's accession to the EEU. The move was widely attributed to Russian pressure exerted on the Armenian government.

Sargsyan dismissed late last month suggestions that the CEPA may also collapse at the last minute. "We have no reason to not sign that document," he said.

The head of the EU Delegation in Yerevan, Piotr Switalski, said last week that officials in Brussels are making final preparations for the signing of the accord with Armenia at the November summit.

The summit will focus on the EU's Eastern Partnership program of closer partnership with six former Soviet republics. Three of them – Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – have signed Association Agreements with the EU.

Aurora Prize Receives 750 Nominations for 2018 Aurora Prize

YEREVAN – In its third year, the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity has received 750 submissions for 509 unique candidates.

During the nomination period which opened the day after the 2017 prize was announced, and closed September 8, entries were submitted in 12 languages from 115 countries including the US, Russia, Egypt, Armenia, India, Germany, UK, Pakistan, Ukraine, and Kenya. This represents a 100-percent increase from last year, when 254 candidates were presented in 13 languages from 66 countries.

"That 750 people took the time to prepare and submit the names of 509 humanitarians is very moving, and also compelling," said Noubar Afeyan, co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative. "This confirms our belief that there is value to collectively celebrating the strength and spirit of those rare individuals who, in some way, act in our name, in our stead, and through their actions, validate and protect our own humanity. The Aurora Prize is a way of putting our gratitude into action, expressing our

thanks for the selfless heroes who make it possible for others to survive. We are committed, through Aurora, to empower contemporary heroes and raise awareness about their actions."

The profiles of the candidates for the 2018 Aurora Prize will be sent to the group of humanitarians invited by the Aurora Initiative will carefully assess the veracity of the submissions, the degree to which they satisfy the criteria of demonstrated courage, commitment and impact on preserving human life. The short-list of candidates will be sent to the Selection Committee chaired by Academy Award-winning actor and humanitarian George Clooney.

"At a time of pressing global humanitarian crises, it is great that we have the opportunity to recognize and thank individuals who do good for the sake of doing good. Each year's Aurora nominees have inspired us all with their work and their words. We look forward to learning about new heroes from around the world," said Mary Robinson, member of the Aurora

Prize Selection Committee, former president of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Selection Committee 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; former president of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo; Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London Professor the Lord Darzi of Denham; president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Vartan Gregorian.

The 2017 Aurora Prize was awarded to Dr. Tom Catena, a Catholic missionary from Amsterdam, New York, who has saved thousands of lives as the sole surgeon permanently based in Sudan's war-ravaged Nuba Mountains where humanitarian aid is restricted. Marguerite Barankitse was awarded the inaugural Aurora Prize in 2016 for her tire-

less commitment to restoring children's dignity and hope as the founder of Maison Shalom and the REMA Hospital in Burundi.

The finalists of the 2018 Aurora Prize will be announced on April 24, 2018, the annual day of remembrance of the Armenian Genocide. The \$1 million Aurora Prize, established on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, will be awarded for the third time on June 10, 2018 in Armenia. The laureate is invited to share \$1million with organizations which inspire their work. The award ceremony is a culmination of the weekend of special events that will take place on June 8-10, 2018. Pre-eminent humanitarians, academics, philanthropists, human rights defenders, elected officials, journalists and business leaders from around the world will gather for the purpose of galvanizing action to address today's most pressing humanitarian challenges and to celebrate the best of humanity.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Colombia Embassy Confirms Death of Arsen Voskanyan

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – The embassy of Russia in Colombia has confirmed the information on the death of Russian citizen Arsen Voskanyan, who is of Armenian origin.

The Russian diplomatic mission announced on its Facebook page that Voskanyan apparently was killed while attempting to escape from captivity.

Earlier it was reported that the embassy was checking reports on Voskanyan's murder by the Colombian ELN guerrillas, who had taken him hostage.

According to the embassy's message, however, the exact cause of his death has not been found out yet.

Lavrov, Tillerson to meet At UN General Assembly

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will meet on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York, TASS news agency reported.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov made the announcement on Tuesday, September 12, after two days of consultations with US Undersecretary of State Thomas Shannon.

"The course is towards their meeting during the high-level week at the UN General Assembly session in New York," Ryabkov said.

Moscow expects positive signals from Washington on improvement of relations ahead of the meeting. "It is desirable that our leaders and foreign ministers after their meetings issue a generally positive message to their countries and the international community in the form of agreements to resolve at least some of the outstanding problems. Positive signals are crucial to tackling the major issues on the international agenda, be it Syria, the situation on the Korean Peninsula, or Ukraine," Ryabkov said. "We believe that the time remaining till the high-level portion of the UN General Assembly enables us to finalize such signals and present proposals to the leaders precisely from the angle of how that meeting might cause a direct, healing effect on the situation in bilateral relations and become a tangible contribution to addressing major issues that our countries deal with on the permanent basis."

Merkel Dismisses Turkey Travel Warnings

BERLIN (Deutsche Welle) – Chancellor Angela Merkel has dismissed Turkey's warning about traveling to Germany, saying that Turkish citizens are more than welcome to visit.

Ankara had cautioned that its citizens run the risk of facing racism or terrorism.

No Turkish citizen should be afraid of traveling to Germany during its election season, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on September 10.

"I want to be very clear here: Any Turkish citizen can come visit us," Merkel said during a campaign stop in the western town of Delbrück.

"No journalists are arrested here. No journalists are put into detention here. Here, we have freedom of expression and the rule of law. And we're proud of that," the chancellor added.

According to the German Foreign Office, at least 10 Germans are currently detained in Turkey on political charges, including Deniz Yücel, a German-Turkish journalist with Die Welt newspaper.

On Saturday, Turkey's Foreign Ministry issued a travel warning telling Turkish citizens visiting or living in Germany to be cautious amid reports of racism during the country's election campaign.

The Foreign Ministry statement also told its citizens that Germany welcomes terrorist groups, such as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the network of the US-based Islamic cleric Fethullah Gulen.

Both Merkel and her main rival in the upcoming September 24 national election, Martin Schulz, called for an end to Turkey's EU membership talks during a television debate last week.

Around 3 million people of Turkish origin live in Germany, 1 million of whom have the right to vote in the upcoming election.

Iraq Declares Planned Kurdish Independence Referendum Unconstitutional

BAGHDAD (AP) – The leader of Iraq's Kurdish region defended an independence referendum planned for later this month during a visit Tuesday, September 12, to the oil-rich Kirkuk province, the epicenter of a long-running dispute with the central government.

Iraq's parliament, meanwhile, rejected the referendum in a non-binding resolution and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi described it as "unconstitutional" hours after the vote.

"I call upon the Kurdish leadership to come to Baghdad and conclude a dialogue," Abadi said at a news conference.

Iraq's Kurds plan to hold the referendum on Sept. 25 in three governorates that make up their self-ruled region as well as disputed areas that are controlled by Kurdish forces but claimed by Baghdad, including the oil-rich province of Kirkuk.

Masoud Barzani, the president of Iraq's Kurdish region, insisted that holding the referendum in Kirkuk is "entirely legal."

"Kirkuk will remain as safe and secure as it is now, kept safe by the Peshmerga," Barzani said, referring to the Kurdish forces that control the city.

"We will not compromise Kirkuk's identity. We would rather give up our own rights than to compromise the rights of the ethnic minorities that live here."

Kirkuk is home to Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen and Christians. Kurdish forces took control of the province and other disputed areas in the summer of 2014, when the Islamic State group swept across northern and central Iraq and the Iraqi armed forces crumbled.

Iraqi and Kurdish forces have driven IS from most of the country over the past two years, but now appear to be girding for a new conflict over the spoils.

The parliament resolution states that



People celebrate on Sept. 11 in Kirkuk to show their support for independence referendum occurring in two weeks. (Ako Rasheed/Reuters)

the referendum is a "threat to Iraq's integrity, which is guaranteed by the constitution... in addition to the civil peace and the regional security." It called on the central government to "shoulder its responsibility to protect the unity of Iraq and to take all necessary measures to preserve that unity."

All Kurdish lawmakers boycotted Tuesday's session, while Arab lawmakers voted in favor, said lawmaker Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, who attended the session. A breakdown for the vote was not immediately available.

Turkey and Iran, concerned about separatist leanings among their own Kurdish populations, are also opposed to the referendum, and the UN mission to Iraq has said it will not be "engaged in any way or form" in the vote.

In Kirkuk, Barzani addressed growing fears that the independence vote could lead to violence between forces aligned with Baghdad and those loyal to the Kurdish region.

"We have no intention to start a

fight," he said. "But we have the right to defend ourselves. Those who launch a war have to expect a response."

Amid Tension, Trump And Turkey's Erdogan To Strengthen Ties

ANKARA (Reuters) – US President Donald Trump and Turkey's Tayyip Erdogan spoke on Saturday and agreed to continue to work toward stronger ties and regional security, Erdogan's office said, a day after he lashed out at US authorities for indicting one of his ex-ministers.

Ties between the United States and its NATO ally have been strained by Washington's support for the YPG Kurdish fighters in the battle against Islamic State in Syria. Turkey considers the YPG a terrorist group.

Ankara has also been frustrated by what it sees as Washington's reluctance to extradite the Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen. Turkey blames Gulen, who has lived in Pennsylvania since 1999, for last year's failed coup.

"Noting the strategic partnership between Turkey and the United States, the two leaders emphasized the importance of continuing to work together to further strengthen bilateral relations and increase stability in the region," the Turkish president's office said in a statement.

The two leaders agreed to meet in New York at the United States General Assembly, scheduled for this month.

The call was notable for its timing, coming a day after Erdogan described a US prosecutor's indictment against Turkey's former economy minister as being politically motivated and tantamount to an attack on Ankara.

The former minister, Zafer Caglayan, and the ex-head of a state-owned Turkish bank were charged this week with conspiring to violate Iran sanctions by illegally moving hundreds of millions of dollars through the US financial system on Tehran's behalf.

The indictment marked the first time an ex-government member with close ties to Erdogan had been charged in the on-going US investigation, which has strained ties between the two countries.

"For the moment, it is impossible to evaluate this within legal logic," he told reporters on September 8. "I see this step against our former economy minister as a step against the Turkish Republic."

He had also called on Washington to re-think the charges.

"I hope we'll get a chance to discuss this issue in the United States. You may be a big nation, but being a just nation is something else. Being a just nation

Foreign Minister Receives Head Religious Endowments for Christians and Other Religions in Iraq

YEREVAN – On September 11, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian received Raad Jalil Kajaji, head of the Office of Religious Endowments for Christians and Other Religions in Iraq, as well as Christian leaders of Iraq.

Welcoming the guests, Nalbandian emphasized that Armenia has repeatedly condemned at international platforms the violence committed by DAESH and other terrorist groups, voiced the issues faced by national and religious, including Christian minorities in Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries, as well as contributes to the international efforts for the protection of their rights.

In this context, Foreign Minister highlighted the importance of protection of one of the oldest communities of the region – the Iraqi Armenians, and of its cultural, religious and community institutions.

He appreciated the valuable support of the central and regional authorities to the construction of Armenian churches in Kirkuk and Erbil.

Nalbandian commended the recent liberation of the majority of Iraqi territory from DAESH, underlining the essential significance of that for reestablishing peace and stability in the region.

The head of Iraqi Waqf and the leaders of Iraqi religious minorities touched upon the situation in the country, the atrocities committed by terrorist and extremist groups, concerns of the communities and the steps taken by the Iraqi government and the international community towards their settlement.

The interlocutors attached importance to the preservation of the national and religious heritage of the region, as well as to the restoration of traditions of tolerance and coexistence.



Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian with Iraq religious minority leaders.



Turkey Signs Deal to Get Russian S-400 Air Defense Missiles

ANKARA (BBC) – President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said a deposit had already been paid. The deal is thought to be worth \$2.5 billion (£1.9bn).

Turkey has the second-largest army in NATO. The alliance reacted skeptically to the decision, saying the system was not compatible with its equipment.

Turkey has been establishing closer links with Russia after its recent souring of ties with the US and Europe.

Erdogan's government objects to US military support for the YPG Syrian Kurdish rebels, who are linked to rebel Kurds in Turkey.

Russia says the S-400 system has a range of 400 kilometers (248 miles) and can shoot down up to 80 targets simultaneously, aiming two missiles at each one.

Russia deployed the S-400 at its air force base near Latakia in Syria in December 2015, after Turkish jets had shot down a Russian Su-24 warplane on the Syria-Turkey border.

That incident caused a diplomatic rift between Russia and Turkey, but President Erdogan later patched up his quarrel with President Vladimir Putin.

A military adviser to Putin, Vladimir Kozhin, said the S-400 contract with Turkey was “strictly compatible with our strategic interests.”

“On that score, one can quite understand the reaction of some Western countries who are trying to put pressure on Turkey,” he said.

Erdogan, quoted by Turkey's Hurriyet daily, voiced displeasure with unnamed Western partners who were “seeking enormous amounts of money” for military drones.

He said Turkey had killed 90 YPG “terrorists” in the past week with Turkish drones – developed because the Western ones were too expensive.

“We are responsible for taking security measures for the defense of our country,” he

stressed.

The missile deal is clearly a rebuff to NATO, after the US and Germany withdrew Patriot air defense batteries from Turkey.

In 2015, Turkey urged its NATO allies to keep those batteries positioned on the Turkish-Syrian border.

Speaking to AFP news agency, an unnamed NATO official said: “No NATO ally currently operates the S-400.” They added: “NATO has not been informed about the details of any purchase.”

Germany's Foreign Minister, Sigmar Gabriel, said Berlin would put all arms exports to Turkey on hold due to the deteriorating relationship between the two nations.

Gabriel's counterpart in Ankara, Mevlut Çavusoglu, said the comments were inappropriate for a foreign minister.



The S-400 missile system is deployed at Russia's Hmeimim airbase in Syria. (AFP photo)

Ankara Reacts to Germany Suspending Major Arms Exports to Turkey

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region (Rudaw) – Germany has suspended all major arms exports to Turkey amid concerns over the deteriorating human rights situation in the country, while Turkey's EU Affairs Minister said the decision will make “Europe's future more vulnerable.”

“We have put on hold all big requests (for arms exports) that Turkey has sent to us, and these are really not a few,” said Minister Sigmar Gabriel during a panel discussion put on by German daily Handelsblatt, Reuters reported.

He added that under NATO, Berlin is obliged to send arms to allies if requested, but said this is currently not possible. Exceptions would include exports tied to international agreements or vehicles, not weapons, according to Reuters.

Turkey's EU Affairs Minister, Omer Celik, speaking in London on Tuesday responded to Germany's decision.

“This decision will weaken Turkey's fight against terrorism, and weakening the Turkish fight would mean making Europe's future more vulnerable,” he said, according to Reuters. “Germany must leave security issues out of political discussions.”

“The German foreign minister must formulate his comments seriously,” Celik added. “Those arms are being used in the struggle against the PKK and ISIS.”

Relations have become increasingly strained between Ankara and Berlin in the wake of the failed coup attempt in Turkey last year as Germany has been critical of what it sees as a deterioration of the rule of law.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has said Germany may have to “rethink” relations with Ankara in response to arrests of German nationals for what Berlin says are “political reasons.” As many as 12 Germans are in jail in Turkey for

similar reasons.

In a recent televised debate ahead of elections in German, Merkel said she would cancel Turkey's EU membership talks. Ankara hit back accusing her of inciting racism.

Turkish officials have also accused Germany of “Nazi-like” tactics when Turkish politicians were banned from campaigning in Germany ahead of its constitution referendum earlier this year. Germany issued the ban citing security concerns.

Despite their strained relations, Ankara has approved 99 permits for arms exports to Turkey totaling more than 25 million euros since the beginning of 2017, according to the ministry for economic affairs. This is a significant decline over exports from the year before. In the first eight months of 2016, Germany approved 158 permits with a total value of nearly 70 million euros.

Iran Signs Deal to Repair Syria's Power Grid

TEHRAN (Aljazeera) – The Syrian government has signed an agreement Iran to repair parts of the war-torn country's power grid, state media said, in an early sign of the major role Tehran is expected to play in Syria's reconstruction.

The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on Tuesday, September 12, during a visit by Syria's electricity minister to Tehran, including building a power plant in the coastal province of Latakia with a capacity of

“The Syrian government ... is working relentlessly to restore the power system,” SANA quoted Syrian Electricity Minister Mohammad Zuhair Kharboutli as saying.

The deal also includes rehabilitating a 90-megawatt power station in Deir Az Zor province, where the Syrian army and allied forces have made swift advances against ISIL in recent days.

A contract was also signed for an Iranian company to supply power to the city of Aleppo, where the opposition-held eastern part of the city was retaken by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government in December of last year.

“We will stand by the Syrian people to rebuild this country ... We will bring light to houses of the Syrian people,” Sattar Mahmoudi, Iran's acting energy minister, said in a statement on the ministry's website.

The deals will be worth hundreds of millions of dollars if finalized, and Tehran is also eager to expand its coop-

eration to construct water and sewage facilities in Syria, Mahmoudi said.

WATCH: Is Hezbollah stronger after its involvement in Syria?

More than 1,000 soldiers deployed by Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) to Syria have died on the front lines of the multi-sided conflict in recent years.

“Iran's Revolutionary Guards saved the Assad regime from collapsing at a heavy price for Damascus for now they own Syria,”



The deals to restore and build new power plant will be worth hundreds of millions of dollars if finalised [Ammar Abdullah/Reuters]

540 megawatts, Syrian state news agency SANA said.

During the more than six years of fighting, Syria's infrastructure has taken a tremendous hit. Electricity generation dropped by more than a half from 2010 to 2014, according to the latest figures available from the OECD's International Energy Agency monitoring group.

Tuesday's agreement involves restoring the main control center for Syria's electricity grid in the capital Damascus, SANA said.

Cyprus Picks up Boats Carrying 300 Syrian Refugees

NICOSIA (DPA) – Two men have been detained after two boats carrying 305 Syrian refugees arrived on the Mediterranean Island. The Turkish coast guard says it stopped 313 migrants this weekend trying to reach Balkan countries.

File picture of migrants at a Cypriot refugee camp

Cypriot authorities brought ashore more than 300 Syrian refugees early on Sunday after spotting two crowded boats in open water off the island's northwest coast.

Police spokesman Michalis Ioannou said the 202 men, 30 women and 73 children had left Mersin in Turkey on Saturday.

As one of the vehicles was taking in water, the boats were towed into harbor, police said. A 36-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of piloting one of the boats. He was expected to appear before a court in the Cypriot resort town of Paphos on Sunday.

A 29-year-old man was also taken into custody on suspicion of migrant trafficking.

Officials said the migrants were in good health and would be transported to a reception center outside the capital Nicosia. They reported paying up to \$2,000 (1,660 euros) each to the smugglers for the trip.

Authorities said the rescue was one of the largest group landings of migrants to the island, which despite being the closest European Union member state to Syria, has largely been spared the massive numbers that have overwhelmed other EU countries over the past two years.

Since September 2014 more than a dozen migrant boats have reached the island, bringing in nearly 1,500 migrants, including the latest arrivals.

Meanwhile, Turkish authorities say they stopped 313 migrants on the Black Sea attempting to reach Balkan countries in the last two days.

One fishing boat, discovered off the northern coast of Istanbul on Sunday, was carrying 93 Syrians and an Afghan along with a suspected Turkish smuggler.

The coast guard also intercepted 68 Syrians and two Iranians in a sailboat with one alleged Turkish smuggler, a few miles east of Bulgaria on Saturday.

Late Friday, an official vessel stopped 149 Syrians and two Ukrainians thought to be smugglers in a fishing boat emitting a distress signal just off the Romanian coast.

Emanuele Ottolenghi, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told Reuters news agency.

“I expect these to be the first in a wave of tenders won by IRGC companies, which will have the best reconstruction projects to Iran,” he added.

Iranian firms are already involved in a series

of electricity generation projects in Syria.

Iran also said in August that it has exported \$58 million worth of goods to Syria in the first four months of this year, marking a 100 percent increase compared with the same period a year ago.

In January, Iran's government and entities close to the IRGC signed major telecommunications and mining deals with Damascus.

Community News

AGBU Central Board to Donate \$50,000 in Support of Hurricane Harvey Relief Efforts

NEW YORK – The Central Board of Directors of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), through special relief contributions, will donate \$50,000 to the American Red Cross in support of Hurricane Harvey Emergency Relief.

As part of its longstanding commitment to humanitarian aid, AGBU has always responded to the plight of people impacted by conflict and natural disasters. Local chapters and Young Professionals groups also carry on this longstanding tradition mobilizing to address local needs during times of crisis.

Natural disasters like Hurricane Harvey create more needs than any single organization can meet on its own. The American Red Cross is collaborating with communities, government agencies, non-profits and businesses to help fund and coordinate emergency relief efforts. We encourage our members and supporters worldwide to continue to donate to organizations that are providing relief efforts.

The American Red Cross is working along the Gulf Coast to rescue people, evacuate homes and provide emergency supplies, food,



La Grange, Texas. Red Cross volunteer assess flood damage in La Grange, Texas. Photo by Chuck Haupt for the American Red Cross. ©The American National Red Cross 2017

water, shelter, counseling and other assistance. Approximately 42,000 people sought refuge in 258 Red Cross and partner shelters across Texas while some 2,000 disaster workers are on the ground.

The Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America is advocating to help provide relief to the people of the St. Kevork Church community, as many Armenian families are now displaced. Visit <https://armenianchurch.us/donate/> to support the Diocese's relief efforts by donating to the St. Kevork Flood Relief.

To donate to the American Red Cross, visit <https://www.redcross.org>

Victims Demand Red Sox Atone for Abuse

BOSTON (*Boston Herald*) – A group of men sexually abused over decades by a former equipment and clubhouse manager for the Boston Red Sox under Tom Yawkey are demanding the team acknowledge and make amends for the abuse as it moves to scrub reminders of Yawkey's racist past.

"How could he continue for years? It had to be something or someone who was helping him cover this up," said Gerald Armstrong, who said he was molested by Donald Fitzpatrick as an 11-year-old employee of the Kansas City Athletics when the Red Sox came to town.

Armstrong is one of 21 men who have said Fitzpatrick molested them as youths while working for baseball teams. Charles Crawford, who said he was molested in Fenway Park in 1991, said Red Sox owner John Henry's

see ABUSE, page 9



Elvina Asatryan

Meet Elvina: Armenia's Next Wine Magnate

YEREVAN – Elvina Asatryan is a senior at the Agribusiness Teaching Center (ATC) in Yerevan, and once she finishes her education, she intends to completely redesign the Armenian wine industry. ACT is the flagship academic program at the International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education (ICARE). ICARE is partnered with Texas A&M University in order to provide Armenian students with a quality agribusiness education using western teaching

By Joel Kesselbrenner

Asatryan is working at ICARE, examining Armenia's agricultural exports and imports, and the accompanying government policies. I sat down with her one afternoon to discuss her experiences at ATC and her plans for the future. Asatryan is articulate and clearly very determined; I left with the impression that I had just met the future of Armenia's wine industry.

Asatryan is from the province of Vyots Dzor, one of the least industrialized areas in Armenia. From childhood, agriculture played a large role in her life and she always knew it was a field she wanted to go into. Her father was involved in winemaking and after her grandfather told her that there were no women in the wine business, she resolved to become the first businesswoman in the wine sector. In the pursuit of this dream, she left home and attended school in Yerevan at the Armenian National Agrarian University. Unfortunately, Asatryan found the school to be a bit lacking and was not convinced that she was ready for the workforce. Her university education had forced her to study hard and memorize a great deal, but it had not challenged her ways of thinking. At ATC, she found the education opportunity she had been lacking. Not only did ATC imbue her with public speaking and networking skills, but it fundamentally changed her ways of thinking. For so long she had been simply memorizing material and not engaging with it in a meaningful way. At ATC, she was able to go beyond theory and apply her skills and knowledge in a real-world context. She feels like a far more confident, capable person, and this really shines through just from talking to her.

After Asatryan finishes at ATC, the next step in her journey will take her to California. During her studies, Elvina became aware of the unique properties and tastes of Armenian wine. However, Armenian wine does not enjoy the same widespread acclaim as wines from Western Europe. Many Armenian wine companies have found success in overseas markets but Armenian wines on the whole are largely unknown. Elvina believes she has found a remedy for this problem and intends to unite all Armenian wine companies through the creation of an Armenian wine association. This is the project that will bring her to America. Elvina will intern in the California wine sector, where she hopes to

see WINE, page 7

UT Student Spends Summer Interning in Washington

By Kylie Hubbard

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – University of Tennessee (UT) student Mateos Hayes, a sophomore in philosophy, started his fall semester with a new internship under his belt.

"I am proud of what I achieved and of what I was able to see and do," Hayes said. "I believe that I came away from the Assembly with some truly valuable lessons which will help me as I go onward."

Founded in 1972, the Armenian Assembly of America, also known as Assembly, promotes Armenian issues and encourages Armenian-Americans to participate in American politics. The Assembly also assists in Armenian development programs in places such as Nagorno-Karabakh with the hope of strengthening the relationship between the U.S. and Armenia.

Five years after its start, the Assembly founded the Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program. This program gives college students of Armenian descent the opportunity to get hands-on experience with the policy-making process in Washington, D.C.

"The internship program is important in providing these students real-world experience and creating future leaders for the Armenian-American community," Joseph Piatt, Armenian Assembly intern program director, said. "That's why we do this particular program – to develop the next generation of leaders and build our contacts in D.C. through positive work and connection."

Hayes knew he wanted to spend his summer at an internship, and his friend directed him to the Assembly.

"I wanted to intern in DC this summer, and I had applied to multiple other potential opportunities," Hayes said. "When one of my friends, who knew of my interest in working in DC, pointed me towards the Armenian Assembly of America, I looked them up."

Hayes was surprised when he received news of his acceptance. He couldn't wait to start.

"I felt relieved and optimistic. I had applied just shy of the deadline and summer wasn't far away," Hayes said. "I couldn't wait to see what it would be like to work for an Armenian-American advocacy group for the first time."

Hayes said the eight-week program gave him the opportunity to meet and work with different political figures, something he will remember as he moves forward in his career.

"I think the experience I gained while working at this internship will be invaluable to me as I return to work in DC soon," Hayes said. "I have an interest in community work and government, and I have gained a better understanding of how those work."

"One of the most potent tools for us to communicate Armenian issues to the world is social media," Hayes said. "Retweeting and sharing for groups such as the Armenian Assembly of America or even the HALO Trust, is very helpful."

This summer wasn't the last time D.C. will see Hayes. He wants to return to the nation's capital again next year for another internship.

"I greatly enjoyed this internship and my summer, and can't wait to return to DC to intern once more."



COMMUNITY NEWS

Billerica Woman Karen Hovsepian Rescues, Fosters Houston Dogs

By Rick Sobey

BILLERICA, Mass. (*Lowell Sun*) – The videos of frightened pets in the Houston area have been heartbreaking.

Because of devastating Hurricane Harvey, many pets have been displaced and need new foster homes.

Watching this tragedy unfold from afar, Billerica resident Karen Hovsepian couldn't sit idly by and not help. As a result, the volunteer with Paws New England will head to Texas on Friday, September 1, picking up around 25 foster-home dogs.

Four volunteers, including Hovsepian, were to take two vans down to Texarkana – which is located about 300 miles from Houston. They brought supplies down, and then bringing back dogs who will be fostered in New England.

"Rescuing these dogs, and making sure they have somewhere to go is very important right now," said Hovsepian, 52, who lives in Pinehurst. "They desperately need fosters to take in all these dogs."

Paws New England is a nonprofit that rescues abandoned, neglected and abused dogs, bringing them to New England where they are placed in homes.

None of the dogs from the Houston area are coming directly from shelters. They're all coming from foster homes for Passion for Pooches in Texas, and they're all fully vetted with vaccines. Passion for Pooches is a small-breed rescue group, specializing in finding permanent homes for rescue dogs.

"There's been an outpouring of people to foster them," said Joanne Hutchinson, co-founder of Paws New England. "The response has been amazing."

Some of the dogs coming back to New England include a shih tzu mix, maltese mix, retriever mix and poodle mix.

Hovsepian and Paws New England are also collecting supplies to bring down to Texas this weekend. The supplies will be distributed by Passion for Pooches to local rescues and



Karen Hovsepian, of Billerica, left and Kirsten Hirschler, of Littleton, with Hovsepian's rescue dog, Bo, at Hovsepian's home in late May. They were featured in a June 5 Sun article about their volunteering with Missing Dogs Massachusetts. Hovsepian will travel to Texas to rescue dogs stranded by Hurricane Harvey.

shelters.

Some of the supplies include: canned/wet food for cats and dogs; collapsing crates; collars; leashes; kitty litter; scoops and bins for litter; baggies to disburse food; flea/tick preventative and heartworm preventative.

"They're going to bring as much as they can," Hutchinson said. "They need all these supplies down there."

She stressed that Paws New England won't go to the devastation in Houston, and that they're mindful of animal rescue teams on the ground. They won't interfere, she said. The goal is to get supplies to those who need it without getting

in the way, and bringing back dogs to foster homes.

Paws New England is also accepting monetary donations, which will help Passion for Pooches with any of their veterinary needs.

"We're asking that anyone willing to foster to go on our website, and fill in a foster application," she added.

For more information on fostering, visit www.pawsnewengland.com/foster. You can also email adoptions@pawsnewengland.com.

To donate money to Paws New England, which will help go toward Houston efforts, visit www.pawsnewengland.com/donate.

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Armenia's Next Wine Magnate

WINE, from page 6

acquire the first-hand experience needed to unite all of Armenia's wineries under one banner. Elvina has no delusions that it will be easy but she has already left her home once to study and is fully prepared to do it again.

For me, what is most remarkable about Elvina is that she is doing all of this for the good of her country. Not once did she mention her own personal benefit. Likewise, she feels indebted to ATC, and hopes to pay it back in full. Elvina was only able to attend ATC in the first place because she qualified for a scholarship. On her own she would not have been able to afford it. Once she establishes herself in wine, Elvina has every intention of establishing her own ATC scholarship, which will help students just like her get the break they need. Since its inception, ATC has been a breeding ground for leaders in agribusiness, and Elvina might possibly become the most successful of them all. In a country that has struggled with economic stagnation, ATC and the pioneers it produces may be the brightest hope for an improved economy.

(Joel Kesselbrenner is a sophomore at Brown University. This summer he interned in Armenia at the International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education (ICARE). The center is an educational NGO partnered with Texas A&M University that provides young Armenians with an agribusiness education based off Western teaching methods. ICARE's flagship program is the Agribusiness teaching center (ATC), which offers a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Agribusiness. As part of his internship, he interviewed a handful of successful students and alumni and wrote up short profiles of their lives.)

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OBITUARY

Barkev Bablouzian

Engineer, Designer, Lover of Life and Family

NEWTON, Mass. — Barkev Bablousian died on August 18, 2017. He was 79.

He was the husband of Salpi (Ganimian) Bablouzian; father of Levon Bablouzian and his wife Susan of Framingham and Lenna Bablouzian and her husband John Santangelo of Arlington; grandfather of Sarah Bell, Ara Bablouzian, Zaven Bablouzian Valeria Santangelo and Adrina Santangelo; and great-grandfather of Frances Bell.

He was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1938 and grew up learning the art of precision machining metal parts. Upon arriving in the US in 1957, he and his parents settled in Newton. He matriculated at Northeastern University and earned a Bachelor's Degree in electrical Engineering. He began his engineering career at Avco and gained experience there for a few years.

He then traveled to Beirut, Lebanon to marry Salpi Ganimian, a nurse from the American University of Beirut. Upon arriving back in the US, the couple moved to Champaign-Urbana, Ill., where Barkev pursued his graduate studies. They stayed for two years and moved back to Massachusetts for the birth of first child, Levon.

Barkev Bablouzian was hired by Brandeis University and began a 46-year career as an electronics engineer. While growing his career, they also grew their family and welcomed their daughter, Lenna.

Barkev was the go-to guy in the Biochemistry Department. Long before computer-aided design was available, he conceived, designed, and built specialty equipment to further the research efforts of the professors. Though many of the researchers were brilliant biochemists, their grasp of practical equipment design was not equally strong and requests for equipment design frequently sounded like this "...I can't measure what I need, please help me."

The combination of intellect, creativity, and machining experience made him unique. After



painstakingly understanding the specific engineering requirements, he designed and built equipment literally decades ahead of its time. In particular, a researcher who rose to head the Biochemistry Department and to international acclaim shared the following at Barkev's retirement party after 46 years of service: "There is no way my career would have advanced this far without the help of Barkev and the work he did."

Later in his career and in retirement, the couple traveled the world and focused their attention on their five grandchildren. They were experienced, adventurous travelers and particularly enjoyed Armenia, Greece, Jerusalem, Egypt, Norway, Romania, Italy, Germany, and Hungary. Being fluent in Armenian, English, Turkish, and Arabic was a tremendous asset during these tours and this fluency, combined with his legendary wit, left a trail of friends that continues to stretch around the world. On a visit to Morocco, he was identified as a potential threat due to his Syrian heritage. The couple were assigned an armed guard and had to

wait until the group had completed an eight-hour tour. Rather than sulk, they befriended the armed guard while sipping tea and exchanging stories in Arabic before being personally escorted back to their tour at the end of the day. They received numerous cards and correspondence from the guard through the ensuing years.

As a grandparent, Barkev forged a unique and special bond with each of his grandchildren. Always generous and fun loving to the core, he leaves each of his grandchildren special, far ranging memories including: trips to Disneyworld and Cancun, allowing the kids to steer the car while sitting in his lap, joking with

waiters and waitresses until the kids were laughing so hard it hurt, painting his fingernails with his granddaughters, adding his own unique narration to a boat ride on the Cape, and simply playing ball in the front yard.

He lived a full and wonderful life and his accomplishments will be shared by his friends and family for decades to come.

Services were held at the Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, on Wednesday, August 23. Interment was in Newton Cemetery, Newton.

Arrangements were by the Giragosian Funeral Home, 576 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

Sara Bejoian

Resident of Watertown and Chatham

WATERTOWN — On September 1, Sara Bejoian of Watertown and Chatham passed away at her home in Chatham.

She was the wife of the late James Bejoian. She leaves her children Lynne and Laurie of Watertown, JC and his wife Beth and son Benjamin of Sherborn; brother Oscar Najarian and his wife Pat of Westborough.

She was the daughter of the late Vartan and Aroosiag Najarian of Worcester.

Her greatest loves were her family, grandson Benjamin, church, friends and extended family, music, arts, Friday Night Band Concerts and 4th of July Parades in Chatham and the Boston Red Sox.

Funeral services were on Friday, September 8 at Armenian Church of the Holy Translators, 38 Franklin Street, Framingham.

Arrangements were made by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home.



Dr. Richard Krikorian

Advocate for Women's Health

BELMONT, Mass. — Dr. Richard Krikorian, 75, died on August 17, 2017.



He was a father and physician who devoted his life to the care of patients and their families through his work as an OB/GYN at Mt. Auburn Hospital.

As a doctor, mentor, and colleague, he was a passionate advocate for women's health issues. His warm smile, wonderful stories, compassion, and accepting

nature brought comfort to all who knew and loved him.

Krikorian is survived by his son Benjamin, wife Renee, and grandchildren Scarlett, Henry and Eliza of Newton; son David and partner Shannyn of Boston; brother John of Needham and sister Elaine of Connecticut; former wife and friend Betty of Belmont and numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

Services were held at St. James Armenian Church, Watertown on Wednesday, August 23. Interment was in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home.

Giragosian

F U N E R A L H O M E

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Vick Vanlian

Interior Designer

BEIRUT — Lebanese-Armenian interior designer Vick Vanlian of Vick Vanlian / V World has passed away at the age of 40.

Vanlian graduated with a degree in Interior Architecture from the American University in Beirut in 2000. He founded the interior design company Vick Vanlian and launched his first furniture collection, V World, at the Milan Furniture Fair in 2012.

Harper's Bazaar Interior named Vanlian as one of the "fastest growing names in interiors in the Middle East," with projects commissioned all over the region by an impressive list of clients, including: Haifa Wehbe, Ragheb Alama and members of several Middle Eastern Royal families.

The news of his death was announced on the Lebanesedesigners Instagram page on September 11, although more information has not been revealed.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Even in Summer, This Company Wants to Warm Your Home

By Cindy Atoji Keene

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (*Boston Globe*) – It's a flashback to the Victorian era – or perhaps a scene out of Harry Potter. A tiny and quaint village shop brims with gleaming brass and cooper. Gothic letters on an old wooden sign read: Adams Fireplace Shop. It's the last place you'd expect to find near Cambridge's Fresh Pond rotary, in the middle of a busy commercial district filled with big-box stores, gas stations and doughnut shops. But over a half a century ago, this third-generation family store was on farmland near the railroad tracks, selling coal, kindling, and firewood. Today, the shop – just 13 feet wide by 150 feet long – holds \$3.5 million worth of antique fireplace equipment, including 500 pairs of andirons, 400 antique fenders, and 200 tool sets. The inventory extends into a barn and 12 sheds behind it. "It's a humble storefront. People think it's going to be a junk shop, but it's is an optical illusion," says longtime proprietor Donald Adamian. The *Globe* spoke with Adamian to find out how he keeps the hearth burning year-round.

"When I was a young boy, I went to prep school on Brattle Street next to Longfellow House. Afterward, I'd sit at home in a rocking chair and read Colonial Homes magazine. I'd dream about open hearths and fireplaces and creating coziness in people's homes. My family ran a coal yard at the time, and I sold firewood to Harvard students who would come in their little VW Bugs and buy a cord for \$3.50 to warm their dorm rooms. They'd ask if we sold fireplace equipment, and it was my idea to start selling tongs, shovels, pokers, and other tools.



Donald Adamian, who runs Adam's Fireplace Shop in Cambridge, says the Internet has been cutting into his business.

My dad took me to a yard sale where I picked up a pair of antique andirons and screens. I polished and sold them, and that's how I got into selling antiques.

"Over the years, our stock grew to an ever-

widening variety, including vintage lighting. Some of the pieces have been here 30 to 40 years, just waiting to be discovered by the right person. Almost everyone comes in here first for fireplace screens, but then they start to see the firewood racks and carriers, bellows, andirons, grates, and fenders, and it creates a desire for all the beautiful things. Even with gas and electric units, homeowners will still purchase andirons and fenders to give the illusion of real wood-burning fireplaces. But there are still many traditionalists who want to live like the old days and insist on wood-burning, purchasing polished brass accoutrements, even though the trend is toward satin nickel or oil-polished bronze.

"We still sell firewood, of course – it was a mild winter last season, so I sold just 4,000 bun-

dles, but two years ago, during the harsh winter, it was 11,000. Our firewood comes 12 pallets at a time, 630 bundles, from Whitinsville in central Massachusetts, all shrink wrapped with a handle, so it makes it easy to carry.

Overall, business has dropped in the last two years. Everyone's buying on the Internet and they don't even think of going into a retail store anymore. Boston isn't big enough of a market now, so we've photographed hundreds of products on red velvet to put online, adding onto the over 760 items already on website.

"Even my cat, Buddy, who was a fixture here for the last 20 years, has passed away. I'm 62 now, and have had five husbands, but no children, so I'm not sure of the future of this store. But I've fulfilled my dream of bringing warmth into people's homes."



Executive Director Position Manoogian Manor, Livonia, MI

The Manoogian Manor, founded by Alex and Marie Manoogian, a fully licensed non-profit facility providing assisted living and personal care services for seniors, is currently taking resumes for the position of its Executive Director. A 90-bed premier community that has just gone through a major multi-million dollar renovation is known for its outstanding resident care programs. Potential candidates should have extensive experience in the industry, having run similar or larger programs in the past.

- Michigan Assisted Living Administrator's License will be required.
- A passion for working with seniors
- College degree BA/BS, preferably in Business Administration, Hospital Administration, Hospitality, or health-related field.
- Must have a minimum of three years of executive managerial experience in senior living, assisted care, nursing home administration or similar.
- Must possess excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Must demonstrate a warm, outgoing, and compassionate personality.
- Must have demonstrated integrity, maturity and leadership skills.
- Must have knowledge of community agencies and appreciation for social/life history status of the residents.
- Knowledge of the Armenian language and or culture is a plus

Interested candidates should send resume with cover letter to: Manoogian Manor, Attention Gregory Jamian at jamiang@americaremedical.com

Victims Demand Red Sox Atone for Abuse

ABUSE, from page 6

proposal to rename Yawkey Way because of the former owner's racist past is no comfort.

"I was kind of offended, it was a slap in the face," Crawford said. "I saw him on TV, so concerned about the team's image. What about me?"

Fitzpatrick, who died in 2005, admitted to sexually abusing children, pleading guilty to four counts of attempted sexual battery. Authorities said Fitzpatrick had victimized at least nine others, but the statute of limitations had run out.

"The Red Sox have done great things with Boston Strong, with the Jimmy Fund, where are they now?" said Mitchell Garabedian, an attorney for the men. "It's as though they've shirked all social responsibility."

Red Sox spokeswoman Zineb Curran said, "The Red Sox have always viewed the actions – which date back as long as six decades ago – of Mr. Fitzpatrick to be abhorrent. When the team, under prior ownership, became aware of the allegations against Mr. Fitzpatrick in 1991, he was promptly relieved of his duties."



Attorney Mitchell Garabedian, center, listens as he holds a press conference with Gerald Armstrong, left, the alleged oldest of Red Sox employee Donald Fitzpatrick's victims from Kansas City, Mo and Charles Crawford, right, the alleged youngest of "Fitzzy's" alleged 21 victims abused at Fenway Park at Hilton Hotel in the financial district on Wednesday, September 6, 2017.



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**Friday
November 3
2017**

Reception, Meet the Awardees
6:30 P.M.

Dinner and Program
7:30 P.M.

Mistress of Ceremonies

Anaide Nahikian

Leader, Advanced Training Program
on Humanitarian Action at Harvard
Humanitarian Initiative

Entertainment

Black Sea Salsa



COMMUNITY NEWS

Group Raises Funds for Children's Cancer Hospital in Yerevan

KAZANJIAN, from page 1

Kazanjian's 10-year-old grandson, Vaughan Krikorian, was with her and her husband, Richard Kazanjian, and did not say much during the tour, during which they saw many children stricken with cancer. One child, she recalled, couldn't even pick her head up.

"He didn't say anything," she said. Then, once on the bus driving away from the hospital, she recalled he said, "What are we going to do about this?"



A patient with a City of Smiles shirt

She added, "It made a huge impression on him."

Kazanjian replied that she would try to find a way. She contacted Tamamyan, and realized the best way to help was through Dana Farber, which hosts the annual Jimmy Fund Walk to raise funds for cancer research. The Dana Farber Global Health Initiatives donates to different hospitals and organizations around the world. Through contact with them, Kazanjian and others were able to establish a link so that 90 percent of the funds raised by this group at the Jimmy Fund Walk goes to the Muratsan Clinic. This way, a trusted organization with experience in working on the disease is making sure that the money is going to the right place.

Kazanjian, of Burlington, teaches at the Kids Test Kitchen and works with the food brokerage company At Your Service Sales. She has been a longtime member of Holy Trinity.

"The children have no food in the hospital," she said.

In fact, she noted, the hospital lacked everything: supplies, food, medicines, etc.

Feeding the children is, Kazanjian explained, the responsibility of the parents.

The hospital is accepting donations of non-perishables, such as sugar, salt, lentils, bulgur, etc.

With Kazanjian's training as a dietician, she has been trying to set up a kitchen at the hos-



Rev. Vasken Kouzouian with patients during a visit to the hospital in 2016.

pital for the children and families. She came back recently from a month-long stint there and is going to head back later this fall.

The children, she stressed, get rare forms of cancer which sometimes requires much more intensive treatment that also can be harder to pinpoint, as "you very rarely see them."

Kazanjian spoke also about seeing one girl, Ani, a bright and beautiful 10-year-old, who the previous year at the hospital had been without hair and seeming very ill. When Kazanjian had gone back in May, the young girl had appeared with a full head of hair and bright eyes. She could hardly wrap her mind around the young girl dying that very day.

Kazanjian has been walking in the Jimmy Fund Walk for 14 years as she has had many family members and friends afflicted. and this year it marks her 15th walk. Kazanjian and her group, named City of Smile Team, are going to be walking for the second year together at the Jimmy Fund Walk on Sunday, September 24. The team is gathering at 7.45 a.m. in front of Newton Wellesley Hospital, 2014 Washington St., Newton. Walkers last year raised \$27,000 for the hospital. Her grandsons alone walked raised \$2,000.

They hope to double the amount this year. Funds will go directly to the clinic, which is

The
Jimmy Fund
DANA-FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE



Sunday, September 24, 2017

**7:45 a.m., in front of Newton Wellesley Hospital
2014 Washington Street, Newton MA 02462**

**Make Every Step Count in Conquering Cancer
Join the City of Smile Team as a Walker or Sponsor**

For the second year, Cynthia Kazanjian is organizing a fund-raising effort to benefit the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic through the City of Smile team participating in the Jimmy Fund Walk. This pediatric oncology clinic works with children and their families from all

over Armenia. In 2016, almost \$27,000 was raised for the Clinic. This year's goal is to at least double that amount! **Won't you help??**

To join the City of Smile Team as a walker, please contact Cynthia at 339.222.9900 or email cynkazan@aol.com.

To donate, log onto www.jimmyfundwalk.org/2017/cityofsmile. Funds raised will go directly to the Clinic which is affiliated with Dana-Farber/Children's Hospital Health Initiative.



2016 City of Smile Team



The Jimmy Fund team last year

affiliated with Dana Farber/Children's Hospital Health Initiative.

The Muratsan doctors, Tamamyan and oncologist Liana Safaryan, are arriving in Boston on September 17 and will stay until September 24. Holy Trinity will host a public reception for them on September 20, 7-9 p.m. during which they will explain their needs as well as their successes. Also participating in the program will be several psychologists and physicians from Dana Farber.

To join or to donate, visit www.jimmyfundwalk.org/2017/cityofsmile

Another way is to write a check payable to "Dana Farber/Boston Children's Global Health Initiative," with the memo "for the City of Smile" or "for Armenia," and mail to Cynthia Kazanjian, 17 Marigold Way, Burlington MA 01803, who will ensure that all checks are delivered to the Dana Farber Global Health Initiative.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Lebanese-Armenian Racer Comes in Third on Challenging Belgian Track

SPA, Belgium — On July 30, Armenian-Lebanese driver Alex Demirdjian has won third place at the world-famous Total 24 Hours of Spa race in Belgium, which is part of the Blancpain GT Series. A total of 64 cars began the race at the historic Spa-Francorchamps circuit but only 35 finished the challenging feat. Demirdjian and his Ferrari AF Corse teammates Nicolas Minassian, Davide Rizzo and Toni Vilander came in third.

“It was important for me to race for the Armenian people,” said Alex Demirdjian. “This race was about remembering our past but also letting the world know that we are present and our future is strong.”

The Total 24 Hours of Spa race is widely recognized as one of the most difficult across the globe, due both to the continuous 24 hours of driving and the challenging weather conditions characteristic of the region. This year, drivers had to brave heavy rains throughout the entire night with many teams experiencing dangerous crashes. Demirdjian recognized the race as an important opportunity to represent both the Armenian and Lebanese communities, honoring the history of his people and creating hope for their future.

The Ferrari 488 GT3 that Demirdjian raced in proudly displayed the red, blue, and orange colors of the Armenian flag with the words “Drive for Life” just below. The front of the racecar displayed the Lebanese flag with the country’s national Cedar tree leading the way.

“It was a wonderful feeling to cross the Armenian and Lebanese flags across the finish line,” said Demirdjian. “This achievement really goes to show that teamwork is more important than any individual endeavor, and I hope future generations will be inspired to work together in



Alex Demirdjian’s car with the tricolor

pursuit of their ambitions while honoring their history.”

Prior to this event, Demirdjian raced in the Blancpain GT Endurance Race in Monza, Italy where he won 1st place with his Ferrari AF Corse teammates Davide Rizzo and Abbie Eaton.

Alex has been racing for many years. He has

always been an avid Formula racing fan and as a young adult became a driver. He participated in the 1995 and 1996 Formula 3 French Championship. This year alone he has participated in three of the Blancpain series races throughout Europe (he won first place in Monza, Italy back in April). We’re not certain which race he will take part in next, but he has aspirations to continue strong and possibly even race in the States at some of the famed tracks here.

He was born in 1970. He has been married to Anne Abi Farah since 2001 and they have two children, Alex Jr. and Anoushka.

The Demirdjian family is heavily involved with the Armenian community. The AGBU Demirdjian-Manoogian school in Los Angeles is named after them, as is the Demirdjian Center in Lebanon. Alex takes great care in continuing the charitable efforts of his family.

Alex is also occupied with Demco Group, the family business.



Alex Demirdjian with his cup



Alex Demirdjian and his team

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Arts & Living

NAASR, Near East Relief Present Screening of 'They Shall Not Perish' In Lexington, Mass.

LEXINGTON, Mass. — On Friday, October 13, at 7:30 p.m., the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Near East Foundation (NEF) will present the Boston-area public premiere of the documentary film "They Shall Not Perish: The Story of Near East Relief," at the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum (formerly National Heritage Museum), 33 Marrett Road. A post-film discussion will feature NEF Board Director and executive-producer of the film, Shant Mardirossian, with a panel of scholars. The program is free and open to the public and will be followed by a reception.

Mardirossian and award-winning director George Billard, the documentary "They Shall Not Perish" details the unprecedented humanitarian efforts of thousands of Americans who saved a generation of orphans and refugees during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and in the aftermath of the crisis that came to be known as the Armenian Genocide. The film teaches us the amazing role ordinary citizens can play in responding to humanitarian crises.

Following the screening, Marc Mamigonian, NAASR director of Academic Affairs, will moderate a panel discussion with Mardirossian and scholars Dr. Taner Akçam, Kaloosdian-Mugar Professor of Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University; Dr. Hayk Demoyan, director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia; and Dr. Nora Nercessian, author of the study City of Orphans: Relief Workers, Commissars and the Builders of the New Armenia Alexandropol/Leninakan 1919-1931.

The one-hour documentary film features the stories of American diplomats, missionaries and relief workers who, as witnesses to the Armenian Genocide, responded to a call to



action and mobilized the largest non-governmental international humanitarian movement undertaken by American citizens.

Narrated by six-time Emmy award nominated actor Victor Garber, the film is set against a mix of historical footage, archival photographs and utilizes contemporary interviews from leading academic experts such as Taner Akçam, Peter Balakian, Keith David Watenpugh, and the late Martin Deranian. In addition, the letters of American officials, relief workers and orphans are brought to life through the voices of leading actors — Michael Aronov, Kathleen Chalfant, Dariush Kashani, Andrea Martin, Ron Rifkin, Tony Shalhoub and Kara Vedder — taking the audience on a journey from the depths of cruelty to the triumphs of survival.

Mardirossian, inspired by his grandparents' escape and survival during the genocide, says he produced this film "not just to remember those we lost in the genocide, but to shed light on an important chapter of American history when ordinary citizens stood together against a great injustice and saved the lives of 132,000 orphans."



The youth opera singers during a practice for their performance of Monk

'The Monk' Sings Again in Brooklyn

NEW YORK — For the first time in almost a century, composer Barsegh Kanachian's opera "Monk," a tragic love story set on the shores of Lake Sevan, will be featured on the world stage at The Master Theater under the artistic direction of Gosh Sargsyan, musical direction of Knarik Vardanyan and featuring the talents of Astghikner Youth Choir and the Shushi Dance Ensemble.

The opera will be performed on Friday, October 13, at the Master Theater, 1029 Brighton Beach Avenue in Brooklyn.

This special event, under the auspices of Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and sponsored by the Sahakyan Brothers, was brought to life through the shared musical passion of producers Maria Sahakyan, a New York-based vocalist and Sargsyan, who hails from Armenia and has directed creative works both in the homeland and abroad.

"One of our unique cultural pieces of the Armenian musical world is the "Monk" opera," said Sargsyan, who has taught at the Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University for the past 14 years. "And after nearly eight decades of silence, I feel pride that we are able to stage this production in New York City."

Not only is the opera being given a rebirth, it is also the debut performance of youth in Monk. In addition to lead actors Artur Babayan and Alen Manukyan, the opera will feature the voices of Armenians from the homeland and the Diaspora, alongside New York-based musical students of all backgrounds - from Mexican to Jewish to Russian to Georgian - who learned Armenian music under the training and guidance of Sahakyan.

see MONK, page 14



Members of the Shushi Dance Ensemble of New York

Armenian Genocide Book Shortlisted For Dayton Literary Peace Prize

DAYTON, Ohio — Dawn Anahid MacKeen's book, *The Hundred-Year Walk: An Armenian Odyssey*, is a finalist for the prestigious Dayton Literary Peace Prize in nonfiction. She is one of 12 authors shortlisted in nonfiction and fiction for the award, which recognizes the power of literature to promote peace and reconciliation.

Inspired by the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords that ended the war in Bosnia, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize is the only international literary peace prize awarded in the United States. The prize celebrates the power of literature to promote peace, justice, and global understanding. This year's winners will be honored at a gala ceremony in Dayton on November 5.

The other finalists include Colson Whitehead's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Underground Railroad*, and J.D. Vance's best-selling *Hillbilly Elegy*.

"At a time of great uncertainty in the world, this year's finalists reveal how we got to this point and offer powerful lessons on how we can heal, reconcile, and build a better world," said Sharon Rab, co-chair of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation. "Now more than ever, we need to celebrate authors who dare to explore the impact of war, exile, racism, and economic inequality and, more importantly, endeavor to offer hope in these tumultuous times."

The Hundred-Year Walk tells the courageous story of MacKeen's grandfather, Stepan Miskjian, one of the few to survive the massacres in the Deir Zor region of present-day Syria. Miskjian left hundreds of pages detailing his survival, which MacKeen, an investigative journalist, used to reconstruct his life and death march. She then retraced his steps across Turkey and Syria. The book alternates between the two accounts. Miskjian believed he'd lived in order to tell the world about the atrocities. "Being a witness to that satanic pogrom, I vowed it as my duty to put to paper what I saw," Miskjian wrote in his notebooks.

Both the *New York Post* and *Outside* declared the book a "must read." It was also awarded best biography by the American Society of Journalists and Authors, and longlisted for the Chautauqua Prize. It's beginning to be taught in universities and high schools. "I'm so honored that many students and readers are learning about the genocide for the first time through my grandfather's story," MacKeen said. "Education is the reason why I spent a decade on this book."

Award organizers announced in July that Irish novelist, journalist and essayist Colm Tóibín, whose fiction and nonfiction captures the impact of exile and political conflict on individual lives, will receive the 2017 Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award, named in honor of the noted US diplomat who helped negotiate the Dayton Peace Accords.

The full list of finalists can be found below and at www.daytonliterarypeaceprize.org.



Dawn Anahid MacKeen

‘The Monk’ Sings Again In Brooklyn

MONK, from page 13

The youth, aged 4-17, are members of Astghikner Youth Choir, which was founded by Sahakyan during her time as a teacher at St. Gregory Armenian Church Mission Parish of Brooklyn, New York. She welcomed anyone with a desire to learn Armenian music.

“Music and opera has no language and no religion,” said Sahakyan, who studied vocals and piano at the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan. “Music unites us all and brings us together.”

Rehearsing since February, Sahakyan notes the youth’s dedication, who stay active and engaged during their five-hour rehearsals. All talented in their own right, the children are pursuing music both inside and outside of school. And by joining Astghikner, they have made new friends and shared a cross-cultural experience while keeping Armenian music alive.

“I like singing because I feel happy when I’m on stage and it’s been fun to work with other kids on this opera,” said Dea Arabuli, a kindergartener who decided to join

“Our main goal is the preservation of Armenian art around the world,” said Sargsyan. “This is a unique cultural experience where children of all nations will unite and sing together in Armenian language,” said Sargsyan, who has been working with children in the theater and opera worlds for almost two decades.

The melancholy yet alluring story comes to life with the charming décor, set pieces, handmade costumes and the artistic performances of the Shushi Dance Ensemble.

“When I was approached by Gosh and Maria, I was impressed with their vision and professionalism as well as the story,” said Seta Kantardjian, artistic director and choreographer who founded the ensemble 25 years ago. “The first time I saw the children sing, I thought they were phenomenal and I couldn’t resist the idea of Shushi being involved in a musical, which will be a first for us.”

The opera will be featured in the First Time Around the World Stage series, with plans to perform around the world so that



Members of Astghikner during a recent visit to the Holy See of Etchmiadzin

Astghikner to learn about the Armenian music and culture.

“I’ve learned a lot over the past few months, especially the certain ways to talk in Armenian and pronounce the words,” said 11-year-old Emily Plakht, a student in the musical theater program at IS 228 in New York. “I love singing and feeling the music, which is always a part of me.” This won’t be the first time Emily is on stage as she won first place in the musical “Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs” at Carnegie Hall.

“It’s my life’s work to work with kids and I can’t imagine my life without it,” said Sahakyan, who is a private vocal coach and serves in the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir. “The children may be small stars now but I know they will grow up and become big stars.”

The skillful voices of these youth will indeed enhance the experience of Monk, which takes place on an ancient island of Sevan, where a church is built at the request of Princess Mariam. When her brother and his daughter, Seda, come to see the church on a raft, the stormy lake flips them over. A monk saves Seda from drowning in the lake but he then loses the peace of his soul and body and his inner world becomes filled with Seda’s magic vision. Every night on Lake Sevan, the monk stares into the sky and waits for Seda’s call. Unable to move on from his love for her, he throws himself into the water.

Kanachian’s masterpiece will continue to delight a new generation. A composer and conductor who studied musical theory, Kanachian was born in the Ottoman Empire in 1885 and contributed greatly to the Armenian culture while living in the Diaspora, with stints in Istanbul, Paris, Cyprus and Lebanon, where he died in 1967. He is mostly known for arranging the music to the Armenian national anthem, *Mer Hairenik* along with the famous traditional Armenian lullaby *Oror Im Palas*. A meeting with Komitas Vardapet in 1910 helped him decide to become a musician and dedicate his life’s work to the Armenian people. Kanachian’s own daughter, Seda, will travel from Beirut to New York with her daughters to see her father’s opera come to life on the stage after 80 years.

“Music has always played an important role in the life of the Armenian people, as a force that brings us together,” said Archbishop Barsamian. “That great tradition has also left an imprint on the operatic stage, as newer, younger talents, add their distinct voices to our national chorus. The future will be enriched by the creative powers which are alive in our younger generation—as this opera, Monk, reminds us.”

“We don’t want this opera to die,” said Sahakyan. “We want it to live, like Bizet’s Carmen, and we want to uphold our Armenian artistic tradition while doing so.”



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian

Armenian Tomato and Bulgur Soup with Mint


INGREDIENTS

7-8 cups low-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
1 large onion, finely chopped
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 medium green bell pepper, seeded, finely chopped
1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste
1 cup fine grain bulgur
1/2 cup low-sodium tomato sauce
1 teaspoon Kosher or sea salt
3/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
Juice of one large lemon
Olive oil
Garnishing options: paprika or Aleppo pepper, fresh chopped tomatoes, parsley and mint, and a drizzle of olive oil

PREPARATION:

Bring the broth to a full boil over moderate heat in a large pot. Meanwhile, in a small pan, sauté the onions, garlic, and bell pepper in olive oil for 5-8 minutes until the onions are golden brown. Set aside. Add the tomato paste to the boiling broth. Stir until tomato paste is distributed evenly before adding the bulgur, tomato sauce, salt, and pepper. Stir to combine, then add the cooked onions, garlic and bell pepper. Cover pot, lower heat, and simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring a few times before serving. Serve hot soup with lemon juice and top with paprika or Aleppo pepper; garnish with chopped tomatoes, parsley and mint. Drizzle with olive oil, if desired. Serves 4.

*Christine’s recipes have been published in the Fresno Bee Newspaper, Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, and at thearmeniankitchen.com
Go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian> or <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>



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ARTS & LIVING

‘Undeliverable:’ USC Presents Postcards from Anatolia

LOS ANGELES — The University of Southern California (USC) Institute of Armenian Studies presents a one-of-a-kind installation of extremely rare postcards from Anatolia, displayed alongside scenes from many of the same locations captured a century later.

“Undeliverable: Postcards and Photos of Lives Interrupted,” which runs August 28 through December 18 in USC’s Edward L. Doheny Jr. Memorial Library, revolves around 160 original printed sepia tones, some of which have never been exhibited before, hand-picked from the world’s largest collection of Ottoman postcards. Illustrating the everyday lives of Armenians in cities, towns and villages, these pictorial souvenirs would be banal had their subjects not been exterminated by near-total genocide.

Collected over 32 years by Istanbul-based businessman Orlando Carlo Calumeno, the 80,000 unique postcards, all printed between 1895 and 1921, belong to a larger collection of books, furnishings and printed ephemera documenting quotidian life in multicultural, multi-lingual, turn-of-the century Anatolia.

“The postcards are especially interesting artifacts to work with,” says exhibition co-curator Narineh Mirzaeian, a Los Angeles-based designer and architect. “They’re pre-genocide, but they foreshadow what is about to happen. Or they don’t foreshadow it, which feels even more stark.”

As a counterpoint to the vintage postcards, the installation features Brazilian photographer Norair Chahinian’s visual explorations into his own Armenian roots. Drawn from two books of his photography, *Armenia* (2008) and *The Power of Emptiness* (2012), they include images captured using an antique camera owned by Chahinian’s grandfather, an Anatolian refugee who operated a photo studio in Aleppo, Syria, before joining the Armenian diaspora in São Paulo.

Photography and photographic printing, notes the collector, Calumeno, were almost exclusively Armenian trades in Ottoman Turkey. Religious prohibitions against making graven images prevented Muslims from entering the profession until 1910, and it fell to Christians, particularly Armenians, to fill the vacuum.

Postcards, he says, “were what the Internet is today” — an easy, low-cost way to preserve a travel memory or to keep in touch with loved ones. “In those days, people received hundreds

of postcards from friends everywhere,” Calumeno says. “Most were thrown away.”

Some postcards included in the “Undeliverable” installation depict world heritage sites along the Silk Road. Others document ordinary village life and mundane urban structures—a new factory wing, school building or orphanage. Missionaries used these to support fund-raising efforts.

Calumeno, who is Armenian on his mother’s side and Levantine-Italian on his father’s side, focuses his postcard collecting on Anatolia’s

sender had jotted down a home remedy for nursing mothers to prevent cracked nipples. The card is addressed, in swirling Armenian cursive, to the woman’s sister in Bursa.

“These postcards are very important,” says Calumeno. “Each one is a gateway to connect with the past—a glorious past where everybody called each other ‘my brother, my sister.’ You see these naïve people, not knowing what is going to happen in the future. In these images, they live happily forever.”

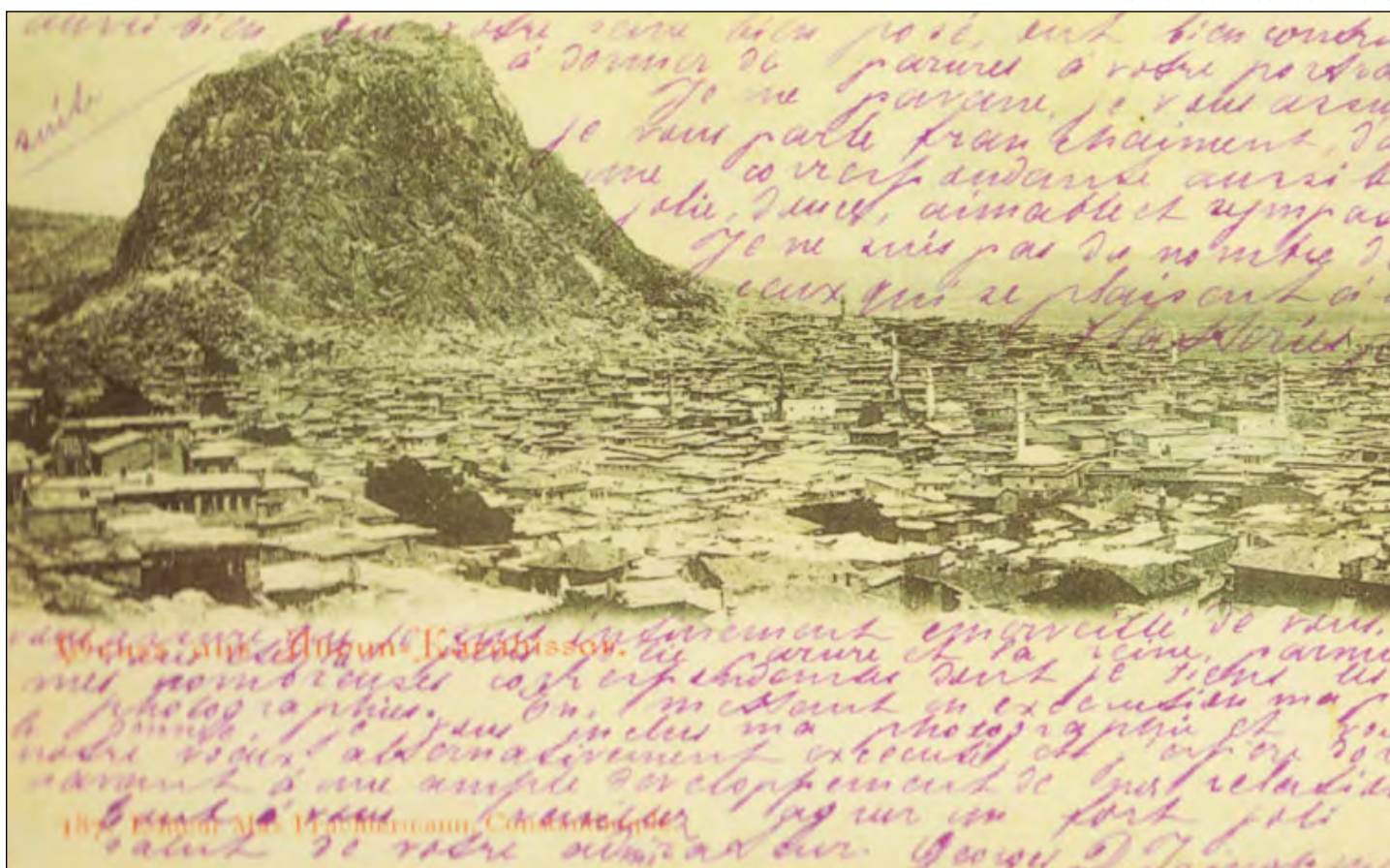
“Undeliverable” is presented on two floors, in

a dilapidated Armenian church dome looming overhead.

The installation design invites visitors to navigate the curated scenes at two scales, says Ghazarian—zooming in to study nuances of daily life brought to life in the postcard dioramas, and zooming back out to see the blight left in the wake of genocide.

“It’s this surreal emotional landscape where alienation meets nostalgia, what-if encounters why, and despair yields to an irrepressible urge to reconstruct and build upon the erased past,”

ORLANDO CARLO CALUMENO COLLECTION AND ARCHIVES



diverse minority communities: Assyrians, Jews, Greeks, Kurds and especially Armenians. “The greatness of Anatolia was that melting pot,” he says. “Now it has become a mono-cultural, mono-lingual environment.”

His favorite card — the first he ever purchased, at age 16 — depicts Istanbul’s Hippodrome Square near Hagia Sophia, the cathedral-turned-mosque and a major tourist attraction. Curiously, on the back side, the

multiple parts, spanning the Doheny Library’s Treasure Room, Rotunda and Arts Corridor.

Working closely with USC Institute of Armenian Studies director Salpi Ghazarian, 160 vintage postcards are displayed in vitrines on the ground level, alongside documentary-style black-and-white images taken by Chahinian in recent years.

But in the Treasure Room, the curator has taken an unconventional approach. Focusing on 10 of the most intriguing postcards, she has scanned, enlarged and optically separated the images, creating layered, three-dimensional dioramas. Standing at eye-level on tripods, each diorama box invites visitors to peer into a lost

she adds

Genocide exhibitions typically focus on victims, notes Mirzaeian. This installation focuses on places.

“It’s a different approach to what was lost, and what has remained,” she says. “It goes beyond victimhood — all these feelings we slip into that are unproductive. It’s more about re-inhabiting these spaces through the persistent architectural details. Those imaginative realities are interesting because they beg a lot of productive questions. Anytime you can do that, it’s good.”

“We’re very pleased to be able to present this immersive installation, in a timeless, three-

ORLANDO CARLO CALUMENO COLLECTION AND ARCHIVES



world through a time-bending tower viewer. On the surrounding walls and ceiling, Mirzaeian has splashed full-scale murals of Chahinian’s bleak architectural photography illustrating modern Anatolia’s abandoned spaces, including

dimensional space, here in the Library. This is especially important because the library’s long hours will make it easy for anyone who wants to spend time in this lost world to attend. Admission, of course, is free,” said Ghazarian.



TCA MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP

THE *Unexpected* GUEST
by Agatha Christie

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ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 17 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park for Families and Friends. 2-4 p.m. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCVB-TV5 is emcee. Enjoy the Greg Krikorian Ensemble. Hoodies! At 2:30 pm meet Wally the Green Monster and his sister, Tessie. RSVP appreciated hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 17 — Armenian Church of the Holy Translators annual Armenian Food Festival, to be held at the church (38 Franklin Street, Framingham, MA), Noon – 5 P.M. Traditional Armenian food menu includes Shish, Losh, & Chicken Kebabs, dinners, beverages and pastries. Entertainment includes live Armenian music, dancing and children’s activities. Church hall is available for unwanted weather conditions. For further information, contact the church office: 508-875-0868.

SEPTEMBER 20 — Meet and Greet the Doctors of the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic of Yerevan State Medical University, 7-9 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. All are invited to meet Dr. Gevorg Tamamyan and Dr. Liana Safaryan of the Chemotherapy Clinic for an informative evening to learn more about the wonderful work they are doing at this Clinic that treats children dealing with cancer from all over Armenia. Light reception. For further information, contact Cynthia Kazanjian, 339.222.9900.

SEPTEMBER 21 — Welcome Reception for New Citizens following the Naturalization Ceremony at Faneuil Hall. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Funded by the Anna & Noubar Afeyan Endowed Fund. For information, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 21 — Henry Theriault, “Setting the Agenda: Genocide Studies Today and the Place of the Armenian Genocide,” at Thursday, 7:30 p.m., National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. Presented by the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues. Contact hq@naasr.org for more information.

SEPTEMBER 22 — St. James Hye Café. Join us for delicious food and fellowship, and live musical entertainment! Enjoy Kebab, Falafel, Imam Bayeldi, and more. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. For more information visit www.stjameswatertown.org. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

SEPTEMBER 30 — AN EVENING WITH SIBIL, renowned Armenian Singer from Istanbul (www.sibilmusic.com), joined on stage by Zangakner Ensemble and other local musicians, 7 p.m., Ellsworth Theatre at Pine Manor College, Chestnut Hill. Sponsored by the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA). For info & tickets, at \$100, \$75, & \$50, contact aiwainternational.org/sibil or 617-926-0171.

OCTOBER 4 — Wednesday, Sts. Vartanantz - Hye Point Golf Outing @ Butter Brook Golf Club, Westford. \$150 includes Golf, Lunch, Dinner, and 20 Raffle Tickets. 10:00 a.m. shotgun start. Registration desk on October 4 open at 9:00 a.m. Contact: Mark at 508-633-7447; Steve, 978-808-2820; or email StsVGolf@earthlink.net. Proceeds to benefit scholarships for Diocesan youth programs.

OCTOBER 5 — Panel Discussion, “Expanding Inclusion of Media Literacy in Education in Armenia: Challenges and Opportunities,” with the participation of five young women from Armenia’s media literacy organizations and schools, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave. Co-sponsored by the Cambridge Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) and NAASR / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues. Contact hq@naasr.org for more information.

OCTOBER 10 — Reducing and Managing Stress: Walking the Labyrinth. 5:30 p.m. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway in partnership with Hollister Staffing. HUBweek program. Networking Reception follows at Hollister Staffing, 75 State Street. RSVP appreciated at HUBweek or hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

OCTOBER 13-14 — St. James 70th Annual Bazaar. Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries! Silent Auction, Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Raffles, Children’s Activities and more! Details to follow. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or info@stthagop.com or visit www.stjameswatertown.org.

OCTOBER 11 — Geometry as Public Art: Celebrating the Immigrant Experience. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. 5:30pm. HUBweek program. Reception hosted by The Bostonian Hotel. RSVP appreciated at HUBweek or hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

OCTOBER 13 — Friday, 7:30 p.m. Film Screening: “They Shall Not Perish: The Story of Near East Relief,” at the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum (formerly the National Heritage Museum), 33 Marrett Road, Lexington (at the intersection of Route 2A and Massachusetts Ave.). Co-sponsored by National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and the Near East Foundation. Featuring a panel discussion with Taner Akcam, Hayk Demoyan, Shant Mardirossian, and Nora Nercessian, moderated by Marc Mamigonian. Contact hq@naasr.org for more information.

OCTOBER 14 — Armenian Friends of America, Inc. Present HYE KEF 5 Dance Featuring: ONNIK DINKJIAN. 7 p.m. – Midnight, 123 Old River Road • Andover. AFA room rates until 9/16/17 • Call 978-975-3600. Ticket Prices Include Buffet and Dance • Cash Bar Only. \$55 if purchased before 9/1/17 • \$65.00 after 9/1/17. \$50 for Students 21 and under. Continuous Buffet 7:30 – 9:30 pm. Advance tickets only. John Arzigian - 603-560-3826, Lucy Sirmaian - 978-683-9121, Peter Gulezian - 978-375-1616, Sharké Der Apkarian - 978-808-0598, To Benefit: The Armenian Churches of the Merrimack Valley (St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of N. Andover, The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, Haverhill, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church of Chelmsford, Ararat Armenian Congregational Church of Salem, NH) www.ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.org. John Berberian / Oud, Mal Barsamian / Clarinet, Ara Dinkjian / Keyboard, Ron Tutunjian / Dumbeg

OCTOBER 19 — The Battle of Bash Aparan. Lecture by Dr. Dikran Kaligian. Presented by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and the Armenia Tree Project. At NAASR, Belmont, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 22 — Annual Banquet of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Celebrating the 56th Anniversary of the Consecration of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Sunday, 12:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

OCTOBER 26 — Annual Fall Dinner and Drawing sponsored by the Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club, 6:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. All are invited, and you don’t have to be a member of the 1000 Club to join us for a delicious losh kebab and pilaf dinner; \$9.99 per person; tickets on sale at the door. Regular monthly raffle drawing at 8 p.m., plus five \$25 door prizes. “One-time” numbers will be sold on the night of dinner; special offer: purchase five “one-time” numbers for \$20, save \$5. For further info, contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

NOVEMBER 2 — Thursday, Symposium with the participation of International media representatives, dedicated to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator’s 85th Anniversary. Details to follow.

NOVEMBER 3 — Friday, 85th Anniversary Celebration Banquet of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator Newspaper the first English Language Armenian Newspaper in the United States @ Newton Marriott Hotel Banquet Hall. 85 Years and Beyond. Details to follow

NOVEMBER 10 — Benefit dinner for Armenia Tree Project’s 100th anniversary living memorial to General Dro and the Battle of Bash Aparan, presented by the Armenia Tree Project and the Kanayan family. Armenian American Social Club, Watertown. Details to follow.

NOVEMBER 12 — From Armenia to Boston for the first time. Beloved singer RUBEN SASUNCI, live in concert with the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston (SNDC). Sunday, at 4 p.m. at Shaw Auditorium - Watertown High School, 50 Columbia St. Tickets: \$45 and \$35 to be reserved from front to back, in the order calls are received. For tickets and info, please call Mike Demirchian (617) 240-8266 or Vrej Ashjian at (339) 222-3429.

NOVEMBER 18 — Armenian Women’s Welfare Association Lucheon/Auction will be held on Saturday, at the Oakley Country Club in Watertown.

NOVEMBER 19 — The Westin Waltham Boston Hotel, Project SAVE will celebrate with a Thanks Giving

brunch event to honor Founder Ruth Thomasian’s vision and 42 years of service and to acknowledge the many volunteers, photo donors and supporters who have contributed to Project SAVE. An event for the community to come together and celebrate as we look ahead to the future. For more information call 617-923-4542 or email: archives@projectsave.org .

MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 8 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association will present the stage play “All Rise, the Court is in Session” at the Lawrence Technological University Mary Marburger Science and Engineering Auditorium. 3 p.m. The play is a drama by one of Armenia’s prominent playwrights, Perch Zeytuntsyan, performed by the TCA MHER Megerdchian Theatrical Group from New York. Adapted and directed by Gerald Papasian from Paris. The play recounts the trial proceedings of Soghomon Tehlirian who avenged the extermination of his nation and family by assassinating Talaat Pasha in Berlin on March 15, 1921. The play will be in Armenian with English subtitles. For reservations and other questions, you may contact Eventbrite or: Karine Koundjakian at 248-761-9844; Shoushan Minassian at 248-762-4641; Pamela Coultis at 248-646-7847; Noreen Masropian at 248-376-0899; Doris Krikorian at 734-464-7973; Yvonne Korkoian at 248-254-3029 or Diana Alexanian at 248-334-3636

DECEMBER 2 — Nor Keghi Kef Time III Pagharch Dinner and Dance Fundraiser for Nor Keghi School in Armenia, 6.30 p.m. St. John Armenian Church Hall, Southfield. Continuous music by an assembly of Detroit’s All-Star Armenian Musicians will again entertain attendees to the third “Pagharch” feast that residents of the historic Armenian district dined on for centuries at the start of the winter season in mountainous Keghi district. The government of Armenia on Feb. 1962 renamed the region of Ashdarag to Nor Keghi to honor the history of Kephizees of historic Western Armenia. Funds raised will help in development of the school’s multi-purpose auditorium.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

SEPTEMBER 30 — Shish Kebab supper at the historic Ararat Armenian Congregational Church in Salem NH. 4:30 - 7. Delicious meal with shish kebab, pilaf, vegetables, salad and dessert! Adults \$15; children 12 and under \$7.50

NEW JERSEY

OCTOBER 7 — Kalfayan Orphanage of Istanbul Charity Fund Event. Please save the date for the Gala banquet celebrating the 150th anniversary of the orphanage at St’ Leon’s Armenian Church, Fairlawn. Held under the Auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian (Primate), Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

NOVEMBER 18 — Save the date. Gala banquet celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association. At the Terrace at Biagios. 299 Paramus Road, Paramus. Featuring Elie Berberian and his band from Montreal.

NEVADA

NOVEMBER 10-12 — Association of Armenian Church Choirs, 2017 Convention & Assembly, Las Vegas. Saint Geragos Armenian Apostolic Church, Contact: website: www.aaccwd.com • email: events@aaccwd.com. The AACCWD is an organization of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America.

PENNSYLVANIA

SEPTEMBER 23 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston is headed back to Pennsylvania to celebrate Armenian Independence Day, with its 30th anniversary production of “The journey continues...” At Centennial Hall of Haverford School, 450 Lancaster Ave., Haverford. Saturday, 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are going fast so please reserve your seats ASAP. For tickets, call Ana Torcomian at 610-659-7839, Alina Ashjian at 617-8521816 or email sayatnovadancecompany@gmail.com. Tickets are \$30, \$40 and \$50 with discounted rates available for groups of 20 or more.

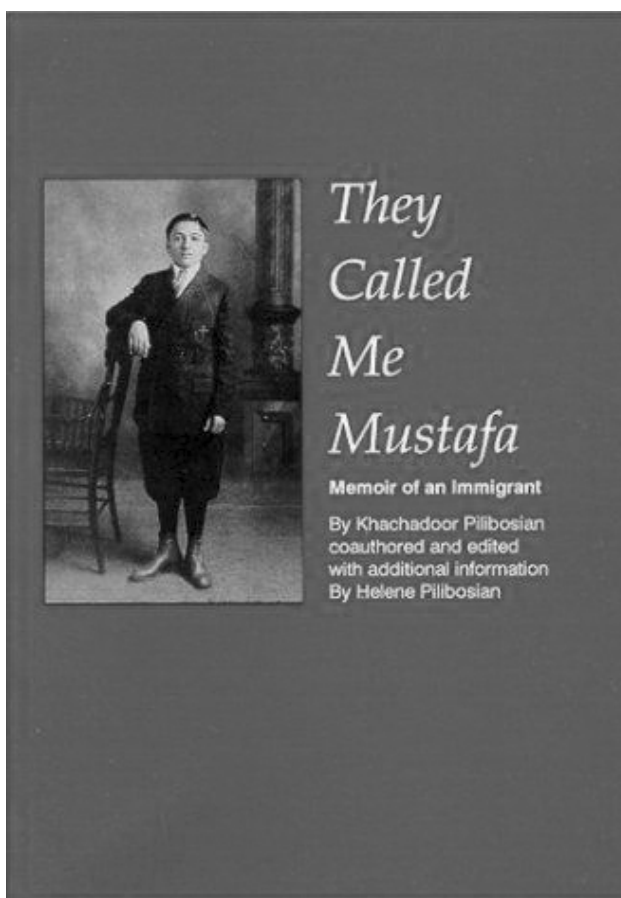
continued on next page

ARTS & LIVING

They Called Me Mustafa Now Available on Kindle and Nook

WATERTOWN — Ohan Press has released *They Called Me Mustafa: Memoir of an Immigrant* as e-books on Kindle (at amazon.com) and Nook (at barnesandnoble.com). It is the second printing of the second edition, which was originally released as a paperback in 1999. The paperback is also still available at amazon.com for \$16.

They Called Me Mustafa: Memoir of an Immigrant by Khachadoor (Archie) Pilibosian, edited and coauthored with additional information by Helene Pilibosian, is the dramatic story of Khachadoor, who as a boy is caught in the Armenian Genocide of 1915, kidnapped by a Kurd and manages to escape after years of slavery to emigrate to America. Details describe his birthplace in the province of Kharpert in historic Armenia, and early Armenian immigrant life in Watertown, Massachusetts, including the first Star Market store in Watertown Square, where he worked for a while, and his own store, Huron Spa in Cambridge. Some stories about the artist Arshile Gorky in Watertown and his friendship with Yenovk Der Hagopian, singer of Armenian troubadour songs, are recorded. Nostalgic pictures are included. Part II includes English translations of his poems and stories, many previously published in Armenian newspapers, presented for their authenticity of fact and emotion. They were translated into English by Hagop Sarkissian and Helene Pilibosian, who also wrote extensive notes on Part II, analyzing the need to write about genocide. Also includes comments by Edmond Y. Azadian, writer.



Publishing House Releases *As the Poppies Bloomed* in Turkish

ISTANBUL (Panorama.am) — The Turkish Aras publishing house has published the Turkish-language edition of the Armenian Genocide novel *As the Poppies Bloomed* by Los Angeles based, Syrian-Armenian writer Maral Boyadjian, Ermenihaber reports.

The novel tells the story of young lovers Anno and Daron, who fall in love as their Armenian village, Salor, comes under increasing threat by Turkish authorities in the period leading up to the Armenian Genocide. The couple wants to marry and continue life in their homeland, but they are unprepared for the dangerous secret Daron's father keeps or the dark days ahead.

Boyadjian tells a timeless love story set against the backdrop of one of the most dramatic tragedies of the early 20th century, the Armenian Genocide. *As the Poppies Bloomed* reveals a beautiful and heart-wrenching tale of love, loss and hope of two young Armenians who face seemingly insurmountable odds while the land of the sultans breaks apart and World War I rushes toward them along with the greatest massacre the world had ever known.

Born in Aleppo, Boyadjian moved to Los Angeles, together with her family as a child. In 2011-2014, she visited Van, Bitlis, Mush, Shenik and Sasun, the fatherland of her grandparents, survivors of the Armenian Genocide, for the first time.

As the Poppies Bloomed was published in the US in 2015.



The cover of the Turkish edition of *As the Poppies Bloomed*

RHODE ISLAND

SEPTEMBER 13, 2017-MARCH 14, 2018 — Armenian Film Festival "The Nation's Past & Present"

Sponsored by Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, in Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence. Wednesday, October 11, at 7 pm, "Garni, Geghard" Wednesday, November 15, 2017, at 7 pm, "Armenia" (Yerevan, Echmiadzin, Khor Virap, Zvartnots, Sevan, Dilijan, Lori) Wednesday, January 24, at 7 pm "Country of Armenian Kings - 2" (Ani, Kars, Edesia, Musaler) Wednesday, February 21, at 7 pm, "Country of Armenian Kings - 3" (Cilicia, Kharbert, Adana, Zeytoun) Wednesday, March 14, 2018, at 7 pm. All presented in English, donation of \$10.

OCTOBER 22 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church & The Rhode Island Orthodox Clergy Fellowship presents - Spiritual Music Festival, 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence.

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



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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Erdogan: The Necessary Evil of the Political World

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s fall from grace one day may be as spectacular as his rise, as proven by last year’s coup attempt to unseat him. But for now he will bully his way through, as long as his administration lasts.

He understands well the forces that are reviving and feeding the new Cold War and he can exploit them to promote his country’s as well as his personal ambitions.

One thing he seems to ignore is that the policies he is pursuing domestically run counter to his global ambitions; by eliminating the academics, writers, judges, politicians, journalists and the entire intellectual classes, a group which would have created a common ground with Europe and the civilized world, and playing up his Ottomanist tendencies, he is furthering his nation’s withdrawal from the realm of the international community.

Erdogan’s friendship with Russian President Vladimir Putin after the shooting down of the Russian warplane is as sincere as the relations he is trying to cultivate with US President Donald Trump.

The news outlet Reuters reports from Ankara that “US President Donald Trump and Turkey’s Tayyip Erdogan spoke on Saturday and agreed to continue to work toward stronger ties and regional security. Erdogan’s office said, a day after he lashed out at US authorities for indicting one of his ex-ministers.”

After flinging acrimonious accusations against the US on a number of political issues, it looks like the Turkish leadership realizes how far they have strayed from a strategic ally and political patron saint.

Relations between the US and Turkey have been strained over Washington’s support for the YPG Kurdish fighters in Syria.

Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), frustrating Armenia, which is a member of that body. To add insult to injury, Erdogan revived the Turkish Stream pipeline, to extend Russian gas delivers to the Balkans and by extension, to Europe, against Washington’s blatant attempts to wean Europe from Russian energy.

For Mr. Erdogan, thwarting domestic investigations into his and his family’s scandalous corruption is very simple; just replace judges on the bench and appoint his cronies to his kangaroo courts and the case is dismissed. But he is very frustrated when he cannot extend that dictatorial power to the US judicial system. Reams of documents from Ankara could not convince the US judicial system to extradite the Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen, who is accused of being the mastermind behind last year’s coup attempt in Turkey.

And the other legal entanglements are piling up; a grand jury in August indicted 19 defendants, including 15 security officials, Erdogan’s bodyguards, on charges resulting from violent attacks on peaceful protestors in Washington, during the Turkish president’s visit. Erdogan was angered over the indictments and made some caustic remarks about judges in the US. As a warning against Erdogan’s upcoming visit to New York, House Foreign Affairs Chairman Ed Royce (R-Calif.) and ranking member Eliot Engel (D-NY) have sent a cautionary letter to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson not to allow any fresh violence when Erdogan arrives in New York later this September.

In the meantime, voices in the US political and military quarters have been requesting the removal of nuclear weapons from Turkish soil as a reaction to the latter’s erratic behavior and in his inability to protect them.

As if all these problems were not enough to drive a wedge between the two countries, now legal developments have further deteriorated those relations. Turkey’s former Minister of



Turkey considers them terrorists, while the US has found them to be the most reliable fighting force in the battlefield against ISIS. Despite continued complaints, even some hostile provocations by Ankara in Syria, the US administration did not heed Turkey’s complaints, placing its bets on the winning horse on the battlefield. Washington also realized that Turkey is in the game for narrow, selfish interests rather than fighting for a common cause with the US and its allies. Ironically, the US found accommodation with its archenemy, Russia, rather than with Turkey, signing off on the policy of Assad’s survival instead of giving in to Turkish demands.

As far as Kurdish issues are concerned, Washington and Ankara are at odds; Ankara and Tehran have teamed up in opposing the Kurdish referendum scheduled for September 25 in Iraq, as they consider it a destabilizing move in the region, while Washington has given a green light to it, as far as we can tell from its benign negligence and the assurance of the Kurdish leadership.

Turkey’s relationship with Europe and especially with Germany, were strained to the breaking point, so much so that voices from various political quarters became louder to drop Turkey as a NATO ally. To compensate for its alienation from Europe, Erdogan’s government emerged as a candidate for the

Economy Zafer Caglayan, and former head of the Turkish Bank were indicted in the US for conspiring to violate US sanctions against Iran. A Turkish government spokesman, Bekir Bozdag, complained about the indictment, stating that “Mr. Caglayan has protected Turkey’s interests as the Turkish economy minister, and he has acted within the laws of our country and international laws while doing it.”

Erdogan himself contracted that official statement, saying that Turkey had never agreed to comply with those sanctions on Iran. One would ask what kind of relationship and alliance are in place that the parties can cherry pick laws to abide by or to enforce?

The telephone call has set the stage for an upcoming meeting between Presidents Trump and Erdogan to iron out the burning issues dividing the two countries. That meeting may also serve as an opportunity for Mr. Erdogan to teach the American president on how to run a legal system. Mr. Erdogan’s comments on the US legal system are hilarious. His statement could be used as a cartoon legend: “You may be a big nation, but being a just nation is something else. Being a just nation requires the legal system to work fairly.”

After the Trump-Erdogan meeting, US citizens will find out how effective Mr. Erdogan’s judicial instructions have been to his American counterpart.

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COMMENTARY

Armenia-Diaspora: Attempt No. 6 in a Period Of Deep Crisis of the Armenian World



By Hayk Demoyan

I was following an interesting scene on board a plane flying from Yerevan to Paris while heading to Boston in the middle of August. A young mother of three was trying to convince her children to read Movses

Khorenatsi's *History of Armenia*, which remained half read. It was exactly the same edition of 1968 I had read when I was 14. Despite her attempts, the youngsters in front of me rejected the book, preferring their iPhones and tablets.

Surprisingly enough, 10 days after that flight, I came across another reference to Khorenatsi. In his speech at the graduation ceremony of military educational institutions, on August 28 President Serzh Sargsyan reaffirmed the well-known aphorism of Khorenatsi, who in the beginning of his *History of Armenia* stated that we Armenians are "small in number and vulnerable." At the same time, he added a reservation, declaring, "...Yes, we are small, yet powerful, strong with the unified characteristics of a powerful nation and family..."

Maybe not all, but many know well that the fifth-century situation of the Armenians is described in somber tones at the end of Khorenatsi's pious work, a section which was still awaiting the attention of the mother and her children on board the plane. This section is the lamentation of Khorenatsi concerning Armenian reality shortly after the loss of statehood and the end of the Arshakuni dynasty. The founding father of Armenian historiography gave a condensed description of the situation of the Armenian state and Armenian people, which simply could be described as a definition of the national crisis.

The remains of the Arshakuni kings, as archeologists claim, were found and displayed quite recently in the Armenian village of Aghtsq unceremoniously in the presence of the former Speaker of the Parliament and other politicians. Here the bones of the Arshakuni kings were buried in the fourth century after they were taken back from the Persian army, shortly after the latter's invasion of Armenia. Too much symbolism? Maybe. But is it a new sign for a new loss of statehood we must face? The sad reality is that as a nation we are divided now rather than united, and there is much proof and evidence to back this unwanted statement. I am not intending to be a 21st-century Armenian historian who will write another lamentation on 21st-century Armenian realities, but at the same time I cannot keep silent on what we have both in Armenia and Diaspora, different from the non-existent realities artificially created by the president's speechwriters and those who feel comfortable with the situation we have currently.

The situation we have in Armenia and Diaspora relations could be labeled as a profound crisis on the elite level, which is an objective consequence of non-mature and dishonest relationships with no clear strategies and long-term action plans. There are many reasons to describe the existing situation as such, and there is no need to be an academician or to have skills in social sciences in order to understand the reasons and causes of that crisis.

The failure to develop mutually beneficial and trustful relations within the past 25 years is a consequence of an elite-level crisis both in Armenia and Diaspora. The collapse of political life and corruption in Armenia, and an outdated

structure with which many Diasporan communities still try to survive are not the only primary factors which caused the existing crisis. The "Armenian world," propagated in Armenia at the highest levels not so long time ago, brought no substantive results to set a common agenda and strategic road map to follow, since it was more like an intellectual exercise, and not a clear strategy. One can agree on the formula, saying that Armenia is one thing with Diaspora and quite another without it. But the sad reality is that now we have Armenian statehood absolutely marginalized in regional and global politics, rejected even as a sole decision-maker in her external and internal politics. Armenia is pushed into a corner by her allies, or so-called allies, making her vulnerable many more times than before.

Mutual ignorance and false rhetoric praising narrow interests and self-promotion accompanied most of the mutual relationships which led to further marginalization of the imagined icon of "Armenia strong with her Diaspora," one we all were striving for in the first years of independence. Today we have enough evidence of distancing rather than bridging the motherland with Armenian communities worldwide. Armenia in its turn failed to turn into a dominant magnet and heartland for Diasporan communities. The latter also preferred to remain in their own worlds, being afraid of dependent and weak Armenian statehood instead of thinking and acting to strengthen REAL Armenia politically, economically and, of course, militarily. Instead an imagined homeland still prevails in most of Diasporan intellectual and political circles. The last 25 years were not enough to transform the mindset of Diasporan elite thinking from a symbolical and imagined homeland to the real one as an important and the only prerequisite for developing further strategies of the Armenian world of global character. Unclear, suspicious and dispersed thinking banned the Diaspora from being the only reliable ally of the Motherland, pushing it into an environment where it is isolated and ignored.

Within the past 25 years, there were no any attempts to set up a qualitatively new structure which could enable the effective security of Armenia and Diasporan communities as one united strategic entity. Instead, age-old, completely outdated models were kept which cannot provide and secure any breakthrough both within Diasporan communities as well as in their relations with Armenia. Still surviving party-based structures, century-old enmities, divided churches, and the wasting of enormous resources for nothing and for no reason: this is the situation we are facing today.

While speaking in the name of the Diaspora, most of the leaders in communities by default oppose themselves to Armenia, rather than trying to show their sympathies and support. Inclinations toward such dangerous opposition became evident during the Armenian-Turkish protocol period, which clearly exposed the absolute absence of dialog between Armenia and the various global communities, at least on the elite level. The reasons for such attitude are both subjective and objective. Armenia, now mired in rampant corruption and human rights violations, objectively gave birth to the formula "I am not going to give anything to Armenia." At the same time that many preferred to hide themselves or feel comfortable with such mantras or expressions rather than to act, others preferred tourism and mentor-like attitude towards post-Soviet compatriots while residing in Armenia and trying to define new identities for themselves.

The Ministry of Diaspora eight years ago failed to generate any strategic partnership plan or common agenda for

Armenia-Diaspora relations. Instead, Soviet period Komsomol-type entertainments coupled with extensive medal awards and accomplishment ceremonies resulted in, or, it would be more correct to say, were aimed at further marginalization of Armenia-Diaspora relations. It is more than clear that one of the main responsibilities of the Diaspora Ministry was to keep away any strong and effective involvement of Diasporan Armenians in both external and internal affairs of Armenia. Such effective presence was of vital importance at least to counter to the disastrous developments inside of Armenia and to have a positive impact on foreign policy preferences of the Motherland.

Should we expect any breakthrough from the sixth meeting of Armenia-Diaspora scheduled for September 18-19? Definitely no. Logically and objectively the past five forums showed that such gatherings are more like combined touristic package for many Diasporans wanting to enjoy the mild autumn season in Armenia rather than to speak about putting Armenia-Diaspora relations on the rails of short and long-term development strategies and strengthening the security of both Armenia herself and Armenian-Diaspora relations in general.

The Armenia-Diaspora congress scheduled for September 18-19 without a doubt will not bring any breakthrough in these strategically important but ignored and downplayed relations. As is expected, both sides will refrain from any intellectual, non-paper-based discussion and criticism of the existing sad and dangerous realities in Armenia and Diasporan communities. Such consensus is a long-orchestrated strategy between elites on both sides preferring banal and cheap patriotic rhetoric and slogans rather than open and sober discussion. The document put into circulation a year ago for setting up the Armenian council is outdated and does not reflect the existing realities of the crisis in Armenia-Diaspora relations and how to overcome it.

It is sad to state that after suffering enormous human losses and suffering, millions of distorted destinies and emigration from Armenia, we are faced now with new dangers and challenges to overcome, though being absolutely unprepared to face them.

We are in a deep crisis, ladies and gentlemen. This is a political, religious and intellectual elite-level crisis which could result in disastrous consequences in the nearest future if we fail to understand how to overcome this situation and enable new generation of decision makers to show up and set new agendas for strengthening the Armenian world. The new generation of decision makers are not those who are indoctrinated with political hatred to secure narrow minded interests or Soviet-type party boss clones to replace and duplicate old thinking guys.

It is high time even after 1400 years after Khorenatsi to take real steps to prevent the further collapse of the Armenian world, but not to make statements on our weakness and vulnerability...

(Dr. Hayk Demoyan is a US Fulbright visiting scholar at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies of Harvard University. He is researching identity transformation processes in the South Caucasus. From 2006 to 2017 he held the position of director of the Armenian Genocide Museum Institute in Yerevan. Demoyan is the head of the scientific council of the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute. He is also a chief editor of the International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies published starting in 2014. The views and opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author. This is the first in an ongoing series of opinion pieces from him.)

Destruction for Profit: A Non-Expert's Observation of Mining in Armenia

A few years ago my wife and I visited the monastery of Akhtala, a 10th-century fortified Armenian Church with impressive murals in Lori province. The church is situated on a hill

By J. D.

above the Debet river. Near the river there was a toxic pool of waste from nearby copper mines. As my wife was photographing the church from below, a large black SUV pulled up. Two burley, well-dressed men ("hastaviz" - "thick necks" in local parlance) exited the SUV and asked my wife if she was photographing the pool of mine waste. "No," she answered, "I'm photographing the church. Is it illegal to photograph the church?"

"No," they replied. They lingered for a few minutes and left. They were concerned, of course, about negative publicity about the mining waste situated next to the Debet river.

Traveling to a neighboring village we passed a valley with whitish-yellow mine waste dumped onto the valley slopes. I asked a villager if there was a plan to clean this up. "The mining company says they'll plant trees, but who'd eat fruit from such trees?," he said. When I questioned locals about the quality of the drinking water, they were uneasy about the question and quite hesitatingly and unconvincingly said the water was ok.

From the hills above the Debet river valley near the once bustling industrial city of

Alaverdi, in Lori province in Armenia's north, we could clearly see smoke from the refinery in Alaverdi filling the valley. The owner of the refinery, Valex, had posted signs on the lamp posts in Alaverdi stating "Valex Loves You," but smoke continued to fill the valley. Valex also owns Base Metals, which has a factory in northern Artsakh along the shores of the Sarsang Reservoir. During my first visit to that area a decade or two ago the water of the Sarsang Reservoir seemed normal. During a subsequent visit a few years ago, with the Base Metals plant operating above the reservoir, the water had a greenish tint to it. Upstream from the plant, on the Trtu river which feeds the reservoir, the water was clear and appeared normal. The plant

obviously was the reason for the green color of the water. What was in the water? I cannot say.

Also in northern Armenia not far from the town of Odzun is the village of Ardvi, a site of extraordinary beauty containing the tomb of Catholicos Hovhannes Odznetsi (Catholicos from 717-728). My wife and I spent hours admiring Ardvi's beauty while being amazed at the agility of mountain goats scaling Ardvi's seemingly unscalable cliffs. Azatutyun newspaper (<https://www.azatutyun.am/a/28665707.html>) reported that on June 26 villagers blocked the road to the village preventing a visit of mining officials from a newly registered mining company. The mining company wants to establish an

see MINING, page 20



Destruction for Profit: A Non-Expert's Observation of Mining in Armenia

MINING, from page 19

open pit gold mine nearby which villagers fear will pollute the area and spoil the regions beauty.

A few years ago on our way to Kapan, in Syunik province in southern Armenia, as we descended from the mountains towards the city, there appeared a large "lake" in the valley to the right. This "lake" was a toxic dump of mine waste with a bluish green surface, but also reflecting a number of other colors as well. A man and woman we met nearby both told us of children getting sick and of difficult-to-breathe, foul-smelling air periodically coming from the mining operation. Families, fearing for the health of their children, were leaving; for Yerevan if work was available there, or if not for Russia. This year, 2017, the greatly enlarged toxic lake consumed nearly the entire valley.

From Kapan we headed towards Geghivank (Geghi church) in the village of Geghi. On the Geghi river there is a large dam holding back green tinted water. We were told that this was from a copper mine. As we traveled along the road alongside the valley, another valley opened up towards our right. But this valley entrance was blocked by what appeared to be a large man-made berm or wall of earth and rocks. Presumably the valley beyond the wall is also intended to store mining waste, but I can't be sure. Such structures appeared elsewhere as well.

Proceeding towards Meghri on the Armenia-Iranian border we took a wrong turn in Kacharan, passing the Molybdenum mining facilities. Near the factory was a good size mountain, with a good part of the mountain missing, as if a giant beast had devoured it.

Heading back towards Yerevan from Meghri via the new highway (M-17), passing through the villages of Shivanidzor and Srashen, we entered the Shikahogh Reserve which was stunningly beautiful. We neared Kacharan from the hills to the east. Two thirds of a deep valley to our left was filled with solid waste, presumably from mines, piled at least 5-6 stories high; much higher than the few trees which remained on the not yet filled in areas on the valley floor.

The current Republic of Armenia is a small country. With a 3,000-year history the sense of time here is in millennia, not in years or hundreds of years. When we Armenians think of the future we should think of the legacy we will leave 100, 200, 500 years hence. Yet those exploiting Armenia's minerals apparently think only of short term profits, of their expensive cars, their palatial villas in and outside of Armenia, and profits at the expense of Armenia's environment and survivability. Such greed will turn Armenia into an uninhabitable wasteland. Given modern mining equipment, greed, a lack of environmental enforcement, and indifference - it will not take long to turn Armenia into such a wasteland. Of course mining companies do make some improvements in some villages such as repairing roads and renovating a few buildings, but these improvements are short term. Environmental destruction is long term, maybe forever. Government officials, the judiciary, investors, industry, and Armenian political parties must protect the environment. They must honestly survey the damage, publicize the results, and take remedial action for the damage already done.

Florida Armenians Shaken but Unharmed after Hurricane

IRMA, from page 1

There were 15,856 Armenians living in Florida in 2010, according to the US Census Bureau. They are served by four churches, all affiliated with the Eastern Diocese: St. David Armenian Apostolic Church (Boca Raton), St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church (Hollywood), St. Hagop Armenian Apostolic Church (Pinellas Park) and St. Haroutian Armenian Apostolic Church (Orlando). There are also several mission parishes.

Around 10,000 of the Floridian Armenians live in Southern Florida, and 6,000 in the Tampa and St. Petersburg area, according to Floridian Taniel Koushajian. Koushajian, editor-in-chief of the Florida Armenians website, lives with his family in Boca Raton, but has taken refuge in the Hyatt Hotel in West Palm Beach.

Fr. Hovnan Demirjian of St. Hagop, in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area, stated that the church and the area it serves was not too badly affected. It lost some shingles, but there was no flooding or great damage. A good portion of his parishioners left, going out of state or to other parts of Florida. The people remaining in state who lived on the coast either went to neighbors or friends, and others stayed at home if they were not in an urgent evacuation zone.

Demirjian said, "No one was affected with more than downed trees in his yard, and there was no severe damage." Some Armenians also have taken refuge in public shelters in various parts of the state.

There is no news from the small communities in Naples, which was in the middle of the storm, and Jacksonville, which experienced flooding, so far but Koushajian and Demirjian confirmed that the other communities appear to be in relatively good shape. Curfews were lifted in Miami on September 12. People who evacuated now are starting to return to their homes, and others who stayed begin their repairs, but it will take a long time for Florida's infrastructure to be fully repaired and as long

as several weeks for electricity to be restored everywhere.

There are gas shortages in much of the state. Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian on September 11 confirmed the general assessment in a statement circulated in The Armenian Church Leader: "Today, Monday, I have been in contact with pastors and parish leaders in the state, and I am happy to convey the news that their respective communities seem to have weathered the worst of the storm. Florida pastors and parish council chairs were in frequent contact with parishioners, and report that people are physically well and bearing up under the extreme conditions of the past few days. The state is still experiencing high-velocity winds at this writing, and travel in many areas is restricted, so the extent of material damage—including the state of church facilities—is yet to be completely assessed. Many homes have no power, and stores are closed and lack provisions; but again, from all accounts our people are safe."

Fortunately, federal and state resources already had begun to be set in place even before the height of the storm, though federal funding may still be an issue. Koushajian noted that many people are coming from other states to aid in the recovery. The lesson for many, learned through hard experience, is to prepare ahead of time. Steps were also taken by the state government after Hurricane Wilma in 2005: every gas station is now required by law to have a backup generator so that at least one pump will work. High rises should also have backup sources of electricity, Koushajian observed.

There is a little bit of good news that Koushajian related. Gevork and Agunik Sarkisian had a baby boy on September 7 in Boca Raton, right before the storm's arrival. All three had to stay in the hospital, West Boca Medical Center, through the storm, but went home on September 12. Baby Harout Michael Sarkisian is now the newest addition to the Florida-Armenian community.



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Writer, Founder and Director of Alternative Radio



Philip Terzian

Literary Editor of *The Weekly Standard*



The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

SYMPOSIUM ON ARMENIAN ISSUES IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Journalism and "Fake News": Armenian Genocide and Karabagh

Aram Arkun, Moderator

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Amberin Zaman

Turkish Journalist, Minority Rights Activist

Thursday

November 2, 2017

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