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The Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II speaks at the Armenia-Diaspora Conference.

## Calls for Unity at Diaspora Conference

By Alin K. Gregorian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

YEREVAN – For three days, Armenians, Artsakh residents and Armenians from around the world came together for meetings, concerts and reports, at Yerevan’s Karen Demirchyan Complex, September 18-20.

The sixth Armenia-Diaspora Pan-Armenian Conference, titled “Mutual Trust, Unity and Responsibility,” was held on the threshold of the 100th anniversary of the declaration of the First Republic of Armenia, the 100th anniversary of the Battles of May 1918 and the 2,800th anniversary of the foundation of Erebouni-Yerevan.

The conference perhaps did not break

new ground but if offered a chance for Armenians from around the globe, from countries near and far, including Myanmar, Japan, Argentina, a total of 71 countries, to mingle.

Every day there were four sessions during which presentations were made. Present for the seminars were representatives from the Armenian government, including the ministries of defense, foreign affairs and diaspora.

The wrap-up session presented the attendees with a chance to listen to a positive conclusion by Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan, who stressed unity and suggested that Armenia is for all, locals and Diasporans.

She also stressed that the issue of the different dialects should not matter. “The official language in Armenia is Armenian not Eastern or Western Armenian,” she said, to

applause from the audience.

She also stressed that the forum provided many with a chance to get to know others from different countries. Indeed, it was interesting to see clusters of Spanish-speaking attendees with those from Iran, Lebanon or France.

see DIASPORA, page 4

## Fighting Breaks Out at Turkish President’s Speech In New York

By Maggie Astor and  
Nicholas Fandos

NEW YORK (New York Times) – Violence broke out at a New York hotel on Thursday, September 21 when protesters disrupted a speech by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey.

In the middle of Mr. Erdogan’s speech at the Marriott Marquis hotel, delivered in Turkish, a man – one of a handful of protesters – screamed in English: “You’re a terrorist. Get out of my country!” The ballroom at the Marriott Marquis hotel in Times Square instantly erupted, with many attendees chanting Erdogan’s name to drown out the protesters.

see FIGHTING, page 6



## Robert Fisk

40 Years of Journalism in the Middle East

BOSTON – In honor of its 85th anniversary, the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will host a symposium titled “Journalism and Fake News: The Armenian Genocide and Karabagh” at Wellesley College on November 2, which is free and open to the public.

This panel discussion will begin with journalist Robert Fisk. Fisk is a British columnist and correspondent for *The Independent* and an outspoken proponent of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. He has written on this topic often in *The Independent* and in his book, *The Great War for Civilisation* (2005). Fisk is a seven-time recipient of the British Press Awards’ International Journalist of the Year and a two-time winner of the British Press Awards’ Reporter of the Year. Based in Beirut, he has lived in the Middle East for more than 40 years.

A cross between a correspondent, writer, and historian, Fisk is able to report on the Middle East with deep historical context. He got his start in journalism at Lancaster University, where he wrote for the student magazine. He later received his PhD in political science from Trinity College in Dublin.

No stranger to covering conflict, Fisk started his career reporting in Northern  
see FISK, page 20



## Iraqi Armenian Soldier Kolsuzian Dies on Mission

KIRKUK, Iraq (*Hay Dzayn*) – Armenian soldier Hrants Kolsuzian died on September 21 while on a mission performing his duties near Hawega/al-Kirkuk, fighting against ISIS troops.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### World Without Genocide Honors Turkish Scholar Akçam

MINNEAPOLIS – Prof. Taner Akçam, holder of the Robert Aram, Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University, will be honored with the 2018 Outstanding Upstander Award from the World Without Genocide organization for his work promoting justice and the rule of law.

He will formally receive the award at the organization’s annual gala in May 2018 in Minneapolis.

Akçam was one of the first Turkish intellectuals to openly discuss the Armenian Genocide, he holds the only endowed chair dedicated to research and teaching on this subject.

He is an outspoken advocate of democracy and free expression since his student days at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, he is an internationally recognized human rights activist.

### Argentine Tycoon Declared Armenian ‘National Hero’

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – President Serzh Sargsyan on September 21 bestowed Armenia’s highest state award, the title of National Hero, on Eduardo Eurnekian, an Argentine billionaire who has invested heavily in the country.

In a corresponding decree, he cited Eurnekian’s “exceptional services” to his ancestral homeland and contributions to its economic development.

A son of Armenian immigrants, Eurnekian, 84, has built a diverse business empire that includes more than 50 airports in and outside Argentina operated by his Corporacion America group.

The company also runs Yerevan’s Zvartnots international airport in line with a 30-year management contract signed with the Armenian government in 2001. It has spent more than \$160 million on building a new terminal there and modernizing other airport facilities since then.

The tycoon also invested in other sectors of the economy in the early 2000s. He purchased an Armenian commercial bank and set up what is now one of the country’s largest wine companies. The latter uses grapes grown at vast vineyards that were established by Eurnekian in the Armavir province.

Another Eurnekian-owned company has managed Armenia’s postal service for the past decade. In addition, the tycoon in 2013 bought a historic building in Yerevan that housed the Armenian ministries of foreign affairs, energy and agriculture. He is going to turn it into a luxury hotel.

Eurnekian has also engaged in charitable activities in Armenia. As recently as on September 14, he inaugurated a newly built school in the town of Echmiadzin. President Sargsyan and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II also took part in the ceremony.

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## News From Armenia

### Deepening Armenian-French Commercial Ties Is Priority

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan on September 26 received member of the French National Assembly (lower house of the parliament) Olivier Dassault, according to the press service of the president. Welcoming the guest in Armenia, President Sargsyan said interparliamentary cooperation plays a key role on strengthening the Armenian-French ties.

He said relations between the two friendly states are effectively developing in all spheres, stating that the deepening of Armenian-French commercial ties is among the priorities of the bilateral agenda. President Sargsyan and the French MP attached importance to the productive activity of Armenia-France interparliamentary friendship groups aimed at strengthening the centuries-old friendship between the two peoples and interstate ties, as well as close cooperation within the frames of international organizations.

Highlighting the role of Dassault and his family in France's political life, the president expressed hope his visit to Armenia will contribute to further intensifying and developing the Armenian-French friendly ties.

### PM Trudeau Says Canada To Increase Collaboration With Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau congratulated Armenia and the Armenian people on the 26th anniversary of the country's independence, stating: "We join the people of Armenia and members of the Armenian community in Canada and around the world to celebrate the anniversary of Armenia's independence. Canada and the Republic of Armenia enjoy a dynamic and friendly relationship, built upon shared values of justice, democracy and freedom, people-to-people connections, and our collaboration in international organizations, including La Francophonie. Canada looks forward to continuing to work with the Republic of Armenia to further strengthen the relationship between our two countries, and to deepen our collaboration on global and regional issues, including climate change, development cooperation, trade and investment, and peace and security."

He said cultural diversity is one of the country's greatest strengths and sources of pride. "I commend the Armenian-Canadian community for their generosity and leadership in welcoming thousands of newcomers from Syria. When we come together to welcome newcomers, we strengthen our communities in long-lasting and significant ways," he said.

### Turkey Says Iraqi Kurdish Independence Vote Is 'Terrible Mistake'

ANKARA (Reuters) – Turkey called a plan by Iraqi Kurds to hold a referendum on independence a "terrible mistake," saying on Friday, September 22, that Iraq's territorial integrity and political unity was a fundamental principle for Ankara.

Kurdish separatism is a sensitive issue for Turkey, which has been battling a militant insurgency in its largely Kurdish southeast for three decades.

Ankara is also worried about the advances by a Syrian Kurdish militia in northern Syria, fearing that could embolden the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey.

"We think this will represent a terrible mistake," the foreign ministry said in a statement. "The maintenance of Iraq's territorial integrity and political unit is one of the fundamental principles of Turkey's Iraq policy."

Iraq's majority Shi'ite Arab community mainly live in the south while the Kurds and the Sunni Arabs inhabit different areas of the north. The center around Baghdad is mixed.

## Trump Praises Armenia-NATO Ties

NEW YORK – US President Donald Trump praised Armenia for participating in NATO-led peacekeeping operations and military exercises on Thursday when he congratulated the country on the 26th anniversary of its declaration of independence from the Soviet Union.

In a congratulatory letter to President Serzh Sargsyan, Trump also expressed readiness to "continue our assistance" to Armenia's ongoing transition to a parliamentary system of government. He said his administration is also seeking to expand US-Armenian economic ties.

"We also greatly appreciate Armenia's participation in international peacekeeping operations and NATO-led and other multinational exercises," read the letter publicized by Sargsyan's press office.

Trump singled out Armenian participation in US-led drills held in neighboring Georgia in August. They involved about 2,800 troops from the United States, Georgia and six other nations. US Vice President Mike Pence visited and addressed them during an official trip to Georgia.

"We thank you for your dedication to regional stability and international peacekeeping operations," US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said in a statement on Armenia's independence holiday. "We greatly appreciate these endeavors toward building a more peaceful world."

Despite its military alliance with

Russia, Armenia has deepened defense cooperation with the US and other NATO member states since the early 2000s. It currently contributes more than 100 troops to NATO-led missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan.

"Armenia does a good job of balancing its relationships with all its neighbors," the US ambassador in Yerevan, Richard Mills, said in an interview late

contact between the two men.

Sargsyan praised Armenia's "strong partnership" with the US when he congratulated Trump on America's Independence Day in July. He expressed hope that the two countries will "enrich the agenda of Armenian-American relations with new mutually beneficial initiatives and projects."

Meeting with a group of visiting US



President Serzh Sargsyan with President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump

last month.

Trump sent his congratulatory message two days after greeting Sargsyan at a reception which he hosted in New York for world leaders that attended the latest session of the UN General Assembly. It was the first face-to-face

lawmakers in Yerevan on Thursday, the Armenian leader again thanked the US for its economic assistance provided to his country since the early 1990s and praised Washington's role in international efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

## Prime Minister, US Lawmakers Discuss US-Armenia Economic Cooperation Prospects

YEREVAN – Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan received a delegation of the United States House of Representatives this past week, consisting of Co-Chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues Frank Pallone, Jackie Speier and David Valadao, as well as Congress members Anna Eshoo, Tulsi Gabbard and Jim Sensenbrenner.

Karapetyan said he appreciated the US legislators' activities in the development and strengthening of US-Armenian friendly relationship in various spheres and thanked the Congress, especially the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues for providing foreign assistance to Armenia and Artsakh.

He and the US lawmakers discussed economic cooperation between the two countries. From the perspective of inbound investments, the premier highlighted the signing of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, as well as Armenia's inclusion by the US Congress and government in the list of countries benefiting from the GSP



Rep. David Valadao shakes hands with Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan

trade regime.

Karapetyan described as effective the ongoing cooperation between Armenia and the United States in the field of information and high technologies,

where a number of successful projects have already been implemented.

The sides exchanged views over the further improvement of the legal-contractual framework regulating trade and economic relations. Karapetyan attached importance to the active work of the Armenian-American intergovernmental commission.

Reference was also made to the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Karapetyan stressed that Armenia sees the solution to the problem exclusively in the peaceful settlement and stressed the importance of continued efforts by the United States as a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chair.

"Our strategy is being built on the assumption that we have to be strong enough to ensure our security. I think the developments in our region are very clear and transparent. We would appreciate if the international community could express a clear-cut attitude," he said.



From left, Representatives Jim Sensenbrenner, Frank Pallone and Jackie Speier with Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan



## ARMENIA

# Sargsyan in UN Address Says Protocols Will Be Shelved

NEW YORK – On September 19, President Serzh Sargsyan partook in the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly in United Nations headquarters and delivered a lecture in which he stressed Armenia's commitment to the right to self-determination of the people of Artsakh (Karabakh), condemning repeated Azeri aggression against Armenia as well as the latter's decision to do away formally with the Protocols which had been drafted in 2009.

He told the assembled delegates that Turkey erected one obstacle after another in the way of the Protocols, showing bad faith.

Sargsyan thanked the member countries that had supported the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and pledged his country's continuous efforts to peacefully resolve the standoff in Artsakh. His statement in full appears below.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I congratulate and wish success to Mr. Miroslav Lajčák upon his election as the President of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly.

I avail myself of this opportunity and congratulate anew Mr. António Guterres upon his election to the office of the UN Secretary General. Distinguished Mr. Secretary General, we wish you success in carrying out your important mission. The priorities you declared enjoy Armenia's support.

In 2017, we marked the 25th anniversary of Armenia's accession to the United Nations. On March 2, 1992, the Armenian tricolor flew at this headquarters of the United Nations family as a logical and sought for outcome of the exercise by our people of its fundamental right to self-determination.

Over the years, Armenia has become a fully-fledged and responsible member of the international community. There had been numerous challenges before of us, and we withstood them with dignity. The most important and intricate one was the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

It is for the fifth time that I have an opportunity to speak from this eminent podium and again I am compelled to address the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. I should have rather preferred to talk of peace, progress and cooperation, but unfortunately, we are not there yet. Hence, it is my duty to explain why we are so much away from that desirable stage.

The new phase of the struggle for self-determination by the people of Artsakh began almost 30 years ago. The peaceful calls by the Armenians of Artsakh to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination as well as every step to that effect was met by use force, to which Azerbaijan continuously resorted to.

The policy of official Baku culminated in the massacres, ethnic cleansing and mass deportation of the Armenian population of Azerbaijan. Once flourishing Armenian-populated districts in their entirety have been wiped out of the Armenians, and the Government of Azerbaijan continues with its policy of systematic destruction of the vast Armenian cultural and spiritual heritage on the territories under its control.

It is obvious that, under such circumstances, the people of Artsakh were left with no other choice than to resort to self-defense. The grievous war of 1992-1994, its aftermath and negotiations that followed did not serve as a lesson for Azerbaijan. Last year in April, Azerbaijan unleashed a four-day war, which came to prove that Azerbaijan pursues the objective of extermination of the people of Artsakh.

In the course of the military offensive unleashed in 2016, the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan committed a number of war crimes against civilian population and the prisoners of war. Here I am compelled to mention that a serviceman who committed such atrocities has been decorated with a high state award, and the President of Azerbaijan personally decorated him in front of the cameras.

It has been years that hate speech and Armenophobia was made part and parcel of the Azerbaijan's state policy. It has taken deep root in the school curricula, intoxicating the younger generation. It has been for years that a number of inter-governmental and non-governmental specialized organizations dealing with racism and xenophobia have been ringing alarm bells about it.

All of these leads us to believe that the exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of Artsakh is of existential significance. In this regard, I convey the consolidated view of Armenia and Artsakh as well as the one shared by Armenians from all over the globe. I bring this message from Yerevan, where right now Armenia-Diaspora conference is taking place.

Everyone should be aware that for the democratically developing Artsakh, Azerbaijan simply symbolizes medieval backwardness. Azerbaijan has got no legal or moral ground whatsoever to present any claims towards Artsakh. Artsakh has never been part to independent Azerbaijan, and therefore the attempts of its annexation to that particular state framework cannot be justified.



Today free Artsakh is an established democratic society. Our shared motto and commitment of "Leaving no one behind" should be the milestone guiding the work of the United Nations family. It is exactly for that reason, I believe, that people of Artsakh should never be isolated from the implementation of the sustainable development goals.

I strongly believe that the unresolved status of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict should have no impact on the people of Artsakh as they exercise their rights. It is, first and foremost, about inalienable rights for any human being. It is about the right to life, the right to organize public life, the right to form freely one's own government, the right to communicate unimpededly with the outer world, and many other rights.

Armenia consistently contributes and will contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of the people of Artsakh, its sustainable and democratic development. No one has a right to create hindrances to the implementation of initiatives and projects to that effect. The legal status of Artsakh, or, to be more precise, the lack of the international legal recognition, is not and cannot constitute an obstacle for the women and men who live there to exercise their rights.

We strongly believe that there is no alternative to the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Right now, from this eminent podium, I reiterate our commitment to that effect.

Meanwhile, everyone should be aware that the Nagorno Karabakh issue is a human rights issue. It can be resolved exclusively through one of the fundamental and inalienable human rights – the people's right to self-determination.

At the end of the day, whatever option for the conflict resolution we arrive at, the Republic of Artsakh should not enjoy a status and liberty that might be inferior to the one it enjoys today. Azerbaijan shall recognize and respect the right of the people of Artsakh to decide its own future through a free expression of will. All available international and domestic mechanisms should guarantee the security of the Armenian population of Artsakh.

All remaining issues are collateral. All remaining issues will find their logical and fair solution in parallel to the general resolution process.

When I last time spoke from this eminent podium and addressed the process of international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, I considered it my duty to express our gratitude one by one to all nations that recognized the horrendous crime that was committed against my people in the Ottoman Empire.

It is my duty to express gratitude from this eminent podium of Honor and Responsibility to all those countries that have recognized or reiterated their position on the Armenian Genocide.

I thank them for it, regardless of the format and language adopted.

I thank the numerous countries and individuals, state bodies, regional entities and organizations, who called things by their proper names. That is, indeed, important since denial paves the

way for new crimes of genocide.

In this context, we recall that next year the family of the United Nations will mark the 70th anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Armenia will bring up a new initiative upon that occasion, and we invite all to join us and defend that initiative.

We, nevertheless, have never made the recognition of the Armenian Genocide a precondition for the normalization of the bilateral relations between Armenia and Turkey. Moreover, it was upon the initiative of Armenia that a normalization process was launched, resulting in the conclusion of the Zürich protocols in October 2009.

Up to this day, those documents have not been ratified, instead, they have landed in some dark drawers of official Ankara. The Government of Turkey came up with preposterous preconditions for their ratification that run counter to the letter and spirit of the Protocols. I expressed the clear-cut views of the Armenian

people on this issue three years ago, when I spoke from this eminent podium.

Now the time has come for additional explanations. The leadership of Turkey are mistaken if they think that those documents can be held hostage forever and ratified only at the most opportune occasion from their very own point of view. The Protocols were negotiated in the existing circumstances in order to find solutions to the actually existing issues.

Armenia will declare those two Protocols null and void since they continuously lacked any positive progress towards their implementation. We will enter the spring of 2018 without those, as our experience has demonstrated, futile Protocols.

Armenia, nevertheless, continues to believe that any two neighboring states need to establish and enjoy normal relations in order to address all possible disagreements between them and find solutions to such a discord.

This is the conviction we are guided by in our engagement with various integration processes. Today, Armenia is an active member of the Eurasian Economic Union and with its active work spares no effort in order to contribute to the unimpeded movement of goods and services in that large economic area and, hence, contribute to and promote welfare for all. We have already registered certain achievements in that regard, and that makes us feel hopeful for future. We also plan to conclude this November Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with European Union, which, in our view, will help us to give a new impetus to the institutional reforms implemented in Armenia.

The current instability in the Middle East regrettably remains as a serious challenge.

It is with great pain that we have been following the crisis in Syria and the humanitarian situation there, which has brought about suffering of the civilian population, including the Armenian community of the country. Within its means, Armenia strives to mitigate the suffering of the Syrian people by providing humanitarian assistance. We also express our willingness to engage into possible discussions on the peacemaking efforts in Syria under the UN auspices and with an appropriate mandate.

I have no doubt that our family of the United Nations is able to guarantee a new quality of cooperation that will allow us to withstand the contemporary global and regional challenges. It is with that objective in mind that Armenia participates in a number of the UN peacekeeping operations. Moreover, we stand ready to increase our contribution in Lebanon and Mali to UNIFIL and MINUSMA missions, respectively.

Armenia, as a landlocked country located in the complicated region, a country with scarce natural resources, has continuously emphasized that human capital is its most valuable resource. It is, indeed, correct both for Armenia and for our whole family of the United Nations: we should focus on people, we should strive for peace and a decent life for all, on a sustainable planet.



## ARMENIA

# Calls for Unity at Diaspora Conference

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The unseasonably hot Yerevan weather did not deter the enthusiastic participants.

Buses picked up the attendees at Republic Square every morning, and followed a police escort to the stadium.

Every day, leaders of the country addressed the opening sessions, including President Serzh Sargsyan and Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan.

About 1,800 persons from 71 countries were present, an increase of about 35 percent from the previous gathering three years before, according to Hakobyan. She added that this time around, for the first-time representatives had arrived from Mexico, Myanmar, Japan and Malaysia.

Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II offered the opening prayers, asking for peace for Karabakh and people of the Middle East.

President Sargsyan thanked those who had travelled from far away to attend the conference and stressed the importance of encouraging the youth to get involved.

“Without the youth,” he said, “our efforts will come to naught.”

Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I closed the opening day ceremony with a fiery speech in which he hoped that Armenia would reduce its emigration, reduce poverty and let diasporan and residents of Armenia come together to help the country.

Prime Minister Karapetyan brought his technology savvy vibe to the conference, promising a better future and engendering hope.

He said, “First and foremost, my belief is that Armenia has a huge potential. I am convinced that we have all the chances to become a modern and progressive country and to respond adequately to internal and external challenges. Today’s world, including Armenia, is going through structural reforms. We are implementing reforms in all parts of our country, in all aspects of life, to secure Armenia’s worthy place in the world. That is why our reforms aim not only the settlement and resolution of today’s burning issues, but they also seek to lay the groundwork for making Armenia competitive in a changing world.”

He added, “To become competitive and develop, we need sustainable, long-term growth in all



From left, Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan, Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan, President Serzh Sargsyan and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II

important issues for Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora.

“One of our major issues remains the maintenance of the Armenian identity since we all understand that the Armenian communities are becoming smaller in a rapidly changing world. But I am convinced that if jointly continue our work, we will be able to bring many Armenians to our territory. We face a problem of self-organization in certain communities. The number of mixed marriages gradually increases, the number of people bearing the mother tongue decreases, Armenian schools and cultural centers are being closed, there are problems of maintenance of Armenian cultural heritage in some countries,” she said. She added that there

eral tables of food and the free mingling of many of the country’s leaders, including Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan, Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan and Deputy Defense Minister Artak Zakaryan, among others. Before the festivities began President Serzh Sargsyan addressed those assembled.

The conference coincided with the celebration of the independence anniversary. In honor of the anniversary, a celebratory program was

organized for the delegates at the Ministry of Defense on the outskirts of Yerevan. The program featured music, fireworks and a buffet dinner.

President Sargsyan, who was attending the program as did Prime Minister Karapetyan, the two religious leaders and many other guests, addressed the crowd before he and other members of his cabinet mingled with the participants.



Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan speaks, with Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan seated

lifeline areas of public life. That is why we need a sharp increase in effectiveness in all spheres, and we need fundamental transformations that can change the way we think and act. This is our team’s ultimate goal, and we do not see any reason why we cannot succeed together.”

He encouraged more active participation rather than passivity.

“We need to straighten our back and continue building together the country we all dream about; the country that wakes up every day with firm determination to build, develop and add something new for the sake of its supreme value – people,” he noted.

In her wrapping up of the conference, Hakobyan stressed that the maintenance of Armenian identity remains one of the most

are Armenian communities in 118 countries of the world, and they have different composition and different legal status. “We have cities, villages that are completely Armenian-populated. It’s typical for Armenians to quickly integrate to a foreign environment and maintain their national features.” She noted that that there are 829 communities, 30,000 Armenian organizations, 38 pan-Armenian organizations, 724 operating churches and monasteries, more than 1,000 schools, 637 cultural centers in the Armenian Diaspora.

One event which delighted many was the swanky gala at the Defense Ministry, in honor of the 26th anniversary of the Republic of Armenia. Arriving at sunset, guests were treated to the sounds of several different bands, sev-



Member of the Turkish Parliament Garo Paylan, left, with Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan



Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan with Premier Karen Karapetyan



## INTERNATIONAL

# UN Opens New Camp for Tal Afar's Displaced Civilians

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region (Rudaw) – The UN has opened a new camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have fled Tal Afar, near Mosul, and the surrounding area.

"This is a castle compared to how we were living the past three years, especially in the past two weeks," said Khodeira, a mother of six children when she arrived at the camp, quoted by a UN press release. "We are happy to be settled now. I hope our ordeal will soon be over."

The government-constructed camp named Nimrud is located approximately 55 kilometers from Tal Afar. It is being managed by the Iraqi Salvation Humanitarian Organization (ISHO) on behalf the UN's refugee agency, UNHCR, and can accommodate about 3,600 families (22,000 individuals).

"We are grateful to the Iraqi authorities for developing Nimrud camp with significant housing capacity," said Bruno Geddo, UNHCR representative in Iraq. "The handover of the camp to UNHCR is an excellent example of the level of trust and co-operation we have established in supporting the government response to the displacement crisis in Iraq."

On Saturday, the camp received nearly 350 families and another 1,500 families are expected to arrive from the UNHCR's transit site in Hammam al-Alil within the coming days.

"Our partners and our team are identifying the most vulnerable, providing everyone with the basic relief items that they need in order to lead a dignified life in this camp," said the head of UNHCR's Mosul office, Hovig Etyemezian, at the camp's opening ceremony.

The camp will still require more construction work to complete water sani-



Hovig Etyemezian

tation services and electricity infrastructure.

The Iraqi army announced Sunday that their forces are now in full control of the city of Tal Afar, just eight days after the launch of the operation against ISIS militants.

Military operations are now ongoing north of the city.

In the lead up to the military oper-

ations, there was a surge of families fleeing Tal Afar and surrounding areas. More than 40,000 people have been displaced from the town since April according to government figures.

ISIS militants captured the Turkmen majority town of Tal Afar about three years ago as they also controlled large areas in both Iraq and Syria.

## Australia's New South Wales Premier Breaks Ranks With Armenian Church on Same-sex Marriage

By Brigid Glanville

SYDNEY, Australia (ABCOnline) – New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian has broken ranks with her ethnic church and declared she will be voting "Yes" in the same-sex marriage postal survey.

Speaking at an event in Sydney, Ms Berejiklian described same-sex marriage as a "no brainer" and one of the most important human rights issues of our time.

The position has put her at odds with her Armenian Apostolic Church, which claims same-sex marriage would pave the way for "radical gay sex education programs" to be taught in schools.

Ms Berejiklian, who was born in Australia to Armenian immigrants, is a regular attendee of church events and has been to several this year.

In a Facebook post this week, the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection in Chatswood – where Ms Berejiklian's parents were married – warned followers their faith was "under fire" in the survey.

It said redefining marriage would have "consequences" for religious freedom, free speech and children's education, "allowing radical gay sex education programs to become widespread

and compulsory, where parents can't say no," the post read.

During her speech at the "Parliament Says Yes" event, Ms Berejiklian said she was crossing her fingers the survey returns a "Yes" vote.

"There is no doubt that there are peo-



New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian (Photo AAP, Sam Mooy)

ple out there in the community with conservative views, there are people out there with different religious beliefs and faiths," she said.

"We respect all of that, especially with someone like myself with my own personal background."

Nishan Basmajian, the executive offi-

cer of Australia and New Zealand Diocese of the Armenian Church, said his organisation respected gay people.

"We are against same-sex marriage," he said. "We have nothing against gays and lesbians, nothing at all. Through our Christian values and Christian education we don't see those values are respected [in same-sex marriage]."

Basmajian said the church did not "mix too much" with politics. "I don't know what the Premier thinks but as a church we adhere to our Christian values," he said.

Berejiklian said voting for same-sex marriage was a simple decision for her. "I'm hoping that all of us will look back and feel incredibly proud that we were part of something special," she said, and "that we put aside all of our different political views and came together in supporting our colleagues, in supporting our community, in supporting what is one of the most important decisions of our time, I believe, in terms of human rights."

Same-sex marriage survey forms are being distributed to Australians, with final results from the survey to be announced in November.

## International News

### France Will Always Stand with Armenia: Macron

PARIS (Armenpress) – French President Emmanuel Macron sent a congratulatory message to President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan on the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the independence of Armenia.

"Mr. President, I heartily congratulate you and the entire Armenian people on the national holiday of the Republic of Armenia, wishing happiness and progress. Today Armenia marks the 26th anniversary of independence, and I realize what path the Armenian people has passed, often a difficult one, to build a stable, democratic and prosperous country."

### Iraq Authorities Threaten to Ban Air Connection with Kurdish Region

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Official Baghdad intends to ban international air connection with Iraqi Kurdistan if the regional authorities do not hand the control of the airports located in the autonomy to the Iraqi authorities, Al-Sumaria TV channel reports, citing the decision of the Iraqi federal government.

"The cabinet of ministers has decided to put a ban on flight to and from Kurdistan if the control of the airports of the autonomy is not handed to the Federal government," the TV channel quoted from the statement of the cabinet.

Earlier, the Iraqi government had demanded that the Kurdish leadership hand over the control of the region's checkpoints to the government. The government has also demanded that foreign countries stop oil cooperation with Kurdistan.

More than 90 percent of the participants of the referendum voted for Kurdistan's independence.

### Iraqi Kurds Expected to Pass Referendum

ERBIL (BBC) – Large numbers of people have taken part in a landmark vote on independence for Iraq's Kurdistan region, amid growing opposition both at home and abroad on September 26.

Votes are still being counted, with a big victory for "yes" expected.

The Kurds say it will give them a mandate to negotiate secession, but Iraq's PM denounced it as "unconstitutional."

Neighbors Turkey and Iran, fearing separatist unrest in their own Kurdish minorities, threatened to close borders and impose sanctions on oil exports.

The referendum passed off peacefully across the three provinces that make up the region, and in areas controlled by Kurdish forces but claimed by Baghdad.

Turnout was estimated at about 72%, according to the electoral commission.

Partial unofficial results published by the Kurdish Rudaw website show that more than 90 percent have voted for independence.

### Fourteen Ethnic Turks Elected to German Bundestag

BERLIN (Anadolu) – Fourteen ethnic Turkish German citizens were elected to Germany's Bundestag in the September 24 general elections.

According to the temporary initial results, Aydan Özoguz, Metin Hakverdi, Mahmut Özdemir, Cansel Kiziltepe, Gülistan Yüksel and Elvan Korkmaz were elected on the ranks of the Social Democrats (SPD).

Cem Özdemir, Danyal Beyaz, Ekin Deligöz, Canan Bayram and Filiz Polat of the Greens made it to the parliament, while Die Linke had three Turkish-origin lawmakers: Evrim Sommer, Sevim Da delen and Gökay Akbulut.

With the results, the number of Turkish-origin lawmakers in Bundestag has increased to 14 from 11 in the last term. The total of Turkish-origin candidates in the election was 92.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Newly-Released Blogger Airs Grievances Against Azerbaijan

By Joshua Kucera

HAIFA, Israel (Eurasianet.org) – If Azerbaijan expected gratitude for releasing a blogger from prison early, it has miscalculated. When Russian-Israeli travel blogger Alexander Lapshin was released after seven months in an Azerbaijani prison, his lawyer announced that Lapshin had written a letter of thanks to the country's president, Ilham Aliyev.

"Today I learned that you [Mr. President] have signed an order on my pardon. I am very thankful to you for this," said the letter, released on September 13 by Lapshin's lawyer in Azerbaijan.

Lapshin had been arrested in Belarus in December, and then extradited to Azerbaijan in February, for crossing into Nagorno Karabakh, the territory that is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but which is controlled by Armenian forces.

His time in prison, it appeared, had changed his views on the Karabakh question. "Now I am fully convinced that Nagorno-Karabakh is Azerbaijani territory. I hope that the Nagorno-Karabakh problem will be resolved within Azerbaijan's territorial integrity," the letter continued. The blogger "also wished President Ilham Aliyev strong health and long life, expressing hope for the soonest liberation of the Azerbaijani territories," news agency APA reported.

To no one's surprise, however, as soon as Lapshin was out of the country his views quickly shifted. He took to his blog and Facebook to tell his side of the story, which contradicted the Azerbaijani narrative in almost every respect.

For one, he denied Azerbaijani government statements that he had attempted suicide while in prison. Instead, he wrote, he was badly beaten, to the point that he passed out and woke up in a hospital hooked up to a catheter and an oxygen mask. He further speculates that the

attack was carried out to discredit Aliyev personally, which he says corresponds to what he has been told by Azerbaijan's opposition living abroad.

He also thanked a number of people who helped him while he was in prison, including the staff of the Russian and Israeli consulates in Baku, who visited him regularly. And he thanked the Red Cross.

He even more strongly took back his statements about Karabakh, declaring in a Facebook post that it was without doubt Armenian territory.

"I am ashamed of admitting that before I found myself in an Azeri prison I sincerely believed that the Karabakh conflict is a very disputed one and should be resolved on the basis of respect for Azerbaijan's borders," he wrote. "What an idiot I was! Already in 1988 Azerbaijan began terror against Armenians in Sumgait, Baku and Karabakh."

"Armenians, hold firm!" he concluded. "These people want to see you dead, full stop."

And if you lose Karabakh as a result of negotiations or a weakening of Armenia's position, be aware that they will come to slaughter you. Just like the Turks did 100 years ago. Their brutality already has exceeded all acceptable limits."

The post set off the mother of all social media fights between Armenians and Azerbaijanis; 20 hours after it was posted it had already gotten more than 2,900 reactions (either likes or hates), over 1,000 shares and hundreds of comments.

It's unclear how Lapshin, if he went into prison in Azerbaijan believing that the Karabakh question was "disputed," how he left it seemingly having absorbed a strongly Armenian nationalist view of the history and conflict.

What's very clear, though, is that Azerbaijan has created for itself a PR disaster entirely of its own making. Lapshin has started the hashtag #azeromarazm, translating roughly to "Azeri stupidity," which a number of Armenian twitter users have adopted gleefully.

## Armenian MP Armen Ashotyan Delivers Speech at Euronest PA conference in Baku

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Armenian Parliament Armen Ashotyan, who also serves as the leader of the country's delegation to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, delivered a speech on September 22 during the assembly's conference in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Armenian delegation also held a press conference during a break.

The video of the press conference is currently unavailable due to technical reasons. Additional information will be provided later. After the press conference, a representative of the infamous so-called Peace Platform Syuzan Jaghinyan attempted to make provocations, which were adequately responded to by the Armenian delegation. The Armenian delegation also requested the organizers of the conference to take measures in order to rule out similar provocations in the future.

Armenia's delegate, Mane Tandilyan, in response to the Azerbaijani APA news agency, said that they are planning to tour Baku on September 23. "We will tour different districts of Baku. We'll see how the Armenian heritage has been preserved," she said.

Speaking about the decision to participate in the Euronest PA conference, Ashotyan stressed that the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly is an important platform for Armenia. "Armenia is preparing

to sign a new agreement with the European Union. In addition, we've arrived here to not allow propaganda and anti-Armenian rhetoric during an event in which European lawmakers are also participating. Unfortunately, such rhetoric was allowed in certain speeches. However, it must be taken into consideration that we didn't come here to discuss the Nagorno Karabakh conflict," he said.

Commenting on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement, Ashotyan emphasized that the only legitimate forum for the solution is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group. "Discussions are held in this format. Unfortunately, Azerbaijan relaunched military operations in April of the last year, which broke this process. Today, the activities of the Minsk Group are aimed at restoring trust between the sides. It will be possible to pass to the next phase of talks only after restoring trust. The Nagorno Karabakh conflict should be settled only peacefully, within the framework of the peoples' right of self-determination, territorial integrity and security guarantees from the international community. These principles must be on the negotiation table. It is important that now all sides agree to take steps in this process," Azerbaijani media quoted Ashotyan as saying.

## Fighting Breaks Out at Turkish President's Speech in New York

FIGHTING, from page 1

After shouting at the Turkish president, demonstrators were punched and slapped by audience members as they were escorted out of the event.

Videos showed the protesters – one of them wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with a picture of Michael Israel, an American who was killed in a Turkish airstrike while volunteering with the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or Y.P.G. – being punched and slapped by several attendees as security personnel removed them from the room. Security also removed at least one person who had assaulted the protesters.

Meghan Bodette, who identified herself as one of six protesters (one of whom was filming), said their goal was "to call attention to the Turkish state's war crimes and human rights abuses against the Kurdish people," both in Turkey and in Syria.

"Erdogan should not be able to speak here unchallenged, and we challenged him because the American people need to know that a state that claims to be our ally is hindering the fight against ISIS in Syria and destroying civilian lives," Bodette said in a Twitter message.

Halil Demir, a Turkish-American who works for a humanitarian organization, said he had been standing near the back of the room when three protesters stood up in rapid succession: a young man, a young woman and a middle-aged man. The woman held a green banner, Demir said. Bodette identified it as the flag of the Women's Protection Units, or Y.P.J., the female counterpart to the Y.P.G.

The young man was pulled out of the room, Demir said, and the woman left on her own after being told to do so. But Demir said he saw security guards push the middle-aged man, who fell to the ground. He did not know whether the guards were part of Mr. Erdogan's detail, the United States Secret Service or the hotel's security team.

"The third man screamed, and people were screaming at him," he said. "It didn't take long. Seconds, really."

Mr. Demir said he later saw the man on the floor, handcuffed, outside the ballroom where Mr. Erdogan was speaking at the invitation of the Turkish American National Steering Committee.

Cemil Akgun, 44, a Turkish textile producer who was in New York on a business trip, said Erdogan appeared unfazed. He resumed speaking less than two minutes later.

The New York Police Department said about five protesters were "briefly detained." No arrests were made, and no injuries were reported.

Kathleen Duffy, a spokeswoman for Marriott International's New York City hotels, estimated that more than 2,000 people had attended the event and said that only "a very small" number had been escorted out.

"It appears that it started when pro and anti demonstrators kind of clashed, and it started a little bit of a physical confrontation," Stephen P. Davis, the Police Department's chief spokesman, said. "But at that point, the people were separated and broken out and brought out of the venue."

Davis cautioned that the understanding of what happened was still preliminary.

A police official, who spoke about the investigation on the condition of anonymity, said it appeared the fight had been instigated by competing protesters, not by Erdogan's security forces, who have a history of violent run-ins in the United States.

In 2011, the security forces took part in a fight at the United Nations headquarters in New York that sent at least one officer to the hospital. Last year, they, along with police officers, clashed with demonstrators outside the Brookings Institution in Washington.

In May, during Erdogan's last official visit to the United States, members of his security team attacked a group of peaceful protesters outside the Turkish ambassador's residence in Washington. Nine people were hospitalized, and video showed the episode in vivid detail. Another video emerged showing Erdogan himself watching the attack from a Mercedes-Benz sedan parked a few yards away.

A grand jury in Washington indicted 15 Turkish security officials, as well as four civilians, on assault charges in August.

That attack and the subsequent charges strained the relationship between Washington and Ankara, already tested by Erdogan's authoritarian actions in Turkey. The State Department condemned the violence and said actions intended to limit free speech would not be tolerated on American soil. Erdogan, for his part, accused American officers on the scene of bungling the situation.

After Thursday's episode, however, Erdogan – who was in New York for United Nations General Assembly meetings – seemed unbothered. Immediately after his speech, he met with President Trump and American diplomats, and he and Trump had little but praise for each other, at least as they smiled for photographs.

"We are as close as we've ever been," Trump said.

## New Ambassador of Armenia Arrives in Canada

QUEBEC CITY, Canada – On September 12, the newly appointed Ambassador of Armenia in Canada Levon Mardirossian handed his credentials to the government of Canada in a ceremony held at Quebec City.

Among the guests were Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, member of the Supreme Council of ADL Party worldwide, Archbishop Apkar Hovagimian, Primate of Canada, Nigoghos and Rosette Atinizian of Boston and family members.



Levon Mardirossian, 8th from left, Dr. David Johnston, General Governor of Canada, 10th from left, Nigoghos and Rosette Atinizian, Primate Apkar Hovagimian and Dr. Arshavir Gundjian pictured after the ceremony.

# Community News

## USC Hosts Innovate Armenia to Celebrate Armenian Science, Culture

LOS ANGELES – The University of Southern California (USC) Institute for Armenian Studies hosted its third annual Innovate Armenia event last weekend with an array of authentic music and festivities to celebrate Armenian culture. Through presentations, talks and performances, the festival provided patrons and those of Armenian descent a chance to learn about STEM research and education in Armenia, the *Daily Trojan* reports.

Over the past three years, Innovate Armenia has held the festival to examine the intersection of arts, culture and technology through various speakers and artists. Last year's festival drew 3,000 attendees, and 20,000 more watched online.

The Institute was established in 2005 and is composed of three full-time staff members and one full-time researcher. Associate director Silva Sevljan said this event brings together Armenian leaders to discuss pertinent topics.

"What we like to do is showcase leaders in whatever field we are highlighting that year and this year, it's STEM," Sevljan said. "It's not about showing, 'Here is one successful Armenian,' it is about broadening what cultural identity means. It's about introducing people and introducing professionals and stimulating dialogue outside the norm."

Each aspect of the event related to one or more of the three focal points of the Institute for Armenian Studies. These points include post-Armenian genocide research, diaspora studies and the Republic of Armenia.

Innovate Armenia featured three centers of attention this year. At the Alumni Park, there were several featured musicians, Armenian delicacies and wine for visitors to enjoy. Inside Bovard Auditorium, there were TED Talk-style presentations and panels discussing contemporary and past Armenian topics. Inside Doheny Library, there was an installation called "Undeliverable" which featured rare postcards from Armenia as well as contemporary images by Brazilian photographer Norair Chahinian.

Chahinian shared how his photography taught him more about the Armenian diaspora, in which many Armenians fled Turkey as a result of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

"I learned many stories from that place, but also I found life, I found hope," Chahinian said. "I met many, many people that taught me a lot about how they survived over these past 100 years dealing with a very hard condition."

## Armenian Evangelical Church of New York Celebrates its 120th Anniversary

By Peter Kougasian

NEW YORK – Culminating a year of observances, on the weekend of June 10-11, the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York celebrated its 120th anniversary with a gala banquet and church luncheon. Attendees came from as far away as California, and even Jerusalem, to enjoy music and dance presentations, listen to scripture and historical presentations, and of course, to eat.

The church prides itself on being the first Armenian church in New York and one of the first Armenian churches in the United States, tracing its origins to prayer meetings conducted by Rev. Garabed Nergararian in 1881. The see ANNIVERSARY, page 12



From left, Anthony Barsamian, Rep. Frank Pallone Jr., NKR Parliament Speaker Ashot Ghoulyan and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard

## Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Accompanies Representatives Frank Pallone, Jr. and Tulsi Gabbard to Artsakh

WASHINGTON – Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) Board of Trustees Co-Chairman Anthony Barsamian joined Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Representative Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) on a working visit to Artsakh today. The delegation included Artsakh Foreign Minister Karen Mirzoyan, Artsakh Representative to the US Robert Avetisyan, and All-Armenia Fund President Maria Mehranian. Reps. Pallone and Gabbard are in Armenia as part of a Congressional Delegation with Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Reps. David Valadao (R-CA) and Jackie Speier (D-CA), Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI), and Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA).

"This trip to Artsakh is instrumental in helping US Members of Congress better understand the current political and economic situation in Artsakh. By seeing the destruction caused by Azerbaijan and meeting with high-level officials to discuss US-Armenia and US-Artsakh relations in depth, Representatives Pallone and Gabbard can better convey the pressing need for US humanitarian aid and better understand the security threats to the people of Artsakh caused by the Azeris. They also saw the need for a peaceful resolution, which includes Artsakh in the negotiations," Assembly Co-Chair Barsamian said.

The previous day, Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Barsamian, Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, and Regional Director Arpi Vartanian met with Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan and Foreign Minister Karen Mirzoyan. During the meeting, they discussed the importance of US assistance, especially for de-mining in Artsakh which is carried out by The HALO Trust, as well as the peace process. President Sahakyan emphasized the Assembly's important role in US-Artsakh relations, and acknowledged the organization's "patriotic and highly professional activity."

Valadao also traveled to Artsakh earlier this week, where he met with The HALO Trust to learn more about mine clearance along the borders. Following the visit, he stated, "Families in Nagorno Karabakh live under the constant threat of landmine accidents and I am grateful for the efforts of The HALO Trust." see ARTSAKH, page 8



Rep. David Valadao (R-CA) observing mine clearance with The Halo Trust in Artsakh

## Keushkerian Showcases Tourist Attractions of Andalusia, Spain at TCA Beshgetourian Center

ALTADENA, Calif. – On September 17, Kevork Keushkerian, who recently visited Andalusia, Spain, delivered a PowerPoint presentation on his visit at the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Beshgetourian Center Hall. The event was organized by the Glendale-Pasadena Chapter of Tekeyan Cultural Association, and concluded with a reception.

Keushkerian presented the historic background to the Muslim presence in the Iberian Peninsula. The Arabs or Moors, under the leadership of Berber General Tariq ibn Ziyad, invaded the Iberian Peninsula in the year 711 with a force of 7,000 soldiers.

After an occupation of 780 years, the Arabs were defeated by and relinquished power to the Castilian-Aragonese forces in the year 1491. On January 2, 1492, the Catholic Monarchs, Queen Isabella I of Castile and King Ferdinand II of Aragon, took over Granada. Thus, a new era of Christian rule started in the Iberian Peninsula.

Several of Andalusia Spain's famous tourist attractions dot the landscape of the following cities: Seville, Granada, Cordoba, Toledo, and Madrid, the capital of Spain.

Seville has two main attractions: St. Mary of the See Cathedral and Alcazar, the palace. The Cathedral was built on the ruins of the old mosque and contains the tomb of Columbus.



Seville's cathedral with the coffin of Columbus

The building of the Alcazar palace started in 1811 and took 500 years for completion. Some of the scenes of TV's "Game of Thrones" are shot there.

Granada's main attraction is the Alhambra (meaning "the red" in Arabic), the palace on the hill. It was built in the 11th century and was used as a military fort until the 13th century, when it was transformed into a palace. As a palace, it was first inhabited by King Muhammad I and then by the Catholic Monarchs, Queen Isabella I and King Ferdinand II.

Another attraction is Al-Bayazine ("les Misérables" in Arabic), which is located on another hill across from the palace. This is where the Moors established inhabitation when they were driven out of the palace by the order of Queen Isabella. This neighborhood is now famous for its many taverns and restaurants that serve authentic Spanish menus.

Granada's cathedral is built in the 16th century, on the ruins of the big mosque. Next to it is the chapel that contains the tombs of Queen Isabella I and King Ferdinand II.

Cordoba has a few attractions: The Roman bridge, the Alcazar palace and the Cathedral of our Lady of the Assumption. The Cathedral, which was the Great Mosque during the Muslim rule, has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The Cathedral covers an area of 460 by 280 feet, and is built on 856 columns of jasper, onyx, marble, and granite. The double arches consist of a lower horseshoe arch and an upper semi-circular arch. The double arches were a new introduction to architecture, permitting higher ceilings than would otherwise be possible with relatively low columns.

see ANDALUSIA, page 12



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Accompanies Representatives Frank Pallone, Jr. and Tulsi Gabbard to Artsakh

ARTSAKH, from page 7

Trust to make Nagorno Karabakh a more safe and secure region." Valadao continued, "While their work is renowned worldwide, I appreciated witnessing their work and learning more about their efforts and dedication firsthand."

Earlier this month, Valadao spearheaded a bipartisan amendment along with House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA), House Permanent Select Committee on

Intelligence and Armenian Caucus Vice-Chair Adam Schiff (D-CA), Rep. Pallone, and Rep. Speier to ensure continued funding for de-mining projects in Artsakh.

US Members of Congress have continued to travel to Artsakh throughout the years. Rep. Pallone visited Artsakh for the first time twenty years ago as part of an Armenian Assembly of America-sponsored delegation. During an historic address before the Parliament of Nagorno Karabakh on

January 28, 1997, Rep. Pallone stated, "I hope that my visit to Karabakh, and especially my presence in your legislative body today, will contribute in some small way to a growing international recognition that the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh is a reality."

Pallone has returned to Artsakh a few times since his initial visit, where he observed local elections and learned more about mine clearance.



At left, Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard heading to Stepanakert with Artsakh Foreign Minister Karen Mirzoyan, Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, and All-Armenia Fund President Maria Mehranian; (right) Rep. Pallone, Barsamian, and Rep. Gabbard with servicemen

# Armenian Assembly Salutes Iraqi Kurdistan Referendum

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America issued a statement recently saluting Iraqi Kurdistan's referendum on independence and its results, where the people voted for three provinces of northern Iraq to become part of the sovereign Iraqi Kurdistan.

On September 25, CNN and other news services are reporting that: "The first results should be known within 72 hours. Kurdish election officials said 72 percent of eligible voters had cast their votes in the referendum. The Kurdistan Regional Government, which administers a semi-autonomous region in northern Iraq, says the referendum will give it a mandate to achieve independence from Iraq."

"Iraq has been beset by war for generations now, and this peaceful expression of free will from the people of Iraqi Kurdistan should be respected as a basic human right to help create a better future for the Kurds and all the other groups in the region, including the Christian and other minorities," Assembly Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian said. "This type of expression of popular will demands that we respect the process, and democracies should be supporting peaceful exercises of self-determination consistent with universal human rights in and similar to Iraqi Kurdistan," they added.

Council, told Rudaw, "We have a seat in the Kurdistan parliament as well as a seat in the Duhok Provincial Council."

Many Armenians ended up in northern Iraq as a result of deportations during the 1915 Armenian Genocide. Even though some Kurdish communities were exploited and encouraged by the Turkish Ottoman regime to attack the caravans of Armenians, many Kurds refused and instead rescued them from death.

Kurdish officials have also issued statements expressing their condolences for the Armenian Genocide. According to journalist Christopher Hitchens' article in Slate, he wrote that: "In 1991, in northern Iraq, where you could still see and smell the gassed and poisoned towns and villages of Kurdistan, I heard Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan say that Kurds ought to apologize to the Armenians for the role they had played as enforcers for the Ottomans during the time of the genocide. Talabani, who has often repeated that statement, is now [2007] president of Iraq." Hitchens went on to note: "I would regard his unforced statement as evidence in itself,

by the way, in that proud peoples do not generally offer to apologize for revolting crimes that they did not, in fact, commit."

Some years later, in 1997, Kurdistan Parliament in Exile Executive Committee Chair Zubeyir Aydar stated: "On 24 April 1915, the Ottoman Empire had taken the decision of massacre of the Armenian and Assyrian peoples. The ground for this massacre was prepared in advance. The Kurdish tribes involved in Hamidieh Cavalry took part in the Armenian massacre. Hundreds of thousands of Armenian and Assyrians were slaughtered and as many were forced to migrate during this massacre."

He continued: "Today we wish to share the pain and suffering of our peoples and strongly condemn the Turkish state and any force which is collaborating with it."

In 2007, Iraqi Kurdistan President Massoud Barzani published his father's memoirs about the Armenian Genocide and mass deportation of Armenians. In his writings, his father described how his brigade aided the Armenians and accompanied them to the border of Syria while they were confronted by

Turkish forces, and ultimately suffered casualties.

Today, Kurds in Turkey recognize the Armenian Genocide, commemorate the victims and often call on the Turkish government to apologize to Armenian people. Selahattin Demirtas, the Kurdish Co-Chair of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), has said that "without hesitation, I recognize the Armenian Genocide." He added: "Just because some people have covered up such a tragic historical incident by saying that 'the official history [of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey] is not like that', I will not bow to it. Whatever happened should

be acknowledged."

In addition to being strong advocates for human rights and standing up against genocide, the Kurdish people in the region have been a bulwark against ISIS and have pledged to protect minorities. The United States sees the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), who are from the Kurdish Peoples' Protection Units (YPG), as its most effective battlefield partner and main ally against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. According to the Pentagon's Chief Spokeswoman Dana W. White, they are "the only force on the ground that can successfully seize Raqqa in the near future."



Armenian Assembly Public Affairs Associate Danielle Saroyan, Kurdistan Regional Government Representative to the U.S. Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, and Armenian Assembly Grassroots & Development Associate Mariam Khaloyan at a reception to mark Kurdistan's referendum in Washington, D.C. on September 25, 2017

The Kurdish people have treated Armenians who reside within its territory in Iraq well throughout the years. "There are just a few of us in Kurdistan. But thanks to God, we have been given most of our rights," Ishkhan Milko, an Armenian member of the Duhok Provincial

President Massoud Barzani published his father's memoirs about the Armenian Genocide and mass deportation of Armenians. In his writings, his father described how his brigade aided the Armenians and accompanied them to the border of Syria while they were confronted by

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Cool Cucumbers: Armenian Yard-Longs a Hit

By Annie Charnley Eveland

WALLA WALLA, Wash. (*Union-Bulletin*) – A lifelong gardener, Elsie Flemmer, 70, has the reputation of growing some of the largest cucumbers she and fellow Wheatland Village residents have ever seen.

An image of her holding one of her uber-lengthy cucumbers is on the closed-circuit TV's video rotation for residents to view in the dining area.

Her motto could be "blossom where you're planted," for in the past four to five years she and her vegetables have exemplified this theme down to their roots.

In addition to dill, parsley and tomatoes of various sizes, typical, standard-sized dark-green cukes wend their vines up circular and square cages in her vertical four-by-six-foot raised plot to dangle along with larger Armenian cucumbers that get to be about 16 inches long.

Then, while shopping at a local store a few years ago, she came across seeds for Armenian yard-long, the lengthiest on the market, notes reimerseeds.com.

The cucumis sativus really flourishes in the plot, she said, and no kidding. When kept whole, the fluted or ridged pale celery-green heirlooms are too long to keep in her refrigerator, so she sets them atop the air-conditioning unit in her apartment to keep them cool as well, cucumbers.

A friend volunteered to amend the garden soil for her with Miracle Grow, steer manure and other nutrients. Suffice to say the plants thrive in such an organic heaven.

Working in the garden each afternoon is good therapy and fulfilling, she said. All reap the results of Elsie's efforts, as she shares the produce with neighbors, and brings six-inch spear slices from the large Armenians down to the dining area for everyone to enjoy.

"There's no way I can cut into a yard-long and eat the whole thing," she said. She's weighed in some of the yard-longs at as much as 5 pounds 1 ounce.

Growers must have patience with the huge Armenians as it takes about 65 days for them to come to fruition. Reimerseeds.com recommends harvesting for best results when they're 12 to 15 inches long.

Elsie said the burpless yard-long has a mild, wonderful flavor and nice texture. Imagine salads that could be made from 36 inches of crisp cucumber slices.

A medical social worker with a hospital in the Sacramento-Carmichael, Calif., area, Flemmer retired after 18 years at her deeply rewarding, interesting occupation. Facing virulent physiological issues, she endured 30 surgeries and went into hospice care, believing her time was nearly up.

She moved to Walla Walla about nine years ago to be near family and for two years lived in Wheatland's assisted care section while moving

away from death's door as her health improved.

Now an active resident in the independent living section, she commandeers her zippy motorized wheelchair like a pro and with gusto has embraced cultivating and grocery shopping for

North Dakota where their parents raised cattle, wheat, oats, barley and flax. They fed their nine kids from a large garden near their home that brimmed with cucumbers, beans, strawberries and other produce.



Elsie Flemmer with one of her cucumbers

herself and others.

"I always cook too much and share with the neighbors," she added. "I'm busy every moment of the day."

She and maybe one other sibling enjoy gardening, she said. They grew up on a farm in

For family consumption, they also had separate patches for potatoes, cantaloupe and corn. They stored 100-pound bags of potatoes in their cellar and canned 750 jars of food annually, butchered beef and chicken and produced their own milk and cream.



## 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](mailto:jamiang@americaremedical.com)

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Welcome Reception for New Citizens at Armenian Heritage Park

BOSTON – The welcome reception for new citizens, their families and friends at Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston was held under sunny skies, during an otherwise rain soaked week, on Thursday, September 21.

The Anna and Noubar Afeyan Endowed Fund of Armenian Heritage Park supports the annual Welcome Reception for New Citizens at the park following the Naturalization Ceremony at Faneuil Hall.

“The welcome reception contributes decisively to Heritage Park’s intent to celebrate the immigrant experience and its core mission of inclusion to come together on common ground,” said Armine Afeyan, founding chair of the 2015 welcome reception.

Following the naturalization ceremony, the Dixieland jazz band, Riverboat Stompers, led the new citizens, their families and friends through Faneuil Hall Marketplace to Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway.

At the park, American flags, flying in the warm breeze, dotted the perimeter of the Park. Bouquets of red, white and blue balloons tied to each bench surrounding the labyrinth added to the celebratory festivities. The spirited and energetic music of Black Sea Salsa, the 12-piece band led by Dan Teager, filled the air with many of his original compositions.

As each new citizen arrived, the 4th grade students and their teachers from the Boston Public School’s Eliot Innovation School in the North End joined the Friends of Heritage Park to warmly welcome the newly naturalized citizens with rousing applause and cheers of congratulations. Each new citizen received a flashing light star. Friends of Christopher Columbus Park and residents from the North End and Rowes Wharf were among the Friends extending congratulations.

Soon all were meeting, greeting and enjoying dessert while the leadership of several partnering organizations presented each new citizen

with a gift bag. Among the gifts were a one-year family membership to the Museum of Fine Arts, free admission to programs at the Old State House from the Bostonian Society.

A notable guest at the program was Robert Love, who was a guest of Dr. Nathaniel Sheidley, executive director of The Bostonian Society / Old State House. Love is a Revolutionary figure who between 1760 and 1770, served the Town of Boston by documenting individuals newly arrived from abroad. Robert Love was played by Graeme Marsden, who is himself an immigrant to the United States.

Judge Indira Talwani, the presiding judge during the Naturalization Ceremony at Faneuil Hall, offered a thoughtful and heartfelt welcome during the brief program. Talwani was introduced by Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, who during his welcome commented that, “America’s story is an unfinished book. We are constantly adding chapters – not by one author, but by a chorus of them...Today remind us that America is still the sum of all her parts.”

Dr. Vartan Gregorian, President, Carnegie Foundation of New York offered the welcome during the inaugural Welcome Reception in 2015. Judge Rya Zobel presided over the Naturalization Ceremony at Faneuil Hall and offered the welcome in 2016. Since its inception, Zobel continues to be very much a part in the planning of the day of welcome and cele-



Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian extending congratulations to the new citizens at Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway

bration.

Upcoming events at the park include two HUBweek programs in October. On Tuesday, October 10 Reducing & Managing Stress: Walking the Labyrinth and Wednesday, October 11 Geometry as Public Art:

Celebrating the Immigrant Experience. For details on both and to RSVP, visit HUBweek.org.

For further information about the Park, visit ArmenianHeritagePark.org or email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

## Schiff Urges Textbook Publishers in California to Include More Info on Armenian Genocide

LOS ANGELES (*Glendale News Press*) – Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) and seven of his colleagues sent letters Wednesday, September 20, to California history textbook publishers urging them to include additional information about the Armenian Genocide in forthcoming textbook editions.

“It’s a really necessary part of any student’s education to understand what people are capable of and under what circumstances it takes place, and how it can be avoided in the future,” Schiff said in a phone interview.

Letters were sent to major textbook publishers, such as Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, McGraw-Hill and Pearson, said Emilie Simons, a spokeswoman for Schiff.

Glendale Councilman Vrej Agajanian said Schiff’s letter and the other letters will hopefully lead to the expansion of information about the genocide, which can be essential for a student’s education. He also referred to a quote by Irish philosopher Edmund Burke: “For evil to flourish, all that is necessary is for good men to do nothing.”

“The world has a short memory and, if every kid learns about this, they can be a solidier to stop future genocides,” said Agajanian, who is a political talk show host for “ABCTVLIVE with Vrej Agajanian,” which airs on the Armenian American Broadcasting Corp.

In 2016, Glendale Unified’s history and literature teachers underwent additional training with genocide experts to better instruct students about the Ottoman Turks’ massacre of 1.5 million Armenians beginning in 1915.

Also, in 2016, Glendale Unified officials unanimously approved recognizing Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day on April 24, giving students and faculty that day off.

In 2014, Gov. Jerry Brown signed AB 1915, which required the Armenian Genocide be included in high school curricula.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

85  
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6:30 P.M.**Dinner and Program**  
7:30 P.M.*Mistress of Ceremonies**Entertainment***Anaide Nahikian**Leader, Advanced Training Program  
on Humanitarian Action at Harvard  
Humanitarian Initiative**Black Sea Salsa**



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Evangelical Church of New York Celebrates its 120th Anniversary

ANNIVERSARY, from page 7

prayer meetings became an organized church on November 14, 1896 when seminary student H. H. Khazoyan conducted services at the Adams Memorial Presbyterian Church.

The church's remarkable history was celebrated at a gala luncheon at the Liberty House in Liberty State Park, New Jersey on June 10. Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) recalled the crucial role played by the New York Church in founding the AMAA, and the continuing close association of church and mission for nearly a century. Levon Filian added his warm congratulations from the West Coast office of the AMAA. Rev. Berdj Djambazian extended congratulations from the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, and stirred the audience with deeply personal reflections on the spirit of Armenian martyrs that inspired the creation of the Union and infuses it still. And Rev. Djambazian commended the church's pastor, Rev. Haig Kherloopian, recalling an evening when together they walked the streets of New York, and suddenly Rev. Kherloopian was greeted warmly by a homeless man who considered the pastor his cherished friend.

Plaques and gifts were presented to eleven faithful servants of the church, including former pastor Rev. Dr. Peter Doghramji, and 102-year-old Armine Mardigian. Cultural presentations at the banquet showcased traditional Armenian arts in a modern context.

Milena Nalbandian performed a traditional Armenian dance in costume, flavored with contemporary dance elements. The Armenian a cappella trio Zulal sang Armenian folk melodies invigorated with a modern spirit. Church moderator Jon Brothers, a professional singer, along with members Christina and Aaron Santana-Smith, led the banquet audience in singing "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

Keynote speaker at the Saturday, June 10 banquet, and featured speaker at a church luncheon on Sunday, was Donald Wilson Bush, President of the Woodrow Wilson Legacy Foundation, and a descendant of President Woodrow Wilson. Bush is married to a woman from Armenia, Hermine. Bush delighted the

audience with his story of travelling to Armenia to meet all his wife's relatives, which he called the "khunamee tsunami."

Bush is a theology school graduate, and he delivered an electrifying speech offering his

view of the special role of Armenian Christianity in evangelizing the world. Drawing an analogy to Armenia's geographical placement, joining Europe and Asia, Mr. Bush said Armenian Christians have a special calling to

transcend traditional divisions and proclaim Christianity's universal message.

Reflecting the spirit of Mr. Bush's message, distinguished clergy from all church communities attended the banquet, including Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Rev. Craig Simonian, Rev. Jerair Bizdikian, and Vicar Jordan Voges. Deputy Ambassador Mher Margaryan represented the Republic of Armenia.

The Saturday banquet ended with guest clergy leading the singing of the Hayr Mer, and master of ceremonies Paul Kayaian extending an invitation to one and all to come to New York the next day to attend church services followed by a luncheon. Many of the 180 in attendance took up the offer.

Rev. Haig Kherloopian, the charismatic young pastor of the New York Church, addressed the banquet on Saturday and conducted Sunday services. A graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, Rev. Haig continues the greatest tradition of the New York Church: a ministry that combines the finest scholarship with a searing Evangelical spirituality. His theme for the weekend was a forward-looking ministry that emphasizes three approaches: (1) reaching out to the larger community to call new disciples; (2) unifying the Church through a message that unites denominations, cultures, and ethnicities; and (3) using new technologies to communicate ancient truths.

After church on Sunday, the Boyajian family provided a delicious kebab luncheon, and Seza Momjian and Peggy Dingilian provided mezze, drinks, and dessert. The weekend offered yet one more symbolic element to celebrate. Longtime members could not help but note that the anniversary committee co-chairs were Jennifer Telfeyan-LaRoe and Katherine Tharp, scions of the Telfeyan and Teagar families, two of the greatest pillars in the long history of the New York Church. Their leadership conveyed the assurance that the great traditions of the church endure to this day.

As the celebration drew to a close on Sunday, with the audience inspired, delighted, and very well-fed, one common thought seemed to be expressed by one and all: the church seems well-poised for its next 120 years.



From left to right: Rev. Haig Kherloopian; Banquet MC, Paul Kayaian

From left to right: Dance by Milena Nalbandian; guest clergy leading the singing of the Hayr Mer, Rev. Craig Simonian, Rev. Jerair Bizdikian, Rev. Haig Kherloopian, Very Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, Rev. Berdj Djambazian

From left to right: Guest speakers, Zaven Khanjian, Rev. Berdj Djambazian, and Donald Wilson Bush

From left to right: Zulal, Toni Apelian, Yeraz Markarian, and Anais Terkerian; Church moderator Jon Brothers along with members Christina and Aaron Santana-Smith

Presenting gifts to our Faithful servants of the church, from left to right: Banquet Co-Chair, Kat Tharp; Head of Trustees, Mossig Makhouljian, Dolly Tharp accepting for Mr. Arthur & Mrs. Gloria Teagar; Berge Kayaian; Hilda Melconian; Banquet Co-Chair Jennifer Telfeyan-LaRoe, Peter Kougasian, Banquet Co-Chair Kat Tharp

## Keushkerian Showcases Tourist Attractions of Andalusia, Spain at TCA Beshgetourian Center

ANDALUSIA, from page 7

Toledo is a walled city not far from Madrid. It is famous for the Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes, built by Queen Isabella I and King Ferdinand II. By the order of the Queen, the iron chains used on the captured Christian slaves are hanging high

off the building's exterior, symbolizing freedom and independence.

Toledo's main Cathedral contains the biggest chalice in the world, "Corpus Christy," which means Body of Christ.

Madrid has many touristic attractions like the Prado muse-

um, where one could enjoy, among others, the works of Goya. Then there is Picasso's museum, the Royal Palace, and the Cathedral. The Bull Fight Arena is especially attractive, because there you could see the same architectural style as the Cathedral of Cordoba.



Alhambra Palace in Granada



COMMUNITY NEWS

# CYSCA Panel on Media Literacy in Armenia with 5 Visiting Armenian Specialists Hosted at NAASR October 5

BELMONT, Mass. – On Thursday, October 5, a panel discussion on “Expanding Inclusion of Media Literacy in Education in Armenia: Challenges and Opportunities” will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) headquarters. It will be hosted by the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) and NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian

Issues. Five young women from Armenia will be in Greater Boston September 29 - October 7 to participate in a grant program focused on media literacy in education hosted by CYSCA, with funding support from the Open World (OW) program of the US Library of Congress, CYSCA, and its team of volunteers. A key goal of the program is to help participants develop methods for inclusion of media literacy in edu-

cation by engaging them with their American counterparts. The program aims to give the participants first-hand exposure to America’s democratic government and free-market system as an instrument for Americans engaged in citizens’ diplomacy.

During their stay, CYSCA has designed a program of intense visits/meetings with various organizations/individuals in the Greater Boston area including, for example, the Massachusetts Media Literacy Consortium, Emerson College, University of Massachusetts Boston, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Media Lab. The five participants and their accompanying facilitator will be staying with host families during their stay to enable them to experience life in an American home.

During the panel discussion, the participants will discuss their work experience in Armenia and reflect on their visit to the US. The program will include Siranush Galstyan, smart room coordinator, Children of Armenia Fund (COAF); Nina Ganjalyan, smart room coordinator, COAF; Lusine Grigoryan, media literacy specialist, Media Initiatives Center; Armine Khloyan, sociology teacher/head of robotics lab, National Engineering University of Armenia (Foundation); Shushanik Ohanyan, project manager, Goris Press Club NGO; and Anahit Khachatryan, facilitator for the group, currently project management specialist at USAID Armenia.

Admission is free (donations accepted) and a 7 p.m. reception precedes the panel. The NAASR Bookstore will open at 6:30 p.m.

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# Hye Pointe Church New Cross Blessed

BRADFORD, Mass. – On Sunday, September 17, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, at the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, the ceremony of the blessing of the cross that will adorn the Family Life and Cultural Center’s main cupola took place. After the blessing of the cross, the Hye Pointe Fundraising Committee organized a lunch. During lunch, the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) chapter at Hye Pointe presented a check for 5000 dollars raised at its Mother’s Day dance to the Building Fund.



Armenak Chavushyan, center, with his family

Fr. Vart Gyozealian and his parish thanked Armenak Chavushyan and his family for the donation of the cross and for the meal, as well as the Fundraising Committee, and Men’s and Women’s Clubs for organizing the lunch.



The ACYOA Hye Pointe chapter presents a check for \$5,000 raised at its Mother’s Day dance to the Building Fund of the church



Blessing of the new cross at Hye Pointe Church

# Arts & Living

## Paris Fashion Week Features Armenian Designer's Collection

PARIS (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The collection created by Armenian designer Ariga Torosyan, who founded the brand Arigato, will be presented at the Paris Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2018.

The designer said that her showroom, called Ozone, will open within the framework of the fashion week in the French capital from September 28 to October 4 to display her new creations for women.

"Titled 'Elemental Impression,' the collection is inspired by the three basic shapes that exist in nature – triangle, circle and square," she said, adding that the collection was produced entirely in Armenia.



Ariga Torosyan (left) at Paris Fashion Week

"Humans are on a daily basis either in contact with these elements or can feel/see them in their surroundings. In the 'elemental collection,' you can find a strong influence of geometrical elements on one of the most important creations of humankind, i.e. clothing."

This is not the first time that Torosyan is participating in the prestigious fashion event. Previously, her collection was presented as part of the Paris Fashion Week AW 2017-2018 in March.

Ariga Torosyan is an Iranian Armenian fashion designer who was born in Iran in 1986.

She studied graphic in high school and sculpture in art studio from 2000-2005. Then continued her studies in fashion design an illustration from 2006-2011 in Yerevan fine art academy.

After returning to Iran, she co-founded an Iranian clothing brand as the main designer. She started her own brand, Arigato, at the beginning of 2016 in Armenia.



One of the designs by Ariga Torosyan



Eric Esraïlian, left, and Terry George plant a memorial tree in Tsitsernakaberd's Memory Alley.

## 'The Promise' Director Terry George and Co-producer Eric Esraïlian Visit Tsitsernakaberd

YEREVAN – On Saturday, September 23, two days after the celebration of the 26th anniversary of Armenia's independence, "The Promise" director Terry George and co-producer Eric Esraïlian paid a symbolic and emotional visit to Tsitsernakaberd, the Armenian Genocide Memorial Complex. Esraïlian and George, who arrived in Yerevan on Thursday afternoon to attend a series of events devoted to "The Promise," were accompanied by Armenia's Minister of Culture Armen Amiryany and AGBU Central Board members.

The visit to Tsitsernakaberd was a true highlight for George. Never intimidated to speak up against genocides, he depicted their horrors in his historical dramas Hotel Rwanda and "The Promise." "This visit sums up everything that I worked for over the last four years and brings into focus what really cinema and the power of cinema can be about, to try to commemorate the loss of lives and the horrible crime that was committed. So, this is the most emotional moment of the whole production of "The Promise" itself, the most important moment of the project," said George.

George and Esraïlian paid tribute to the Armenian Genocide victims with a moment of silence as they laid flowers at the eternal flame. They also planted a tree

see VISIT, page 17



Terry George, Eric Esraïlian and guests place flowers near the eternal flame in Tsitsernakaberd.

## Joyce Van Dyke's 'Daybreak' to Be Performed by Pan Asian Rep in NY

NEW YORK – The Pan Asian Repertory Theatre will present the world premiere of "Daybreak" by Joyce Van Dyke in 2018.

The play will be part of the troupe's 41st season. Directed by Lucie Tiberghien, the play will be performed April 21-May 13, 2018, at the Becket Theatre, 410 West 42 St.

Tisa Chang, founding artistic producing director of the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, noted that other plays performed in 2018 include "Acquittal," about four women unjustly imprisoned during the 1980s military regime in Pakistan, and "Cambodia Agonistes," focused on the Khmer Rouge civil war years.

"Daybreak" is a powerful new play that highlights a new Armenian-American voice. Set in three time periods, the play is inspired by the true stories of two women friends, survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and using memory, dreams, and music, carries the story of these women and their families, into the 21st century future to celebrate the endurance of the human spirit. "Daybreak" is a universal call for recognition and healing. Van Dyke says: "Throughout the play, dreams overtake the "reality" of the action... showing that the impact of genocide does not just break human bonds... it ruptures time and space. This is the most ambitious play I've written, both in its dream-play form and in its creative processes. It is both intimate and epic." Her other plays on Armenian themes include "A Girl's War," produced by Golden Thread Productions (2009), New Repertory Theatre (2003) and Boston Playwrights' Theatre (2001), winner of the Gassner Award and the Boston Globe's "Top Ten" plays of 2001.

Her new play, "The Women Who Mapped the Stars," was co-commissioned by The Poets' Theatre and by Central Square Theater which will produce the world premiere in 2018 as part of The Brit D'Arbeloff Women in Science Production Series. Her other plays include



Joyce Van Dyke

"The Oil Thief," commissioned by the Ensemble Studio Theatre/Sloan Project, produced by Boston Playwrights' Theatre, and winner of the Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding New Script (2009). She is a MacDowell Colony Fellow and Huntington Theatre Playwriting Fellow, and teaches playwriting and Shakespeare at Northeastern and Harvard.

Tisa Chang is the Pan Asian Rep's founding artistic producing director. She has led the company since its inception, promoting stories seldom told and voices seldom heard. She is a theatre professional for 5 decades as actor, dancer director and highlights include: 2015's "Sayonara," 2007's "The Joy Luck Club," intercultural epic "Cambodia Agonistes," which toured nationally and to Cairo and Johannesburg, "Kwatz! The Tibetan Project" and "Rashomon," which was invited to Havana Theatre Festival in 2003.

Pan Asian Rep is regarded as a pioneer for artistic excellence and service with an off Broadway Season, Training/Outreach, Play Development and is recognized by diverse communities, press and the American theatre mainstream.



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Whistler House Makeover: Lowell Landmark's Luster Restored

By Rick Sobey

LOWELL (*Lowell Sun*)— Clutter. Cracks in the walls and ceiling.

A “dump.”

The third floor of the Whistler House, the birthplace of artist James McNeill Whistler, had become attic-like.

“Oh god, it was so dirty,” recalls Sara Bogosian, executive director of the Whistler House Museum of Art on Worthen Street. “It was really bad.”

It's hard to believe the third floor was such a dump only a few months ago. One side of the floor has since been transformed into a nursery and library, recreating the early years of Whistler — including a cradle from 1834.

In addition, the other side has been restored as an artist-in-residence studio.

“We wanted to enhance the beauty of our house, and everything is so much prettier now,” Bogosian said.

“It really enhances the tour, making the visitor experience so much better,” she added. “It enhances the education of the Whistler House for visitors, and we're able to educate them even further by putting out a collection of works that have been in storage for years.”

The historic landmark was built in 1823. Back in those years, the nursery was located on the third floor, according to Bogosian.

The furniture in the nursery and library — the cradle, bed, desk and more — was provided by the Lowell Historical Society and clients of Bob Roach, an interior designer who's on the Whistler House board.

“This could even be a bridal suite for them to get ready,” Bogosian said.

The museum had an artist-in-resident for a number of years.

However, after the restoration of the artist-in-resi-



Sara Bogosian the president and executive director at the Whistler House Museum of Art in Lowell shows off the third floor renovations that they completed in June. A view of the third floor nursery that they have created during the renovations. (SUN/JOHN LOVE)

dence studio, the museum wants to give numerous artists an opportunity to paint there.

Bogosian said the artists could come in for a month at a time.

“We want them to feel what it's like to paint up here because it's really the best space in Lowell,” she said. “This north light is perfect for artists.”

“It's the only location in the city with this kind of north light, with this much of an opening of light,” Bogosian added. “And it's a historic home where we've had artists since the 1900s.”

The museum has raised money for their restoration projects through grants, fundraisers and sponsors.

In the past five years, the museum has restored its exterior, kitchen, gift shop and now the third floor.

They've added window shutters, made like the origi-

nals on the house. The museum has also added air conditioning.

The museum has pulled out many decorations and artifacts from the closets in recent years.

Moving forward, Bogosian would like to restore the Parker Gallery, which was built in 1960. She wants new floors and a state-of-the-art kitchen.

“It's important for me to get the house looking absolutely gorgeous because I think making this an important location in the city enhances the city,” she said. “And that's my main goal — to make Lowell great.”

The Whistler House is open Wednesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Pending availability, guided tours are offered daily, Wednesday to Saturday, from noon to 2 p.m.



TCA MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP

## THE UNEXPECTED GUEST

by Agatha Christie

- SAVE THE DATE -  
OCTOBER 28 & 29

## Warner Bros. Signs First-Look Deal With French Company Marvelous Productions

PARIS (*Variety*) — Warner Bros. has signed a first-look deal with Marvelous Productions, the Paris-based outfit launched at Cannes by former top-level execs at Pathé, Romain Le Grand and Vivien Aslanian and producer Marco Pacchioni.

Under the pact, Warner Bros. will have the opportunity to board any French-language project produced or co-produced by Marvelous Productions. The agreement underscores the Hollywood studio's aim to increase its footprint in local production with strong partners.

“We have a deep respect for the talent and professionalism of the founders of Marvelous Productions, and we are convinced of their ability to deliver quality films that have a wide appeal,” said Iris Knobloch, president of Warner Bros. France.

Over the last few years, Warner Bros. has

backed several French movies, most notably Michel Hazanavicius's Oscar-winning film “The Artist.”

Le Grand and Aslanian were at the helm of Pathé for 19 years before exiting in 2016. Together, they produced and distributed many franchise-based French comedies, such as “Les Tuches” and “Camping,” as well as “Back to Mom” and “One Man and His Cow,” which were all highly successful at the local box office. Pacchioni produced “Alone in Berlin” with Emma Thompson, Brendan Gleeson and Daniel Bruhl, and co-produced Virginie Despentes's “Bye Bye Blondie” with Emmanuelle Beart.

Marvelous Productions will be producing and co-producing content for film, TV and web formats. The outfit's first slate will soon be unveiled.

Read News in Armenian at:





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## CALIFORNIA

**NOVEMBER 18 — Join the Armenian EyeCare Project for its 25th Anniversary Gala** at 6:30pm at the Balboa Bay Club in Newport Beach. The organization will honor Founder Dr. Roger Ohanesian for 25 years of dedicated service to Armenia in the field of eye care. The fun-filled evening includes an authentic Armenian dinner, roving entertainers, a silent & live auction, Tom Bozgian & his band and Artur's Armenian Dance Troupe. To RSVP or for more information, call 949-933-4069, email [leslie@eyecareproject.com](mailto:leslie@eyecareproject.com) or visit [eyecareproject.com/25th-anniversary-gala/](http://eyecareproject.com/25th-anniversary-gala/)

## MASSACHUSETTS

**SEPTEMBER 30 — AN EVENING WITH SIBIL, renowned Armenian Singer from Istanbul** ([www.sibilmusic.com](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.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](mailto: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](mailto:hq@naasr.org) for more information.

**OCTOBER 13-14 - St. James 70th Annual Bazaar** 11am-8pm Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. Silent Auction, Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Super Raffle (Apple Products, Electronics, and Children's Prizes), \$100 Raffle and Children's Activities. St. James Armenian Church - 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Sponsorship opportunities available. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or at [www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar](http://www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar)

**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](http://www.ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.org). John Berberian / Oud, Mal Barsamian / Clarinet, Ara Dinkjian / Keyboard, Ron Tutunjian / Dumbeg

**OCTOBER 15 — 4th Annual Trinity Tailgate, New England Patriots vs. New York Jets,** sponsored by the Trinity Men's Union of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 12:15 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. All are invited to a tailgate party to watch the game, 1 p.m. kick-off, on a 12-foot high-definition screen. Lots of food, beverages and snacks. Silent Auction of 2 tickets to the December 31, 2017 Patriots vs Jets Game, 1 p.m. kick-off. For further information, call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

**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 Celebrating the 56th Anniversary of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston and Honoring Aram Hintlian,** as Parishioner of the Year, Sunday, 12:15 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. During the Banquet, recognition will also be given to outgoing Parish Council member Jack Ekchian. Dinner donation is \$40; children under 12, \$20. Seating is by advance paid reservation only with a RSVP deadline of October 18. For further information, call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or log onto <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/464/>

**OCTOBER 26 — Annual Fall Dinner and Drawing sponsored by the Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club,** 6:30 p.m., Charles and Nevert 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](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**NOVEMBER 2 — Thursday: Symposium on Armenian Issues in the International Press. "Journalism and "Fake News": The Armenian Genocide and Karabagh.** Journalism is changing at a rapid pace. Join the Armenian Mirror-Spectator along with Robert Fisk from Beirut, Lebanon, David Barsamian, Philip Terzian and Amberin Zaman to discuss the issues facing journalism today and their impact on the Armenian Case. Wellesley College, Alumnae Hall Ballroom, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA. Doors open at 6:00 pm, Program starts 7:00 pm. Reception to follow, free admission.

**NOVEMBER 3 - 85th Anniversary Benefit Gala of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator,** the first English-language Armenian newspaper in the United States. Boston Marriott Hotel, 2345 Commonwealth Ave. Newton, MA. Reception, Meet the Awardees |6:30 PM; Dinner and Program, 7:30 PM. 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award to Robert Fisk, Journalist, Middle East correspondent for *The Independent* of London based in Beirut, seven time recipient of British Press Awards' Reporter of the Year; 2017 Excellence Awards to David Barsamian, founder and director of Alternative Radio, and Amberin Zaman, columnist for Diken and Al Monitor, former Turkey correspondent for *The Economist*. Mistress of Ceremonies Anaide Nahikian, Leader, Advanced Training Program at Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Entertainment, 12 Musicians of Black Sea Salsa. For Reservations please call Aram Arkun (917) 743-9005 (cell), Email: [tcadirector@aol.com](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com).

**NOVEMBER 3-4 — 61st annual St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church Bazaar.** Friday and Saturday. Come with family and friends for delicious chicken, beef and losh kebab, kuftah and kheyma dinners, pastries and specialty gourmet items. Handmade arts and crafts, White Elephant table and ever popular silent and live auction items. Visit the church's website, [www.soorpstepanors.org](http://www.soorpstepanors.org) for menus, pastry and gourmet items. Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Admission is free.

**NOVEMBER 3 and 4 — Annual Autumnfest Bazaar sponsored by the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe,** at our new location 1280 Boston Road, (Rte 125) Bradford MA ,

Friday 12 - 7 pm and Saturday 12 - 7 pm. Lamb, Losh, Chicken Kebab and Kheyma. Dinners served all day. Pastry table, Armenian cuisine, gift baskets, raffles for cash and prizes. For more info, visit [www.hypointearmenianchurch.org](http://www.hypointearmenianchurch.org) or call (978) 372-9227.

**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](mailto: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.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## 'The Promise' Director Terry George and Co-producer Eric Esrailian Visit Tsitsernakaberd

VISIT, from page 7

in the Memory Alley to honor the memory of the late Kirk Kerkorian, the legendary man who tirelessly worked to bring "The Promise" to big screens, and toured in the genocide museum.

"This tree symbolizes the ever-growing reach of the Armenian story. Kirk Kerkorian planted the seed, and Terry, Mike Medavoy, and I have been honored to work with our incredible cast and crew to share this story with the world. We must never let the world forget our past, and we must move forward together support others in need. Under Kirk Kerkorian's direction, we followed

nificant past unfold on screen for the first time in a wide-release Hollywood production. It is difficult to express our global gratitude for the efforts of the late Kirk Kerkorian and to those who worked as allies in telling this story, specifically our guests Terry, Eric and their co-producers. They confronted countless challenges over the years and succeeded despite all odds. We are honored to dedicate a few events, including the musical tribute at the Yerevan Opera Theater to the film," said Setrakian.

"The Promise" is a major historical drama depicting the Armenian Genocide through a



Terry George during a visit to Tsitsernakaberd.

through on his wishes for the film. Today, we honor his life and the lives of those lost over a hundred years ago," said Esrailian, co-producer of "The Promise."

On Friday, they spoke to the local journalists and attended "We Promise" musical tribute—inspired by "The Promise" and based on its original score—which premiered at the Opera Theater in Yerevan. Armenia's President Serzh Sargsyan, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan, Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, AGBU President Berge Setrakian along with foreign ambassadors and dignitaries attended the spectacular.

"Armenians across the globe watched their sig-

touching love story. After its mainstream release in the United States and Canada in April, "The Promise" continues to open in theaters across the world. Produced by Kerkorian's Survival Pictures and directed by renowned, Academy Award-winning director Terry George, "The Promise" features an all-star international cast, including Oscar Isaac, Christian Bale, Charlotte Le Bon, Shohreh Aghdashloo and Angela Sarafyan. The movie's original score was created by Oscar-winning composer Gabriel Yared with the title song The Promise written and performed by the late Chris Cornell. All proceeds from the film have been designated to various charities with an emphasis on human rights causes.

### NEVADA

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

### PENNSYLVANIA

**OCTOBER 15** — Armenian Intercommunal Committee of Philadelphia celebrating Armenian Cultural Month presents a musical program by Areni Choir at Holy Trinity Armenian Church. Sunday, 2 pm. Admission is free. Light meal will be served. 101 Ashmead Rd, Cheltenham, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, phone: 215 663-1600.

### 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.

**NOVEMBER 4, 5** — Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, Annual Food Fair & Bazaar. Saturday, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m., Sunday, noon - 6 p.m. Shish Kebab, Kufta, Kheyra, Choreg, Yalanchi, Losh Kebab, Armenian Pastries, midia, Vosbov Kheyra, etc. Daily Raffle, Silent Auction Kids activities & Balloon Man, and much more. Cash, Check, Visa & Mastercard accepted. Call 401-272-7712 for further info.

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.



## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian

### Baked Spinach, Cheese and Eggs

#### INGREDIENTS

2 (6-ounce) packages fresh baby spinach, washed, drained, torn into pieces  
4 eggs, beaten  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2-3 large cloves garlic, minced  
3/4 cup milk  
1 cup crumbled Feta cheese or 1 cup diced Mozzarella or Munster cheese (more to taste)  
2 thick slices white or French bread, crust removed, diced in pieces  
Sea or Kosher salt, black pepper, and paprika  
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/8 teaspoon each ground red pepper and ground nutmeg  
Olive oil  
Sour cream

#### PREPARATION:

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.

Sauté the onions and garlic in olive oil for a few minutes and set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the spinach, eggs, milk, cheese, and spices together. Add the cooked onion and garlic mixture to the bowl and mix.

Pour into a greased casserole dish, top with the cubed bread, and sprinkle with paprika. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until lightly browned and bubbly.

Remove from oven, cut into squares, and serve with a generous dollop of sour cream on top.

Serves 4-6.

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

TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF DETROIT  
PRESENTS  
TCA MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP OF GREATER NEW YORK

A PLAY BY PERCH ZEYTUNTSYAN  
**ALL RISE**  
ADAPTED & DIRECTED BY GERALD PAPASIAN  
**THE COURTS IS IN SESSION**  
ՊՍՏՐԱՆՆԵ ԵՆՏՔՐ...  
THE TRIAL OF SOCHOMON TEHLIRIAN

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8 AT 3:00 P.M.**  
LAWRENCE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY  
MARY - MARBURGER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING AUDITORIUM  
21000 West Ten Mile Road • Southfield, MI 48075

Enter from Northwestern Hwy./Southbound Lodge/M10 Service Drive or 10 Mile Road, west of Evergreen and east of Lahser Roads "Taubman complex/Science Building/College of Arts and Science"

Tickets may be purchased online at [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)  
\$25 - \$50 IN ADVANCE • \$20 STUDENTS  
\$5 MORE AT THE DOOR



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## COMMENTARY

# Mirror Spectator



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# A Bird's Eye View from the Diaspora

By H.K.

The sixth Armenia-Diaspora Congress in Yerevan September 18-20 is finally over. Much was written about it prior to the event, much is being written and discussed at the present and no doubt, a sizeable number of commentaries will be its legacy in the coming weeks and months.

The big question remains how to translate the various recommendations and resolutions that are on paper into tangible results and action plans, thus justifying the convening of the meeting.

The Congress provided a golden opportunity for getting together, exchanging experiences, exploring avenues of collaboration and networking. In the 90-plus presentations, in four different sessions, there was a mix of calls for better communication, coordination, effective and sustainable investments, self-serving addresses, utopic suggestions, albeit not much by way of practical and constructive dialogue particularly in relation to complementarity within this network of Armenia-Artsakh-Diaspora. In this context, there were numerous calls for the Diaspora to be more cohesive and united in its actions.

The mantra of the congress was "Prosperous Armenia, Independent Artsakh and a Cohesive and Vibrant Diaspora." This was explored and elaborated in the final resolution that was read by the Minister Hranush Hakobyan and unanimously approved at the end.

As they say the devil is in the details when it comes to the implementation. Already the press and media in Armenia and the diaspora have started the debate as to how to proceed. Curiously, however, several authors in articles, blogs and discussion groups have considered that this as a whole has been an exercise in futility.

One should, however, be optimistic, forward looking and give it a chance. There are existentialist issues in Armenia and Artsakh that should be confronted successfully; failure is not an option.

I tend to look at the situation through the lens of a diasporan and try to explore why there is such a negative and defeatist impression, in particular the sector of Armenian society, be it in Armenia and the Diaspora. My comments are directed in particular, to the Diaspora as I know it rather well. In particular, I try to understand the reasons behind these concerns and why is it that well-meaning acts do not result in an effective and cohesive impact in Armenia or Artsakh.

Throughout the three days, I listened to official presentations, observing the body language of participants, being privy to side discussions, listening to tidbits of arguments. I have concluded that the diaspora should face up to the calls for unity in order to have a say initially followed by a role in the mother land.

I observe that, for example, most participants belong mainly to the analogue space, rather than the digital space in this globalised and competitive world we now live in. Some naturally have managed this qualitative leap; however, the presence of those of the digital space, i.e. the youth, appeared to be in the minority. There was however, a shining example of this when younger mem-

bers of the Prime Minister's team took to the floor to the applause of the audience. The general absence of this digital generation in the diasporan component from decision making process remains a stumbling block in the face of a cohesive, and thus a very effective diaspora.

Another issue, as I see it, relates to the chronic division and the subtle mistrust of the two segments of the Mother Church. This was obvious both explicitly and implicitly. This division has been the cause of much of the divisive action in the diaspora. This split of more than 50 years, has been the cause of much waste of energy and resources. Many call for reforms in the church (if not in this congress) and an unambiguous reconciliation away from political meddling. Surely, the Mother Church could heal the wounds inherited from the past, bring about this reconciliation and herald the much-desired unity. This action is bound to result in a unified and stronger action by the Diaspora in service of Armenia and Armenians wherever they may be.

Since independence, much has been accomplished by diasporan philanthropists in Armenia and Artsakh. In the initial years of unorganised "Chaos" many such individuals were disappointed and their assistance to the country was not effective. Although such individual acts of benevolence are much appreciated and are commendable, but individual acts do not form a nation. In my personal experience, such actions should be channelled into institutionalised acts with a clear strategy, expected outcomes, and measurable of indicators of success. In order to operate in this manner bridges of trust should be established between donors and recipients - something which is not always taken for granted. The guarantor should naturally be the state as the promoter of good governance.

Another impediment to a closer integration of the Diaspora is the recent "exodus" of people from Armenia towards diasporan shores. This reminds one of the migration of Armenians from Lebanon and the Middle East in general during the 15-years of the Lebanese civil war. This group of Armenian migrants, however, injected a new lease of life in the countries they went and settled in because they were knowledgeable of the Diasporan traditions, customs and the language. They provided teachers, editors, community workers, and religious people to the countries they settled in. This in itself was a welcome phenomenon when taking the diaspora as a unity. The new migrants from Armenia, however, had precious little knowledge of the Diaspora, its traditions, its institutions and its language - they spoke eastern Armenian as opposed to the western Armenian - the lingua franca of the Diaspora. As a direct consequence western Armenian is now in decline, and community schools are at a loss as to how to cope with this. These new migrants are developing insularly in closed communities. They join the traditional diasporan structures only at April 24 commemorative marches and to some major religious feasts. A concerted effort is called for through the Armenian diplomatic missions for a better integration. This can only strengthen the diasporan communities thus enabling better-organised bi-partisan action in service of Armenia, Artsakh and the Armenian nation.

Finally, I ask the detractors of such mega meetings: What is the alternative? In my modest opinion, the only way forward should be to add value to what has been accomplished thus far by forming specialised task forces in selected domains for a healthy debate, elaboration of priorities and strategies and formulating action plans and work packages. The success of such an approach needs a dedicated government. The speeches of the President of the Republic and its Prime Minister inspire me with confidence and provide hope and the possibility of integration of well qualified younger generation of diasporans in the decision-making process. The Armenian Diaspora provides both financial resources and manpower which should be tapped by the decision makers in the Armenian public service, particularly in matters related to the Diaspora.

(The author is based in London.)

## LETTERS

# Hayk Demoyan Presents Real Picture

To the Editor:

It was very refreshing and revealing to read Hayk Demoyan's article in the September 18 issue of the Mirror Spectator. He obviously understands very well the real situation in Armenia. Surprisingly he also begins to understand the dismal picture in the diaspora. This piece needs to be read by a wide audience both here in the US as

well as in the homeland.

He certainly tells us not to expect too much from the Armenia-Diaspora conference being held in September. Other than the same old empty rhetoric coming from our so-called leaders, not much can be accomplished by the attendees.

What will be needed is a fresh new look at

the entire global Armenian world starting with the premise that we are in danger of losing our newly independent Armenia to the forces of ignorance, honesty and lack of imagination.

We need to hear more from Hayk Demoyan.

Michael Haratunian

New York

## Corrections

In "2017 Hrant Dink Award Goes to Eren Keskin from Turkey and Ai Weiwei from China" (Mirror, September 23, p. 4) the photo captions for the two awardees were inadvertently switched.

In "Glendale's Mayor Vartan Gharpetian Talks Politics" (Mirror, September 23, p. 7), Ara Najarian should be described as a native of Cleveland, Ohio, not from Lebanon.



## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Aliyev Lies Before the Whole World At United Nations Speech In New York

There were plenty of Azeri commentators and officials who criticized President Sargsyan's speech at the UN General Assembly last week, but I did not come across any Armenian commentators or government leaders who attacked President Aliyev's ugly speech at the UN on September 20.

The Azeri president's lengthy remarks were full of lies and distortions: let's try to set the record straight on some of them.

The first line of Aliyev's speech starts with a usual exaggeration and untruth, stating that "Armenia occupies 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other regions of the country." The truth is that Armenia does not occupy any Azeri territory. Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) was never a part of Azerbaijan. It was an autonomous Armenian-inhabited region gifted to Azerbaijan by Soviet dictator Stalin in 1923. The Armenian population of Artsakh finally liberated themselves after decades of brutal Azeri occupation. Furthermore, the Azeri claim that Armenia occupies 20 percent of Azerbaijan is false, as the

region liberated by Armenians is around 15 percent, not 20.

President Aliyev then proceeds to state: "Nagorno-Karabakh is an ancient and historical part of Azerbaijan." This is a complete lie as Azerbaijan did not exist historically as a state. It was created in 1918 with the help of the Turkish army.

Aliyev's next big lie is that there are one million Azeri "refugees and internally displaced persons" as a result of Armenian military action. First of all, it is not one million, but several hundred thousand, just like there were several hundred thousand Armenian refugees as a result of Azeri pogroms and ethnic cleansing. If there were a large number of Azeri refugees 25 years later still living in muddy camps, this is the fault only of the Azeri government which earns billions of petrodollars annually and does not spend any of these funds to resettle these refugees in comfortable homes! Furthermore, as we have seen in recent European publications, Azeri leaders, particularly the Aliyev family and its cronies, have stolen billions of dollars from the state oil revenues to pay for their lavish life-styles or bribe officials around the world to cover up their persistent violations of human rights. Yet, the President of Azerbaijan is not ashamed to proclaim that his country has "absolute transparency, zero tolerance to corruption and bribery."

Aliyev then repeats the biggest lie about the so-called "Khojaly genocide" of 600 Azerbaijanis by Armenian troops during the Artsakh war. There are various versions of what exactly took place in Khojaly during that conflict, including Azeri soldiers blocking the escape routes of their own population who were then trapped and became war casualties. But even if there were a shred of evidence that 600 Azeris died during that conflict, which would be unfortunate, Azerbaijan shamelessly denies the Genocide of 1.5 million Armenians by Turkey starting in 1915, and yet has no

qualms of perpetuating the lie that the deaths of 600 Azeris were a genocide!

President Aliyev continues his series of lies, claiming that Armenia was the one that attacked Azerbaijan in April 2016. The whole world knows that Azerbaijan was the initiator of that attack. Exposing his own lie, he warns that Azerbaijan will attack again!

Aliyev then boasts that Azerbaijan in 2011 was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council with 155 countries voting in favor. What President Aliyev neglects to mention is that most of these votes were secured by lavish gifts to the UN Ambassadors, as we had exposed in my weekly column in 2011.

The President of Azerbaijan shamelessly proclaims from the UN podium that the "development of democracy and human rights protection are among the top priorities of our government. All fundamental freedoms are fully provided in Azerbaijan, including freedom of expression, media freedom, freedom of Assembly, religious freedom." Everyone knows that Azerbaijan is a dictatorship with corrupt leaders, and that its jails are full of human rights activists and independent journalists!

Aliyev then goes on to announce that "representatives of all ethnic groups and religions live in Azerbaijan in peace and harmony." Besides Armenians, who were victims of ethnic cleansing and are potential victims of a new Azeri Genocide in Artsakh, there are many other minorities in the country who are routinely discriminated against and jailed. Calling Azerbaijan a democracy and "one of the world's most recognized centers of multiculturalism," is an outrageous statement!

The string of lies, distortions and exaggerations is so long in President Aliyev's UN speech that one needs to write an entire book to expose all of his falsehoods!

# Next Middle East War? Kurdish Referendum Brings Hope and Fears of New Conflict to Iraq

By Tom O'Connor

After roughly a hundred years of fighting for greater autonomy in four separate countries, the Kurdish community is preparing for what's likely to be their greatest chance yet to create a fully independent state. Experts say, however, that the historic measure could also open a new front for violence in the Middle East.

The Kurdistan Regional Government, a self-ruling entity located in northern Iraq, has taken advantage of the failures of the war-torn country's central government in Baghdad to establish its own state institutions and its residents are set to vote Monday on whether they want total independence. Observers say the controversial referendum is likely to pass, emboldening Kurds across the region, but angering the Iraqi government and neighboring countries, who have their own interests at stake.

"The Kurds just want what the Turks have, what the Iranians have, what the Arabs have, nothing more," Kurdish affairs analyst Mutlu Civiroglu told Newsweek.

"They are surrounded by hostile nations. They feel their ancestral homeland has been seized," he added.

Along with the government of Iraq, a majority-Arab and Shiite Muslim nation, Turkey and Iran have led efforts to discredit Kurdish national aspirations. This is partly because they themselves host dissatisfied Kurdish communities who have waged violent insurgencies in support of independence. Turkey and Iran, traditional rivals, have come together in opposition of the vote and have threatened countermeasures.

While Turkey actually relies on the vital oil trade between itself and Kurdish territory in Iraq, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has pledged economic sanctions and has even recently ordered military exercises on the border between Turkey and the prospective Kurdistan. Civiroglu says "Turkey's threats are pretty serious" and could be "a serious problem for Iraqi Kurds."

Like the Kurds, Iran has greatly benefited from the U.S.'s 2003 invasion of Iraq and toppling of former President Saddam Hussein, a Sunni Muslim. Hussein's downfall led to a Shiite Muslim resurgence in the country, one that resisted both a Kurdish homeland and ultraconservative reactionary forces such as the Islamic State militant group (ISIS), which originated in Iraq. As ISIS' self-proclaimed caliphate collapses,

Iran, along with Turkey, can use its enhanced position to sabotage what it views as a challenge to its claims in Iraq.

"What the vote does tell us, even before the results are in, is that the Iraqi Kurds' neighbors - mainly Iran and Turkey, and of course the Iraqi government - oppose Kurdish independence so much so that they've started threatening the Iraqi Kurds simply for holding a vote," Aliza Marcus, a writer and analyst on Kurdish affairs, told Newsweek. "The problem is that any Iraqi Kurdish state will need good relations with its neighbors to succeed as an economically viable, internally stable state."

In response to ISIS, which took over about half the country in 2014, Iran helped form the majority-Shiite Muslim Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), called Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi in

ever, has faced major criticism from the Arab and Muslim world from its very foundation, which led to the mass expulsion and exodus of hundreds of Palestinians in 1948 and several wars with its neighbors. The Kurds have likened their own difficult experiences in the Middle East to the persecution of the Jewish people and have embraced Israeli support.

The Kurds' relationship with Israel not only rejects a founding tenet of Arab nationalism, of which Iraq was once a leader, but also sparks regional fears of increased Israeli influence in Iraq. Iran has become the leading opponents of Israeli and U.S. involvement in the Middle East and it could mobilize its local allies in Iraq in defense of its stake in the country.

"There is great concern in Iran in particular that, if Kurdistan achieves independence, Israel will have more influence, hampering Iranian interests in the region," Ahmad Majidyar, director of the Middle East Institute's Iran Observed Project, told Newsweek.

"These could lead to flashpoints between the Iranian-backed PMF and Kurdish forces, which be very detrimental to the future of Iraq and also for U.S. security interests in the region," he added.

From the U.S. perspective, the Kurds have proven an effective ally against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, where local Kurdish councils are also planning to vote on greater autonomy. Their friendship does come with costs, though. U.S. support for Kurds has severely alienated fellow NATO partner Turkey, and, if an independent Iraqi Kurdistan does form, Civiroglu says "it gives Iraq totally to Iran" by severing a major bastion of anti-Iran sentiment.

But Majidyar argues that this scenario still is not likely to sit well with Iran, which has spent years establishing a support base in neighboring Iraq as well as a land route of support stretching across Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. He expressed skepticism toward the idea that Iran or Turkey would totally cut themselves off from a future Iraqi Kurdistan, but warned that, without sufficient support abroad, the fledgling country may be doomed from the start.

"If it does not have the support of the international community, if it does not have support from the region and if it becomes a battleground for regional actors, then there is a possibility for Iraqi Kurdistan to become a failed state."

(This commentary originally appeared in *Newsweek* on September 24.)

## LIKE THE KURDS, IRAN HAS GREATLY BENEFITED FROM THE U.S.'S 2003 INVASION OF IRAQ AND TOPPLING OF FORMER PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN, A SUNNI MUSLIM.

Arabic. These powerful militias fought alongside both U.S.-backed Iraqi forces and Kurdish fighters, known as peshmerga, but are now deeply opposed to Kurds' desire to divide the country, especially in disputed areas such as Kirkuk.

"I think there will be violence in the disputed territories. I think it will be provocative and potentially lead to interethnic conflict," Megan Connelly, a Juris Doctor candidate and a Ph.D. candidate in political science at SUNY University at Buffalo, told Newsweek.

She argues that the Kurdistan Regional Government, led by President Masoud Barzani, has done very little to prepare itself for the upcoming vote and the fallout that is likely to ensue. In fact, she suspects that the vote was more about consolidating power in the hands of the ruling Kurdish Democratic Party, then it was about achieving independence. Now with even the Kurds' greatest ally, the U.S., calling for the vote to be called off, Barzani has found himself with few allies.

"It's really difficult to see how this deal will work out in Kurdistan's favor," she added.

One nation has stepped up, however, and its entrance into the debate has sparked even greater controversy. Israel may very well be the only country in the Middle East to voice support for Monday's referendum. The majority-Jewish state, how-



# US Nixes Proposal to Let Turkey Guards Buy Guns

By Josh Lederman

NEW YORK (AP) — The Trump administration has withdrawn a proposal to let Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's security guards buy \$1.2 million in U.S.-made weapons, a congressional official said September 18, following violence against protesters during Erdogan's visit to Washington this spring.

Earlier this year, the administration told Congress that it planned to allow New Hampshire gunmaker Sig Sauer to sell the weapons, which include hundreds of semi-automatic handguns and ammunition. The notification triggered a period in which Congress could review the deal before final approval is granted. The weapons would have gone to an intermediary in Turkey for use by Erdogan's presidential security forces.

But US lawmakers began expressing strong opposition to the sale after a violent incident on May 16, which was caught-on-camera outside the home of the Turkish ambassador to Washington as Erdogan was visiting. Nineteen people including 15 identified as Turkish security officials have been indicted by a US grand jury for attacking peaceful protesters.

The incident was one of several during visits by top Turkish officials to the US that have raised serious questions about the behavior of Turkish security forces on American soil.

In June, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce, R-Calif., wrote Secretary of State Rex Tillerson urging him to reject the deal and calling the conduct of the Turkish guards "unprofessional and brutal." A Senate panel has also approved a measure that would block the sale.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., said the move to cancel the deal "was a little late" but welcome nonetheless. "It should never have been something that we were considering," Van

Hollen said. He and Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., succeeded earlier this month in adding a provision to a State Department spending bill that would have blocked the sale.

In a joint statement, Van Hollen and Leahy added, "We should also stop selling weapons to units of the Turkish National Police that have been arbitrarily arresting and abusing Turkish citizens who peacefully criticize the government."

The State Department, in informing Congress that it was formally withdrawing the planned sale, said it was at the request of Sig Sauer, a firearms manufacturer, which had requested the license from the US government that's needed to export weapons outside the U.S.

But the US had already quietly put the sale on hold after the violence, and the Trump administration had informed the Turkish government that the sale wouldn't be allowed to take place. Sig Sauer appeared to have pulled its request for a license from the US government after hearing from the Turks that it no longer expected to purchase the weapons.

A spokesman for Sig Sauer did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Rep. Dave Trott, R-Mich., hailed the decision to withdraw. He said going ahead with the deal "would have been nothing short of an endorsement" of the attack by the Turkish security guards. Pulling out, Trott said, amounts to finally pointing "a finger in Erdogan's chest" and telling him that Turkey is not above the law.

Word of the withdrawn sale came as President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson were in New York for the annual UN General Assembly gathering. Erdogan arrived in New York on Monday for the meetings.

Lawmakers of both parties have asked the State Department to take extra precautions to ensure there's not another violent incident this week by Turkish personnel during the UN gathering.

(Associated Press writer Richard Lardner in Washington contributed.)

## Robert Fisk

40 Years of Journalism in the Middle East

FISK, from page 1

Ireland in 1972 as a Belfast correspondent for *The Times of London*. Fisk then moved to the Middle East where he has lived and worked covering many of the wars there, including the Lebanese Civil War, the Gulf War, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Arab Spring, etc.

Fisk steps directly into the affected areas and speaks to those on the front lines. This deep connection with local communities has gained him credibility that far exceeds that of the average journalist who stops by for a brief visit to cover an issue.



As a self-proclaimed "Ottoman Correspondent," Fisk has written often and forcefully about the Turkish government's denial of the Armenian Genocide. In October 2016, Fisk published a moving article titled "A Beautiful Mosque and the Dark Period of the Armenian Genocide," bringing to light the construction of a mosque in Gaziantep or Antep on the former site of the 19th-century Armenian Holy Mother of God Cathedral.

Fisk prefers to call the events that befell the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire and later the Republic of Turkey as "The Armenian Holocaust." In addition to renaming the Genocide, Fisk suggests that Armenians fight denialism following the Jewish tradition and honor the noble Turks who put their own lives and those of their

families by saving countless Armenian neighbors and friends. One of his favorite quotes when speaking about this subject is "Honour the good Turks. Alas, everyone claps. And does nothing."

He has not escaped unscathed during his many years of being in political hotspots. In December 2001, Fisk was in Pakistan to cover the Afghan border situation. During a long car ride between the Pakistani city of Quetta and the border town of Chaman, Fisk faced a crowd of several hundred Afghani refugees. During this face-off, Fisk was attacked with rocks and brutally kicked. Through the kindness of a local, Fisk escaped more serious harm and was brought to a Red Cross convoy where he was treated. In Fisk's own words, "I couldn't see for the blood pouring down my forehead and swamping my eyes. And even then, I understood. I couldn't blame them for what they were doing. In fact, if I were the Afghan refugees of Kila Abdullah, close to the Afghan-Pakistan border, I would have done just the same to Robert Fisk. Or any other Westerner I could find."

For 40 years Fisk has been an important part of international journalism. In addition to addressing journalism and Armenians at the symposium on Thursday, November 2, Fisk will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award from the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* at the gala celebrating its 85th anniversary on November 3 at the Boston Marriott Newton.

For more information about the events or to purchase tickets, call Aram Arkun at 617-924-4420.



### Robert Fisk

Journalist, Middle East Correspondent for *The Independent*  
Seven-Time Recipient of British Press Awards' Reporter of the Year



### David Barsamian

Writer, Founder and Director of Alternative Radio



### Philip Terzian

Senior Editor at *The Weekly Standard* and Pulitzer Prize finalist

85 Years

*The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*

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Aram Arkun, Moderator

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Amberin Zaman

Columnist for *Diken* and *Al Monitor*, former Turkey Correspondent for *The Economist*

