



# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

# NATO Official Sees No Russian Pressure on Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – NATO’s Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller insisted on Tuesday, December 19, that she has seen no indications that Russia has tried to prevent Armenia from forging closer ties with NATO.

In an interview, Gottemoeller also again praised the “good and appropriate level of cooperation” between Yerevan and the US-led alliance.

“I am really quite impressed with what Armenia has done over the years in terms of partnership with NATO,” she said during a visit to Yerevan.

Gottemoeller singled out the continuing participation of some 155 Armenian soldiers in the NATO-led security missions in

Asked whether she has felt any Russian pressure exerted on the Armenian leadership in connection with its dealings with NATO, Gottemoeller said: “No. That’s the short answer and that’s the true answer.”

Commenting on the possibility of such pressure in the future, she said: “It’s up to the Kremlin. Of course, they always have their own opinions about things but I really think it is important to stress that NATO is guided by decisions made by Armenia.”

“There is no zero-sum game there from our perspective,” she added in reference to Russia’s and NATO’s ties with the South Caucasus state.

But she also stressed: “It is completely up to Armenia to decide the speed and inten-

“Earlier this year, Armenia agreed to a new Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO, and we will be working together more closely on interoperability, defense education and defense reform,” added Gottemoeller.

The first Armenia-NATO IPAP was launched in 2006. The current, fifth such plan approved by NATO in April lists joint activities planned for 2017-2019.

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## Turkey Releases One More German From Prison

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – One by one, and at a painfully slow tempo, German journalists and intellectuals unlawfully imprisoned by the Turkish authorities are being released. On December 18, it was the turn of Mesale Tolu, a translator and journalist who had been held for seven months. She was allowed to walk out of jail, but must remain in the country and report to authorities every week. Five other prisoners were released the same day under similar conditions. Tolu’s next hearing is scheduled for April 26, 2018.

Together with 17 other persons, Tolu was charged with belonging to a terrorist organization, the left extremist MLKP, and could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison. On being seized April 30, she and the others denied all charges. At her first hearing on October 11, she had stated that, when arrested, “The special police unit not only aimed a weapon at my son,

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President Serzh Sargsyan meets with NATO’s Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller in Yerevan,

Afghanistan and Kosovo. Armenia contributes more troops to those missions than any other member of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), she stressed.

The deployments in Afghanistan and Kosovo have been part of Armenia’s broader efforts to step up military cooperation with NATO – and the United States in particular – while remaining allied to Russia politically and militarily. Yerevan pledged to continue deepening ties with NATO with a fresh Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) launched in April.

sity of your relationship with NATO.”

Gottemoeller met with President Serzh Sargsyan and other Armenian leaders for talks that touched upon Armenia-NATO ties and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

“We spoke about current security challenges and how we can take our cooperation farther,” she said after the talks with Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian which preceded her meeting with Sargsyan.

“NATO and Armenia have developed partnership over 25 years,” she said. “Cooperation between NATO and Armenia is in both of our interests.”

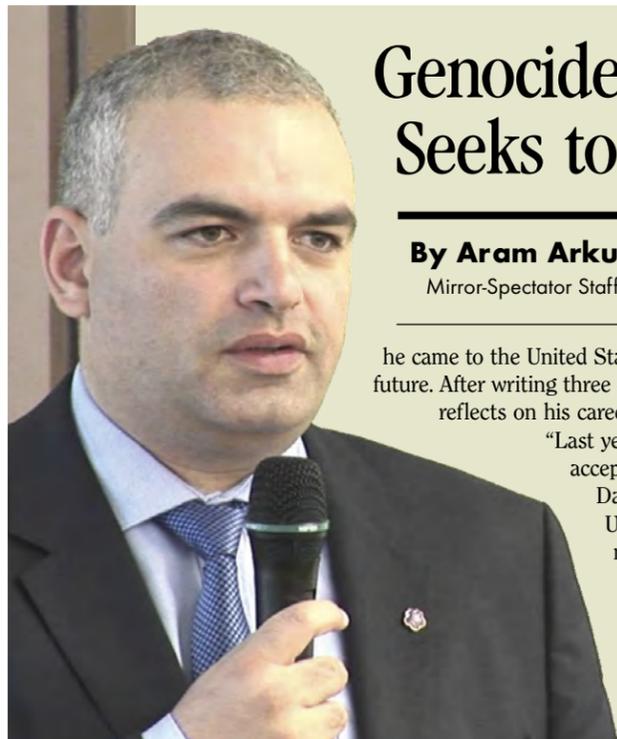
## Genocide Museum’s Demoyan Seeks to Chart Original Path

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

he came to the United States this fall, many wondered what that meant for his position and future. After writing three opinion pieces for the *Mirror-Spectator*, Demoyan in this interview reflects on his career and future plans.

“Last year I applied to the US Fulbright Visiting Scholar program. I was accepted for a period of 10 months to carry out research. I selected the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University,” Demoyan said. He chose the topic of identity transformations in post-Soviet Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan for his research, which, he said, he began studying 10 years ago. He followed the trends in identity transformation in the three Caucasian republics, including memory and linguistic policies, the creation of new diasporas, the invention of new calendars

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## Armenian Mirror-Spectator Vacation Schedule

WATERTOWN – The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* offices will close for one week in observance of Christmas and New Year’s.

This issue will be our last for 2017.

Our next issue will be that of January 6, 2018.

We wish all our readers and supporters a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Merry Armenian Christmas.

See you in 2018.

## Turkey Hopes to Open Embassy in East Jerusalem, Says Erdogan

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – Turkey intends to open an embassy in East Jerusalem, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said, days after leading calls at a summit of Muslim leaders for the world to recognize it as the capital of a Palestinian state.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit was a response to the US president, Donald Trump’s decision earlier this month to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. His move broke with decades of US policy and international consensus that the city’s status must be left to Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

Erdogan said in a speech to members of his AK party in Turkey’s southern province of Karaman that the country’s consulate general in Jerusalem was already represented by an ambassador.

“God willing, the day is close when officially, with God’s permission, we will open our embassy there,” Erdogan said.

It was not clear how he would carry out the move, as Israel controls all of Jerusalem and calls the city its indivisible capital. Palestinians want the capital of a future state they seek to be in East Jerusalem, which Israel took in a 1967 war and later annexed in a move not recognized internationally.

Jerusalem, revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike, is home to Islam’s third holiest shrine as well as Judaism’s Western Wall – both in the eastern sector – and has been at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for decades.

Foreign embassies in Israel, including Turkey’s, are located in Tel Aviv, reflecting Jerusalem’s unresolved status.

A communique issued after December 13’s summit of more than 50 Muslim countries, including US allies, said they considered Trump’s move to be a declaration that Washington was withdrawing from its role “as sponsor of peace” in the Middle East.

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## News From Armenia

### President Views Exhibition Dedicated to Painters' Union Anniversary

YEREVAN (news.am) – Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan on December 18 visited the Armenian Painters Union to view the jubilee exhibition dedicated to the 85th anniversary of APU establishment, which features about 300 paintings, graphic works, sculptures and decorative art works authored by representatives of all generations of Armenian painters, the press service of the Armenian President's Office reported.

The President of Armenia next called at the Moscow Cinema Theater to watch the premiere of "The Road to Our Dream" film. The film, which consists of seven novels, is conceived by seven Armenian filmmakers who have each set a story at the core of the novels that represent the fate of different people who went through the 25 years of independence, inspired by their love for Armenia.

### Azerbaijan Fires More than 2,300 Bullets at Artsakh Contact Line

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Azerbaijan violated cease fire regime 200 times firing over 2300 bullets at Armenian border guards on the Artsakh-Azerbaijan contact line during the period of December 10-16.

According to the press service of the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Artsakh, the defense Army front line units were on top of the situation.

### Armenian Cyclist Nabs Silver at Portugal Tournament

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Leading Armenian cyclist Edgar Stepanyan has won a silver medal at the Troféu Internacional (International Trophy) taking place in Anadia, Portugal.

Competing in the U23 group, the Armenian cyclist won the silver in the scratch race, lagging behind Ivo Oliveira of Portugal, the National Olympic Committee reported.

Edgar Stepanyan collected important ranking points in a struggle to be qualified for the 2018 Track Cycling World Championships to be hosted by the Netherlands.

He will compete in the scratch race of the elite tournament (among adults) on Saturday.

### Lecture Series Held on Chinese Foreign Policy

YEREVAN – On December 15, a special lecture series titled "Rethinking China's Foreign Policy," was launched by the China-Eurasia Council for Political and Strategic Research Foundation.

The main purpose of the course was to provide a comprehensive analysis on contemporary China's foreign policy.

Foreign and Armenian specialists in the field of Chinese Studies and international relations delivered lectures for Armenian specialists interested in China's Foreign Policy.

Twenty three individuals were selected by the organizing committee to participate in series of lectures "Rethinking China's Foreign Policy" which was held December 15 to 20.

Dr. Mher Sahakyan, the head of the China-Eurasia Council for Political and Strategic Research Foundation, said at the opening ceremony: "In order to have a full picture of China's foreign policy, in this Special Course we have involved Armenian and foreign experts who research China's policy and economy for many years. I hope that during this course we will pass knowledge and skills to our younger generation of sinologists. Hopefully in the near future they will have their own contribution and impact on improving Sino-Armenian relations."

## UWC Dilijan Appoints New Leader

DILIJAN, Armenia – The Board of Governors of UWC Dilijan announced this week the appointment of Gabriel Abad Fernández as the new Head of College, effective August 1, 2018.

Denise Davidson, who has been Interim Head of the UWC Dilijan for two years, will manage the hand-over of the College to Abad at the end of this academic year.

"UWC Dilijan has been fortunate to benefit from the able and experienced leadership of Mrs. Denise Davidson who has brought stability, necessary structures and cohesion to the Dilijan community," said Veronika Zonabend, co-founder and chair of the Board of Governors of the UWC Dilijan.

"After a period of consolidation, we are now ready to move on to the next phase of dynamic progression based on a holistic approach to education and innovative ideas in the context of the formation of the Education Cluster and the proposed Teachers Centre. It is clear to me and the Board that Gabriel has all the skills and character required both to nourish the UWC Dilijan community as it exists as well as to take UWC Dilijan forward," Zonabend added.

Abad takes up this post after gaining considerable experience at UWC South East Asia, occupying a variety of positions most latterly as director of boarding. He has been active in UWC, the Council of International Schools and the International Baccalaureate



Gabriel Abad Fernández

Educators Network.

"I am thrilled to join UWC Dilijan, to build on the solid foundation laid out by Denise and her team. My wife Natalie is a UWC Atlantic College alumna, and our children Eleri Carmen and Harri Gabriel have lived all of their lives in the two UWCSEA campuses. While we will be sad to leave UWCSEA, which has been our home for 16 years and to which we owe so much, we are all looking forward to moving to Armenia to become part of the UWC Dilijan community and of the wider Dilijan community," said Abad.

UWC Dilijan is the first international

boarding school of the UWC education model in the post-Soviet Union. The college opened in 2014 in the Armenian town of Dilijan and currently has 210 students enrolled from about 80 countries and 44 academic staff members from 16 countries.

UWC Dilijan represents an exciting extension of the UWC movement into the Caucasus region at the junction of Asia and Europe. Established in 1962, UWC educational movement now comprises 17 international schools and colleges, national committees in more than 150 countries, and a series of short educational programs.

UWC Dilijan was initiated and masterminded by impact investors and entrepreneurs Ruben Vardanyan and Veronika Zonabend with the support of other Founding Patrons. The college was built with generous donations from over 330 benefactors. Its admissions policy aims to make enrolment available to anyone, regardless of socio-economic background, on the basis of demonstrated need. 96% of students receive full or partial scholarships, 82% is an average scholarship.

The UWC Dilijan academic program – The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program (DP) – is for students aged 16 to 19.

UWC Dilijan has two generations of alumni of 2016 and 2017; many of them are continuing their education at the leading universities worldwide.

## Greek Deputy FM Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The President of the National Assembly of Armenia Ara Babloyan received on December 15 the Deputy Foreign Minister of Greece Terence Nicholas Quick.

The press service of the National

He expressed his gratitude to the Greek people for giving shelter to the Armenian Genocide survivors, and later adopting the resolution criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide. He referred to the strengthening of the existing rela-

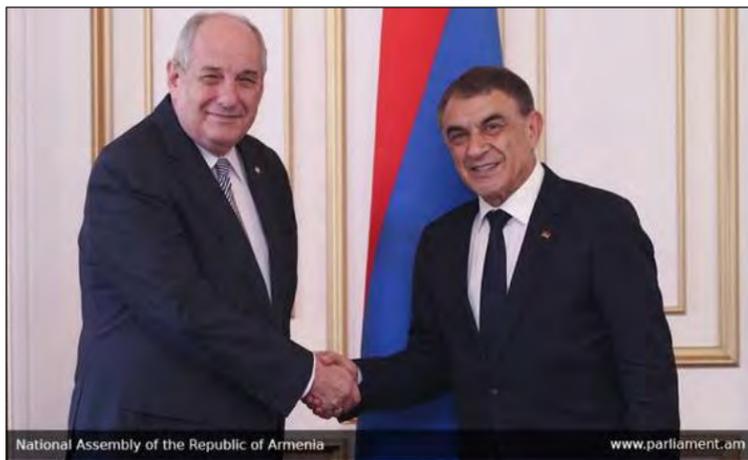
well as referred to the necessity to deepen cooperation of the parliamentary delegations of the two countries in international organizations.

Babloyan touched upon the incidents that occurred during the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Parliamentary Assembly and expressed his concern over the position towards the Armenian delegation.

Referring to the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between Armenia and the EU Babloyan noted that it will foster the reform process in Armenia in the spheres of strengthening democratic institutions in Armenia, human rights and rule of law.

Quick thanked his host for the reception and referred to the great role of the Greek-Armenian community in the social-political life of Greece. Referring to the existing conflicts, he reaffirmed the position of his country to solve them through peaceful means.

Quick also spoke about parliamentary diplomacy, stressing the importance of deepening inter-parliamentary cooperation and the importance of mutual support on international platforms. He suggested discussing the opportunity of organizing a meeting of the heads of parliaments of Armenia, Greece and Cyprus.



Deputy Foreign Minister of Greece Terence Nicholas Quick, left, with the President of the National Assembly of Armenia Ara Babloyan

Assembly of Armenia reported that on greeting the guest, Babloyan spoke about the centuries-old friendship between the Armenian and Greek people and their common history.

tions between Armenia and Greece and expansion of cooperation spheres. In addition, Babloyan highlighted the role of parliamentary diplomacy in deepening relations, as

## NATO Official Sees No Russian Pressure on Armenia

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In addition to this policy framework, Armenia has stepped up its involvement in NATO-led security missions. It currently has 121 Armenian soldiers deployed in Afghanistan and 35 others in Kosovo. A senior Armenian Defense Ministry official said last week that Yerevan will continue to participate in these multinational missions in the years to come.

"We are grateful for Armenia's

important contribution to our Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan and our KFOR peacekeeping mission in Kosovo," Gottemoeller told reporters.

Sargsyan likewise noted with satisfaction the "developing" Armenia-NATO ties when he met with the senior NATO official. He also thanked the alliance for its "assistance provided to Armenia."

The two also discussed recent developments in the Karabakh peace

process.

Meeting with students and professors of Yerevan State University earlier in the day, Gottemoeller welcomed progress reportedly made at high-level Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations held in October and November. NATO hopes for further progress in the peace process, she said, adding that a Karabakh settlement would have a very positive impact on the region.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Foreign Minister Decries Turkish Statement on Relations with Armenia

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — The December 14 comments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey regarding the Armenian-Turkish relations is yet another flagrant example of distortion of the letter and spirit of the Zürich Protocols of 2009, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

“Our position on President [Serzh] Sargsyan’s initiative to normalize relations with Turkey was expressed in the well-known approach to normalize relations without preconditions. Based on this common understanding with the Turkish side we launched the negotiation process and reached agreements,”

The comments come after the Turkish Foreign Ministry issued a statement, stating its commitment to the Armenian-Turkish protocols, but went on to cite prerequisites for their ratification.

“It is well known that right after the signing of the Protocols Ankara backtracked from the agreements. Turkey not only has rejected to ratify those Protocols, but has returned to the same language of preconditions that it had used before the launch of the process. The last statement of the Turkish MFA goes in the same direction,” the Armenian Foreign Ministry said.

“Ankara doesn’t shy away to voice once again its preconditions, linking the Armenian-Turkish relations to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement in favor of Azerbaijan, at the same time

making redundant reference to the United Nations Security Council resolutions, which have nothing to do with the negotiation process of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution. It is well known, that there is no single word on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict or any precondition in the Protocols. By returning once again to the language of preconditions following the signing of Protocols, Turkey has opposed to the international community, which has always supported the normalization of the Armenian Turkish relations without preconditions and continues to do so now,” it added.

“The Turkish side refused to ratify the Protocols and intentionally moved the whole process to the stalemate. This was the very reason that compelled Armenia to suspend the ratification procedure, while staying in the normalization process, and this was duly acknowledged and welcomed by the leaders of different countries. It is obvious that even today, years after signing of the Protocols, Ankara is not ready yet to normalize the Armenian-Turkish relations,” the statement reads.

“It does not come as a surprise that the Turkish authorities stick to stereotyped approaches and are trying to voice fabricated allegations. For more than a century the leadership of that country denies the Armenian Genocide. Is it easier to take the sin for the century-old

great crime committed in the Ottoman Empire by continuously denying it, instead of recognizing it and thus rendering an important service to its own people, to the future of the region and to the prevention of future genocides?” the Ministry noted.

“Ankara goes the opposite direction. The statement of the MFA of Turkey claims that allegedly the efforts to recognize the Armenian Genocide are morally and legally incorrect and ill-intentioned. It turns out that Turkey preaches morality to France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Uruguay, Belgium, Greece, Cyprus and to dozens of other countries, which have recognized the Armenian Genocide,” it added.

The MFA said “it is ironic that Turkey, one of the most notorious countries of the world in restricting freedom of expression, tries to justify the genocide denialism on the grounds of freedom of expression.”

“It has always been clear for different world capitals both after the signing of the Protocols and today that the ball is on the Turkish court, that Armenia has done everything possible for the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations. Ankara’s inability to accept this and other realities consolidates the sense throughout the world that Turkey and the international community speak in different languages,” the Ministry statement noted.

## Erdogan: Syrian Kurds Will Be Cleared from Turkey’s Border

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region (Rudaw) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he will eliminate Kurdish “terrorists” from the Turkey-Syria border, referring to the US-backed People’s Protection Units (YPG) in northern Syria

“We will clean Afrin of terrorists, we will clean Manbij of terrorists. We will clean Tel Abyad, Ras al-Ayn and Qamishli of terrorists,” Erdogan said at a meeting with the ruling Justice and

Development Party (AKP) on Sunday, December 17, in the central province of Karaman, state media Anadolu Agency reported.

The YPG claimed on Wednesday that they killed two Turkish soldiers and wounded others trying to cross the border near Kobane.

The Syrian Kurdish force said the Turkish forces tried to “transgress” the border near the village of Ashme, west of Kobane, in the early hours on

Wednesday.

The YPG and the female YPJ responded in force that resulted in blowing up a military vehicle “full of ammunition that caused the death of two Turkish soldiers” and wounded an unspecified number of other soldiers, a YPG statement read.

Turkey did not immediately confirm the incident or the casualties.

Turkey has constructed a wall along its border with Rojava, Syrian Kurdistan mainly to prevent movements of the YPG forces across the border.

It considers the YPG and its umbrella organization, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), as an extension to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), a named terrorist organization by Turkey, the US and the EU.

The YPG and SDF deny any connection to the PKK.

Erdogan declared in late November after an exchange of fire between Turkish military and the YPG across the Afrin-Idlib border that they will “cleanse Afrin of the structure there called the YPG terrorist organization.”

The YPG have regularly reported exchanges of fire with Turkish forces in the Afrin area, accusing the Turks and their allied Syrian militias of daily attacks.

“They are not going to be able to seize a tiny part of our land,” the YPG stated last month, vowing to defend Afrin.

Turkey began military operations in Idlib province in October in order to monitor a ceasefire and establish a de-escalation zone under agreements reached in Astana by Turkey, Russia, and Iran.

Turkey is also using the mission to observe the Kurdish canton of Afrin, north of Idlib. Kurdish forces say the Turks have frequently fired at their positions and civilian locations in Afrin.

The YPG is the dominant force within the US-backed SDF battling ISIS in northern Syria and were successful in liberating Raqqa in June from the militant group.



Sevan Nisanyan, right, with Prof. Taner Akçam

## Turkish Historian Meets Sevan Nisanyan

ATHENS (news.am) — Istanbul writer and former jailed activist of Armenian origin Sevan Nisanyan posted a photo with Turkish historian Taner Akçam this week on his Twitter account.

Nisanyan commented the photo with the words: “With Taner Akçam, in the process of creating projects concerning the future of Turkey. Don’t worry, everything will be fine.”

Akçam is the author of numerous works proving the fact of the Armenian Genocide.

Nisanyan was on a day-leave from prison but never went back. It was later found out that the Greek authorities had granted him temporary residence.

Nisanyan was sentenced to 11 years in prison by the Turkish courts for illegal construction of his hotel. He has often openly spoken about the Armenian Genocide.

## International News

### Macron to Participate in Annual Dinner of French Armenian Group

PARIS (Armenpress) — President of France Emmanuel Macron will participate in the annual dinner of the Coordinating Council of the Armenian Organizations of France (CCAF), according to sources from the organization.

The annual dinner will take place on January 30, 2018 at l’Hôtel du Collectionneur in Paris. Macron is expected to give a speech at the dinner.

Macron, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, Cabinet members, MPs, the Armenian Ambassador to Switzerland, Charles Aznavour, high ranking French officials, heads of French-Armenian organizations, religious leaders are also expected to attend.

### Russian MP Konstantin Zatulin Sees President Sargsyan as Armenia’s Future Prime Minister |

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Russian State Duma lawmaker Konstantin Zatulin sees Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan as the country’s prime minister after Armenia’s transition to the parliamentary system. “Maybe I am wrong but I see Serzh Sargsyan as the prime minister of Armenia after he suspends his presidential powers. I cannot say who will be the next president, but I think that this issue will be solved. Armenia’s history of the previous period proved me that Armenian political figures can listen to opinions and adopt decisions which eventually enable the country to continue the path without serious internal cataclysms,” Zatulin said during a video conference in Sputnik News.

Commenting on the transformation of the governance system from presidential to parliamentary one, the Russian lawmaker recalled that not in all parliaments decisions are adopted by consensus, in many cases they are adopted by the parliamentary majority. “Today this parliamentary majority firmly belongs to the Republican Party of Armenia, and I do not predict any cataclysm in the transition period from presidential to parliamentary system,” he said. Konstantin Zatulin stated that Russia is greatly impressed by the parliamentary elections held in Armenia as a result of which there were less complaints compared to the previous cases.

### Sharmazanov Meets with German Parliament Member

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — On December 19, the Vice President of the Armenian National Assembly Edward Sharmazanov received Member of the German Bundestag, President of the German-Armenian Forum Albert Weiler, the Head of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung/Foundation (KAS) Regional Program, Political Dialogue South Caucasus Office Thomas Schrapel and the accompanying persons.

Sharmazanov hailed the current level of the Armenian-German cooperation and highlighted the German colleagues’ beneficial work in Armenia.

He expressed his gratitude to the Bundestag for the adoption of a Resolution condemning the Armenian Genocide on 2 June 2016. He touched upon the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by the UN, the 70 years of which will be marked next year.

“I propose to organize exhibition of the Armenian Genocide materials in the Bundestag on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the UN,” Sharmazanov said.

Sharmazanov briefed the guests on the peculiarities of the Karabakh conflict. “Artsakh seceded from the Soviet Union, not Azerbaijan in line with the same laws, as the remaining countries of the USSR, and some of them are members of the European Union today.”

In this context the interlocutors emphasized the importance of peaceful settlement of the issue based on the negotiating process.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Turkey Releases One More German From Prison

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but they also used force in arresting me in front of my child.” At her second hearing on December 18, during which the Prosecutor proposed her conditional release, she reportedly said, “I was arrested because I am a journalist and it was intended to exert pressure on the

prison three weeks ago, and her father Ali Reza Tolu, were also present. On hearing his daughter would be freed, he said he was “the happiest person in the world,” and that they would all go home to celebrate together.

Tolu, who is 33, is of Turkish descent but since 2007 has had only German citizenship.

her in an Istanbul women’s prison. After her first hearing in October, the child was allowed to go to Germany.

## Happiness and Relief in Berlin

The response from Berlin was positive. Maria Adebahr, spokeswoman for the Foreign Ministry, stated, “She is out of custody, she is out, and that’s great.” Thomas Oppermann (SPD), who is Vice President of the Bundestag (Parliament), issued a message on Twitter, saying, “That is good news from Turkey. Now the others who have been unlawfully detained must be liberated.” SPD leader Martin Schulz wrote that her release was long overdue. Cem Özdemir, Green Party leader, welcomed the news, but added that it would not change much regarding the miserable state of affairs of the justice system in Turkey.

Chancellor Angela Merkel was also measured in her response. “On the one hand,” she said, “it is good news, considering she has been freed. But on the other hand, not all good news, because she cannot leave the country and the trial will continue.” Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said it was “not only good news but also a great relief.” In expressing his personal happiness for her release, he added that although the case “has not been closed, one big step has been taken.” Government spokesman Stefan Seibert, also glad that she could be reunited with husband and child, said it was not clear what the decision really meant. Most importantly, he said the German government’s pressure would continue.

## Political Pressure from Germany And EU

The government has been demanding that all German citizens being held as political prisoners be freed. Dogan Akhanli, who had been arrested while on vacation in Spain, eventually was allowed to return to Germany, as was human rights activist Peter Steudtner on

October 25. But Deniz Yücel, a journalist for *Die Welt* who was jailed in February, is not only still in detention, but was in solitary confinement for 300 days, and only recently allowed to have contact with one other prisoner, in a small enclosed yard measuring 8 square meters. No charges have been brought against him yet.

Rainer Hermann, who was a long-term correspondent in Turkey, referred in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on December 18 to the remaining German prisoners as political prisoners who are essentially hostages. Since Turkish President Erdogan openly offered the United States a prisoner exchange, whereby American Pastor Andrew Brunson would be released in return for the extradition of Fetullah Gülen, it stands to reason that he would engage in such negotiations with Germany as well. But Germany will not comply. As Hermann explains, Turkey’s reasons for demanding extraditions are either non-existent or paper thin or not comprehensible; in addition, the German constitutional court could not comply, if the persons were threatened with life sentences under harsh conditions, or with no right to appeal.

One thing is certain, Hermann writes; Germany has exerted pressure and has also succeeded in bringing the EU on board. EU funds related to application for membership have been cut, expanding the customs union has been put on the back burner and, most importantly, big international financial institutions, like the European Investment Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have suspended loans for public projects. The pressure seems to be yielding some results, as one after another political prisoner leaves jail, and there is every reason to believe that the pressure will continue, as Siebert pledged. However, in Hermann’s view, this does not mean that a normalization of relations with Turkey is on the horizon. The process underway in Turkey, towards autocratic rule, has taken on a dynamic of its own.



Mesale Tolu



Deniz Yücel

media. Pressure on the media was continued but I think that the legal authorities will make the right decision.” According to wire reports, a “secret witness” who had testified against her in the first hearing, declined to do so again.

On hand during the hearing were Heike Hänsel, a German parliamentarian from the Linke (Left) party, Martin Erdmann, the German Ambassador, and Günter Wallraff, an investigative journalist and human rights activist. Tolu’s husband Suat Corlu, who was released from

She worked for a leftist group, the Etkin News Agency (Ethna), and was arrested when authorities raided her apartment on April 30. According to wire reports, she had been accused of participating in two commemorations for Kurdish women who had died fighting against the Islamic State, of demonstrating for women’s rights and of attending the funeral of a member of the outlawed Communist Party. During the first five months of her imprisonment, she had her son, then two years old, with

## ‘Golden Opportunity’ Lost as Syrian Peace Talks Collapse

GENEVA (*Guardian*) – UN-sponsored talks in Geneva designed to end the Syrian civil war have collapsed, with a deflated special envoy Staffan de Mistura admitting “a golden big opportunity” had been missed.

He largely blamed the Syrian government delegation for setting preconditions on holding direct talks with the opposition, saying it would be difficult for any future talks sponsor to make progress “if the government is not willing to meet anyone who has a different opinion.”

He said the Syrian government delegation had refused to discuss two of the major potential agenda items – a constitutional process and presidential elections – insisting instead it would only discuss terrorism.

The end of talks leaves the Geneva process – now in its eighth round of talks – perilously shorn of credibility.

De Mistura said he would report the outcome of the talks to the UN Security Council next week and would not stop trying.

He said without pressure from President Bashar al-Assad’s sponsors Russia, or an implausible change on the battlefield, Assad felt no need to negotiate with a divided, and under-resourced opposition.

As the Syrian government delegation resolutely refused to engage in Geneva, de Mistura had pleaded with the Russians to put more pressure on the government negotiators to start talks, but the Syrian government lead negotiator Bashar Ja’afari said it was not possible to talk to the opposition.

He said a statement issued by a revamped opposition delegation team in Riyadh ahead of the talks demanded a political transition in which Assad did not participate. He said he would not negotiate under blackmail.

De Mistura countered that apart from one mistaken statement by the opposition at Geneva, it had not set preconditions, and its call for Assad to stand aside ahead of UN supervised presidential elections was merely an expression of an opinion, and not a precondition.

At one point Ja’afari accused de Mistura of misleading him by putting the Syrian government delegation in a room adjacent to the opposition.

The collapse of the talks leaves the political initiative to secure a political settlement now resting largely with President Vladimir Putin who has said he will convene a Syrian Congress of National Dialogue in the Black Sea resort of Sochi probably in February.

The Syrian government will attend any Putin-sponsored talks especially if the still unknown composition of the congress dilutes the opposition attending the talks.

In a bid to make itself a viable negotiating partner for the Syrian government, the opposition ahead of the talks had broadened its composition and diluted its platform.

The Trump administration has taken little interest in a long term political settlement in Syria, with different members of the government giving different views on whether Assad can remain in office, or for how long.

The UK remains committed to Assad’s removal on the basis that no sustainable political settlement or return of refugees is possible so long as he remains in power.

The Sochi conference also faces difficulties since one of the co-sponsors, Turkey, has insisted it will not allow Syrian Kurds to attend the dialogue on the basis that they have links with Turkish Kurdish group, the PKK.

## Israel Should Have Recognized Armenian Genocide Long Ago, Politician Says

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Yesh Atid opposition party in Israel is going to submit a bill to the Knesset (Parliament of Israel) which supposes official recognition of the Armenian Genocide. The leader of the party, Yair Lapid, is convinced that Israel should have recognized this historical fact long ago. He gave an interview on December 19 to reporter Araks Kasyan about the Armenian Genocide recognition bill, as well as the recent Turkish-Israeli tense relations.

Armenpress: Mr. Lapid, you have recently announced that your Yesh Atid party is going to submit an Armenian Genocide recognition bill to the Knesset. At what stage are the preparation works of the bill and when do you plan to submit it to the parliament?



Yair Lapid

Yair Lapid: The bill is written and we are in the process of gathering signatures to support the bill from across the Knesset. We would like for the bill to have the support of as many Knesset members as possible and believe we will be able to move forward with it very soon.

Armenpress: Why does Israel, whose residents suffered from the Holocaust, avoid recognizing the Armenian Genocide?

Yair Lapid: Many Israeli leaders have personally expressed their recognition of the Armenian Genocide which is a historical fact and recently the Knesset Education Committee announced its recognition of the genocide as well. Previous Israeli governments have avoided officially recognizing the Armenian Genocide as a result of misguided strategic calculations. It is something we should have done long ago because above all it is morally the right thing to do. With the aggressive behavior of President Erdogan, now there are no more excuses for anyone to avoid doing the right thing.

Armenpress: After the Mavi Marmara crisis, Turkish-Israeli relations again entered a deadlock over the status of Jerusalem. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made sharp statements addressed to Israel. How do you assess official Ankara’s statements?

Yair Lapid: President Erdogan has decided to use Israel to build up support in the Islamic world, he is engaging in incitement against Israel and is actively involved in fomenting trouble in the region. He has played an active part in cementing Iran’s position in Syria which constitutes a direct threat to our security. Israel needs to stand strong opposite President Erdogan and make clear that we are not intimidated by his rhetoric and threats. We will do what is right for us and that includes recognizing the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide, increasing our support for the rightful Kurdish campaign for independence and cancelling the misguided idea of a gas pipeline to Turkey.

# Community News

## Thanking the Helpers of Children in Glendale

GLENDALÉ – The City of Glendale shows its appreciation to the Armenian American Orphans Children Fund and those who consistently support it.

The Appreciation Night on November 30 gave the City of Glendale and the Armenian American Orphans Disabled Fund an opportunity to express their gratitude to the individuals that have always stood by Armenia. The program was held at the Armenian Society of Los Angeles.

We were honored to host a variety of esteemed guests, including, Glendale Mayor



President of the Armenian American Orphans Disabled Fund Ovanes Balayan and Glendale City Mayor Mr. Vartan Gharapetian



President of the Armenian American Orphans Children Fund Ovanes Balayan and Glendale City Mayor Vartan Gharapetian present the Mayor's Commendation award to Mrs. Anet Galstian

Vartan Gharapetian, Council member Paula Devine, Council member Vrej Agajanian, former Sheriff Lee Baca and many other distinguished guests. Joining them included main sponsors and committee members who we appreciate and give credit to for constantly supporting the growth of our fund. The Appreciation Night was also a great opportunity to showcase to our advocates the progress the fund has made and

see GLENDALÉ, page 14



Hooshere, class of 1987

## Holy Martyrs Day School Celebrates 50th Anniversary

PORT WASHINGTON, N.Y. – The Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS) celebrated its Golden Anniversary through the artistic presentation, "Spotlight on Culture," held on Sunday, December 3 at Landmark on Main Street.

Alumni, teaching staff, students and supporters gathered to honor 50 years of academic excellence while appreciating the cultural riches of the Armenian heritage.

**By Taleen Babayan**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

performance by the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston.

The concert highlighted pieces from Komitas and Aram Khachaturian to the contemporary Nune Yesayan and Lilu, and also included a repertoire of classical pieces by Rachmaninov, Bach and Piazzola. A talented mix of performers took to the stage, including Seta Karakashian and Diana Vasilyan along with alumni artists Ani Djirdjirian, the Arminstring Ensemble, Nevart Zeronian, Deborah Agopian and Hooshere, who all embodied the school's cultural mission through their performances.

"We owe this school and this milestone to the visionaries and founders of HMADS and now to the current generation," said Zarmine Boghosian, Principal Emeritus of Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School and concert co-chair.

Current principal Seta Megherian, an alumna of HMADS herself, said it was "an honor to be back home."

see ANNIVERSARY, page 6



Seta Tavitian Megherian (2016 to present), Sophie Kerbeykian (Principal 2003-2006), Zarmine Boghosian, (1987-2001 principal emeritus, 2006-2016)

## Kesablyans Honored At Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church

CHELMSFORD, Mass. – On December 10, some 150 parishioners and friends gathered for a Community Christmas Luncheon and 10th anniversary celebration to mark Rev. Khachatur and Yeretgyn Anna Kesablyan's ministry at Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, Chelmsford. Parish Council chairman, Bruce Kayajanian, served as master of ceremonies and offered welcoming remarks thanking Father Khachatur and Yeretgyn Anna for their dedicated service to the parish. Bruce also shared the responses from Sunday and Armenian School students who commented on the couple's strongest attributes and where they think they would be 25 years from now.

Jennifer Murphy, Parish Council vice chair, read a congratulatory letter from the Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. George Simonian, Milka Jeknavorian, and Sophia Manukian, representing the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA), offered reflections on Father Khachatur's and Yeretgyn Anna's adjustment to life in America and the impact they have had on the parish. Susan Manoian Clark, representing the Sunday and Armenian School schools, presented Father Kesablyan with a book of drawings and tributes by the students.

Ara Jeknavorian presented a narrated slide presentation which highlighted the dynamic growth



Diane Juknavorian, Chairlady of the Women's Guild, presents Rev. Khachatur Kesablyan and Yn. Anna Kesablyan a certificate from the Fund for Armenia Relief (FAR)

of the parish over the past 10 years, and the young priest's devotion to the parish youth programs.

Diane Juknavorian, chairwoman of the Women's Guild, announced that as one of the gifts to mark the Kesablyan family's 10th year at Sts. Vartanantz, parish donations to two charities to support Armenia, the Vanadzor Old Age Home and Children of Armenia Support Program (CASP), have been made on their behalf.

Both Kesablyans expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the special committee that had organized the anniversary appreciation luncheon as well to all those present at the gathering. Father Khachatur expressed his sincere appreciation to the parish for embracing his family and encouraging and supporting his ministry.

"Yeretgyn and I and our children, Maria and Narek, are so blessed to have been part of the Sts. Vartanantz family for the past 10 years. You have prayed for us, and have supported our ministry to build and make Sts. Vartanantz a vibrant parish – a place where everyone feels part of a loving family dedicated to greater glory of God."

He also thanked his family, especially his wife for her love, patience, and encouragement in his ministry in the vineyards of the Lord. The day's activities wrapped up with a visit from Santa Claus.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Holy Martyrs Days School Celebrates 50th Anniversary

ANNIVERSARY, from page 5

"This New York gem has been the strongest foundation and part of my life for as long as I can remember," said co-chair Megherian, a graduate of the class of 1989. "Serving as principal brings me great joy and happiness, to be able to spread and share that part of my life that was so near and dear to me."

Founded in 1967, HMADS is the first and only Armenian Day School in the New York metropolitan area. The school has made a significant impact to the Armenian Diaspora over the past five decades as a full-fledged elementary school, chartered by the Board of Regents of the New York State Department of Education. Located in Bayside, HMADS not only provides bilingual education, but also teaches Armenian cultural values and prepares students to become productive members of their surrounding American society.

"Each day our goal is to strengthen and perpetuate the Armenian language and culture," said Megherian, who notes that students are involved both in the school and the community by serving the church and other cultural organizations. "By teaching and learning our Armenian language we allow for our culture to strengthen and grow and stay alive for the next generation."

Portraying the strong bonds forged between HMADS and its graduates, the "Spotlight on Culture" concert brought former graduates back to the stage to perform in honor of their alma mater, including Ani Djirdjian, class of 2006, who said performing on stage was "nothing short of surreal and heart-warming."



Group shot of the Spotlight on Culture committee

co-chair. "I am forever indebted to this school for all that it has done, and so the best way I can show my gratitude is doing all I can to ensure the legacy lives on and that this amazing opportunity is available to generations to come."

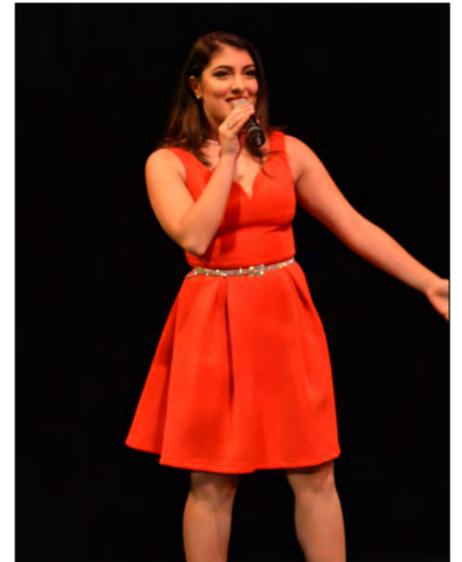
In the spirit of promoting and preserving the

per in the diaspora," said Ashjian, noting the importance of educating and inspiring the youth to keep the Armenian tradition and culture alive. "We pave the way for the future generations to maintain their love for their Armenian culture while also making sure that the world understands who we are as a nation."

Over the last 50 years, HMADS has created a fruitful and connected network of close to 300 students and graduates who have become successful in many fields, from finance to education to the arts.

Boghosian remarked how proud she is of the achievements of the students and graduates who, "always shine and elevate the name of our school."

"It's been an honor to have a role in their education and to watch them grow from nursery into hard working bright sixth grade students," said Boghosian. "And it's even more delightful to see them coming back after graduating."



Ani Djirdjian, class of 2006



Arminstring Violin Ensemble

"I'm eternally grateful to HMADS for instilling our Armenian language, culture, and community in me and my friends, making me fall in love with who we are as a people and always reminding us of our resilience," said Djirdjian, a singer and actress who performed Haireniks by Lilu. "I hope the generations of Armenian youth to come are given the same opportunities I was fortunate to have through HMADS."

Throughout the decades, HMADS has been a home away from home for its students, under the guidance of the teaching staff and leadership, including principals Sara Anoushian Dadourian, Mae Bedrossian Kazandjian, Zarmine Kalayjian Boghosian, Sophie Djanec Kerbekian and Seta Tavitian Megherian, who all established everlasting ties to their students, including Natalie Gabrelian, class of 1988.

"For 50 years, HMADS has stood as a pillar of the New York Armenian-American community, embracing generation after generation into its welcoming arms," said Natalie Gabrelian, Director of Alternative Education at AGBU and the concert's



Seta Karakashian

Armenian culture, the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston performed graceful and energetic dances reflective of their heritage. The group recently celebrated its 30th anniversary and, according to director Apo Ashjian, the Sayat Nova dancers were "honored" and "humbled" to participate in the 50th anniversary concert of the HMADS.

"We understand the perseverance that is required for an organization to grow and pros-



Natalie Gabrelian and Seta Tavitian Megherian, co-chairs of the concert



Sayat Nova Dance Company

All photos: Garen Karamyan



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Shiva Ayyadurai to Speak at St. James Armenian Church Men's Club

WATERTOWN — On Monday, January 8, 2018, the speaker of the St. James Armenian Church Men's Club monthly meeting will be Dr. V.A. Shiva Ayyadurai, Systems Scientist Innovator, and Entrepreneur.

The program will be held at the Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center.

The topic will be "Innovation, the Foundation of Entrepreneurship."

Ayyadurai holds four degrees from MIT, including a PhD in biological engineering, and is a Fulbright grant recipient. He is a candidate in the 2018 United States Senate election in Massachusetts.

His love of medicine and complex systems began in India when he became intrigued with medicine at the age of 5 as he observed his grandmother, a farmer and healer in the small village of Muhavur in South India, apply Siddha, India's oldest system of traditional medicine, to heal and support local villagers. These early experiences inspired him to pursue the study of modern systems science, information technology and eastern and traditional systems of medicine to develop an integrative frame-

work linking eastern and western systems of medicine.

Dr. Ayyadurai received a bachelors in electrical engineering and computer science from MIT, and a dual master's degree in mechanical engineering and visual studies from the MIT Media Laboratory. In 2003, he returned to MIT to complete his doctoral work in systems biology within the Department of Biological Engineering, where he developed CytoSolve®, a scalable computational platform for modeling the cell by dynamic integration of molecular pathways models. Following his doctoral work, he returned to India on a Fulbright, where he discovered the systems theoretic basis of eastern systems of medicine, resulting in Systems Health®, a new educational program that provides a scientific foundation of integrative medicine. While at MIT, he also developed a pioneering new course called Systems Visualization which integrates systems theory, narrative story telling, metaphor and data visualization to provide visualization of complex systems.

Today, he is the chairman and CEO of CytoSolve, Inc. CytoSolve provides a revolution-

ary platform for modeling complex diseases as well as for discovering multi-combination therapeutics. His recent efforts at CytoSolve have led to an FDA allowance and exemption for a multi-combination drug for pancreatic cancer, development of innovative nutraceutical products, as well as numerous industry and academic partnerships. Ayyadurai's earlier research on pattern recognition and large-scale systems development also resulted in multiple patents, numerous industry awards, commercial products such as EchoMail, and scientific and industry publications. He serves as Executive Director of the International Center for Integrative Systems (ICIS), a non-profit research and education foundation, located in Cambridge.

He has started and successfully managed several start-up companies. Following his winning of a White House competition to automatically analyze and sort President Clinton's email, Ayyadurai started EchoMail, Inc. which grew to nearly \$200 million in market valuation. He has appeared in The MIT Technology Review, The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, NBC News, USA Today and other major media. Shiva was named

Top 40 in the Improper Bostonian.

Ayyadurai continues his passion for entrepreneurialism as Managing Director of General Interactive, a venture fund that incubates, mentors and funds new startups in various areas including rural healthcare, media, biotechnology, information technology, to name a few. He has also started Innovation Corps to fuel innovation among teenagers worldwide. He serves as a consultant to CEOs and Executive Management at Fortune 1000 companies, as well as government organizations.

Ayyadurai is a member of Sigma-Xi, Eta Kappa Nu and Tau Beta Pi. He supports the Shanthi Foundation, which raises money to provide scholarships for education of orphaned girls. He is also a supporter of various arts and non-profit organizations including the Guggenheim Museum, Very Special Arts, National Public Radio and the National Geographic Society. Ayyadurai lives in Belmont and enjoys yoga, tennis, animals, art and architecture.

This St. James Men's Club dinner meeting will begin with a social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m.

## OBITUARY

### Ardashes Hagop Shelemian

Writer, Musician, Engineer

WATERTOWN — Ardashes Hagop Shelemian, 94, passed away on December 13, 2017.

Born in Istanbul, Turkey, he was the son of the late Victoria and Hagop Shelemian and brother of the late Kegham Shelemian. He leaves behind his wife, Sake Tinzir, and many close friends and family.

He received his early education at the Nersesian School in Constantinople, and the Azgayin Kentronakan [National Central School], and continued his higher education at the Robert American College where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in exact sciences. He later attended the Reserve Officers Academy where he received the rank of lieutenant in the signal corps.

Passionate about classical Armenian music and liturgy and Gomidas, he received his musical education under Sargis Boyajian of the historical St. Gregory the Lusavorich (Illuminator) Armenian Church of Galatia and Harutiun Muradian (later, Fr. Shnorhik Muradian). He also studied violin under Enoch Gavafian and harmony and composition under prominent musician Koharik Ghazarossian as well as sang under the leadership of Parsegh Ganatchian.

Fluent in Armenian, Turkish, English and

Spanish, he was always an active member of his community in his birthplace as well as Buenos Aires, Argentina and Boston. As a freelance writer and correspondent, he has contributed pieces to several Armenian language periodicals, among them *Jamanak*, *Marmara*, *Jarakeyt*, and *Badge*, *Arev*, and *Yerchanik*, all in Istanbul; and *Nerkay*, *Hay Ketron*, and *Vospor* as editor, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

He held a number of academic positions in the United States, Argentina and Turkey.

He was a member of a number of Armenian and non-Armenian organizations and institutions, among them, Alumni Association of Kentronakan Armenian Lyceum, Istanbul; Asociacion Cultural Armenia de Estambul,

Buenos Aires; co-founder of Pro-Music Armenia, Buenos Aires; Association of Argentino-Armenian Musicians; National Association for Armenian Studies and Research; Armenian Artists Association of America, Erevan Choral Society, Tekeyan Cultural Association, Boston and the Armenian Cultural Foundation.

As per his wishes, a memorial service will be held on Wednesday, December 27th at 6:30 p.m. at the Giragosian Funeral Home, at 576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Genocide Museum's Demoyan Seeks to Chart Original Path

DEMOYAN, from page 1

and tradition, migration identities, and the symbolic geography of the independence period. Demoyan said that “Harvard is a wonderful place because there are a lot of data bases and available materials. Accessibility makes work easy, but at the same time complicated because of the huge amount of materials you have to deal with.” The final product will be a book of at least 400 pages, in English.

## From Karabakh to Genocide

Demoyan graduated from Yerevan State University in 1998 as a cultural anthropologist, working on ethnopsychological studies on the Caucasus. As a doctoral candidate (somewhere in-between the US master's and doctoral stages) he studied economic and social reforms in Turkey in the 1980s, especially the so-called miracle period of Turgut Özal during which Turkey began to turn into a leading world economy from a position of bankruptcy through political will and leadership. His doctoral dissertation was on the Karabakh conflict and Turkish foreign policy, with a comparison between the situations at the start and end of the 20th century. He defended it in 2011 and produced a Russian-language monograph, which he hopes to see published in English in 2018.

Obviously he was not a specialist on the Armenian Genocide, and he entered this field relatively late in his academic career.

Vladimir Barkhudaryan, vice president of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences at the time, contacted him. Demoyan said, “I was 31 years old when I received the invitation, which turned into insistence, to accept the position of director of the AGMI. I wanted to enjoy my academic freedom to research and understood well the challenges to be faced in that position. My research was mostly on Karabakh, not on the Genocide at that time, although as a doctoral student I was dealing with Turkish Studies. This meant that I had to make a big shift in my work. I tried to resist, but after the third time, the seriousness of the situation was explained to me. I finally thought, why not.”

Apart from a feeling of responsibility, Demoyan said, he had to consider whether he could change what was missing or wrong there as a historian. This was in the fall of 2006, and since then, he worked to alter the world's perception of AGMI through conferences, a new website, publications in multiple languages, visits to colleagues, cooperation with various other museums, institutes and academic centers, the development of a new concept of museum exhibition and visualization of the topic of the Genocide, and many other changes. The collections of the museum were expanded, in part through collaboration with collectors throughout the world and many donations, which reached 100,000 in number by 2017. Scholars from outside Armenia were encouraged to work on the Armenian Genocide in Armenia through the Raphael Lemkin Scholarship program, which supports two researchers a year for one-month visits.

Demoyan is particularly proud of his work during the centennial of the Genocide, with exhibitions in nearly 40 countries and numerous books printed in four languages. The museum was expanded and its permanent exhibition was thoroughly revised in 2015 with a new modern design and interactive facilities. That same year the International Journal for Armenian Genocide Studies (<http://www.genocidemuseum.am/eng/International-Journal-of-AGS.php>) was launched, featuring double-blind peer review and articles written in English. Furthermore, he was appointed as secretary of the coordinating commission created by the government of Armenia in 2011 to promote the commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide (see <https://mirrorspectator.com/2015/11/12/genocide-museum-director-demoyan-reflects-on-centennial/>).

Demoyan declared, “A lot of people who visited the museum are giving positive responses to all these changes, which makes me happy. Furthermore, nearly every day over the last two years we have had Turkish visitors. This year alone we had about 300 so far. Even they come and say thank you for our detailed approach.”

Demoyan said, “I cannot imagine my life without Tzitzernakaberd [AGMI].” He retains his position as head of the scholarly council of AGMI and continues to work long-distance as director while is in the United States, though temporarily

Gevorg Vartanian is filling in for him. Demoyan said that his absence is only physical. He said, “It does not mean that I am not in touch. Just before entering the Baikar Building [for this interview], I was talking about things happening with the museum and I am in contact with the staff every day. I edit some papers, and provide instructions before VIP visits to the memorial complex and the museum. We are preparing events for next year, including exhibits in connection with the centennial of the first Republic of Armenia for April, the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, the centennial of Homenetmen, and the summit of the heads of Francophone counties in Yerevan in October 2018.

Demoyan revealed that the AGMI will have a new status starting in 2018. It will no longer be part of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences but will instead have an autonomous status like the Matenadaran, as a non-profit foundation with a board of trustees. Demoyan said, “This will present new opportunities for us.”

Leaving the Academy was one of Demoyan's initiatives, he said.

## Standing One's Ground

Demoyan declared that he has been always able to maintain his independence in his post in Armenia despite all types of pressures. He said that he was able to do this for two reasons.



Ceremony of plaque dedication in memory of Clara Barton with former US ambassador John Heffern, May 2012, at far right

First, he said, “It was my voluntary decision to take this position. Everybody in Armenia knows that. ... I am not indebted to anyone. Secondly, my work was successful on a professional level.”

When asked about his interests in politics, Demoyan replied, “I am a person who has no political ambitions. I am an academician. The Armenian state can feel comfortable and relaxed concerning visiting VIP guests because I know how to deal with them. I know languages, but that is not the main thing.”

Demoyan said, “My case is very unique for the Armenian situation. Subordination and dependence are fixed in Armenia. ... I realized that after I said my bold yes to accept my position, some people tried to control me and dictate to me their own rules. A schism or breaking point occurred after I recognized that I cannot realize my own ideas if I follow those restrictions. Unfortunately, the person who tried to convince me to hold the position of director of AGMI, after two years openly said to me: ‘You work hard and because of that you are always in the center of attention. Just weaken your zeal because you overshadow your colleagues from the other institutions.’ Yes, this was said to me, and I realized that the time to cut the ties with Academy of Science had come.”

Demoyan pointed out as an example of his resistance to political interference the attempts to sell the 100 acres of land the AGMI controls, which is one of the largest green areas in Yerevan. He said, “It would have been easy for me to say I do not want a headache with this green area – irrigation, trees, animals, garbage and so forth – let someone else deal with it. But my understanding of environmental security and maintenance led to me conclude that it could be a dangerous decision to abandon it, so I permanently am in a fight with people who have plans on for this territory.”

A final point of no return for Demoyan took place in 2012. He said, “The presidium of the Academy of Science targeted me to destroy my doctoral dissertation in order to open the way for others who are more obedient and tranquil. In my opinion, it

was one of the most shameful episodes in the history of the Academy of Science. In short it was a clear case of corruption with the involvement of many high-ranking officials, who had their own calculations and intentions before the Genocide centennial.” He added that more recently, AGMI critiqued the eight-volume history of Armenia series being published by the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences, focusing on the volume which deals with the Armenian Genocide and related matters, but a head of the Department of the Armenological studies of the National Academy tried to convince him not to publish this review. Afterwards Demoyan himself was criticized for his criticism. The critical review of the AGMI was printed as a 110-page publication with an ISBN, but his opponents refrained from publishing their own response officially so that it could be easily found.

Despite, or perhaps because of such issues, Demoyan participated in several public bodies. He was appointed by President Serzh Sargsyan as a member of the 36-person advisory Public Council of the Republic of Armenia in 2009, and was elected in 2013 to the 65-person Yerevan City Council of Elders as part of the Republican Party faction.

Concerning these two positions, Demoyan said, “I had only one motivation – to change something if I can, alone or with my friends.” He wanted to work closely with the city council on the preparations for the Armenian Genocide centennial, which,

he said, “was very productive.” The second reason for his participation was to take care of the issues concerning the Tzitzernakaberd park around the memorial, and the third was in order to raise the issue of seismic security in Yerevan. Demoyan felt he was not successful in the latter, and bewailed the fact that the lessons from the 1988 earthquake have not been learned.

He said, “I survived that earthquake. I know what it is to feel it and have it pass through it. It is for your whole life. And now it is horrible that multilevel buildings still appear in Yerevan close to each other.”

This year he did not renew his candidacy because of his research plans.

Demoyan said that the Public Council is not a politically-based body. It was founded with 12 initial members in 2009, including himself, and then broadened to 36. He said, “When I was elected, I was in Providence, and the telephone call was a

surprise to me. There was a lot of hope. After the March 2008 events [the violent crushing of protests about the presidential election, leading to at least 10 deaths and many arrests], society was in a desperate situation. Everybody tried to find a solution. ... The Council was regarded as a place where people can discuss and try to solve issues.”

However, Demoyan said, he was disappointed overall with the quite modest impact of that advisory body.

## No Politics, Please

Demoyan stressed his lack of affiliation with any political group in Armenia (or abroad). He said, “I have never been a member of any political group, and I am not going to be a member of any political party in the near future. A non-partisan status makes your life both interesting and complicated in Armenia. If you want to solve personal issues, concerning business, personal or reputation, you have to be a part of certain groups. But I did not find a milieu I can be part of. My personal, subjective thinking is that political parties make more wrongs and are harmful in the Armenian world than bring benefits.”

As an intellectual, he said, “I hate being a conformist. One of the dangers of Armenian society is being conformist and cautious to speak out. A lot of people know what is wrong but they keep calm and shut their mouths. Why make trouble [they think]; people can then make trouble for you.”

He added that he did not like mindless criticism. “Criticism must not be just for the sake of criticism. In other words, you have to be constructive with your criticism, not destructive. I call this intellectual, not political, opposition.”

He added, “Everyone knows I can vote against the majority. If someone wants to label me as opposition, I can accept that term for me as an intellectual. I think the person who is thinking and writing must be free. The intellectual is an internally free person, not biased or conformist. In terms of opposition, I think that every intellectual by default is an oppositionist – not



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Conference Seeks to Protect Sacred Sites

WASHINGTON – On December 6, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, the Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Director, took part in a special panel on “Sacred Sites and Property Rights” during the third international Conference on Religious Freedom.

Aykazian was among the experts brought together to discuss the struggles of Christian communities across the Middle East to protect religious sites from state

encroachment, and to secure their very survival under often hostile conditions. Aykazian noted by way of example that “the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem has 950 pieces of property in Constantinople and the surrounding region,” which it has been trying to get back from the Turkish authorities for the last ten years. He said that not even one of these confiscated church properties has yet been returned to the patriarchate.

Other speakers on the panel included Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou (of Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Diplomacy), Rabbi Arthur Schneier (Appeal of Conscience Foundation), Kate Nahapetian (Armenian Legal Center for Justice and Human Rights), and retired US Ambassador to Qatar Patrick Theros.

Also speaking at a different session of the conference was St. John’s University Law Professor (and St. Nersess Seminary board member) Mark Movsesian.

The conference, organized by the “Archons” of the Greek Orthodox Church—an association dedicated to the defense and preservation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in the face of persecution—took place in Washington, DC, December 4-6. The Archons operate under the spiritual direction of Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of the Greek Orthodox Church in America.

(See a video excerpt from the panel discussion on our website, [www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com).)



Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, right, and the other members of the panel

only against the government but against anything that is wrong in his or her opinion, and for the common benefit or state security.”

Demoyan said, “Some circles of the government label me as a troublemaker, a person who is not calm, who is not obedient. Some of them try to explain to me that as a public person I should refrain from making public declarations and statements. Isn’t it funny? My intent is not to call attention to my person. I do not need additional attention. I am not going to apply to be a member of parliament or another public position. I want to direct the attention of the public and the government to issues which touch everyone, to problems which harm the overall security of the country.”

He gave several examples when he spoke out. First, he was upset with the prominent advertisements of casinos at Yerevan’s airport, which led him to write “Pari Yegak Casinoland” [Welcome to Casinoland]. This led to change, and now there are no such advertisements, which, incidentally, were not even in Armenian but in Russian. A second episode was his personal vote against the erection of a monument to Anastas Mikoyan, the Soviet leader, whom many considered an important political figure because he is an Armenian.

On the other hand, there are eight advertisements of vodka on Mashtots Avenue when you come to Yerevan. Demoyan said, “My eyes see this and I have to speak. I criticized this, but those 8 modern advertisement panels with illumination are still there. If I say I am Armenian, and I respect my culture and heritage, but when the main avenue which carries the name of the creator of the Armenian alphabet, starts with vodka ads and ends with the Matenadaran, I cannot stand it!”

He added: “Believe me, when you work in a place called the Armenian Genocide Museum, when nearly every day you deal with episodes of the tragedy which happened to your nation, your sense of justice and motivations to cope with injustice are different than others, especially when you witness how injustice is committed by your compatriots against other compatriots.”

Demoyan’s Harvard research, which examines attempts to bring back Soviet values and ways of thinking emanating from Russia to parts of the former Soviet Union, leads him to wonder what will happen in the next 10-15 years, when the generation with a Soviet way of thinking and nostalgia will no longer be the main decision makers for society due to age and the passage of time. He said that a lack of dialogue and attempts to re-Sovietize might lead to new polarization in Armenian society, as there is “a deepening gap between the authorities and citizens of the Republic” (see more in the summary of his 2016 lecture in the *Mirror-Spectator*, <https://mirrorspectator.com/2016/10/20/demoyan-warns-of-dire-situation-in-armenia/>).

He added that a related problem was that in Armenia, “this is a society of forgetting, of oblivion. It is planned that you should not remember what happened last week, a year ago, or ten years ago.”

Demoyan wants to avoid revolutionary change, but finds that evolutionary change is too slow. He said, “I am a critical optimist,” and concluded, “Our only hope is that the current government will understand that the situation is in a deadlock...and the deadlock cannot continue as it will lead to the collapse of the state. The peaceful rotation of elites, enabling others from the generation of independence to be involved in the government, is one of the crucial solutions but not the main one.”

Demoyan, while in the United States, is also focusing on a different set of Armenian-American issues, though connected with his research on identity transformations. Next year is the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Martin the Armenian to the New World, to Virginia back in 1618. He said that “unfortunately, we



Visit of the French president, May 2014: center, from left, President Serzh Sargsyan of Armenia, President François Hollande, Dr. Hayk Demoyan

have no museum on American Armenians or illustrated volumes to show that rich history, though some academic works exist. As there are no high-profile exhibitions, having gathered a lot of visual materials, I started to work two years ago on an

illustrated catalogue, which will be completed early next spring: *The Armenian Legacy in America: The 400-Year Heritage*.” This work will be some 600 pages long with 2,000 illustrations, mostly previously unknown.



Hillary Clinton’s visit to Tzitzernakaberd Armenian Genocide memorial, 2010



*Peace and Love and Joy to All.*  
**Mary Guleserian Bergoudian**  
 Belmont, MA

*May the joy and blessings of Christmas be with us all throughout the year.*  
**Richard and Ann Tarvezian**  
 Watertown, MA

*Merry Hye Tahd*  
**David Boyajian**  
 Belmont, MA

*May the blessings of Christmas Bring Peace and Good Health to All*  
**Jack and Audrey Pilibosian**  
 Arlington, MA

*Happy New Year*  
**Van and Mary Aroian**  
 Worcester, MA

*Christmas Greetings to the MS Family, especially Alin and Aram. Thank you for your commitment and God Bless you all.*  
**Bob and Carine Avakian and Family**  
 Bedford, MA

*Happy Feelings through the season and the coming year.*  
**Charlie Gazarian**  
 Brookline, MA

*You have matured gracefully over almost a century of service with wisdom and elegance. Congratulations and best wishes for the next century as you shine an ever-brighter light over the Armenian-American community.*  
**Ernest M. Barsamian MD and Sonig Kradjian**  
 West Roxbury, MA

*Merry Christmas to all*  
**Don and Barbara Tellalian**  
 Newton, MA

*For the perpetual memory of Hrant Dink*  
**Harry and Hripsime Parsekian**  
 Watertown, MA

*Best Christmas Wishes*  
**Raffy and Vicki Hovanessian**  
 Fort Lee, NJ

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to All*  
**Hagop Vartivarian**  
 Mahwah, NJ

*Happy New Year and Merry Christmas and congratulations on your 85th Anniversary*  
**Berc and Armine Araz**  
 Wanaque, NJ

*Glad Tidings of Peace, Joy and Love to All*  
**Sarkis Bedevian and Peter Bedevian**  
 Wycoff, NJ



## Christmas Donations

- Elizabeth Aprahamian, Northville, MI \$500
- Robert and Carine Avakian, Bedford, MA \$300
- Rose and Antoine Bazarbashian, Paoli, PA \$300
- Sonig Kradjian and Dr. Ernest Barsamian, Boca Raton, FL \$300
- Raffy and Vicki Hovanessian, Fort Lee, NJ \$250
- Karekin Arzoomanian, New York, NY \$250
- Herman Hintiryan, West Bloomfield, MI \$200
- Peter Balakian, Hamilton, NY \$200
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- Vahan and Maral Voskian and Sons, Los Angeles, CA \$200
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- Emma Sogoian, Bloomfield Hills, MI \$125
- Joyce Barsam, Belmont, MA \$100
- Karekin and Maria Movsesian, Paramus, NJ \$100
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- Theodore Touloukian, South Boston, \$100
- Hagop Vartivarian, Mahwah, NJ \$100
- John and Roxie Maljanian, Newington, CT \$100
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- Edward Shooshanian, Boynton Beach, FL \$100

- Harry Toufayan, Ridgefield, NJ \$100
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- Heratch and Sonya Doumanian, Chicago, IL \$100
- Marjorie Martiesian, Providence, RI \$100
- Hagop Mashikian, Gulfport, FL \$100
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- Ruth and Wilford Swisher, Newington, CT \$100
- Gregory Kechejian, Milton, MA \$80
- Vahan and Anoush Chamlian, Fresno, CA \$80
- Jack and Audrey Pilibosian, Arlington, MA \$50
- Berc and Armine Araz, Wanaque, NJ \$50
- Andrew and Rose Torigian, Paramus, NJ \$50
- Simon Javizian and Family, Boca Raton, FL \$50
- Adrienne and Sarkis Dodakian, Old Lyme, CT \$50
- Stephen and Dorothy Masoian, Cranston, RI \$50
- Paul Chilian, East Providence, RI \$35
- Van and Mary Aroian, Worcester, MA \$30
- Apkar and Arpie Potookian, Waltham, MA \$25
- Lucine Kasbarian, Teaneck, NJ \$25
- David Boyajian, Belmont, MA \$25

**Total: \$6,155**



*Christmas Blessings on All of US*  
**Andy and Rose Torigian**  
 Paramus, NJ

*Keep Christ in Christmas*  
**Richard McOmber**  
 Rumson, NJ

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year*  
*Shnorhavor Nor dari yev Pari Gaghan*  
**Simon Javizian and Family**  
 Boca Raton, FL

*This is not Fake News — the Best Paper!*  
**Adrienne and Sarkis Dodakian**  
 Old Lyme, CT

*Best Wishes to all our readers for Peace and Good Health in the New Year*  
**John and Roxie Maljanian**  
 Newington, CT

*Merry Christmas!*  
**Ruth and Will Swisher**  
 Newington, CT

*Wishing all of our friends at the Mirror-Spectator and in the ADL and TCA a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year.*  
**Dr. and Mrs. Gary Zamanigian**  
 Bloomfield Hills, MI

*We wish all our friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*  
**Edmond and Nora Azadian**  
 West Bloomfield, MI

*Peace on Earth*  
**The Aprahamians**  
 Northville, MI

*On behalf of the Bazarbashian family, we wish all our Armenian brothers and sisters a very Merry Christmas and joyous New Year.*  
**Rose and Antoine Bazarbashian**  
 Paoli, PA

*Best Wishes for 2018*  
**Heratch and Sonya Doumanian**  
 Chicago, IL

*I wish all a Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year*  
**Marjorie Martiesian**  
 Providence, RI

*Happy Holidays to all our family and friends. May the New Year bring good health and happiness.*  
**Stephen and Dorothy Masoian**  
 Cranston, RI

*We at the Mirror-Spectator wish our readers as well as our friends and families a happy and healthy New Year. Shnorhavor Soorp Dzenoond. See you in 2018!*  
**Alin, Aram, Mark, Hasmik and Cristina**



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# L.A. Armenians Raise \$60,000 for Wounded Heroes

## Wounded Hero Sargis Stepanyan Wins 2 Golds

LOS ANGELES – A group of 110 Armenians raised more than \$60,000 for the Armenian Wounded Heroes Fund (AWHF) at a “Scotch and Cigar” event on November 17, at the home of Armen and Katherine Panossian.

AWHF Founders Chris Petrossian and Razmig Arzumian discussed progress in deploying life-saving military first-aid kits across the Artsakh front lines, and our new initiative for post trauma care and rehabilitation for our wounded warriors.

Thanks to the hosts, the Panossians, and those who donated everything, from the catering to the scotch and cigars, every dollar raised will go to help soldiers in Artsakh who have been wounded in the line of duty.

Funds will also help Sargis Stepanyan and other heroes to new, inspiring victories.

The gathering featured a moving video address by war hero Maj. Sargis Stepanyan, who lost both legs and his right arm during a special operations mission in 2014. (Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmkPYrKa4oM>)

watch?v=nmkPYrKa4oM)

Despite his triple-amputations, Stepanyan was in Rumia, Poland, competing for the World Arm-Wrestling Championship with his left arm. During his video message, taped prior to the competition, he promised to win the world cup, and within days of the event in LA, he over-delivered and was crowned World Champion with two gold medals and one silver medal for Armenia (across three competition classes). The Armenian Wounded Heroes Fund is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to serving our heroes, standing with them through challenging times, saving lives, and supporting the rehabilitation of our wounded heroes who have sacrificed all for our homeland.

AWHF founders will continue to cover all administrative costs to ensure that 100 percent of every dollar donated goes toward procuring and deploying modern equipment to our heroes, and that all aid and equipment reaches 100% of its intended recipients through a rigorous monitoring mechanism.

For more information on the organization, visit [www.armenianwoundedheroes.com](http://www.armenianwoundedheroes.com); write to [info@armenianwoundedheroes.com](mailto:info@armenianwoundedheroes.com).



Chris Petrossian and Razmig Arzumian present the AWHF mission.



Sargis Stepanyan (right) wins two gold and one silver medals at the Arm-Wrestling World Cup in Poland. Pictured with his trainer Artavazd Nalbandyan.

## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

### Students of Armenian Descent

Having Completed One Year of College by June 2018  
Applications and other information may be obtained from:

**Armenian Students' Association  
Scholarship Committee**  
333 Atlantic Avenue • Warwick, RI 02888  
Tel. 401-461-6144 • Fax 401-461-6112

email: [headasa@aol.com](mailto:headasa@aol.com)

Deadline for returning completed applications: March 15, 2018



### Knights and Daughters of Vartan

Co-sponsored by National Association of Armenian Studies and Research

#### Dinner and Public Discussion

GUEST SPEAKER



### GREGORY AFTANDILIAN

“The Impact of the Armenian Genocide on the Children of the Survivors”

Consultant, Scholar, and Lecturer,  
Adjunct faculty member at Boston University and American University, Washington, D.C.

**Tuesday, January 9, 2018, 7:00 PM Sharp**

St. Mary Armenian Church Cultural hall  
4125 Fessenden Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

Reservation is a must. Please call

Takuhi Halajian (301) 219-4041  
Jake Bournazian (202) 380-6948



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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Dikranouhi Krikorian Joins Peter Akmajian as Armenian Assembly's Arizona Co-Chairs

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America announced that Dikranouhi “Dede” Krikorian has joined Peter Akmajian as the Assembly’s co-chair for the state of Arizona.

“I look forward to working alongside Peter to serve the Armenian community of Arizona in this new capacity and continue my activism on issues of importance to Armenian Americans,” Krikorian said.

A volunteer for several Armenian organizations throughout the metropolitan Phoenix area, Krikorian is an active member of St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church of Scottsdale. Since 2014, she has served on the Executive Board of the St. Apkar chapter of the Armenian Church Youth Organization (ACYO).

Last month, Krikorian and Akmajian were joined by Armenian Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan at St. Apkar’s annual “ArmeniaFEST,” where the Assembly highlighted its advocacy initiatives, as well as its summer internship programs in Washington, D.C. and Yerevan, Armenia. The two-day festival attracted hundreds of attendees, including members of the Armenian community from Tucson and greater Phoenix. Many people attended St. Apkar’s Melikian Hall to “experience the sights, sounds, and flavors of Armenia,” as the church so aptly highlighted. In partnership with St. Apkar’s diligent Parish Priest, Rev.

Fr. Zacharia Saribekyan, and its lay leadership, the Assembly endeavors to bolster its grassroots activities throughout Arizona in 2018.

Krikorian is a recent graduate of the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at Arizona State University (ASU). She is currently a law clerk at Price Law Group, APC, where she practices civil litigation. While in law school, Krikorian served as President of the Armenian Law Students Association (ALSA), which provides a platform for community-building among Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law students of Armenian descent, non-Armenian students, and faculty interested in exploring Armenian civilization and legal history. Krikorian completed her Bachelor’s Degree in Management and Business Law at ASU’s W.P. Carey School of Business in Tempe.

With over 30 years in the legal arena, Peter Akmajian is a successful trial lawyer and partner at Schmidt, Sethi & Akmajian, a personal injury law firm based in the greater Tucson area. Prior to his service as a plaintiff’s attorney, Akmajian worked as a civil defense lawyer. Since 1998, Akmajian has been certified by the State Bar of Arizona as a Specialist in Personal Injury and Wrongful Death, and is a long-time member of the State Bar’s Commission responsible for vetting potential specialists. In recognition of his outstanding trial work, Akmajian has



Armenian Assembly Arizona State Co-Chair Dede Krikorian and Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan at St. Apkar Armenian Church’s annual “ArmeniaFEST” in Scottsdale

been inducted into the American College of Trial Lawyers, the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, and the International Society of Barristers. He is also a long-time member

of the American Board of Trial Advocates. From 1984 to 1985, Akmajian served as a judicial law clerk for Vice-Chief Justice Frank X. Gordon of the Arizona Supreme Court.

“Peter Akmajian has done an exemplary job as the Assembly’s Arizona State Chair, and we are excited about the addition of Dede Krikorian in this capacity. The Assembly is doubling its efforts in the Grand Canyon State, and we are confident that both Peter and Dede will increase our advocacy efforts to energize greater activism among Armenian Americans in Arizona,” stated Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan.

**Sponsor A Teacher**  
In Armenia and Karabagh  
**17th Anniversary**

Since its inception in 2001, TCA's Sponsor a Teacher program has raised over \$687,000 and reached out to 6,027 teachers and school workers in Armenia & Karabagh.

Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Karabagh to continue helping them to educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher's name and address.  
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 Mail your check with this form to:  
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 Your donation is Tax Deductible.

## St. Vartan Cathedral to Mark 50 years in 2018

NEW YORK – It was the first Armenian cathedral in the New World—the first built in generations.

It was realized through the united effort of ordinary people who had survived the greatest cataclysm ever to befall the Armenian people.

It stands in the heart of New York City: a masterpiece of the Armenian architectural style; a testament to the persistence of the Armenian people, and the power of our Christian faith.

And next year, it will turn 50 years old.

In 2018, St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral will mark 50 years since it was consecrated by Catholics of All Armenians Vasken I, on April 28, 1968.

The Eastern Diocese is planning to honor the milestone throughout the coming year. Under the auspices of Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, anniversary committee chair Richard Dabagian and a group of Diocesan leaders have been working to populate 2018 with a schedule of lectures, concerts, youth events, pilgrimages, and more.

But the celebration will center on Saturday and Sunday, May 5 and 6, when the “national home” of the Armenian-American community will welcome Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, for a weekend of activities to uplift the spirit.

Saturday, May 5, will begin with the grand opening of an exhibit of photos and artifacts from 50 years of life at St. Vartan Cathedral. It will proceed to a “Concert of Sacred Music” in the sanctuary, featuring such luminaries as Isabel Bayrakdarian, Hovhannes Mirzoyan, the Nikolai Kachanov Singers, Shan Arzruni, Haig Mardirosian and Sato Moughalian.

On Sunday, May 6, Karekin II will celebrate a Pontifical Divine Liturgy, followed by a requiem service for St. Vartan Cathedral’s departed founders and leaders.

Details of the May 5-6 weekend (and other events) will be coming in the weeks ahead. But remember these dates – and make sure you plan on being a part of St. Vartan Cathedral’s golden anniversary year.

– C. H. Zakian



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Life Inside Michigan's AGBU Alex And Marie Manoogian School

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. – The 2017-2018 academic year of the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School has been characterized by several accomplishments. First, school enrollment surpassed the expected 400 number, with students from kindergarten to 12th grade reaching 416 for the first time in school history. At the same time, the number of faculty and staff numbers at more than 45. The increase in the student population is once again a testament to the success of the school, whose visibility and fame extend even beyond the Armenian community.

The Manoogian School is a charter school, which means the entire \$3.2-million budget is completely funded by the State of Michigan.

The second achievement was the annual community golf outing that took place in August. Hundreds of supporters joined benefactor Richard Manoogian to spend a pleasant and meaningful day to benefit Michigan's one and only Armenian day school. This is a worthwhile endeavor which secures the perpetuation of this Armenian educational institution. The \$150,000 profit generated from the golf outing will be designated toward various educational projects.

The third, already a tradition at the school, is the enthusiasm connected with the April 2018 pilgrimage to



Students and teachers in Kentucky

Armenia by members of the Junior and Senior classes. Already, 30 students have registered for the trip, and they are engaged in fund raising activities to lessen the financial burden of their parents. Next year's sojourn will last nearly two weeks, from April 15 to April 27.

This year's fourth accomplishment was the successful Canned Food Drive to benefit needy families in the Metro Detroit area. During Thanksgiving week, students at Manoogian collected 13,000 canned and boxed food items.

High School Principal Dr. Hosep Torossian and Elementary and Middle School Principal Sona Kalfayan place great importance upon the Armenian curriculum. The small class size for Armenian language instruction, the introduction of new, Armenian as a Second Language, textbooks, as well as the recent participation of the school's Armenian language teachers in refresher courses in Yerevan, all contribute greatly to the success of

the Armenian Department.

In October, students festively celebrated the Independence of Armenia and Armenian Cultural Month. Also, on December 7, the Elementary students presented a program featuring traditional Armenian songs and ethnic dances.

The school organized an educational field trip to Kentucky by students in the Automotive Engineering class. Led by their principal and three teachers, the students visited various engineering and industrial complexes, as well as many scenic places.

Finally, several students participated in the annual gathering of the Detroit Economic Council. Ten of the highest-ranking students at the school not only were present on this auspicious occasion, but also had the unique opportunity to meet the main stockholder and Chairman of Ford Motor Company, Bill Ford, the great-grandson of founder Henry Ford.

## Thanking the Helpers of Children in Glendale

GLENDALE, from page 5

also to provide insight into our current project. As the night began, one of our very own board members and President of the Armenian Society of Los Angeles, Hovik Gabikian took the stage and began thanking everyone in attendance. Gabikian also took the time to thank Ovanes Balayan, the president and the founder of the Armenian American Orphans Children Fund, for all of his efforts and hard work. He explained to everyone in attendance that Balayan started this fund on his own, with the sole purpose of helping the children in Armenia, who are unable to help them-

selves. Throughout the 18-year journey of the Armenian American Orphans Fund, various committee members have made their own tremendous contributions to the cause. Dr. Vahan Aladadyan, also one of the committee members, presented the finances of our current project in Spitak, Armenia and highlighted to everyone in attendance that we are ahead of schedule. During his presentation, Aladadyan displayed many detailed charts that explained exactly where all the collected money was allocated.

The group's current project in Spitak, Armenia contains three parts; an elementary



Former Sheriff Lee Baca



Many guests were in attendance ranging from Glendale Mayor Vartan Gharapetian, Council member Paula Devine, Councilmember Vrej Agajanian, Former Sheriff Lee Baca and many more.

school, a recreation center and a basketball gymnasium. The night itself was funded by the main sponsors who generously took it upon themselves to cover the expenses. It was an amazing sight to witness the guests interacting with one another. Many found themselves drinking, eating and laughing with old friends, as well as meeting new ones. As the night progressed, the President of the Armenian American Orphans Disabled Fund, Ovanes Balayan, thanked everyone and invited Mayor Vartan Gharapetian on stage.

Gharapetian began giving out awards and

personally thanked those individuals that took it upon themselves to become main sponsors of the Armenian American Orphans Children Fund. The night concluded with Ovanes Balayan taking the stage. He informed everyone about the fund's future plans and projects that the committee has decided to take on. Balayan also showed a series of videos, that revealed the before and after pictures of all of the projects that the Armenian American Orphans Children fund has contributed to.

To find out more, visit [www.forourkids99.com](http://www.forourkids99.com)

# Arts & Living

## Gomidias Choir Brings Music of Christmas to St. Vartan Cathedral

NEW YORK – The Diocese's "Christmas at the Cathedral" concert featuring the Gomidias Choir and Astghikner Vocal Ensemble took place on Friday evening, December 8, 2017 in the cathedral's sanctuary.

The choir members sang songs in the Armenian and American tradition, bringing cheer and the Christmas spirit to the Cathedral.

The overflowing crowd enjoyed the sounds of the season by the talented voices of both choirs, as well as a special solo appearance by singer Elie Berberian.

"Tonight's performance keeps with our proud tradition of the Gomidias Choir, which has always had a home in this cathedral," said Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern). "The Gomidias Choir has seen a renewed vision and beautiful artistry under Kris Kalfayan and listening to the children's voices of the Astghikner Choir, under the direction of Maria Sahakyan, fills our heart with hope and optimism for our future."

Kalfayan said it was a joy to perform at the Cathedral, which he says is their "home."

"To carry on the legacy of our founders, is an honor and our responsibility," said Kalfayan. "We have the responsibility today to continue singing the Gomidias Badarak so that our community has the opportunity to hear its beauty and to continue our founders' legacy."

### A Positive Example

The Gomidias Choir, which sings Gomidias Vartabed's version of the Divine Liturgy, was formed in 1948 at the Holy Cross Church of Armenia in New York. Under the auspices of the Eastern Diocese for the past 60 years, the choir has performed during symbolic moments in Armenian-American church history, including the consecration of St. Vartan Cathedral in 1968. The choir is now comprised of 40 members, many of whom sing in their own parish choirs.

For almost 70 years, the choir has inspired churchgoers and serves as a positive example for the younger generation.

Sahakyan noted it was symbolic for the Astghikner Vocal Ensemble to perform in the Cathedral alongside the Gomidias Choir because they had the opportunity to "experience the professionalism of their elders, which showed them how their own futures will look in the Armenian Church."

"It was a great feeling to perform with people who have already succeeded in music and we were proud to sing in the Armenian Cathedral with the presence of Srpazan," said Sahakyan, who formed the Astghikner Vocal Ensemble in 2015 at the St. Gregory the Illuminator Mission Parish of Brooklyn.

The Gomidias Choir has long held a special place in the heart of its members, including Anoush Givlekian, who at a young age sang in Holy Cross's church choir, where Kalfayan was an organist. She joined the Gomidias Choir in 1975, the youngest female member at the age of 13, and looked forward to the weekly rehearsals at the Diocese under the direction of Deacon Artur Misyan.

"The melodies of the Gomidiasian Liturgy profoundly resonate with me on so many levels," said Givlekian, who serves as Assistant Choir Director of the St. Gregory Armenian Church of White Plains, New York. "Not only because they are reminiscent of the wonderful times I had in the choir, but because of the way that the hymns are structured."

She notes the tension in the music that leads to the resolution and the soaring, uplifting passages.

see GOMIDAS, page 16



Nina Katchadourian, "Lavatory Self-Portrait in the Flemish Style #12" (2011).

## Nina Katchadourian Comes Home to Stanford with Home Run Show

SAN FRANCISCO (*San Francisco Chronicle*) – Before you enter the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, before you see even a single object in the museum's current highlight exhibition, you will hear the art in the trees out front.

"Phoebe," a voice calls out, weakly. "Very, very, very pleased to meet'cha!" comes the answer. "Sweet, sweet, sweet, Canada, Canada, Canada," another interjects. They are the sounds of men and women lamely, sweetly trying to imitate the calls of birds.

By Charles Desmarais

Listen for just a few minutes, and core precepts of the art and philosophy of Nina Katchadourian – a Stanford-born artist who lives in New York and Berlin – will have wormed their way into your consciousness. Katchadourian, whose winning retrospective exhibition "Curiouser" is on view at the Cantor through January 7, is deeply interested in how we communicate, in the structure of language itself. She embraces the everyday illusions our senses present to us, the startling tricks our eyes and ears can play.

Above all, she has the confidence and wit not to take perception, art, life or herself all that seriously. Curiosity and humor, bound together in the exhibition's title, are at the core of the show itself.

For the work "Please, Please, Pleased to Meet'cha!" (2006), to create the recorded voices in the trees, Katchadourian recruited UN interpreters who had little prior knowledge of birds. She handed them an old birdwatchers' guidebook and asked them to vocalize the mnemonic word phrases birders used to identify species in the days before audio recordings.

The readers' varied national accents add further layers of nuance and nonsense. A nonsectarian parable of Babel, it doesn't make a point. Instead, it finds glee in our animal nature, revels in the diversity of the world, marvels at our ability to make any sense at all of one another.

Another sound work in the exhibition, also outside the show's primary galleries but not to be missed, is the 2001 installation "Indecision on the Moon." In a pitch-dark room we experience something of the disorientation Apollo 11 astronauts must have felt when they landed on the moon in 1969. From overhead, we hear a recording of their communications, edited to remove meaningful sentences. Fits and starts of orders and observations, technical hisses and squawks combine unsettlingly: We have entered a territory we cannot understand.

At the entrance to the main exhibition space, the language theme is reintroduced by "Talking Popcorn" (2001), an ordinary glass box like the ones in movie theaters, hooked up to a computer that translates the sounds of corn popping as if they were Morse code signals.

And that leads us, in due course, to the extraordinary "Accent Elimination" (2005). For that work, she enlisted her parents, whose complicated backstories mix

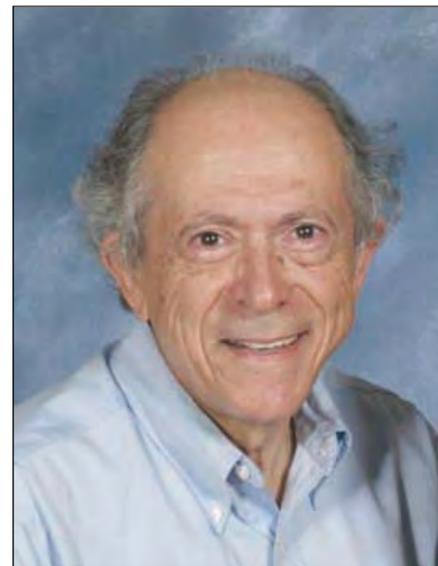
see NINA, page 16

## Stefan Ihrig and Abraham Terian Receive Sona Aronian Armenian Studies Book Prize From NAASR

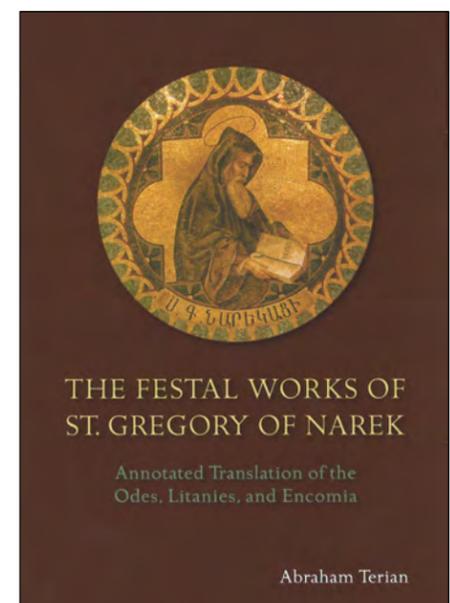
BELMONT, Mass. – The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) announces that Dr. Stefan Ihrig and Dr. Abraham Terian have been awarded the 2017 Dr. Sona Aronian Book Prizes for Excellence in Armenian Studies.

NAASR's Aronian Book Prizes were established in 2014 by the late Dr. Aronian and Dr. Geoffrey Gibbs, to be awarded annually to an outstanding scholarly works in the English language in the field of Armenian Studies and translations from Armenian into English. The 2017 awards are for books published in the year 2016.

Ihrig was awarded the prize for a monograph for his book *Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Harvard University Press), while Terian won for a translation of a literary work, *The Festal*



Dr. Abraham Terian



*Works of St. Gregory of Narek: Annotated Translation of the Odes, Litanies, and Encomia* (Pueblo Books). Each book has been hailed by readers and researchers, with, for example, Yehuda Bauer praising Ihrig's work as "a major contribution to the study of German attitudes to the Armenian Genocide," and James R. Russell stating that of Terian's translation that "all subsequent work on Narekats'i will be measured by its high standard."

see NAASR, page 17

## Gomidas Choir Brings Music of Christmas to St. Vartan Cathedral

GOMIDAS, from page 15

"At times the score is so rich and expressive, the worshipper feels as they are transported to an ethereal plane," said Givlekian, who is a member of the Diocese's Sacred Music Council. "While other times, melodies of his setting of the liturgy are as familiar as a regional village song. That is the magic of Gomidas."

### Family Legacies

Dr. Berdj Feredjian, who was a member of the choir in the 1970s while a student in dental school, rejoined the Gomidas Choir after a 38-year hiatus. He reflects on the efforts of the founders, who wanted to introduce Gomidas Vartabed's Badarak to Armenian-Americans.

"It's quite admirable that a handful of people

participation during performances, without the parish choirs suffering from their member's absences.

"Our members today come from all walks of life," said Kalfayan. "My goal is to increase the membership with younger members so that they carry on our legacy."

One member of the younger generation is Alyne Corrigan, who joined the choir "to carry on the legacy of our ancestors."

She remarked that it's time for her generation to step in and take part in preserving the music, which she learned about from her own family.

"Growing up, the love of music was instilled in me from my grandparents, who learned from their parents and grandparents," said Corrigan, whose



The Gomidas Choir

decided to start a group years ago to continue Gomidas Vartabed's legacy," said Feredjian, a deacon whose service to the church began at the age of 10, alongside his father who was a priest. "Hopefully, through example, we will motivate the next generation to continue to preserve the treasures that Gomidas Vartabed has left for the Armenian people. They are indeed priceless."

While many changes have occurred in the last seven decades, Kalfayan states that the love of the Gomidas Badarak and of the church has remained the same among the choir members and the community at large. The choir does, however, face new challenges, such as full

great-great-grandmother frequented Gomidas Vartabed's performances in historic Armenia. "I want to continue sharing in the mystical beauties of our culture, religion and Badarak, especially as an Armenian-Irish-American."

Corrigan first began singing in her home parish of St. Stephanos in Elberon, New Jersey, under the guidance of then-pastor Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian and is now the church's Assistant Choir Director and Director of the Knar Children's Choir.

"It is important to me that the legacy of our ancient church be preserved by not only learning and singing the hymns, but by teaching the



## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

### Lentil Keyma with Mint, Tomatoes and Parsley

#### INGREDIENTS

2 1/2 cups yellow or red lentils, rinsed  
3/4 cup fine bulgur  
2 large white or yellow onions, finely chopped  
4 cups water  
1 cup low sodium chicken broth (or a little more)  
Fresh chopped mint, tomatoes, parsley and green onions (about 1 cup each)  
Sea salt or Kosher salt, black pepper, cumin, paprika, cayenne pepper, and Aleppo pepper to taste  
3-4 tablespoons unsalted butter (or a little more)  
1/2 cup olive oil (or a little more)  
Fresh lemon wedges

#### PREPARATION:

Place the bulgur in a bowl and cover with hot water. When all the liquid has been absorbed, drain bulgur and set aside.

In a large pan, cook the onions in butter and olive oil until slightly browned, and set aside.

Bring the water and broth to a boil in a large pot, add the lentils and stir; reduce heat and cook for 25-30 minutes or until lentils are soft, stirring a few more times.

Remove lentils from the heat, and set aside until cooled. When the lentils are cooled, pour the browned onions over the lentil mixture, and add the bulgur, spices and seasonings to taste. Mix or wet your hands and knead to combine all ingredients. Check seasonings, adding more salt, pepper or paprika to taste. If this mixture is too dry, add a little olive oil and knead to combine again.

Form this mixture into oval or round shapes, and toss with chopped mint and parsley. Serve keyma on a platter and garnish with a variety of chopped mint, tomatoes, parsley or green onions. Decorate with paprika or cayenne pepper and serve with fresh lemon wedges and a tossed Armenian or green salad, if desired.

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/>  
Also see: <http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>

younger generation the beautiful and meaningful hymns," said Givlekian, "In this ever-changing world we live in, it is comforting to know

that the traditions of our church are perpetuated by a continuum of hymns over millennia."

-Taleen Babayan

## Nina Katchadourian Comes Home to Stanford with Home Run Show

NINA, from page 15

Armenian, Finnish, Lebanese, Swedish and Turkish elements into lives spent in the US for more than 40 years. A series of short videos traces the family's efforts, with the guidance of a professional speech improvement coach, to adopt one another's accents.

The piece touches on aspects of identity and authenticity, with a warmth and caring that is a blessing in this moment of righteous self-defense. To that, add humor, in short supply at any time in the self-serious art world, yet the balm we might most need in this scary time of nuclear threats and racist thuggery.

For the most part, Katchadourian mostly avoids canned laughs, thank goodness. A lot of space in the exhibition is taken up by an exception, "The Genealogy of the Supermarket" (2005-ongoing), a fabricated family tree of branded characters from cereal boxes and food-tin labels. The piece falls flat among subtler, richer ideas.

I prefer the "Sorted Books" project, which has occupied her, on and off, since 1993. Photographs of book spines in provocative piles, they are found texts with the forceful efficiency of the best poetry. "What Is Art?" is pictured on a shelf atop "Close Observation." A particularly cringe-inducing stack of seven tomes reads, from top down, "A Day at the Beach / The Bathers / Shark 1 / Shark 2 / Shark 3 / Sudden Violence / Silence."

The exhibition catalog offers descriptions and pictures of many works not included in the Stanford presentation, and the artist's exceptionally good website ([www.ninakatchadourian.com](http://www.ninakatchadourian.com)) goes into even greater detail on her lively and productive

career, with numerous links to videos and sound files. Clearly, curator Veronica Roberts decided to go for depth by project rather than the breadth these sources provide.

There are few artists who analyze their own work with such incisive understanding of what their fans might want or need. I hesitate to recommend the website only because some viewers might conclude they don't need to see the show. If they did, they would be making a mistake.

The presentation in the exhibition of Katchadourian's best-known work benefits from that vertical drilling down. "Seat Assignment" is a large series of photographs and videos, shot with a smartphone, that the artist has been making since 2010 while in flight on commercial airlines.

Made with only the materials at hand, the works fall into two main groups. The first comprises pictures taken on the seat tray combining images and objects from in-flight magazines, seat-pocket printed materials and what comes along with meal service. A magazine image of a mountain is transformed with a bit of upholstery fuzz into a "Pink Volcano" spewing a black cloud; a sprinkle from a packet of sweetener turns another image into a magical "Sugar Fox."

The second group consists of selfies made in airplane toilets, often incorporating the paper goods dispensed there. I won't be a spoiler or a boor by describing works you should see for yourself. Better to simply point out that an entire exhibition of "Lavatory Self-Portraits in the Flemish Style," with their ruffled collars and headdresses simulated out of toilet seat covers and paper towels, was made on a single trip to New Zealand. That such limited means could produce so



Nina Katchadourian's "Sugar Fox," with sweetener sprinkled on a photo, is from her collection of art made on airplanes.

rich a variety of surreal, knowing and flat-out funny art is a testament to Nina Katchadourian's rare conceptual ingenuity. Nina Katchadourian: Curiouser: Through

Jan. 7. Free. Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, 328 Lomita Drive at Museum Way, Stanford. (650) 723-4177. <http://museum.stanford.edu>



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## MASSACHUSETTS

**JANUARY 6, 2018 — Saturday family Armenian Christmas program for children of Neponsit Valley.**

10-11:30 a.m. Norwood. An un-pageant, pageant. A fun, interactive, and participatory account of Jesus' birth followed by an Armenian Christmas craft. Sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance. For location and additional details contact Neponsitvalleyarmenians@gmail.com. The program is free but registration is required.

**FEBRUARY 10, 2018 — Poon Paregentan Dinner Dance - Family Kef Night, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church,**

180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Featuring Jason Naroian Ensemble: Jason Naroian – Vocals and Dumbeg, Joe Kouyoumjian – Oud, Ara Jeknavorian – Clarinet, and Dave Anisbigian – Guitar, and Children Activities - 5 pm and Dinner/Dancing at 6 p.m. Paid in advance tickets must be received by February 6: Adults \$25, Students (6-12 years old) \$10, and 5 & under, free. At the door: Adults \$35 and Students \$15. For reservations, contact Maria Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or Ria.tk@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

**MARCH 11, 2018 — "Jazz and Art for YerazArt" on**

Sunday, 5 p.m., at Anoush'ella Saj Kitchen, 35 W Newton St., Boston. More information will follow.

## WASHINGTON, DC

**JANUARY 9, 2018 — Knights and Daughters of Vartan program, co-sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Dinner and Public Discussion, guest speaker, Gregory Aftandilian. "The Impact of the Armenian Genocide on the Children of the Survivors." Tuesday, January 9, 2018, 7 p.m., St. Mary Armenian Church Cultural hall, 4125 Fessenden Street, NW, Washington, D.C. Reservation is a must. Please call Takuhi Halajian (301) 219-4041 or Jake Bournazian (202) 380-6948**



**On Tuesday, January 9, 2018, the Knights and Daughters of Vartan in Washington, DC, will present a talk by guest speaker, Gregory Aftandilian. The panel is co-sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research. The program is titled, "The Impact of the Armenian Genocide on the Children of the Survivors." The program, which will be held at St. Mary Armenian Church Cultural hall, 4125 Fessenden Street, NW, Washington, D.C., will start at 7 p.m. Reservations are necessary for the program, which includes dinner. Please call Takuhi Halajian (301) 219-4041 or Jake Bournazian (202) 380-6948.**

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Stefan Ihrig and Abraham Terian Receive Sonia Aronian  
Armenian Studies Book Prize From NAASR

NAASR, from page 15

The announcement of the prizes was made by NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc Mamigonian on Thursday, December 14, 2017, at a NAASR's Belmont, MA, headquarters during the NAASR Christmas Open House. Thanking fellow members of the selection committee for the awards Dr. Christina Maranci, Dr. Bedross Der Matossian, and Dr. Vartan Matiossian, Mamigonian noted the difficulty in choosing among a number of outstanding works in both categories, but that this was "a wonderful problem to have since it means that good work is being done by scholars and translators."

By email, Abraham Terian expressed his "deep gratitude to NAASR and, in particular, to Dr. Sona Aronian for establishing this special prize for excellence in Armenian Studies. ... While we venerate our martyred saints of a hundred years ago, let us not forget our great Saint of a thousand years ago, as Pope Francis reminded us on the Genocide Centennial."

Stefan Ihrig, also via email, wrote that "I am

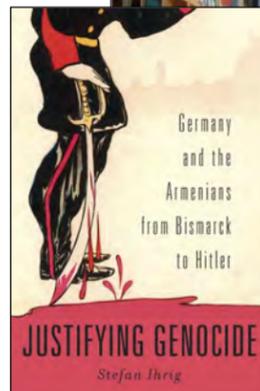
very humbled to be awarded the Sonia Aronian Prize and thank NAASR and my wonderful colleagues in the field of Armenian Studies. I have so far only spent a few years of my life working



Dr. Stefan Ihrig

on the Armenian Genocide and yet they have been among the most meaningful of them all. I have seen and better understood the meaning of courage. Working on the Armenian Genocide means not only working on an immensely important and difficult topic, it also means exposing oneself to attacks and slander by those threatened by our findings, interpretations, and opinions. All too often we find ourselves taking many of the hardest steps alone. Meeting with colleagues from all over the world, including from Turkey, over the years, I felt a little less alone. And again, with this recognition, I feel a little less alone."

For more information, contact NAASR at [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).



# Mirror Spectator



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## COMMENTARY

# Armenian Charity Goes Universal

By Edmond Y. Azadian

People who have suffered adversity are more prone to be sensitive towards other people's suffering. Armenians, a people with a chain of calamities running throughout their history, had to be on the forefront of rendering help to others.

We complain that our pain has not been recognized universally and we make comparisons with Jews, whose Holocaust is never doubted. But we forget one aspect which makes a difference: wherever Jews emigrate, especially Europe and the US, they give generously to care for their own people, but they also go beyond their ethnic boundaries to do good for others. Especially, in the US, they participate in civic activities, contribute and support the arts and are on the boards of hospitals, universities, organizations and other entities that have no relation to their specific ethnic concerns. Those actions merit more visibility but that visibility is backed by a lot of donations and activism outside their specific subset.

Armenians, by contrast, hardly contribute to their own people's issues much less to other causes and yet they expect to get the same recognition that the Jews get.

If we consider the annual Thanksgiving Day telethon of the Armenia Fund as a barometer of charitable giving, we have to be ashamed in front of the world. Not only is our collective generosity miserable but for every donor there are detractors who insult the givers as dopes, and the organization as a fraud. Armenia is on the verge of collapse. The country is still at war though there is a ceasefire on paper. Very few people stop to suggest that the war should be won first, with a united effort, before settling internal squabbles.

But there is good news. After 100 years of misery and introversion, fortunately some people have started to see the light, to do unto others, whatever we expect others to do for us. To move the spirit of charity to the next level and to give a universal scope to it.

In this respect, two phenomenal groups come to mind, that of the Hrant Dink Foundation and the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

The Hrant Dink Foundation, founded in the wake of the assassination of Agos newspaper founder Hrant Dink in 2007, recently received the Chirac Prize for conflict Prevention. The prize ceremony was attended by French President Emmanuel Macron. The mission of the Chirac Foundation is to "support efforts for the prevention of conflict, dialogue between cultures and increasing the quality of access to health services."

While we were wailing and crying for a full century for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, the visionary late journalist Hrant Dink rose to the occasion by proselytizing that before expecting the Armenian Genocide to be recognized by Turkey, we have to first restore sanity there so that human rights in general are respected, which would eventually extend to cover the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Dink stood up for the rights of the Kurds and other minorities who were being treated inhumanely as the Armenians were a century ago. Dink's message received traction in the enlightened segments of Turkish society who wanted to shake off the false history of the Turkish republic. That is why Hrant paid dearly for the principles he cherished.

In accepting the Chirac Prize, Raket Dink, Hrant's widow and the president of the foundation, stated that the intention to establish the foundation was "to continue Hrant's efforts with this institution and try to fill the huge emptiness created in our lives, with his struggle for human rights, women and men committed to fighting on a daily basis, out in the field, so that tensions do not escalate into serious conflicts."

Therefore, it is no surprise that recipients of the Hrant Dink Prize are not necessarily Armenians. Its scope crosses ethnic boundaries to reach out to humanity in general, to help people suffering around the globe the same manner of

suffering Armenians have experienced and throughout their history. The current year's recipients were Eren Keskin from Turkey and Ai Weiwei from China.

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is another entity which addresses the universal pain afflicting humanity. The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is the brainchild of philanthropists Vartan Gregorian, Noubar Afeyan and Ruben Vardanyan. Many other prominent people have joined the board during the first three years of its existence. Aurora gives out prizes in the name of the Armenian people every year to those who provide help in the most difficult and direst situations, doing the most possible with the barest resources. The most recent winner was Dr. Tom Catena, the only doctor in Sudan's war-ravaged Nuba Mountains. According to the organization's website, Catena was selected from more than 550 nominations submitted from 66 countries. As the organizers suggest, once Armenians were on the receiving end of such aid; now, they are in a position to turn around and extend a hand to those in difficult circumstances. That in the process those peoples hear about the Armenians and the Armenian Genocide is a plus.

The Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity was based on the concept of gratitude. Armenians were beneficiaries of many charities, chief among them the Near East Relief, which helped many Armenian refugees in the US. Ruben Vardanyan defined the role of his initiative in the following manner: "They [the participants] saw our willingness to shape our experience and use it for changing the world around us. I think that we are able to look to the future without forgetting the past. And if in the past Armenians have experienced horrors of expulsion, war and genocide. They have also recently had the experience of welcoming refugees into their country."

In addition, this month, Aurora held its first-ever meeting regarding the state of refugees around the world, outside Armenia, in Berlin, as a symbolic gesture in honor of German



openness to taking in more than one million refugees while other European countries have shut their borders.

It is staggering to find out that globally currently there are 65 million people uprooted from their homelands and scattered around the world. It is even more astonishing that 700 million people would also abandon their homelands if the opportunity arose. This figure also includes many citizens of Armenia.

Humanitarians cannot get to the root causes of humanitarian tragedies, but at least they can help alleviate the suffering of those in mass exoduses.

Politicians and politics are responsible for manmade catastrophes, be they in Iraq, Syria, Libya or Yemen, once prosperous countries before they were invaded and destroyed. And yet, no one stopped Omar Bashir from committing genocide in Sudan, nor control the army in Myanmar from enforcing the forced expulsion of the Rohingyas Muslim minority to Bangladesh.

These two initiatives started by Armenians are the result of thinking outside the box. In today's globalized world, we cannot cry over our pain within our ethnic confines alone. If we wish others to be exposed to our tragedy and join forces against all evil, we need to amplify our pain to a universal level and view it with the pain suffered by a greater cross-section of humanity.

This is the message and the vision that these two initiatives offer to the Armenians and the world.



## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## European Court of Human Rights Penalizes Both Armenia and Azerbaijan

On December 12, 2017, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) issued two rulings covering similar lawsuits: one against Armenia and the other against Azerbaijan. Not surprisingly, the Azeri press deceptively reported only the ruling against Armenia, hiding from its readers the fact that a similar judgement was issued against Azerbaijan.

Minas Sargsyan, a refugee from the village of Gulistan in the Shahumyan region of formerly Soviet Azerbaijan, just North of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh), filed a lawsuit against Azerbaijan in the European Court of Human Rights on August 11, 2006. During the Artsakh conflict in 1992, Mr. Sargsyan and his family were forced to flee their home and orchard. Mr. Sargsyan passed away in 2009 in Yerevan. His widow, his son and two daughters continued the lawsuit. When their mother died in 2014, the son and one of the daughters pursued the proceedings. The Sargsyan family demanded compensation for their property losses.

The ECHR referred the case to its Grand Chamber on

March 11, 2010. Rejecting various objections from the government of Azerbaijan, the Grand Chamber ruled on June 16, 2015, that the Sargsyan family was entitled to compensation for their property losses. However, no amount was decided until December 12, 2017, when the Grand Chamber ruled that the Sargsyans should be paid by Azerbaijan 5,000 euros to compensate for their property in Gulistan and 30,000 euros for legal costs and expenses.

The Court emphasized that the two conflicting Republics, Armenia and Azerbaijan, were asked by the Court's Grand Chamber in its 2015 ruling to submit their observations and notify the Court if they had reached any mutual agreement on the Artsakh conflict. Not having reached a political settlement, the two Republics were considered responsible for the property losses of refugees on both sides. The Court stated that Armenia and Azerbaijan prior to their accession to the Council of Europe in 2002, had committed themselves to the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Because they had failed to come to a resolution of the conflict, the Court was obliged to assess a monetary compensation for the property losses of the refugees.

The Grand Chamber of the ECHR was composed of 17 judges from various European countries, including judges from Armenia (Armen Harutyunyan), and Azerbaijan (Latif Huseynov). Interestingly, the Azeri judge added a note at the end of the ruling, stating that while he disagreed with the ruling made before he joined the Grand Chamber, he had no choice but to support its decision of allocating compensation. It is clear that the Azeri judge was trying to protect himself from accusations by Azerbaijan that he had ruled in favor of paying compensation to an Armenian family.

In a parallel case, six Kurds who are Azeri citizens filed a joint complaint to the ECHR on April 6, 2005, under the

heading: Chiragov and Others vs. Armenia. They complained that because the Armenian forces had taken over the Lachin corridor, they were forced to flee their homes which used to be a part of Soviet Azerbaijan during the Artsakh conflict in 1992.

Similar to the Sargisov vs. Azerbaijan case, ECHR's Grand Chamber ruled on June 16, 2015, that Armenia was responsible for the losses of the properties of the six Azeri citizens. They had asked for millions of Euros in compensation. On Dec. 12, 2017, the Grand Chamber ruled that the Armenian Government had to pay 5,000 euros to each of the six Azeri citizens and a total of 28,642 British Pounds for legal costs and expenses. Once again, both Armenian and Azeri judges were part of the 17 judges that formed the Grand Chamber of ECHR. They both voted in favor of the ruling.

The real issue for the ECHR is what to do with the hundreds of thousands of Armenian and Azeri refugees who had also fled their homes during the Artsakh conflict. Will each refugee receive 5,000 euros as compensation and 30,000 euros for legal costs and expenses? The Grand Chamber stated in its ruling that "more than one thousand individual applications lodged by persons who were displaced during the conflict are pending before the Court, slightly more than half of them being directed against Armenia and the remainder against Azerbaijan. The applicants in these cases represent just a small portion of the persons, estimated to exceed one million, who had to flee during the conflict and have since been unable to return to their properties and homes or to receive any compensation for the loss of their enjoyment."

The only solution is that when someday the Artsakh conflict is resolved, the settlement will include a solution to the situation of the large number of Armenian and Azerbaijani refugees.

# Forgotten Armenians at the Forefront of Ottoman Culture

By Raffi Bedrosyan

**L**AST WEEK, while criticizing Israel and US on the Jerusalem issue, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated with great conviction, without batting an eye: "There has never been any genocide, holocaust, massacre, ethnic cleansing or torture in our history." This wholesale denial of historic facts regarding the treatment of minorities by the state is nothing new, but with each denial, history just keeps on repeating itself with sickening regularity, massacres of Armenians followed by massacres of Greeks, Assyrians, Alevis and Kurds.

This article will focus not on the denial of genocide, but more on the denial of the very existence of the Armenians and their contributions to Turkey in so many ways.

In a previous article ("Armenian Island on the Bosphorus"), I had touched upon how a single family of Armenian architects, the Balyans, had shaped the skyline of Istanbul, particularly along the Bosphorus, with their creations of palaces, mansions, military barracks and mosques. Although revered and respected as Royal Architects during the Ottoman reign, their Armenian identity was denied by the Republic of Turkey, and they were mentioned as the Italian Balianis by official tourist guides until the early 2000's.

Even more famous than the Balyan family, an architect living in the 16th century, Mimar (Architect) Sinan (1489-1588) has left his mark all over the Ottoman Empire single-handedly creating 92 mosques, 55 schools, 36 palaces, 48 hamams (bath house), 3 hospitals, 20 inns, 10 bridges, 6 water channels and hundreds of other government buildings, almost all of them still standing after five centuries. His masterpieces are the Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul and Selimiye Mosque in Edirne, which is in the UNESCO World Heritage list of buildings. The average Turk knows him as the Great Turkish Architect Sinan, and his name is given to Fine Arts and Architecture universities. But he is an Armenian from the Agirnas village of Kayseri province, seized away from his parents as a boy, Islamized, circumcised and raised as soldier and subsequently as architect by the state. When he died at the ripe age of 99, he was buried near Suleymaniye Mosque. During the 1930's, the Turkish state was dominated by racist intellectuals who claimed that the Turkish race was superior to all other races and that there was a definable set of Turkish race characteristics in shape of skull and other features. To prove their point and to demonstrate that historically intelligent Turks match their defined racial characteristics, these so-called anthropology experts decided to exhume the remains of Architect Sinan, a most prominent Turk from the past. Unfortunately, Sinan's skull did not match these experts'

theoretical Turkish skull dimensions, and as a result, the skull was kept hidden. To this day, the whereabouts of the skull is still unknown, and Sinan's body lies in the grave without the head.

Again, in the 1930s, when president Mustafa Kemal decided to introduce the Latin alphabet and modernize the Turkish language, he turned to Prof. Agop Martayan, a prominent linguist, to head the Turkish Language Council. As a reward for his services to the Turkish language, Kemal gave him a new surname, Dilacar, meaning "language opener." In return, Martayan proposed the surname "Ataturk" to Kemal, which was eventually adopted by the Parliament. When Martayan passed away in 1979, Turkish media announced his name as A. Dilacar, without ever mentioning his Armenian identity. In fact, some newspapers further distorted his name, by referring to Adil Acar.

After Mustafa Kemal got the surname Ataturk, he needed to create a new signature, and he called upon another Armenian, prominent calligraphy master Vahram Jerjian. Jerjian's Ataturk signature was adopted in 1934 and it appears on everything from Turkish banknotes to parliamentary records, but today nobody remembers him.

In 1932, the Turkish government commissioned a prominent Armenian musicologist and conductor, Edgar Manas, to create the harmony and orchestration for the Turkish national anthem based on a melody by a Turkish musician. Today, nobody remembers Edgar Manas in Turkey, even though his creation of the national anthem is sung every week in schools, stadiums and the parliament.

In Turkish cinema, movie stars Adile Nasit, Toto Karaca, Vahi Oz, Sami Hazinses, Kenan Pars are known all over Turkey, making millions laugh or cry in their films. But very few Turks know or acknowledge that these stars are all Armenian. They all had unique reasons for hiding their Armenian identities, revealed after they passed away. Adile Nasit was Adile Keskiner (1930-1987), Toto Karaca was Irma Felegyan (1912-1992), Vahi Oz was Vahe Ozinyan (1911-1969), Sami Hazinses was Samuel Agop Ulucyan (1925-2002), Kenan Pars was Krikor Jezvezjian (1920-2008).

The first opera in Turkey was staged in 1874 in Istanbul by an Armenian, composed, conducted and produced by Dikran Tchouhadjian (1837-1898). Turkish sources deny this and cite Turkish singers from much later dates.

The first play was staged in 1868 in Istanbul by an Armenian actor, Gullu Agop Vartovyan (1840-1902). Turkish sources deny this and cite Turkish actors from much later dates.

The first sportsmen representing Ottoman Turkey were two Armenians and a Greek in 1912 in Stockholm. The Armenians were Vahram Papazyan and Mgrditch Migiryan, both in track and field. Turkish sources deny this and cite Turkish sportsmen at later dates.

These examples of Armenian contributions, innovations or accomplishments, denied or forgotten in Turkey,

can be repeated in every imaginable field of arts, science, business, finance, banking, engineering or publishing in Ottoman or Republican Turkey. One of the best sources to comprehend the role of Armenians in Turkey is an incredibly detailed series of four books called *Western Armenians Throughout History* (Tarih Boyunca Bati Ermenileri), in Turkish, authored by Prof. Pars Tuglaci. Professor Tuglaci, whose real name is Parsegh Tuglaciyan (1933-2016), is the author of the first Turkish encyclopedia called *The Ocean Encyclopedia Dictionary*, and many other books but his lifetime achievement is this four volume history of Armenians, based on hundreds of thousands of meticulously researched documents. Each volume totals about 900 pages, covering the periods of 289 to 1850 (vol.1), 1850 to 1890 (vol.2), 1890 to 1923 (vol. 3) and 1923 to 1966 (vol. 4). The last volume was published in 2009 in Istanbul. As Alzheimer's disease started to melt away his brilliant mind, unfortunately he could not publish the fifth volume which would cover the period 1966 to 2010. The most dramatic and indisputable evidence of the genocide is in Volume 3 (1890 to 1923), which displays thousands of documents showing Armenian achievements in all imaginable fields as mentioned above, including within the Ottoman government. It seems that until the mid 1910s, the Armenians were prominent in all levels of Ottoman foreign ministry and embassies, indispensable in state enterprises and the central bank, influential in all business, art, science, academic institutions, in Istanbul as well as all the Ottoman provinces. The dramatic disappearance of all these Armenian names in 1915 is evidence enough of the genocide, without the need to mention the word 'genocide'. When I asked Prof. Tuglaciyan how he was allowed to publish such a critical book in Turkey, he had simply stated: "I am just presenting state documents showing promotions or rewards of Armenians in state bureaucracy, achievements of Armenians in arts, sciences and business, promotional ads of Armenian enterprises or cultural events. They all existed before 1915, but no more after 1915, who can dispute that?"

In concluding this article, I urge all Armenian scholars in Armenia and Diaspora to consider translating Prof. Tuglaciyan's hidden treasure to English and Armenian for future generations to better understand what we had, what we lost and most importantly, why.

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



## President Takes Part in National Academic Choir Anniversary Celebration

YEREVAN – This week President Serzh Sargsyan and his wife, Rita, attended a concert dedicated to Armenia National Academic Choir's 80th anniversary, which was held at the Spendiaryan National Academic Opera and Ballet Theater.

On the occasion of the occasion, Serzh Sargsyan extended his congratulations and awarded a high State award and titles to the choir members and conductor Hovhanness Chekidjian for their valuable contribution to art.

"I wish to thank them and their predecessors for their 80 years of long, dedicated service to our people. I would like to thank Maestro Chekidjian and compliment him because he has been managing this harmonious team with such enthusiasm and love for 56 years now.

I would like to thank all of you, the audience that during these 80 years has enjoyed the performance of this glorious collective. I congratulate all of us and wish the Choir continued activities for a long time ahead.



President Serzh Sargsyan presents a medal to conductor Hovhanness Chekidjian.

## Institute Against Discrimination Hosts Lectures on Armenian, Jewish Genocides

BUENOS AIRES (Agencia Prensa Armenia) – On December 15, the National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI), the anti-discrimination state institution of Argentina, along with the Delegation of Argentine Israelite Associations (DAIA) and the Armenian National Committee of Argentina inaugurated a series of lectures entitled "Denial as a form of discrimination."

Ariel Isaak, director of Policies against Discrimination of INADI, said that "denying part of the story is distorting reality, confusing and even encouraging that this type of thing happen again."

Director of the Armenian National Committee of Argentina Nicolas Sabuncuyan added that "denialism expands as the Armenian Cause expands. It begins to operate in different countries to try to demonstrate that 'it was not a genocide' or that every time a state gets involved, it hinders the negotiations".

Finally, Julian Schwindlerman, member of DAIA, the most important organization of Jewish institutions in Argentina, spoke about the Holocaust denial: "In order to have the moral capacity to deny the Holocaust, one has to refute the survivors, the spectators and even the perpetrators. That is the most unusual thing about denial. The perpetrators never denied having committed the genocide".

The cycle of talks sponsored by the Secretary of Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism of Argentina will be held throughout different provinces of the country during the next year. The presentation was held in the Memory and Human Rights Space, which was the former Higher School of Mechanics of the Navy (ESMA), the largest detention center during the last military dictatorship of Argentina, where thousands suffered forced disappearances, torture and illegal executions. In 2004, it was converted to a museum and a space of memory and today is the most important symbolic place in defense of human rights of the country.

# Answering the Question, 'Who is Zabel Yessayan?'

By Judith Saryan

Not long ago in Stepanakert, I wore a t-shirt with the image of Zabel Yessayan on it. A young woman approached my colleague and asked timidly, "Who is Zabel?" That was exactly the question that I wanted the students of Artsakh to answer.

On September 1, Ruben Melikyan, the Republic of Artsakh Ombudsman, and I launched the Second Annual Human Rights Essay Contest which would relate the students' understanding and experience of human rights to the writing of Zabel Yessayan, the noted author and political activist. We wanted to give the students a reason to read Zabel Yessayan's memoir of her childhood in Constantinople, *The Gardens of Silihdar*. In this book, Yessayan reflected on how she came to care so deeply about issues of human rights and social justice.

During the past three months, 53 high school students across Artsakh participated in the contest and answered the questions: Why are human rights important? Please relate this question to your own personal experience and to the experience of Zabel Yessayan. Eighteen judges from Artsakh, Armenia, and the Diaspora examined and scored the essays and chose twelve finalists in the first round, and the top three winners in the second round.

Alexander Yesayan, Zabel Yessayan's grandson, was one of the judges. Speaking at the ceremony, he said that all of the students who entered the contest were winners.

First-prize winner, Marat Hayrapetyan from the K. Mouratyan School in Vaghouhas Village, second-prize winner, Leena Mirzoyan, from the Khachadur Apovyan School in Shushi, and third-prize winner Siroun Kaprielyan, from the Badara School in Askeran, were announced on December 10, International Human Rights Day, in Stepanakert. At the ceremony, the twelve finalists received recognition and gifts from several ministries and organizations, including the Tufenkian Foundation and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), co-sponsors of the contest.

All of the entrants were given the winning t-shirt designed by Astghik Simonyan of Stepanakert from another competition orga-



nized by Tumo Center in conjunction with the essay contest. The t-shirts featured the quote by Yessayan: Literature is not an ornament, a pleasant pastime, a pretty flower. Literature is a weapon to struggle against injustice.

([https://www.facebook.com/TufenkianFoundation/videos/10155819815435340/?notif\\_id=1513263945778459&notif\\_t=like](https://www.facebook.com/TufenkianFoundation/videos/10155819815435340/?notif_id=1513263945778459&notif_t=like))

(Judith Saryan is a project manager at the Armenian International Women's Association with extensive experience in the world of finance. She is a graduate of Wellesley College.)



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