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## Dink Anniversary Commemorated

### Hrant Dink Remembrance Event Held in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (News.am) – A commemoration event devoted to the 11th anniversary of the assassination of journalist Hrant Dink, was held Friday, January 19, outside the former office of Agos weekly, which the late Dink had founded.

The Friends of Hrant organization as well as several NGOs coordinated the event.

Hrant Dink, the founder and chief editor of Agos, was gunned down on January 19, 2007, outside the then office of this newspaper.

In 2011, the perpetrator, Ogün Samast, was sentenced by a juvenile court to 22 years and ten months for the murder.

After long court proceedings and appeals, however, a new probe was ultimately launched into this murder case, pointing the finger at numerous former and current senior Turkish officials' complicity in this assassination.

Crowds flocked to the former address of Agos in Istanbul's Shishli district, Hurriyet Daily News reported.

Before the commemoration ceremony kicked off, police closed off the Haskargazi



Thousands gathered to remember Hrant Dink on the 11th anniversary of his death.

Street and side streets linking to it to traffic. Police officers allowed people wishing to join the ceremony to enter through

barricades, subjecting them to brief security searches.

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### Dink Commemoration Held in Watertown

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN, Mass. – On Sunday, January 21, St. James Armenian Church's Arzene and Veronica Tarvezian Hall was packed, with standing room only, for a program sponsored by Friends of Hrant Dink commemorating the 11th anniversary of Dink's death. There were two main speakers, Ohannes Kiliçdağ, and Gaye Özpınar, and a special guest.

St. James pastor Fr. Arakel Aljalian welcomed the audience and introduced Herman Purutyan who served as master of ceremonies. Purutyan in turn introduced the speakers.

First was Ohannes Kiliçdağı, a graduate of Getronagan Armenian High School in his native city of Istanbul. He has a doctor-



The two speakers with their plaques

ate from Bogaziçi University in Istanbul and taught the social and cultural history of Turkey at Bilgi University, again in Istanbul. He was a research fellow at the see WATERTOWN, page 11

### Carrying on Hrant Dink's Legacy

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

COLOGNE, Germany – On the 11th anniversary of the murder of Hrant Dink in front of his Agos office in Istanbul, Turks and Armenians and Germans gathered in several German cities, not only to commemorate his passing but to celebrate his life's work, with a pledge to continue his struggle for equality, dignity and reconciliation. Berlin, Hamburg and Cologne were among the several venues for events on January 19-20, where speakers from the Armenian community joined with Turkish intellectuals, journalists and artists – many in exile here – and German human rights activists.

see GERMANY, page 5

### Garos Armen Trains Steely Focus On Rural Armenia

NEW YORK – For Dr. Garo Armen, time is running out for rural Armenia and therefore he is focusing on reviving it as quickly and efficiently as possible.

By Alin K. Gregorian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Every year, the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), which Armen founded 14 years ago, hosts swanky galas in New York featuring many entertainment standouts, including Andrea Martin, Leonardo DiCaprio, Vanessa Williams, among others, who raise money to

help people whose lives and poverty they cannot even imagine.

The organization has raised \$35 million to help rural Armenians.

When asked how is he able to get so many high-profile celebrities for the annual winter fundraising ball, he cited the importance of the cause.

"If what you're doing is real, and you convey the urgency of what needs to be done in a realistic way, it will attract genuine people in pursuance of the cause," he said. "These people come not because we are paying them but they genuinely believe in the cause. We are blessed that [it has] almost [become] a phenomenon that feeds on itself."

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Dr. Garo Armen with Tony Shafraizian – Artist, Inventor, Curator and Chair of COAF Honorary Board

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Hamshen Group Nominates Paylan for Nobel Prize

ISTANBUL (Public Radio of Armenia) – Saida Ohanyan, President of the International Association of Hamshenuhi of the Armenian women of Hamshen, announced that they nominated the HDP Armenian deputy Garo Paylan for the "Nobel Peace Prize," Ermenihaber.am reported.

The association is struggling to protect the rights of women, and get recognition and condemnation of the genocide of Hamshens, Islamized Armenians.

About Paylan, whose life has been dedicated to the protection of the rights of Armenians and other peoples in the region, the association has included the following statements: "Today, Paylan is one of the few people who undertake responsibility for protecting the human rights of local people, religious and ethnic minorities. Tolerance between different ethnic and religious groups, and its seeds are sown on the mutual understanding between the Republic of Turkey is giving positive results in people. And despite all the actual pressures and threats he has suffered from nationalist and extremist forces who are all connected by the ruling and demanding him to end his human and political activities."

### Top Obama Aides 'Sorry' They Did Not Recognize Genocide

WASHINGTON (Politico) – Two top aides to former President Barack Obama said last week his administration failed by not officially declaring that the mass slaughter of Armenians 100 years ago constituted genocide.

"It was a mistake," said Ben Rhodes, who served as a deputy national security adviser in the Obama administration. "We should have recognized the Armenian Genocide."

"I'm sorry," added Samantha Power, Obama's ambassador to the United Nations. "I'm sorry that we disappointed so many Armenian Americans."

The two shared their regrets earlier this week in response to an audience question during an episode of Pod Save the World, a podcast hosted by Tommy Vietor, another former Obama aide.

As a presidential candidate in 2008, Obama promised that he would formally recognize the Armenian Genocide but as president, he passed up multiple chances to do so.

"Every year there was a reason not to," Rhodes explained. "Turkey was vital to some issue that we were dealing with, or there was some dialogue between Turkey and the Armenian government."

"Frankly, here's the lesson, I think, going forward: Get it done the first year, you know, because if you don't it gets harder every year in a way," Rhodes added.

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## News From Armenia

### Minks Group Co-Chairs Meet with Armenian, Azeri Foreign Ministers

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Co-Chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stephane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America), together with the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk, met with Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian on January 17 and Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov on January 18. The co-chairs met jointly with the two Foreign Ministers on 18 January.

The ministers and the co-chairs discussed next steps for facilitating realization of the agreements reached at previous summits dedicated to the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement. The Foreign Ministers agreed in principle to the Co-Chairs' revised concept paper for implementing the expansion of the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office with a view toward finalizing it as soon as possible.

During the meetings, the parties exchanged views on core issues contained in the working proposals currently on the table. The co-chairs also called for pursuing trust-building measures as an important contribution to the negotiation process. The parties acknowledged the relative calm on the Line of Contact.

The co-chairs plan to travel to the region in early February.

### Tumo to Open in Paris In September 2018

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo is visiting Yerevan this week to discuss cooperation between Paris and the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies. “We are going to open a school in Paris, the Tumo school of Paris, this year in September. We have discussed and talked about this a lot,” she said at a reception for Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan in the Paris Municipality.

She stated that Tumo is a unique teaching experience which Paris is going to replicate from Yerevan.

“We have worked jointly on this path. Of course, it is also thanks to Armenia's generosity that we will establish this school in Paris for children 12-18. This is a unique opportunity for our youth to be engaged in digital economy,” Hidalgo said. “This is more than just an opening of a school in Paris. This is a symbol of the Armenian-French friendship. I am very happy that Paris will be the second city in the world after Yerevan that creates such an opportunity for its youth,” she stated.

### Armenian Parliament Speaker Receives New Lebanon Ambassador

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Ara Babloyan on January 23 received the newly appointed Ambassador of Lebanon to Armenia Maya Dagher. Welcoming her, Babloyan said though the two countries have had diplomatic relations for about 25 years, the ties between the two peoples goes back much further.

Babloyan thanked the Lebanese people for the constant warm attitude shown to the Armenian community. Talking about the situation in the region, he expressed his concern over the ongoing developments in Syria in the recent years and added that these issues should be settled through a political way. The Parliament Speaker expressed readiness to assist in intensifying the relations of the two parliaments, stating that Armenia and Lebanon have a great potential to develop cooperation in the spheres of economy, healthcare, education, culture and etc.

Dagher thanked Babloyan for the reception and highlighted the important role and significance of the Armenian community in Lebanon's public-political life. She stated that the Armenian lawmakers carry out a productive activity in the Lebanese parliament.

## Republican Party Nominates UK Ambassador, Former PM Sarkissian, for President

YEREVAN (RFE/RL, news.am) – Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan has named former Prime Minister Armen Sarkissian as the ruling Republican Party's nominee for the next president.

Sarkissian, who is no relation to the outgoing president, was Armenia's prime minister from 1996 to 1997 when he resigned from the post because of illness.

He currently is Armenia's ambassador to the United Kingdom and, in accordance with recent constitutional reforms regarding the presidency, is not a member of any political party.

Serzh Sargsyan, who heads the Republican Party, announced the nomination on January 19.

Earlier in January, the president said the Republican Party's candidate should be a person who is not involved in politics and is highly regarded by Armenian society.

Following a referendum in December 2015, Armenia changed its form of government from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary republic.

As a result, presidential veto powers are being stripped from the post and the presidency is being downgraded to a figurehead position elected by parliament every seven years rather than a direct popular vote.

The constitutional reforms coming into effect also limit an Armenian president to a single seven-year term.

Sceptics see the constitutional reforms as a way for incumbent President Sarkissian to maintain political control in Armenia by becoming prime minister when the mandate for his second five-year presidential term expires on April 9.

Armenia's Republican Party controls a simple majority in Yerevan's 113-seat, single-chamber legislature and is expect-



Current UK Ambassador Armen Sarkissian

From 1976 to 1984 he was professor of physics and founder of the Department of Computer Modelling of Complex Systems at the Yerevan State University. From 1984 to 1985 and from 1989 to 1991 he was a visiting research fellow and later professor at the University of Cambridge, Institute of Mathematics of London University. From 1991 to 1995 he was Armenia's ambassador to the UK. After he served other countries in Europe as ambassador, he was again reappointed ambassador to the UK.

He is the founding president of the Eurasia House International. For more than a dozen years he served as senior adviser to British Petroleum, Alcatel, Telefonica, Bank of America Merrill Lynch and other multinational corporations.

On November 1, 1996, he became the fifth prime minister of Armenia and left the post on February 28, 1997.

According to some reports, the reason was an alleged clash with the then-defense minister Vazgen Sargsyan. The formal reports suggested he resigned because an urgent need to undergo treatment from a grave illness.

When Sarkissian was the head of the government, he made efforts to establish head offices of international companies in Yerevan.

He established the Yerevan My Love foundation in 2009. The Prince of Wales, Robert Dudley, Lord Ara Darzi, entrepreneur Ruben Vardanyan, as well as Bank of America, VimpelCom, ITERA, AREVA and others were mentioned in the list of his trustees.

In 2013, the Yerevan Municipality presented the Yerevan My Love foundation a land of 1005 square meters. Four years have passed, but the construction is at a standstill.

In May 2013, Sarkissian accompanied Prince Charles during his trip to Armenia as a guest of the Yerevan My Love foundation.

The Prince's trip was associated with lobbying for the activities of the British company Lydian International, on the board of which Sarkissian serves. The company has obtained a concession from the country's authorities for the development of a gold mine on Mount Amulsar.

During the presidency of Robert Kocharyan, Armen Sarkissian promoted the activities of Alcatel SA in Armenia – one of the leaders in the world telecommunications equipment market.

In 2002 Sarkissian founded an annual Eurasian Media Forum in Astana, whose chairman is daughter of President of Kazakhstan Dariga Nazarbayeva, who was in Armenia in May 2013 within Yerevan My Love initiative.

In early 2000, Sarkissian created several investment companies. Their names are associated with different areas of London, where Sarkissian lives: Knightsbridge Group and Highbury Group. He does not disclose capital stocks. Speaking on the origin of funds he said that these are “family funds” and include the funds of both the Sarkissian family and his acquaintances.

At that time, Sarkissian's business included 25 subsidiaries in various fields: telecommunications, technology, multimedia, real estate, energy and agriculture. The head company of the group was the Knightsbridge Investment Fund, whose board of directors consisted of representatives of international financial organizations and banks.

Knightsbridge Group invested throughout the Eastern Hemisphere. For example, the group invested in the creation of broadband Internet in Turkmenistan.

The company is also interested in Russia. Sarkissian's group entered the Russian market through Knightsbridge Cybersystems with director general being his eldest son Vartan Sarkissian, an IT specialist and entrepreneur.



Ambassador Armen Sarkissian with Prince Charles of the UK

ed to approve President Sarkissian's nominee in an early March vote.

Armen Sarkissian was born on June 23, 1953 in Yerevan. He is married, has two sons and three grandchildren. He graduated from the Yerevan State University, Faculty of Theoretical Physics and Mathematics.



## ARMENIA

# Armenian PM Courts Swiss Investors

DAVOS, Switzerland (RFE/RL) – Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan urged Swiss businesspeople to invest in Armenia when he visited Switzerland on January 22 following a drastic increase in trade between the two countries recorded last year.

Karapetyan addressed them in Zurich at the start of his first trip to a European country in his capacity as prime minister. He will also attend the annual World Economic Forum that

will get underway in the Swiss resort town of Davos on Tuesday.

An Armenian government statement said he will hold “a number of bilateral and multilateral meetings” on the sidelines of the forum. It gave no details.

“My message to you today is clear and straightforward,” Karapetyan declared at a dinner meeting in Zurich organized by the Swiss-Armenian Chamber of Commerce. “Come and do business in Armenia, come and invest in Armenia. It is a worthy place for investing and doing business.”

“We have undertaken significant reforms in every aspect of our country,” he said in what was apparently his first-ever speech delivered in English.

Karapetyan touted his government’s efforts to improve Armenia’s investment climate and attract more foreign investment. He said that they are already producing concrete results,

pointing to official statistics which shows that the Armenian economy grew by about 7 percent last year.

The premier also cited Armenian government data indicating that Swiss-Armenian trade tripled in 2017. According to the National Statistical Service (NSS), it totaled almost \$316 million in January-November 2017, making Switzerland Armenia’s third largest trading partner after Russia and China.

Significantly, Armenian exports to Switzerland accounted for three-quarters of that figure. They include watches and watch parts manufactured by plants belonging to Swiss entrepreneurs of Armenian descent. It is not yet clear what exactly caused those exports to more than triple in the eleven-month period.

Karapetyan encouraged Swiss companies to invest in a wide range of Armenian sectors, including energy, mining, jewelry and agribusi-



Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan in Davos

## EU Provides \$2.5 Million for New Civil Society Projects in Armenia

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – The European Union will finance five new civil society projects in Armenia to promote democratic governance and human rights which will become concrete examples of civil society taking initiative to information gathering and promoting public discussions.

The latter will identify common views of citizens and passing key recommendations and concerns to politicians and government institutions and acting as a watchdog of their governments.

The projects reflect the common values identified and confirmed by the Republic of Armenia and the European Union in the Comprehensive & Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Armenia (CEPA) signed on 25th November 2017.

EU Ambassador Piotr witalwski stated: “The EU delegation is launching five new important civil society projects that will be engaging Armenian citizens in different governance and human rights activities. I very much hope that these new projects will encourage more young people and ordinary citizens to engage in public discussions on important issues in Armenia.

The new projects will engage Armenian citizens, including women and youth, in work on human rights, budget transparency, capacity-building of women’s organizations, assessments and discussions of the situation in closed institutions, and enhancing the knowledge of citizens in rural communities and civil society organizations on steps to reducing their energy costs through new technology. Many project activities will involve and benefit Armenians in the regions during their 2-year implementation period.

Two of the five projects will be advancing human rights issues – one by working with youth journalists and youth organizations to enhance knowledge on human rights monitoring, reporting and promotion of human rights through policy dialogue and the second by updating and expanding existing assessments of the human rights situation in closed institutions such as prisons, institutions for mentally ill persons and pre-trial detention centers.

The Project “EU4Civil Society: Energy Efficiency in Armenian Communities” is a two-year project aimed at assisting wider democratic participation to overhaul civil understanding of energy efficiency as a way to reduce and eradicate poverty in Armenia.

The Project “EU4HumanRights: Pursuing Positive Change through Empowering Civil Society” is a two-year project implemented by Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation – Armenia (OSIAFA) and two CSOs – the Institute of Public Policy and the Union of Informed Citizens.

The Project “EU4Women: Economic Empowerment through Social Enterprise” is a two-year project implemented by the Near East Foundation UK (NEF UK) and the Women’s Development Resource Center Foundation (WDRF) will provide support to 12 civil society organisations in Aragatsotn, Gegharkunik, Lori and Syunik Marzes advocating for women’s rights or helping women and children at risk.

## Armenian Opposition Supporters Rally Against Price Hikes

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The opposition Yelk alliance rallied hundreds of supporters in Yerevan on Friday, January 19, to protest recent increases in the prices of fuel and some foodstuffs which it blames on government policies.

The price rises were caused, in part, by new tax legislation mandating higher excise duties on fuel, tobacco and alcohol. The cost of gasoline, diesel fuel and liquefied natural gas used by most vehicles in Armenia rose by more than 10 percent immediately after it went into force on January 1.

Yelk leaders demanded that the authorities reverse the higher taxes when they addressed the crowd before it marched through downtown Yerevan, chanting “Reduction!” They said that the price hikes are increasing poverty in the country.

“We are saying no to price hikes and demand a reduction of the tax rates that led to the higher prices of basic products,” said one of them, Nikol Pashinian. “We are demanding price and tax cuts.”

Pashinian repeatedly urged Armenians to take to the streets in larger numbers and heighten the pressure on the authorities. But speaking to reporters, he downplayed the relatively poor attendance at the protest and said the Yelk campaign will gradually gain momentum. The outspoken oppositionist claimed that Yelk will soon hold “the biggest and most decisive rally in Armenia’s history.”

Another Yelk leader, Aram Sarkisian, insisted in a speech that the opposition bloc will pull larger crowds in March and April after many Armenians feel the impact of the higher prices more acutely. The next Yelk rally is scheduled

for February 5.

Prime Minister Karen Karapetian downplayed that impact when he answered questions from Yelk leaders on the parliament floor on Wednesday. He insisted that consumer price inflation in Armenia remains low.

senior state officials to discuss ways of mitigating socioeconomic consequences of the price hikes. Sarkisian also initiated parliamentary hearings on the issue which will be held on Tuesday.

Other, more radical opposition groups



Supporters of the opposition Yelk alliance hold an anti-government demonstration in Yerevan

Karapetian also defended the increased tax rates, saying that the government needs more revenue to boost its expenditures and repay foreign loans.

For his part, President Serzh Sarkisian held on January 10 an emergency meeting with

refused to join Friday’s protest, saying that Yelk is not campaigning for regime change. Pashinian rejected that criticism. He said that the opposition cannot seriously threaten the authorities’ hold on power without forcing them to scrap the rate hikes first.

## Babayan Appeals Against Guilty Verdict

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Samvel Babayan, a retired army general recently convicted of illegal arms acquisition and money laundering, insisted on his innocence as Armenia’s Court of Appeals opened hearings in the high-profile case on Monday.

A district court in Yerevan sentenced Babayan to six years in prisons in November at the end of a four-month trial that also involved six other defendants. Two of them were sentenced to three and two years’ imprisonment, while the four others received suspended jail terms.

Babayan was arrested in March 2017 after Armenia’s National Security Service (NSS) claimed to have confiscated a surface-to-air rocket system smuggled to the country. The arrest came about two weeks before Armenia’s last parliamentary elections. Babayan was unofficially affiliated with the ORO alliance led by former Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian and two other opposition politicians. ORO condemned the criminal case as politically motivated.

Babayan has repeatedly denied prosecutors’ claims that he promised to pay other defendants, notably his longtime associate Sanasar Gabrielian, \$50,000 for the delivery of the shoulder-fired Iгла rocket. Gabrielian, who received the three-year prison sentence, insisted during the trial that it was he who commissioned the confiscated Iгла. He claimed that he wanted to donate the launcher along with its shoulder-fired rockets to Nagorno-Karabakh’s army.

Both defendants appealed against the guilty verdict handed down by the lower court. Speaking at the start of Court of Appeals hearings, Babayan accused a trial prosecutor of deliberately omitting key facts which he said prove his and Gabrielian’s innocence. The court rejected his demand for the prosecutor, Aram Aramian, to be barred from the case.

Gabrielian charged, meanwhile, that he and the once powerful general were jailed for their involvement in ORO’s activities.

Law-enforcement authorities deny any politi-

cal motives behind the case. But they have still not explained why Babayan would seek to get hold of the rocket designed to shoot down planes and helicopters.

Late last month, law-enforcement authorities in Georgia extradited to Armenia an Armenian man accused of providing the sophisticated weapon to Babayan. The 40-year-old Robert Aghvanian was detained in Tbilisi just days after Babayan’s controversial arrest.

Babayan, 52, led Karabakh’s Armenian-backed army from 1993-1999 and was widely regarded as the unrecognized republic’s most powerful man at that time. He was arrested in 2000 and subsequently sentenced to 14 years in prison for allegedly masterminding a botched attempt on the life of the then Karabakh president, Arkady Ghukasian. He was set free in 2004.

Babayan criticized the current authorities in Yerevan and Stepanakert after returning to Armenia in May 2016 from Russia where he lived for five years in what appeared to be self-imposed exile.



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Latvian MP Denies Azerbaijani Story

RIGA, Latvia (Armenpress) – Latvian Member of Parliament Ivars Balamovskis officially claims that ideas attributed to him and posted by Azerbaijani Azertag news agency on January 18 and later removed from the website are not real. “I have never given such an interview and I hope there is some misunderstanding here. I refrain from giving any assessment or comment on the content of this material,” Balamovskis told Armenpress.

The Azerbaijani news agency removed on January 22 an article published on January 18, after Armenpress tried to get some clarifications from Balamovskis. The Azerbaijani journalist attributed several quotes to the lawmaker, in which he allegedly said he has been informed about Azerbaijan from a book titled *History of Azerbaijan: Drastic Turn* by Latvian teacher Roman Aliyev. The following words were quoted: “It was interesting to discover definitely unknown pages of history, for example, about the developments that preceded the creation of Azerbaijan independent state. The key representatives of the Azerbaijani intellectuals headed the fight against the Dashnaks and Bolsheviks seeking power. Unfortunately, thousands of Azerbaijani families were brutally killed by these groups.” The agency contacted him to find out whether he said those words.

Balamovskis asked to see the article. Later he didn't respond to phone calls, and after four days the article was removed from the website.

## Mkhitarian Transfers to Arsenal

LONDON (Armenpress) – Henrikh Mkhitarian, the Armenian football star who recently moved from Manchester United to Arsenal, the team announced on its website.

The Armenian midfielder has taken Alexis Sanchez's old No. 7 shirt after trading places with the Chilean, who in turn has taken the same number upon arrival at Manchester United.

Mkhitarian will receive \$14 million a year.

Mkhitarian was signed by Arsenal for 3.5 years.

## Turkish Scientists Study Neolithic Anatolian DNA

ISTANBUL (Anadolu) – Turkish scientists have taken up a study which will tell the story of how human beings transformed from nomadic hunter-gatherers to living in settlements.

The European Research Council (ERC) has given Turkish scientists a €2.5 million (\$2.9 million) grant for the DNA analysis of 1,500 people who lived in the Anatolia during the Neolithic period.

Mehmet Somel, a professor of biological sciences at the Ankara-based Middle East Technical University (ODTU), told Anadolu Agency on Monday, January 22 that they would work with archaeologists, biologists and anthropologists in their project named Neogene.

The study will cover the period from 10,000 to 7,000 BC.

He said that DNA analysis and archaeological data belonging to the Neolithic period – a term scientists use to refer to the last stage of the Stone Age – would be evaluated together.

“Our goal is to tell the true story of one of the most important milestones of human history,” Somel said.

Somel added that during that period, human societies saw a transition from hunting and gathering to one where animals were domesticated and crops were cultivated. This transition took 3,000 to 4,000 years.

“During the study, genetic samples which belong to almost 1,500 people from 20 Neolithic Anatolian settlements will be scanned through a DNA sequencing method,” he said.

The study will then be narrowed down to 350 people whose samples will be subject to deeper analysis.

The second stage will be devoted to bioinformatic analysis so that genetic proximity and gene flow among communities can be determined.

Somel added that at this stage, bio-archaeological data would be obtained and scientists would gather objective cultural data.

# France's Macron Vows Continued Support for Armenia

PARIS (RFE/RL) – France will continue to maintain warm relations with Armenia and support it in the international arena, French President Emmanuel Macron said after holding talks with his Armenian counterpart Serzh Sargsyan in Paris on Tuesday.

Macron also described as “encouraging” recent Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks and urged the parties to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to “go farther” in trying to resolve it.

“France will always be alongside Armenia,” he said in a statement to the press made at the presidential Elysee Palace.

“France will accompany you in a troubled regional environment so that your country can conquer its future as it has always done in its history,” he added.

Macron cited “profound links” between the two nations cemented by the existence of a sizable and influential Armenian community in France. “I am also aware of the fight by the Armenian Diaspora in France for the memory of the [1915] genocide and I have deepest respect for this fight,” he said.

Macron was endorsed by leading French-Armenian organizations ahead of a second round of voting in France's April-May 2017 presidential election. Four ethnic Armenians were subsequently elected to the French parliament on the ticket of his Republic on the Move party.

Macron announced after the talks with Sargsyan that he will travel to Armenia in October on a state visit timed to coincide with a summit in Yerevan of Francophonie, a grouping of over 70 mainly French-speaking nations. He expressed hope that the summit will give “new impetus” to the spread of the French language in Armenia.

The 40-year-old French leader also stressed the “necessity to impart more dynamism to our economic cooperation.”

He said he specifically discussed with Sargsyan ways of boosting French investments in the Armenian economy. “I am thinking of sectors such as tourism, renewable energy, agriculture, logistics and retail,” he said.

For his part, Sargsyan reaffirmed his administration's commitment to deepen Armenia's “privileged” relationship with France. “We sincerely love and respect France and its talented people,” he declared at the joint news briefing.

“We have practically identical views on all vital issues ... I mean both the bilater-

The unresolved Karabakh conflict also apparently featured large during the first-ever meeting of the two presidents. France has been spearheading, together with the United States and Russia, international efforts to broker an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace accord.

Macron said that a long-awaited peaceful resolution of the conflict requires “courageous decisions and compromises” by both conflicting sides. In that regard, he hailed progress reportedly made during Sargsyan's October 2017 meeting with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and fol-



French President Emmanuel Macron (R) and his Armenian counterpart Serge Sargsyan hold a joint news conference after a meeting at the Elysee Palace in Paris, January 23, 2018

al and international agenda. We espouse the same principles and are guided by the same value system,” he said.

Sargsyan went on to thank France for helping Armenia negotiate and sign in November the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the European Union. In Macron's words, the landmark agreement reflects a “special formula” for Armenia-EU ties that was advocated by the French government.

low-up talks between the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers.

“We know how fragile the process still is and how volatile the situation on the ground often is,” said Macron. “It is therefore absolutely essential that this renewed dialogue leads to concrete progress.”

“We will continue to closely monitor this situation and we will take, in concert with our Russian and American partners, any initiative that could advance the settlement process,” he added.

## Syria War: Thousands Flee Turkish Assault on Afrin Enclave

AFRIN, Syria (BBC) – The civilians have fled communities near the border since Turkey launched an offensive to drive a Kurdish militia out of the Afrin region on Saturday, January 20.

Some are reported to have been prevented from crossing into territory controlled by the Syrian government.

The UN said it was ready to deliver aid to 50,000 people in Afrin if required.

World powers involved in the Syrian conflict meanwhile called on the Turkish military to exercise restraint because it risked exacerbating the country's humanitarian crisis.

Turkey's president has vowed to “crush” the People's Protection Units (YPG) militia, which controls Afrin and more than 400km (250 miles) of Syria's northern border.

He says it is an extension of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has fought for Kurdish autonomy in south-eastern Turkey for three decades.

The YPG denies any direct organizational links to the PKK – an assertion backed by the US, which has provided the militia and allied Arab fighters with weapons and air support to help them battle the jihadist group Islamic State (IS) in Syria.

Turkish troops and allied Syrian rebels so far appear to have made limited gains since the air and ground offensive began on Saturday.

On Tuesday, January 23, the Turkish state-run Anadolu news agency reported that rebels had captured the “strategic” village of Hammam in north-western Afrin, and had begun allowing civilians

to return to eight already “liberated” villages and rural areas.

It also reported that a second Turkish soldier had been killed in clashes.

YPG sources told the Kurdish Hawar news agency that its fighters had foiled an attempt to seize the village of Qastal Jando, killing many attackers, and destroyed an armored vehicle in Qoda.

Kurdish leaders also invited civilians to take up arms, saying the YPG was “ready to receive all those who wish to defend Afrin and provide them with weapons.”

The UN says it is concerned by the fighting, and has warned that an estimated 323,000 civilians in Afrin are at risk. About 126,000 of them had already been displaced before this Turkish offensive and now face further upheaval.

A UN report issued on January 23 cited local sources as reporting that as of Monday, an estimated 5,000 people from the border communities of Bulbul, Shankal, Admanli, Balal Kuy and Ali Bakki had fled to central parts of Afrin.

The UN warned that their freedom of movement was restricted not only by the hostilities, but also by the local Kurdish authorities' decision on Saturday to close exit points between the enclave and government-held areas of Aleppo province.

Some families had managed to leave Afrin through unofficial routes, but were reportedly prevented from proceeding at government checkpoints, it added.

“We have been preparing for a large-scale response depending on the needs of the civilian population,” spokesman Stéphane Dujarric told reporters. “We

cannot stress enough the need for all parties involved to protect civilians, to protect civilian infrastructure, and to respect international law.”

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based monitoring group, reports that 25 Syrian rebels and 26 Kurdish fighters have been killed so far.

It also says 24 civilians have been killed.

Turkey has denied killing civilians, saying it only targets combatants.

About 10,000 Syrian rebels are reportedly taking part in the offensive, while Turkish officials estimate that there are between 8,000 and 10,000 YPG fighters in Afrin.

On Tuesday, January 23, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said he took “very seriously Turkey's legitimate security concerns,” but urged it to “exercise restraint in the military action and the rhetoric.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed the issue by phone, the Kremlin said. Both sides agreed that Syria's territorial integrity and sovereignty should be respected.

Russia – an ally of the Syrian government – had earlier withdrawn military observers from Afrin and effectively allowed Turkish warplanes to fly over the enclave.

Politicians in Germany, meanwhile, reacted angrily to Turkey's use of German-made Leopard tanks. The chairman of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee said Germany should not carry out a planned upgrade of the tanks for its NATO ally.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Carrying on Hrant Dink's Legacy

GERMANY, from page 1

The event in Cologne on January 20 was especially significant because the city has become the unofficial capital of the “other Turkey,” with an expanding population of Turkish opposition figures. It is also the seat of the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church as well as the headquarters of numerous human rights organizations engaged in cultural and political dialogue. The KulturForum TürkeiDeutschland and its co-founder, Osman Okkan, a documentary filmmaker, joined with the City of Cologne's Lord Mayor and Cultural Affairs Office, the German-Armenian Society (DAG), the Hrant Dink Forum and the Armin T. Wegner Society, to host an evening of political discussion, illustrated by short film clips and framed in musical interludes.

## A Sober Assessment

The situation inside Turkey has deteriorated dramatically since Dink's death under the rule of the increasingly autocratic President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his AKP, with devastating repercussions on all aspects of political, cultural and social life, especially for anyone suspected of holding opposing views. This fact dominated the proceedings and lent a task orientation to the entire debate.

Following a musical introduction with a piece by Komitas, Okkan welcomed the capacity crowd and introduced Minu

have been forced to toe the government line. Turkish-Germans have been jailed, for political reasons, and, Özdemir said, they are also threatened on German soil; one such individual wears a bullet-proof vest for protection. He added parenthetically that, while attending a similar event in Berlin, his daughter had asked him why Hrant Dink didn't have “the BKA,” meaning official security protection from the German authorities. Özdemir, known to have received threats, had to explain to her that there are some states that not only deny protection, but even kill.

## Political Exiles

That none of this was exaggeration was illustrated by the roster of participants at the event. Asli Erdogan, who was recently released from jail (on charges of having made propaganda for a terrorist organization), was on the program but was unable to attend due to ill health; she had just been in Paris to receive the Simone de Beauvoir prize for human rights. Ragip Zarakolu, from the Belge publishing company, was on hand; he had been jailed and for 20 years and could not leave Turkey. Once he was free to travel, he left for Sweden, where he lives in exile. Celal Baslangic, formerly of *Cumhuriyet*, has been in German exile for one year. The two took part in a round table discussion in Turkish, addressing the questions of how to protect minorities in Turkey, and how to provide support from Europe for those fighting for human rights.

It was Deniz Yücel who brought the issue into the open, and forcefully so. In an interview last week with the German press agency DPA, conducted in writing from his cell, he stated categorically, “I am not available for any dirty deals.” He said he absolutely did not want to have his release “besmirched with any tank deals of Rheinmetall or the dealings of any other comrades in arms.” He also ruled out any deal, to swap his freedom for that of some Turkish military figure allegedly associated with the Gülen movement, who might be in German exile. This option had been mooted reportedly during talks that former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder had with Turkish officials on the case, earlier. Again, following Yücel's interview, Gabriel denied it all.

During the Cologne meeting, this became a central concern. That same day Turkish military were attacking the Syrian Kurdish YPG with bombs and artillery fire, in preparation for a ground offensive in Afrin the following day. If any improvements were going to be made for Turkey's German-manufactured tanks, clearly, they were not going to be deployed against IS terrorists, but against Kurdish units, as part of Erdogan's ethnic cleansing policy. The reports of Yücel's principled stand against any horse-trading were met at the Cologne gathering with applause and support.

## The Power of Truth

In answer to the question, how can the resistance inside Turkey be bolstered, several speakers looked to Dink for guidance. Dr. Raffi Kantian, president of the German-Armenian Society (founded by Johannes Lepsius), referenced his personal contact with Dink, saying he was a very unusual individual, who refused to be silent and spoke out. At the same time, he knew how to build real bridges and to win over hearts. Kantian stressed the impact of his martyrdom on subsequent developments inside Turkey, from acts of resistance to statements of apology by Turkish intellectuals. Hrant Dink was told to be quiet, he said, but he was loud, very loud. And, fully aware of the dangers he was facing, he had said clearly, “I don't plan to die in bed.”

If, Kantian continued, the circulation of *Agos* in 1996 was between 3,000 and 6,000, after his death it reached 20,000, and its influence remains immense. The newspaper is also dealing with other minorities, as Dink had desired. The Hrant Dink Foundation, he said, is increasingly active and, despite hostility, is organizing conferences on vital issues, with international impact. For Kantian, the most important tool for supporting the opposition in Turkey is continued reporting, which is what his association's publication, *Armenische-Deutsche-Korrespondenz*, is dedicated to. This, as Kantian's colleague Vahan Balayan underlined, includes reporting on the developments in the murder trial and the implications they have for the rule of law in Turkey.

Günter Wallraff is an investigative journalist who has demonstrated more than once the power of the pen. In 1985 he published an exposé of the mistreatment of Turkish Gastarbeiter (guest workers), immigrants who were discriminated against on the job and in society. He had disguised himself as one such worker, code name Ali Levent Sinirlioglu, found odd jobs and recorded his experiences. His book became a bestseller while he became a legend. As he recounted in Cologne, he has managed to travel to Turkey several times recently to attend trials, and he has even succeeded in getting out of the country, evidently because of his popularity as Ali. The report he presented of conditions there was chilling: with more than 150 journalists jailed for political reasons, Turkey has more than Russia, China and Iraq combined. There is a construction boom as a result, as 80 new jails are being built to accommodate the estimated 50,000 new political prisoners.

Despite this, Wallraff projected a mood of optimism. First, he said Erdogan obviously does not realize that his repressive policies are a boon to book sales by the persecuted journalists and authors; Turkish-German author Dogan Akhanli, jailed most recently while on vacation in Spain, continues to write books that sell, and Yücel has a book scheduled for release in a couple of weeks. Jails cannot halt the literary effort. In addition, he believes that the days of Erdogan's regime are numbered, and that “we need to spread hope.” For Wallraff, Hrant Dink is to be placed in the tradition of Nehru and Martin Luther King, a tradition of non-violent resistance which in the end can prevail.

This sense of optimism, informed by the courage of a growing number of people in the Turkish opposition, was palpable in Cologne. It pervaded the magnificent musical offerings, of Armenian compositions and those of other minorities, performed by Laia Genc (piano), Nure Diovani (violin), Beate Wolff (cello), Anush Nazaryan (soprano) and Stefán Ogáns (vocal). It was communicated by the images and words of Hrant Dink himself, as well as of his wife Rakel, in film clips of the funeral. Perhaps the most optimistic message came in the footage of a massive demonstration in Istanbul, with people carrying signs “We are all Hrant Dink” and “We are all Armenians,” a demonstration not filmed 11 years ago, but on January 19 of this year, and transmitted to Cologne to be projected onto the screen in the hall. One could see the disproportionate deployment of police, armed to the teeth, as ludicrous as they were impotent to prevent the peaceful protest.



Some of those assembled in Cologne

Nikpay, who represented the Armenian community; Archbishop Karekin Bekdjian was unable to attend due to commitments in Istanbul. Nikpay said that even after 11 years, Hrant Dink still lives in our hearts, and paid tribute to his spreading knowledge of the Armenian people, their history and culture; he gave a new voice to those Armenian writers, politicians, architects, artists and intellectuals who lived as Turkish citizens. And he provided a model of courage. Expressing her gratitude for the resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide that the German Bundestag (parliament) passed in 2016, she applauded the “courage and steadfastness” of all parties who successfully resisted the pressures from Turkish quarters on the members of parliament, pressures including death threats. Hrant Dink had no fear, she said. “We bow down before him. May God bless his soul.”

Such pressures have not evaporated since that resolution; on the contrary, the political shift inside Turkey has made itself felt here, and increasing attempts to deny the genocide are being viewed with concern as preludes to anti-Armenian attacks by extremists. Osman Okkan denounced the long tentacles of certain Turkish entities that reach into Germany and Europe, with the aim of intimidating opposition figures, and pointed to the growing numbers of journalists and others seeking safety in Cologne. “We support the ‘other Turkey,’” he said, “with all democratic means – that is our pledge to Hrant Dink.”

Cem Özdemir, the Green Party leader who led the parliamentary drive for Genocide recognition, stressed the fact that “the clocks have been turned back since Dink's death” in Turkey. Merely participating in a panel discussion on the subject of the Genocide may lead to job loss or jail. Television stations that have hosted such debates have been shut down or

As more and more Turkish intellectuals arrive in Cologne, a city that Özdemir dubbed the “center for those who fled Turkey,” the issue is urgent. Berivan Aymaz, who filled in for Asli Erdogan, was the right person to address it. She is a Green Party member of the North Rhine-Westphalia state parliament, active in the committee on integration. As for the influx of de facto political refugees to Cologne, Aymaz said the city should be happy that so many have made this choice. She made the often-overlooked point that many new arrivals from Turkey are not seeking asylum, but rather hope the situation in their homeland will improve and allow their safe return. The problem is, they do not receive the support they require from the institutions; the city, the state and the federal government, she said, must do more.

## Political Prisoners

Although a number of German citizens jailed in Turkey for political reasons have been released over the past weeks, several still remain behind bars, the most prominent being Deniz Yücel, correspondent of *Die Welt*. During the visit of Turkish foreign minister Mevlüt Çavusoglu to Germany at the beginning of January, his German host Sigmar Gabriel received him for tea at his residence, and demanded the journalist's release. Çavusoglu reportedly asked for weapons deliveries in return, and Gabriel officially denied any linkage between the two. *Der Spiegel* in its latest issue (January 20) revealed that the Turkish official wanted the Rheinmetall arms producer to modernize the “Leopard” tanks that Turkey has, to render them more effective in the conflict with IS. Although Gabriel continues to deny any deal, *Der Spiegel* writes that that may not be the case and that Gabriel may just think if he repeats this often enough it will convince the public.

# Community News

## Shant Sahakian Appointed Chair Of Glendale Arts And Culture Commission

GLENDALE – Glendale School Board Member Shant Sahakian was appointed as the new Chairman of the City of Glendale Arts and Culture Commission with the vote of his colleagues at the first Commission meeting of 2018.

“I am grateful to have been entrusted as the Chairman of the Glendale Arts and Culture Commission,” stated Sahakian. “I am looking forward to our Commission’s exciting year ahead and continuing our important work of supporting, promoting, and advancing arts and culture in Glendale.”

Sahakian was appointed to the Glendale Arts and Culture Commission



Shant Sahakian

in July 2015 with the nomination of Councilmember Vartan Gharpetian and approval of the Glendale City Council. The mission of the five-member Commission is to enrich the human experience, reinforce Glendale’s identity and civic pride through arts and culture, and to recognize the importance of arts to our quality of life and to the local economy.

During his tenure, the Arts and Culture Commission has initiated Glendale’s first Public Art Master Plan to help shape the future of public art in the city, expanded the Beyond the Box program to over one hundred utility box murals painted from South Glendale to Montrose, and sponsored arts and culture events, exhibitions, programs, and performances throughout the community. Most recently, Shant successfully advocated for the fair and equitable compensation of every artist hired by the Commission, leading to the adoption of artist stipends for the Adams Square Mini Park Gas Station exhibition series.

Sahakian is an elected member of the Glendale Unified School District Board of Education representing District D. He was elected in April 2017, becoming the first Millennial and youngest School Board Member elected in Glendale history.

A product of Glendale public schools and a lifelong resident of Glendale, Sahakian has deep roots in the community. He is a longtime community leader who has championed Glendale’s youth, advocated for the underserved, and served the community through a distinguished record of public service. He is a graduate of CSUN and UCLA Extension.

He and his wife, Suzanna, reside in Glendale, with their son, Raffi Sebastian Sahakian.



Armenian Assembly of America Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., and Assembly Grassroots and Development Associate Mariam Khaloyan

## Artsakh Welcomes Congressional Resolution Introduced by Caucus Co-Chair Pallone

WASHINGTON – The Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) welcomes H.Res. 697, introduced by Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues Co-Chair Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), the Armenian Assembly of America reported. The legislation supports United States-Artsakh relations, and calls for free and open communication, as well as travel, between the two nations at all levels of civil society and government.

“We welcome the resolution proposed by Congressman Frank Pallone titled ‘US-Artsakh Travel and Communication’ aimed at establishing contacts between Artsakh and the United States and breaking down artificial barriers to visiting Artsakh by the US officials,” said Artsakh Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Ani Sargsyan. “We are convinced that the mutual visits of official representatives of the two states, as well as an open and direct dialogue between our countries will contribute to the solution of the existing problems in the region. International cooperation, based on the principle of inclusion and not exclusion is also an important factor for reducing tension in the region.”

Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny and Congressional Relations and Grassroots Associate Mariam Khaloyan discussed the resolution with Congressman Pallone this week, highlighting, among other issues, the importance of the cease-fire monitoring regime given Azerbaijan’s ongoing and deadly violations.

H.Res. 697 notes the importance of placing “[Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] OSCE-monitored, advanced gunfire-locator systems and sound-ranging equipment to determine the source of attacks along the line of contact.”

The resolution continued that the House of Representatives: “(1) affirms its commitment to supporting actions that encourage visits and communication between officials from the United States and Artsakh at all levels, including

see PALLONE, page 7



Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), Artsakh National Assembly Chairman Ashot Ghouljian, and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) in front of “We Are Our Mountains” monument north of Stepanakert, Artsakh

## Diocese Pays Tribute to Artist Mary Melikian

NEW YORK – The Eastern Diocese honored a friend and prominent artist on the evening of December 13. Friends and dignitaries gathered in the formal reception room (*tahlij*) of New York’s Diocesan Center to pay tribute to Mary Melikian.

Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presided over the evening, during which he bestowed Melikian with the “St. Vartan Award.”

Pianist and ethnomusicologist Sahan Arzruni was the master of ceremonies for the evening. In his introduction, he recalled his early association with Melikian and her husband, Rev. Haynes, and how their mutual love of artistic beauty solidified their friendship.

“A few weeks ago, Mary celebrated her 90th birthday,” Arzruni said. “I spoke to the Primate



Artist Mary Melikian

and suggested that we mark her contribution to our community. He agreed with delight – and pointed out that there are many Melikian watercolors here at the Diocesan building.”

“Melikian studied at the Rhode Island School of Design and Columbia University,” Arzruni continued. “She exhibited widely, including shows at the National Arts Club. Mary was a director at the Grand Central Art Galleries. Her watercolors are in the permanent collections of the Worcester Museum of Art, Mint Museum of New York, Yerevan Museum in Armenia, Vassar College Art Museum, and elsewhere.”

### A Rare Artist

The guest speaker for the evening was Robert Yahner, registrar for fine arts at the National Arts Club in Manhattan, who spoke warmly about the honoree’s art. “Mary is the rare artist who never ceases to challenge herself. Beyond aesthetic values, Mary is a humanist. She has concerned herself with a broad range of emotions from quiet contemplation to universal anxiety and tragedy.”

“Although Mary’s work has often been a strong vehicle for expressing concern, remembrance—and even protest,” he said. “She has always transcended agenda with pure feeling which translates into poetry where truth and beauty do exist together.”

In his remarks, Archbishop Barsamian reflected on the religious themes that imbue Melikian’s paintings. “Her watercolors and pastels have graced the walls of this center, and they truly are at home here. For Mary’s religious inspiration – her quest to reveal God through art – lies at the heart of her life’s work,” he said.

see MELIKIAN, page 7



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Tribute to Artist Mary Melikian

MELIKIAN, from page 6

"Her style shows us the world through the eyes of the spirit—not through physical eyes. It recalls the statement of St. Paul that 'for now, we see things through a glass, dimly; but one day we will see things face-to-face,'" he said. "Mary's art makes us hope that for that day, when we too will see the world through eyes made new by God."

Melikian had brought along two paintings — "Cloud of Witnesses" and "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego"—for display at the gathering, which she donated to the Diocesan Center.

In remarks accepting the St. Vartan Award, Melikian spoke poetically about the way she



Robert Yahner of the National Arts Club

views her work. "When I was very young, my mother used to repeat a phrase which has a beautiful resonance," she said. "Whenever a breeze would blow through the trees, she would look up and say 'I love your Source.' Indeed, the Source of all creation and any creative effort comes from God whose Spirit moves us in ways we do not always understand, but we feel the "breeze" and can say, 'I love your Source.'"

"As I approach the canvas with my marks and colors, I ask the Holy Spirit to lead the way. For me, the journey is from everlasting to everlasting and by the Grace of God, I look forward to continuing an art and faith walk and at my last breath say, 'I love your Source.'"

## Bench in Honor of Slain 5-Year-Old Boy

SOUTH PASADENA, Calif. (KTLA) — A 5-year-old boy who was killed by his father in 2017 was honored with a memorial bench at Garfield Park in South Pasadena Monday morning.

Ana Estevez included this photo of herself and her son on a public Facebook post on May 17, 2017, when she first spoke out about the disappearance of Aramazd "Piqui" Andressian Jr.

The bench remembering Andressian Jr. was set up on a path to the park's Children's Memorial and Healing Garden, which is located in the north section near Grevelia Street and Stratford Avenue.

South Pasadena Beautiful, which is described on its website as a non-profit organization pursuing sustainability and beautification projects, started an online campaign to help raise funds for the bench.

Andressian Jr. made national headlines when he disappeared in April. His body was discovered two months later in the Lake Cachuma area in Santa Barbara County.

Andressian Jr.'s father, who became the primary suspect in the disappearance when he failed to show up for a custody exchange in April and was found passed out in Arroyo Park, was arrested and charged with murder.

Aramazd Andressian Sr. was sentenced to 25 years to life in August after being convicted of the murder of his son.



The late Aramazd "Piqui" Andressian Jr. with his mother Ana Estevez

## Artsakh Welcomes Resolution Introduced by Caucus Co-Chair Pallone

PALLONE, from page 6

cabinet-level national security officials, general officers, and other executive branch officials, to travel to Artsakh and openly and directly communicate with their Artsakh counterparts; (2) encourages open communication, meetings, and other direct contacts between officials of Artsakh and the executive and legislative branches of the United States, representatives of State and local governments, and representatives of American civil society; and (3) calls for the full and direct participation of the democratically-elected Government of the Republic of Artsakh in all OSCE and other negotiations regarding its future."

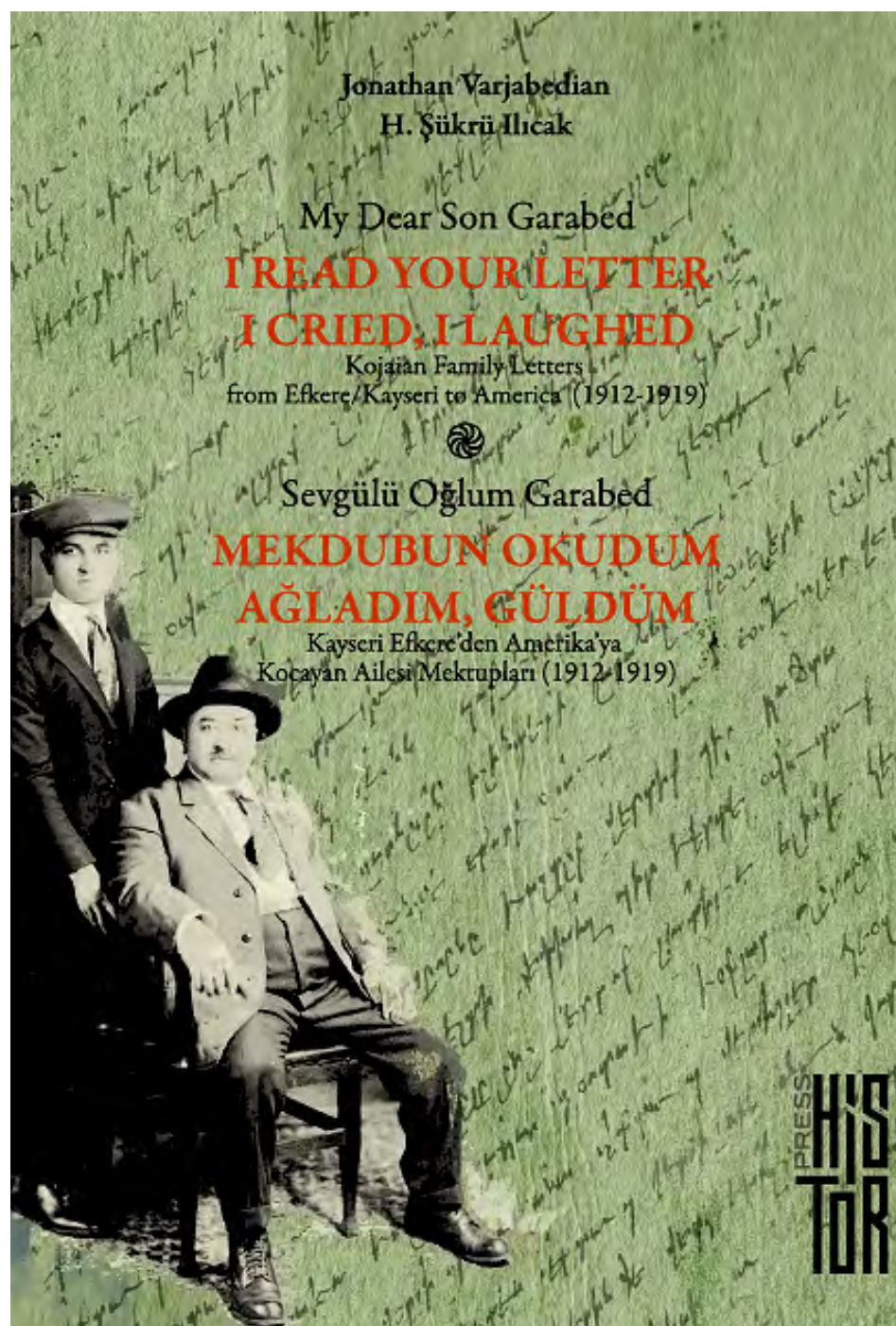
"The United States should be supporting the

free flow of dialogue and ideas across the globe," Congressman Pallone stated. "Artsakh has a successful democratic government and it should not be precluded from interacting with the United States and other nations. My visit to Artsakh in September further revealed the enormous strides that Artsakh has made in recent years, and others should be given the same opportunity that I had. Rather than hindering our relationship with Artsakh through non-recognition, the United States should embrace increased communications and travel to Artsakh," he continued.

Pallone traveled to Stepanakert with Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, Artsakh Foreign Minister Karen Mirzoyan, Artsakh Representative to the

US Robert Avetisyan, and Armenia Fund, Inc. President Maria Mehranian during a Congressional Delegation visit to Armenia. While in Artsakh, he stressed the importance of its status as an autonomous and fully functioning democratic state.

As part of an Armenian Assembly of America-sponsored delegation, Pallone first visited Artsakh 20 years ago. During a historic address before the Parliament of Nagorno Karabakh on January 28, 1997, Rep. Pallone stated, "I hope that my visit to Karabakh, and especially my presence in your legislative body today, will contribute in some small way to a growing international recognition that the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh is a reality."



**Dr. Jonathan Varjabedian  
H. Şükrü İlicak**

## My Dear Son Garabed I Read Your Letter I Cried, I Laughed

**Kojaian Family Letters from Efkere/Kayseri  
to America (1912-1919)**

When Garabed and his father, Haroutiun Kojaian, left their beloved village of Efkere/Kayseri to immigrate to America in 1912 and 1913, they had no idea that it would be the last time that they would see their family, or their village.

By the end of 1915, they were left with nothing but their memories, and a stack of letters that had been written to them from their loved ones in Efkere between 1912 and 1915.

For the first time, 86 of these letters have been compiled, painstakingly translated, and presented here, both in their original Armeno-Turkish, and with an English translation. Two additional letters, from 1919, allow the reader to understand what befell the family during the Genocide.

428 pages

The book may be purchased from the publisher at:  
historpress@gmail.com, and through the Facebook Page for  
Histor Press.



## OBITUARIES

### Dr. Haikaz Martiros Grigorian Psychiatrist, Community Leader

ORADELL, N.J. — Dr. Haikaz Martiros Grigorian, 90, a distinguished psychiatrist, Armenian-American community leader and expert on the psychosocial effects of the Armenian Genocide, died at home on January 17 after a long illness, surrounded by his family.

A beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, colleague, teacher, mentor, humanitarian and friend to many, he is survived by his wife of 62 years, Siran (née Papazian), his brother, Dr. Sombat Grigorian and family, of Potomac, Md., his children, Nyiri MacArthur, Magda Cherry, Nareg Grigorian, and Raffi Grigorian and his nine grandchildren: Taleen, Ian, Cilicia, Max, Olivia, Russell, Eli, Aidan and Liam.

He was predeceased by his sisters, Sirvart Mensoian (Newton, Mass.) and Azniv Dersookian (Bethesda, Md.) and his parents, Khachig and Yeghisabeth Grigorian.

Born in Abadan, Iran, to survivors of the Armenian Genocide, he emigrated to the United States in 1949. Grigorian received his undergraduate degree from Boston University, with graduate and medical degrees from Columbia University and George Washington

University School of Medicine. He completed his residency at Washington Hospital Center and his psychoanalytic training, from 1964 to 1974, at the Washington (DC) Psychoanalytic Institute.

He was a practicing psychiatrist and a professor of psychiatry at George Washington University School of Medicine, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in Piscataway, NJ, and UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School in Newark, NJ. He maintained a Professional Practice in Ridgewood, NJ, while he was Chief of Psychiatry at Bergen Pines County Hospital (NJ) from 1976 to 1986. He held numerous offices, professional and visiting posts and fellowships, including Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association where he served on the Committee on Human Rights, President of the New Jersey Psychiatric Association, and member of the New Jersey Psychoanalytic Association.

He participated in the White House Conference on Ethnicity and Mental Health in 1978 and was a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging in 1981. He, along with colleague Dr. Levon Z. Boyajian, delivered groundbreaking research on the “Psychosocial



Sequelae of the Armenian Genocide” at the International Conference on Holocaust and Genocide in Tel Aviv in 1982. Dr. Grigorian worked on one of three transcultural research projects on drug addiction for the World Health Organization and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in Tehran, Iran in 1973-1974.

He was the co-founder of the Armenian Assembly of America in Washington, DC in

1972 and served as co-chairman from 1972 to 1974. He was founder of the Diaspora Foundation, incorporated in 1985 and was its president. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Land and Culture Organization and a member of the Board of Trustees of Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church.

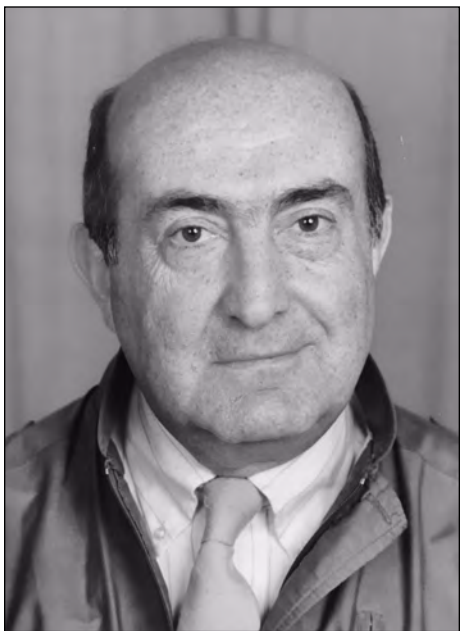
Grigorian used his professional training to assist Armenia by traveling as a Fulbright Scholar in the aftermath of the Armenian earthquake of 1988 to study the needs of the area, and later spent many months and years in Armenia on medical and humanitarian missions. He was a member of the Psychiatric Outreach Program for Armenia since 1989 and chairman of the Medical Board for AGBU Medical Outreach for Earthquake Victims from 1990 to 1991. Also, in 1995 he was the recipient of Recognition from the Armenian American Society for Studies on Stress and Genocide. In 1994, President Levon Ter-Petrosian of Armenia bestowed upon him a Recognition for Humanitarian Services.

Grigorian was an Armenian American Health Providers’ Organization (AAHPO) Honoree in 2011, and served on the AAHPO Board of Directors.

Services were held on Friday, January 19, at the William G. Basralian Funeral Home, Oradell, NJ. The funeral was held on Saturday, January 20, at Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church, Ridgefield, followed by interment at Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, NY.

### Papken V. Janjigian Engineer, Polymath

WATERTOWN — Papken V. Janjigian, known as “Pappy” to his friends, passed away on January 16. He was born on January 1, 1929 in



graduating with honors from the American University of Beirut with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering. A few years later, he traveled to the United States and earned a master’s degree in 1955 from Colorado State University before returning to Beirut to continue his professional career.

Janjigian immigrated to the US in 1959 and prepared for the arrival of his family just a few months later. Although he was already a highly educated and qualified engineer, like many immigrants, he was determined to prove his worth. He attended night school at New York University and earned a second Master’s degree while working full time at Malcolm Pirnie, Inc., a civil engineering consulting firm. He passed the rigorous Professional Engineer exam on his first attempt and earned his engineering license, which prompted Malcolm Pirnie to send him to Newport, Rhode Island to head a major project for the city. It was during this time that Janjigian was offered the position of City Engineer of Newport. He served in that capacity as well as Water Director for the next 15 years.

While working for the city of Newport, Janjigian also taught engineering courses at Roger Williams University. In addition, he was extremely active in several professional organizations. He was appointed by the governor of the state of Rhode Island to the Water Resources Board, he was elected president of the Rhode Island Society of

Professional Engineers, and on its centennial, he was elected the first foreign-born president of the New England Water Works Association.

international relations with his many friends at the Newport Athletic Club, which he visited every morning without fail. He was also a generous supporter of many worthy causes. He was a life trustee of the Armenian Assembly of America and a trustee of the Armenian Museum of America.

He is survived by his son Vahan (wife Noone) of Rye Brook, NY, his daughter Kayane (husband Dennis Knudson) of Broomall, Penn., and his five grandchildren, Lori, Lucine, and Lily Janjigian, and Michael and Talene Knudson. He is also survived by his sister Artemis Nazerian of Manhasset, NY and his numerous nieces and nephews.

Janjigian returned to Newport, a city that he loved, to spend his retirement years. He was a true polymath, having a multitude of interests. He spoke four languages fluently, he was an excellent cook, he was an avid reader, and he especially enjoyed having lively discussions about investing, politics, and

Giragosian Funeral Home handled arrangements and a private funeral service for the family was arranged.

## Giragosian

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## OBITUARIES

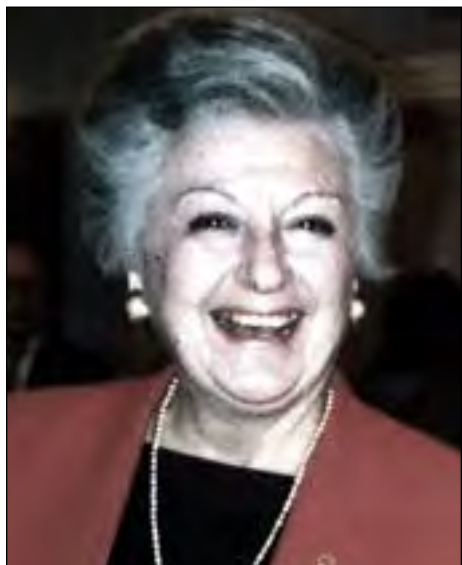
## Araxe Cherishian

### Dedicated to St. Vartan Cathedral

NEW YORK – Araxe Cherishian, born in New York, NY on February 28, 1930 to John and Nazenig Cherishian, passed away on December 19, 2017 in Oradell, NJ.

She lived in Manhattan's Murray Hill neighborhood for decades, and, as the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America wrote in its eulogy, she lived much of her life physically and as well as spiritually close to St. Vartan Cathedral.

From the earliest days of the cathedral, she contributed to its daily life, serving on – or



East Community Association, and the New York Police Department's 17th Precinct Community Council. She worked as a volunteer reading tutor with the Volunteer Services for Children project for around two decades.

She was presented with the 2004 Recognition Award by Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts III, president of the Council of Churches of the City of New York. She was recognized for her "pious, loving soul" that has given strength and inspiration to the Armenian community. Saying "we do God's work and serve as His hands," she told the attendees that her service stemmed from seeing her parents give back and support the community and church. She was merely following their example.

In 2004, her brother-in-law Onnig Halajian declared: "The qualities that define Araxie best are her spirit of service to her community, Armenian and non-Armenian, and a compulsion to care for her fellow men for their material and moral needs. Such qualities are rare and do not come by chance. I see her as a product of an upbringing by parents who have also made an impression on me by virtue of their unadvertised love for people, for their community, and for their ancestral church."

Cherichian's larger role was truly unique. She was the "human spirit" of the cathedral: the personification of the kindly, faithful, welcoming spirit that has prevailed in the Armenian Church through the centuries. Cherichian was a person of grace and generosity, with a wonderful feeling of patriotism and gratitude for America – and an abiding love for the city she called home.

"It was a true privilege to experience the faith-filled humanity of this Armenian Christian woman," said Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian in a condolence message read at her funeral. "That quality, above all, is what we will always honor in her – and what we will miss hereafter. Her beautiful personality – quiet, but full of life; unobtrusive, yet always eager to lend a helping hand – has left an indelible mark on this institution, and will never be forgotten here."

Her funeral service took place on December 29, 2017 at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, and she was interred in Cedar Grove Cemetery in Flushing, NY.

more accurately, helping to found – its numerous committees and outreach projects. She served as senior usher for several decades and was charged with coordinating community outreach for the cathedral. She has served as the chair of the St. Vartan Cathedral Guild and as a leader of the St. Gregory Church Parish Council and Sunday School.

She was a member of the board of directors of the Armenian Home for the Aged in Flushing, and chair of the Union of Marash Armenians (Compatriotic Union/New York Chapter).

For years, she was president of the "Friends of St. Vartan Park," which oversees the city park next to the cathedral, and was highly regarded around the municipal government and the local 17th police precinct. She was a member of the board of directors of the Murray Hill Committee, the Manhattan

## PFC Evan G. Kasabian Dies

### Flags Lowered on January 11

TYNGBORO, Mass. – Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker ordered that the United States flag and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts flag be lowered to half-staff at all state buildings from sunrise until sunset on Thursday, January 11, the day of interment, in honor of Private First Class Evan G. Kasabian,



member of the US Army, of Tyngsboro, who died on Saturday, December 30, 2017.

Kasabian, 28, of Tyngsboro died at his home. Born in Nashua, NH, he was the son of Deborah Kasabian and the late Gregory S.

Kasabian. He graduated from Tyngsboro High School with the class of 2007. He attended Bridgewater State College and Middlesex Community College.

A dedicated soldier, he had recently completed Airborne School this fall which he was extremely proud of and was currently training with US Army Special Forces and Airborne Preparations at C Company, Fort Bragg, NC.

He had previously worked in the food industry as a chef which he loved.

He was a communicant of St. Mary Magdalen Church.

He enjoyed playing football, hockey and lacrosse in High School.

Known for his smile and care for others, Kasabian had a rare passion and amazing talent for music and artwork, and was always reading and writing.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his brothers, Brent Kasabian of Castine, Maine, Kyle Kasabian of Los Angeles, and Jarret Kasabian of Tyngsboro; stepfather, Thomas Cole of Tyngsboro; maternal grandfather, Daniel Cunha of Falmouth, Mass., maternal great-grandmother, Margaret "Peggy" Steele of Falmouth; maternal step-grandmother Joyce Cunha of Falmouth; uncle, Kenneth Kasabian Jr. of Shirley, among many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

## Alice Aghavni (Hamparian) Kasbarian

### Trained Soprano, Keeper of Armenian Traditions

TEANECK, N.J. – Alice Aghavni (Hamparian) Kasbarian, 90, of Teaneck, NJ died January 17, 2018 surrounded by family. Born in New York City in 1927 to Armenian Genocide survivors from Sepastia, Western Armenia, she was a long-time figure in the Teaneck public school system. For more than 30 years, she served as a remedial teacher of English and math and as a member of the Teaneck High School administration.

She also served as a Kindergarten teacher at the Nareg Armenian School of New Jersey in the 1970s and was a member of the Board of Trustees of Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church of Ridgefield, NJ in the 1990s.



She was a standard bearer of the Western Armenian cultural tradition, imparting the endangered language and folkways of her ancestors to subsequent generations living in exile. Her insistence on speaking Armenian in the home played a dominant role in facilitating her aims.

A trained lyric soprano, Kasbarian gave up a promising operatic career to raise a family. She belonged to the Nayiri Western Armenian Folk Song and Dance Ensemble of New York; the Armenian National Chorus of New York; and the Hamazkayin Chorus of New Jersey. She was a soloist in the choirs of St. Illuminator's Armenian Cathedral of New York and Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church of New Jersey. Prominent Armenian musicians Onnik Dinkjian and Armen Babamian both acclaimed her soprano voice as the finest they had encountered.

Kasbarian will be remembered as a gentle, multi-talented woman blessed with quiet strength and kindness, always extending a helping hand to others.

She is survived by her husband Charles Garabed Kasbarian; her son John Antranig Kasbarian and his wife Maro Matosian; and her daughter Lucine Kasbarian and her husband David Boyajian. She is also survived by her late brother Nishan Hamparian's children, Aram, Anahid and Raffi Hamparian; and many great-nieces and great-nephews.

Funeral arrangements are private. A memorial program is planned.



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PRESENT

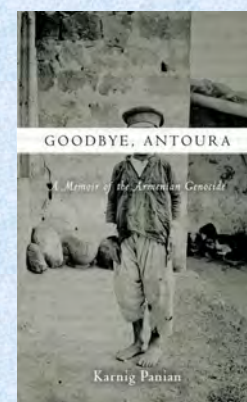
## GOODBYE, ANTOURA

### A MEMOIR OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Featuring a presentation by

### Houry Panian Boyamian

Principal, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School  
of Watertown, Massachusetts  
and daughter of author Karnig Panian



Saturday, February 17, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

Soorp Khatch Armenian Apostolic Church  
Arabian Hall

4906 Flint Drive, Bethesda, Maryland, 20816

Reception to follow

Books available for purchase and signing



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Garo Armen Trains Steely Focus on Rural Armenia

ARMEN, from page 1

Armen said he created COAF for one reason: "One simple word: the need."

Compounding the need is that there is so much potential among that population.

"The government wasn't doing it and the church wasn't doing enough for the people of Armenia," he said.

"At the time, I was so busy that I needed COAF like I needed a hole in the head," he joked. "I wasn't looking for a purpose in life but when I witnessed the Armen villages," he said he felt he had no choice but to help.

Armen, 64, is chairman and chief executive officer of Agenesis Inc., formerly known as Antigenics Inc., a biotechnology company that discovered Oncophage, a personalized cancer vaccine recently approved in Russia for patients with earlier-stage kidney cancer.

In addition, he made news in the early 2000s for resuscitating Elan Corporation, which worked on drug development based in Ireland, through a \$1 billion restructuring program. (Armen left Elan in 2004, and eventually, in 2013, the company went under.)

For Armen, the need was immediate. The condition of the people, because of their lack of resources, was dire, but it was compounded by that population being advanced "intellectually and culturally."

The combination of the two factors created "such a disconnect that it would lead to losing people as resources."

And that was not acceptable to him.

COAF, he said, wanted to "create conditions that allow them to advance."

"We peeled through layers and as a result implemented the program," Armen said, creating ones "appropriate for each [village] setting."

The help, he said, goes to Armenia in real time. "It's a crisis, so we don't have the luxury to establish a foundation. We address the crisis. We come in with a plan to resource people," he noted.

First order of business, therefore, was establishing schools as well as improving medical care for the villagers as well as establishing a civil society.

In many cases, he said, renovating schools is not enough; teachers and principals need to be trained and retrained on how to educate. "We want to take education beyond the traditional setting and take health care beyond health care setting."

"We started with one village in Armavir," he said. "Then the neighboring villages came to us and said 'Mer Mekhgeh Incheh (What is our fault?) that you are not doing it for us,'" he recalled.

Thus, the program first expanded into five villages in the region and later into other provinces, for a total of five provinces (*marzes*) and 44 villages.

"We are doing it with the same methodology," he said.

One major concept to which he referred to as "beautiful" was the COAF Smart Program. The COAF Smart Center, located in Lori, will officially open in May. "It's a phenomenal architectural masterpiece," he said with pride.

The center basically provides high-speed internet, as well as classes in a variety of subjects including technology (programming, engineering and robotics), music and arts, linguistics and communication, as well as classes on recycling, health and lifestyle and business and civic education.

Many other smaller hubs will be connected to the main center.

He further explained that his ambition is very



An aerial view of the Smart Center

simple: "to afford them the freedom to do what they want to do. Some think rural life is best suited for them." He said he wanted to create conditions where "you can be in a rural setting and be productive."

"We are thinking about the future that doesn't resemble the arc of the past," Armen said. "The purpose is to basically convey a message to the people that it's OK to think big. We have become a nation that thinks small. We have to



SMART Safe Rooms in Aygehovit-Koti

change our thinking because our people are worth it."

That way, he said, they can support families while staying in their local villages.

In addition, he explained, "I cannot envision a country where only the capital city is the driver. Where will people in the capital city get

COAF and what his organization could provide to Armenia.

Now, he visits the country four to six times a year and COAF has a staff of 150 on the ground. The group also cooperates as needed with other organizations.

## Teen Immigrant in New York

Armen arrived in New York in 1970 from Turkey at age 17 literally with no money, but the drive to make it. He worked through college and did various jobs day and night, including for a time a messenger for the Armenian General Benevolent Union office, and paid his way through college and graduate school. He received his doctorate in physical chemistry from the City University of New York.

"Opportunities presented themselves through luck, hard work or good judgment," leading eventually to his current status as the head of a pioneering biotech company.

He became more interested in biomedicine when he was taking care of his mother, who died of cancer. He founded and is the CEO of Agenesis, which employs 250 people in three different locations, Lexington, Mass., Berkeley, Calif. and Cambridge, UK.

"I want to make Agenesis a huge success," he cited one of his goals for the future.

The field of immunology, he said, "is very embryonic but still the company has done a phenomenal job."

"We are driving that to a much higher level of success," Armen said. "I want to piggy-back that success with COAF to address issues in rural Armenia. We can create a country that will not only prosper but help neighbors prosper."

He has two sons and lives with his partner,



Garo Armen with students at a renovated village school

their food from? In Armenian villages, the level of sophistication is so high that it would be a waste of people resources not to provide them the means to advance."

Again, and again, Armen went back to the theme of dreams and visions for success. "We have to have a dream to fulfill. Without the dream, there is no chance you can realize that dream," he noted.

"Having an objective that is worthy helps," he added.

With the technology which COAF is focusing on, village residents can "press a button" and be able to use high-speed internet. The center for the Internet is the village of Debed.

There is no time to lose, he said.

"Armenia and Armenians are in danger of becoming an extinct species," he said. The real dangers facing the country force it to plan efficiently and do some hard work.

For Armen, being Armenian means something, as he grew up with his grandmother's stories about the Armenian Genocide.

He first visited Armenia in 2001 and later again in 2003, where he honed his vision for



Dr. Garo Armen with Bradley Busetto, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for the Republic of Armenia

Dr. Alice Saraydarian, and divides his time between homes in Boston, New York, Yerevan as well as a farm in Maine. He chuckled that he was a "gypsy" and lived on planes most of the time.

To learn more about COAF visit [www.coafkids.org](http://www.coafkids.org)



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Hrant Dink Commemorated in Watertown

WATERTOWN, from page 1

University of Michigan in 2012-13, and at present is a visiting post-doctoral fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. He is a columnist for the Turkish-Armenian newspaper *Agos*, which Hrant Dink helped found.

Kiliçdagi acknowledged the Kurds and Turks in the audience, and seemed to focus much of his talk on them. He suggested that they moved to the US as part of an accelerating trend of emigration from Turkey among the middle and upper classes because, he said, they thought that “they were not living in a just and free society. They could not see a secure and happy future for themselves nor for their children. As for Armenians, this has been the situation not just for a few years, but for 150 years or more.” In other words, he stressed, in Turkey today everyone has the potential of turning into Armenians, though they are luckier because they are still alive. Sooner or later, he said, anybody in Turkey, unless a just and free society were to be established, might decide to emigrate.

Hrant Dink’s primary concern, Kiliçdagi said, was the democratization of Turkey and the peaceful cohabitation of its peoples. Dink, he said, was fighting for a free and just society for all, not just for Armenians. If Turkey did not face the mass violence of the past, including the Armenian Genocide, it could affect anyone in the future.

Hrant Dink was killed, Kiliçdagi explained, because he succeeded in opening people’s eyes



Zadik Özcan gives a plaque to speaker Ohannes Kiliçdagi on behalf of Friends of Hrant Dink

starting her own office in 2010, she worked with the Boston immigration law firm Barker, Epstein and Loscocco and the American Consumer Law Group in Waltham, Mass. She also served as ‘Of Counsel’ to Exemplar Law Group.

Currently her practice is focused on US immi-

up in Turkey, regardless of their politics, with a nationalist educational system which taught that talk about genocide is simply an attack on Turkey.

Özpinar went back to her own childhood to give examples. She grew up in a privileged family and thought, like many children, that she could change the world. She said that she wrote a long essay in fourth grade, in which, she said, “I was holding hands with Atatürk and we were going to save the country. I was very well aware that we were a backward country...I don’t know if it came from a dream or I made it up, but I still have that image in my mind, holding hands, walking with him, knowing that we will make this a better country.”

When she was 11 years old, her parents sent her to an international camp in Italy, and she felt obliged to act as a “mini-diplomat,” and “act as an exemplary Turk to show everyone else that Turks are good people.” In this camp and another two years later, she defended Turkey against all sorts of criticism and asserted that it was progressive.

She made her first shift in attitude after coming to the US. She came to Brandeis to study, and there was a Turkish-Armenian dialogue event in the year 2000, but she stayed away, because, she said, “I was not ready.” She thought that perhaps somebody would attack her. Instead, she tried to become more American than a Turk.

However, by 2006, she read a book by the novelist Yashar Kemal, who talked about what happened to the Armenians in a few places. She said to herself that something happened here, and decided “I have to read about this. What happened – what happened to the Armenian people? What did they teach me? They did not



Ohannes Kiliçdagi



Gaye Özpinar

to this, and this made him particularly dangerous to the rulers. He said, “What was special about him was his skill in communications. ... He could make even those who had hostile feelings toward him to listen to him.” He built bridges between peoples or different segments of Turkish society which were living in isolation from one another, Kiliçdagi said.

Turkish Armenians reacted in various ways to Dink, who had suddenly led to much more attention being directed at them in Turkey. They had previously been used to living almost invisibly, in silence, even if their rights were being violated, but Dink encouraged them to demand their rights and justice. Kiliçdagi said, “Hrant Dink saved their dignity and gave it back to them. After all, you can’t keep your honor, as a human being, if you cannot object whenever you face an injustice or oppression.” They began to act as if they were equal Turkish citizens, not just a minority.

Kiliçdagi proposed that leaving Turkey does not mean leaving the struggle for democracy and justice there. This is a common struggle for Turks, Armenians and others. He suggested that one way to continue is by supporting the most important heritage of Dink, the newspaper, *Agos*. Kiliçdagi stated: “*Agos* still tries to defend the rights of all oppressed groups or identities and to give voice to them. It also tries to protect the Armenian heritage in Turkey, to remind [about] what has been forgotten, as well as to defend and demand Armenians’ rights vis-à-vis public authority.”

The second main speaker, Cambridge-based Gaye Özpinar, was born and raised in Bursa, Turkey. She earned her Juris Doctor degree from Suffolk University Law School in Boston in 2006 and a bachelor’s degree in political science from Brandeis University in 2002. Before

gration law, and she has helped many individuals and businesses solve their immigration problems. She is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), National Lawyers Guild (NLG), Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, Inc. (MCLE), and Political Asylum/Immigration Project (PAIR). She is also an active member of BostonBul, a nonprofit group focusing on human rights violations in Turkey.

Özpinar’s talk was very emotional and moving. She declared that sometimes literature helps us in dealing with pain. In particular, she said that in the Ruins, Zabel Yesayan’s book on the 1909 Cilician massacres “describes my feelings, of what I feel when I need to talk about the Genocide as a Turk, and about remembering Hrant Dink, commemorating him, that grief, that pain that causes physical, debilitating pain.”

Özpinar said that she had a dream at night prior to her talk, and in the dream asked Hrant Dink what she should say. He responded that she should speak from the heart. Indeed, Özpinar spoke openly and passionately, and told the audience about her own path of coming to grips with the Armenian Genocide, which did not happen overnight, in order to help Armenians in the diaspora understand how this is possible.

She said that she should like to think that the majority of the people in Turkey who do not know about the Genocide “are people who could see things if shown, they are people who keep their hearts open...” However, they grew

up in Turkey, regardless of their politics, with a nationalist educational system which taught that talk about genocide is simply an attack on Turkey.

teach us anything.” In high school her history teacher announced that the students who were going to go abroad for their education should come to her office to get a folder of information. The students would get attacked while abroad, and the folder contained the answers which they could use. Özpinar however never went to the office to pick up this file, thinking that she would on her

own eventually look into this.

In America, she met Armenians who, she said, “affected me, who bettered my life in the United States.” She said that she felt that such human interactions “is what Hrant wanted—for Armenians and Turks to meet, in spaces like this, to share their stories, to continue to fight for justice, to continue to fight and ask for democracy wherever we are.” She concluded, to great applause, that “Changing the laws, fighting for democracy, getting into office, asking for resolutions for Genocide recognition, I would say that is only one part of the job. The other part is for us to open our hearts, to share our individual stories, to tell people our own stories, to share pictures, because I think that is how it starts, and that is the most valuable part. And Hrant, they couldn’t stand him because he started that, as Ohannes said. They were scared of him because he started that. And I am here, and my Turkish



Herman Purutyan, master of ceremonies

friends are here with you today sitting, listening, and sharing because of Hrant Dink. And we will continue to do it.”

Harry Parsekian of the Friends of Hrant Dink organization then introduced a guest in the audience who only a week ago arrived in Boston: Ayse Kadioglu, who was a professor of political science at Sabanci University in Istanbul and on the Hrant Dink Foundation board. Parsekian related that she is a graduate of Boston University, where she obtained her doctorate, and was a student of Howard Zinn, and now has come to Harvard. He exclaimed, “She is a mobile, global Hye – she is a very dedicated Armenian.”

Dr. Kadioglu said that Hrant Dink was a friend of hers, and went on to tell an anecdote about the 2005 icebreaking conference in Istanbul on Armenians during the decline of the Ottoman Empire, where a woman was screaming periodically that “you are traitors, what you are doing is an awful thing for this country,” despite the efforts of panel chairs to quiet her. After Hrant finished speaking, Kadioglu looked around to find him and suddenly saw him being hugged by that woman who was screaming. Hrant shrugged his shoulders, as if to say, I don’t know why – she is the one hugging me.

Kadioglu said, “He could talk. He could convince people. Maybe that is why they thought of him as dangerous. He could really communicate. Maybe that is why he was shot.” Kadioglu said that Hrant wrote in his last piece in *Agos* about feeling like a pigeon looking to the left and right in anxiety, and “that is a feeling we all share right now, living in Turkey...we all feel threatened.”

She said she always thought of Hrant as trying to establish bridges between people, and “on the day of his funeral, there were hundreds of thousands of people who went out there to guard that bridge, in his name. I always thought he would have loved to see that.”

Parsekian thanked Kadioglu for her talk, and in Turkish thanked all the Turkish friends who came. Finally, he declared, “To me, Hrant Dink was a humanist, and as far as that is concerned, I consider Hrant the Mandela...a great humanist and human rights person who cared for everybody, not just Armenians or Turks, but humanity.”

After a break for refreshments, Zadik Özcan gave some presents and mementos on behalf of the Friends of Hrant Dink to the two main speakers, Kiliçdagi and Özpinar.



Dr. Ayse Kadioglu



## COMMUNITY NEWS

REFLECTING • CONNECTING • INSPIRING

# The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

Thank you for your support. We had a great 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary symposium and gala, and, as long as you continue to support us, we will work to further improve the *Mirror* both in its print and digital version.

We want to let our readers know that we have been working hard over the past year to bring you more news and services.

Feel free to visit us in our Watertown Baikar Building headquarters, or call, write or email us with your comments and suggestions.

- We increased the print edition of the paper from 16 to 20 pages weekly.
- We improved the paper quality used in printing the paper.
- We have begun to increase our coverage of events in various parts of the world through special correspondents.
- We redesigned our website ([www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com)), which now offers more functionalities: you can see videos, comment, and contact us directly. You can directly input *free* calendar notices for your events. You will also shortly be able to pay with credit cards for your subscriptions or make gifts online.
- We are now sending out emails twice a week with links to new articles and videos from our website. Please send us ([info@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:info@mirrorspectator.com) or through our website) the email addresses of your friends so that they too can enjoy this *free* service.

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*The Armenian Mirror-Spectator hopes your New Year will be a great one—and that along the way we can continue to keep you informed about developments in the Armenian world. Keep your friends and family in the loop by buying them a print subscription, and send us their emails to get weekly notices.*

[www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com)

# Arts & Living

## Adrienne Alexanian Presents Father's Memoirs at Fresno State

By Annie Rubio

FRESNO (*Hye Sharzhoom*) – We cannot change the events that led to the Armenian Genocide in 1915. However, we, as Armenians, can choose how we are remembered in the years to come. Yervant Alexanian chose to be remembered as a prolific writer and activist, and was one of the few Armenian soldiers who were conscripted into the Ottoman Turkish Army in 1915 and who survived.

Alexanian's memoir, *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army* (Transaction Publishers, 2017), was edited by his daughter Adrienne Alexanian, who visited Fresno State for a book reading on Tuesday, November 14. *Forced into Genocide* has received praise from many prominent scholars and has been a valuable means for increasing awareness of the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Sergio La Porta, Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State wrote a moving introduction for the book, which was translated from Armenian into English by Simon Beugekian. Dr. Israel Charny, executive director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem, wrote the foreword to the volume.

The lecture was a collaborative effort sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, the College of Arts and Humanities, the Department of Media, Communications and Journalism, the Greater Fresno Area AGBU, the Knights of Vartan, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research. Jim Melikian was instrumental in the planning and the promotion of the event, which drew an over-flow audience of more than 200.

Yervant Alexanian was a prominent member of the Armenian community, and several of his articles had appeared in Armenian publications. Upon her father's death, Adrienne Alexanian discovered his memoirs and realized the importance of her father's story. "I realized it was my responsibility, not only to him, but to my people, to have this published," she stated.

Adrienne Alexanian's thoughts were confirmed by several scholars, who remarked that there were few if any books on this aspect of the Armenian Genocide.

At her book reading, Alexanian noted that the massacre of the Armenian soldiers within the Ottoman army was a prelude to the events that followed in the Genocide. Her father was one of the few conscripted soldiers who survived.

"The day my father was conscripted," said Alexanian, "he was prepared to die." However, he was unable to save 51 of his family members who died in the deportation marches. He watched them disappear over a hill, never to be seen again, in what he described in his memoir as the "worst day of my life."

Growing up, Alexanian never heard much about her father's experiences in the Genocide. After reading the memoir, she understood how horrific and traumatizing his story was. "I realized it was a form of therapy for him – writing it down as opposed to verbalizing it to me."

It also gave her the chance to understand her father, and why he cared so much for the Armenian community when he came to America. It was common knowledge that Yervant Alexanian would go out of his way to help Armenians who emigrated to America. He would drop everything to help them find jobs, apartments, even furniture if they so asked.

"I never understood why he would do that for strangers," Adrienne commented. "It was because he was unable to save the members of  
see MEMOIRS, page 14



Actor Bob Odenkirk as Ben Bagdikian in "The Post"

## Odenkirk on Playing Former Berkeley Dean, Journalist Ben Bagdikian in Pentagon Papers film

BERKELEY, Calif. (*Berkeley News*) – Actor Bob Odenkirk told a Newsweek interviewer that in making "The Post," the new film about the Washington Post's publication of the Pentagon Papers, he was struck by how reporter (and later UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism dean) Ben Bagdikian "treated journalism the way his (minister) father treated religion."

By Kathleen Maclay

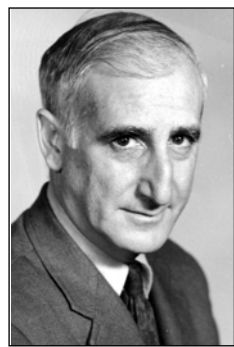
In 1971, Bagdikian was an award-winning national editor at the *Post* when acquaintance Daniel Ellsberg gave him parts of the Pentagon Papers, a top-secret report containing 3,000 pages of historical analysis and 4,000 pages of original government documents that revealed government deceit around the United States' involvement and intentions in Vietnam.

The war killed more than 60,000 American soldiers and wounded another 150,000 of the more than 3 million Americans who served there from 1955 to 1975.

Bagdikian, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide who came to the US from Turkey as an infant, persuaded the Washington Post to publish excerpts of the Pentagon Papers in 1971, despite objections and threats from the Nixon administration.

Ellsberg was charged with stealing and holding secret government documents, but charges were dropped following a mistrial in 1973. The documents were declassified 40 years later and are now available online.

In a biographical report prepared in 2010 by the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library, Bagdikian compared Wikileaks to his own history-making role in publishing the Pentagon Papers. He also recalled telling a *Post* board member, while debating whether to publish the Pentagon Papers information, that "if we don't print them, it's going to encourage the government to keep secret all the mistakes they make."



Ben Bagdikian

Actor Odenkirk said he connected to what he perceived as Bagdikian's strong sense of moral character.

"Standing by your principles. Ben had a special position that allowed him to do that," he told *Newsweek*. "(Ben) Bradley was in charge and Ben (Bagdikian) knew that he could be the voice of their shared principles and not have to worry about balancing everything out..."

"I've been in charge, where you have to listen to every side. But I can relate to being the person in the back of the room who claims to know what's right, and does know what's right, but also has the luxury of being blunt because he's not in charge...It's an indulgence, but a good one, to be the one who gets to speak up for the core principles and never waver and never have to see both sides."

An award-winning journalist and media critic, Bagdikian taught journalism at Berkeley from 1976 until his retirement in 1990. He served as Graduate School of Journalism dean at Berkeley from 1985 to 1988. Bagdikian died in 2015.

A commentary by University of Michigan historian Heather Ann Thompson examining the importance of the *Post*'s role in publishing the Pentagon Papers, even though it followed in the steps of the *New York Times* rather than breaking the story itself, appeared recently on history.com.

## Tololyan Prize-Winning Book *A Poet in Washington Heights* out on Nauset Press

NEW YORK – In verse that will delight the reader and hopefully win them back to a love of poetry, Christopher Atamian's latest publication relates aspects of the author's life in the neighborhood of Washington Heights. This fabled neighborhood includes the Cloisters and Fort Tryon Park and was host more than 200 years ago to George Washington and his troops who wintered there during the Revolutionary War – it is there that he is said to have held off British and Hessian troops. The book's title itself is an allusion to Federico Garcia Lorca's *A Poet in New York* which was penned during the famed Spanish poet's stay in New York City in the early 1930s.

One particularity of *A Poet in Washington Heights* lies in the fact that it was written mostly in an "updated" version of traditional rhyme. The author stated that

"It is considered a bit old-fashioned to rhyme one's poetry today, but I think it adds musicality and fun to the work. Some contemporary poetry is so deconstructed that it effectively becomes prose." To be fair there is some prose-poetry in Atamian's book as well, as in the poem "Riverside Park." Meant as an homage to the Armenian Parisian writer Nigoghos Sarafian and his book *The Bois de*



Christopher Atamian

*Vincennes*, the poem takes the reader on a trip through the park and time itself. Coincidentally Atamian – who is a writer and filmmaker – won the inaugural Tololyan Prize for his translation of *The Bois de Vincennes*.

Some of the themes broached in *A Poet in Washington Heights* include family, Armenian culture and personal identity. Reviews to date have praised the book. The playwright Jonathan Leaf writes: "Christopher Atamian writes powerful, very personal verse. There are superlative poems in this collection..." And writer and memoirist Nancy Agabian states: "Christopher Atamian celebrates the extraordinary cultural mosaic and landscape of Washington Heights in playful, nostalgic rhyme that honors familial love as much as urban romance, cutting to the core of queer desire. Drawing on influences as disparate as Nigoghos Sarafian and Patti Smith, Chris mesmerizes the reader with mythological figures and spiritual reverie, ultimately offering redemption for our troubled times – through his Armenian-American and native New Yorker eyes." The book also represents the genesis of a generation of Armenian-American writers born in the late 1960s and 1970s.

The book can be ordered through Amazon or <http://www.nausetpress.com/a-poet-in-washington-heights>.

## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Biweekly Armenian Supper Club Starts at Hamtramck Pop-Up Revolver

DETROIT (*Eater*) – It's not easy finding Armenian food in Metro Detroit.

Now a local Armenian chef launches a year-long series at Revolver, a popular pop-up restaurant space at 9737 Joseph Campau in Hamtramck.

**By Brenna Houck**

Julién Godman of Tonic & Juice will serve dinners “with a contemporary vegetarian focus” at the

New Armenian Supper Club on a walk-in basis every other Tuesday, starting January 16. Doors open at 5 p.m. and dinner service runs from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. The cost is not given.

The concept of the club is simple and invigorating: wholesome food of the Armenian diasporan home, but with a contemporary vegetarian focus. As Julién puts it: “Whatever is fresh at the market that day, I’ll write on the chalkboard.”

There will be no set menu and attendees can come enjoy food and time with loved ones with little expectation and much surprise. Herbal tea will be available for purchase on site with advance three-day notice. Please consult website for blends and products (pricing is lower in person than online, so buy away!).

For Godman, the purpose of the club is to explore his own cultural roots, as well as raise a figurative flag to the Armenian narrative, significance and history here in Detroit.

Over the course of the residency, Godman aims to begin the planning and fundraising phase of opening his own vegetarian Armenian cafe and herbal tea distribution space in Detroit. This residency moves his vision one step closer.

Four weeks ago, he and his wife hosted a fundraising “communal supper experience” at Revolver and previewed



Julién Godman of Tonic & Juice on Jan. 16 starts biweekly pop-ups in Hamtramck

this year’s series:

This one-year trial period, which will include licensed tea packaging and distribution space along with a dining room, is vital to the longevity of the business model – because success here could mean even bigger things for the venture and for the Armenian culinary scene here in Detroit.

Not only is this a big step for the business, it is also a huge

leap for Julién Godman, who has been cooking up monthly brunches in Detroit for the past four years. It is his goal to open up a two-fold facility: New-Armenian cafe as well as an herbal tea house with distribution/packaging space.

Supper club dates include: January 30 | February 13 and 27 | March 13 | March 27 (ticketed event), April 10 and 24, May 8 (ticketed event), May 22 and June 5 and 19.

## Global Cinema Film Festival of Boston Takes Place in March

BELMONT, Mass. – The Global Cinema Film Festival of Boston (GCFB) will host its third annual global event March 8-11, at the Studio Cinema, located at 376 Trapelo Road.

The festival kicks off on Thursday March 8, at 6 p.m. with the annual opening night Red Carpet Event and film screenings until 10 p.m. Film screenings will continue from Friday, March 9, through Sunday, March 11.

GCFB in partnership with WCF studios/films LLC and under the direction of multiple award-winning Documentarian Raouf J. Jacob and award-winning Executive Producer Lara M. Moreno are committed to bringing the best of global cinema to Boston.

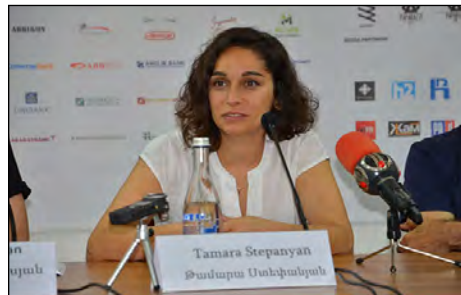
The festival includes more than 30 award-winning independent films, with world premieres, director question-and-answers and critically-acclaimed official selections that have also been featured in major award competitions, including Sundance, BAFTA, Tribeca Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, IDFA, and more.

For a full list of films, times and further details, visit [www.worldwidecinemaframes.com](http://www.worldwidecinemaframes.com)

### Documentary Feature

A Woman Captured | Directed by Bernadett Tuza-Ritter  
 Brasilia: Life After Design | Directed by Bart Simpson  
 Dogs Of Democracy | Directed by Mary Zournazi  
 Hell On Earth | Directed by Sebastian Junger  
 Paper Lanterns | Directed by Barry Frechette  
 Return To Bosnia | Directed by Wes Greene  
 This is Congo | Directed by Daniel McCabe  
 Taste Of Cement | Directed by Ziad Kalthoum

The Ransom | Directed by Rémi Lainé  
 Those From The Shore | Directed by Tamara Stepanyan



Tamara Stepanyan

The Family | Directed by Rok Bicek  
 No Place For A Rebel | Directed by Maartje Wegdam

### Documentary Short

Anastasia Lin: The Crown | Directed by Kacey Cox  
 Runnin’ | Directed by Matthew Orr & Alex Hogan  
 Street Workers Unite | Directed by Gabriel Diamond  
 The Good Fight | Directed by Ben Holman  
 Little Rebel | Directed by Aimie Vallat  
 Close Ties | Directed by Zofia Kowalewska  
 Six Year Old Fears | Directed by Lauren Anders Brown  
 The Rugby Boys Of Memphis | Directed by David Darg

### Narrative Short & Feature

Aimee | Directed by Lee Whittaker

Big City | Directed by Jordan Bond  
 Baraka | Directed by Néstor Ruiz Medina  
 Dialogue | Directed by Gabor Fabricius  
 Iron Hands | Directed by Johnson Cheng  
 Little Bird | Directed by Georgia Oakley  
 Life Boat | Directed by Lorraine Nicholson  
 Mare Nostrum | Directed by Rana Kazkaz  
 Retouch | Directed by Kaveh Mazaheri  
 Spoken Word | Directed by Ilan Srulovicz  
 Streetwrite | Directed by Blanche Baker

The Geneva Convention | Directed by Benoit Martin  
 The World In Your Window | Directed by Zoe McIntosh  
 The Best Of All Worlds | Directed by Adrian Goiginger  
 Wave | Directed by Benjamin Cleary  
 What Tears Us Apart | Directed by Hu Wei  
 For more information visit [www.worldwidecinemaframes.com](http://www.worldwidecinemaframes.com)

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## Adrienne Alexanian Presents Father's Memoirs

MEMOIRS, from page 13

his family.” His life’s work was to save Armenians, and with his memoir he will continue to help serve his people.

Adrienne Alexanian’s book reading left a deep impact. The detailed experiences from her father’s memoir, combined with the images from his journals, stirred up many emotions in the audience. It made the Armenian Genocide a personal experience by seeing the events through the eyes of a man who lived through it.

This memoir gives satisfaction to Armenians everywhere, by adding to the numerous eyewitness accounts of the Genocide that exist today.

“When you have so many memoirs, you can’t deny the Armenian Genocide anymore,” said Alexanian.



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# LA Armenian Community Honors Grammy Nominees Mansurian, Orbelian

LOS ANGELES – At a celebration luncheon held on January 13 in Los Angeles, the Armenian community honored two Armenian musicians, Tigran Mansurian and Constantine Orbelian, on the occasion of their nomination for Grammy Awards. The luncheon, which took place at Bistro Garden in Studio City, was



Constantine Orbelian with Savye Tufenkian

attended by a cross section of cultural leaders and music lovers. It was sponsored by Drs. Nazareth and Ani Darakjian, Alice Navasargian and Joe and Joyce Stein.

In his opening remarks, the event's Master of Ceremonies, Prof. Peter Cowe, Narekatsi Chair of Armenian Studies at UCLA, formally introduced the honorees and encapsulated the achievements for which they have received Grammy Award nominations from the Recording Academy. As importantly, Cowe highlighted the fact that this year marks the



Constantine Orbelian with the Organizing Committee, Flora Dunaiants, Elizabeth Agbabian and Hermine Janoyan

85th anniversary of the Yerevan Opera House, as well as the 150th anniversary of Armenian opera, which was founded with the operatic masterpiece "Arshak II."

Later during the luncheon, Cowe also presented the biographies of the honorees, detailing their outstanding bodies of work.

Mansurian, recognized as a People's Artist of the Republic of Armenia, is a leading composer of classical music and film scores. His Requiem has been nominated for the Grammy Award in two categories: Best Choral Performance and Best Contemporary Classical Composition.

Orbelian is a globally acclaimed pianist and conductor, and an Honored Artist of the Russian Federation. Since June 2016, he has helmed the National Opera and Ballet Theater of Armenia (the Yerevan Opera House) as its

General Director and Artistic Director. His recording of Sviridov's Russia Cast Adrift, featuring the late baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky and the State Symphony Orchestra of St. Petersburg, has received a Grammy nomination in the category of Best Conductor on a Solo Vocal Album.

Following Cowe's remarks, the guests were treated to a musical interlude performed by pianist Artashes Kartalyan.

Subsequently, in the event's most anticipated segment, Orbelian was interviewed on stage by *Asbarez* English-language editor Ara Khachatourian. The lively conversation touched on current plans for expanding the



Constantine Orbelian with Mrs. Alice Navasargian, one of the sponsors of the luncheon



Constantine Orbelian and Valeri Mkrtumyan, Armenia's Consulate General

activities of the Yerevan Opera House through new musical productions, performances abroad, educational programs, and community outreach; and the need for substantial pan-Armenian support toward the further modernization and development of the Yerevan Opera House, as a dynamic cultural hub and a national treasure.



by Christine Vartanian Datian

## Spinach and Split Pea Soup

### INGREDIENTS

About 1 1/2 lbs. cubed beef stew meat or lamb meat  
 1 large onion, sliced or diced  
 1 medium green or red bell pepper, diced  
 1 medium carrot, diced  
 2 stalks celery (and tops), diced  
 1 cup yellow split peas, washed and drained  
 1 small (8 oz.) can tomato sauce  
 1 tablespoon tomato paste  
 2-3 cloves garlic, minced  
 Juice of 1 large lemon (more to taste)  
 1/2 cup dry white wine (optional)  
 Sea or Kosher salt, black pepper, garlic powder  
 1 teaspoon sweet basil, crushed  
 4 cups fresh baby spinach, washed, drained, chopped  
 Olive oil  
 Water, low sodium beef broth  
 Chopped flat leaf parsley and onions as garnish  
 Armenian or Greek-style yogurt as garnish  
 Lemon wedges as garnish

### PREPARATION:

In a large pot or dutch oven, brown the stew meat in oil, then add the onion and garlic and cook for one hour on medium low heat, tossing occasionally.

Add 4 cups (or more) of water or beef broth, bell pepper, carrot, celery, split peas, tomato sauce, tomato paste, and seasonings, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and cook for 20 minutes. When the split peas are tender, add the spinach, lemon juice, wine, and additional water or broth if desired.

Bring soup to a low boil and simmer for 10 minutes longer until the spinach is tender. Add more lemon juice if desired.

Garnish with chopped parsley, onions, and lemon wedges, and serve with yogurt on the side.

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/>)



Constantine Orbelian with Drs. Nazareth and Ani Darakjian



Constantine Orbelian with Mr. and Mrs. Mansurian

# CALENDAR

## CONNECTICUT

**FEBRUARY 10 — Hye Hearts Dance. Second big annual event. Back By Popular Demand!** 8pm - ??? LIVE MUSIC featuring Harry Bedrossian (oud, vocals), Mal Barsamian (clarinet), Bruce Gigarjian (guitar), Charlie Dermenjian (dumbeg). Continuous dancing with DJ Chris Habibian. Hosted by the Tri-Church Cultural Committee. Holiday Inn, 1 Bright Meadow Blvd., Enfield, CT (just off Interstate 91). Hotel \$89 room rate. 860-741-2211, mention "Hye Hearts" Adults \$45 advance, \$50 at the door. Students & Adults 80+ \$30 advance, \$35 at the door. Children 12 & under free. Mezzeh included. Cash Bar. Reservations for up to tables of 10. To purchase tickets: <https://hyeheartsdance2018.eventbrite.com> or mail checks (made payable to TCCC) to: Gary Hovhannessian, 81 Cope Farms Rd., Farmington, CT 06032. RSVP & Questions/Info: David Jermakian 413-727-2586, davidjermakian@gmail.com and Gary 860-690-5959 or garyhov@aol.com. Tri-Church Cultural Committee includes members of the Armenian Church of Holy Resurrection, New Britain, CT and St. George Armenian Church, Hartford, CT and St. Mark's Armenian Church, Springfield, MA.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**FEBRUARY 1 — Thursday, 7:30 p.m.: William C. Rempel, The Gambler: How Penniless Dropout Kirk Kerkorian Became the Greatest Deal Maker in Capitalist History,** NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478. Contact NAASR at 617-489-1610 or [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).

**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



**The Hye Hearts Dance will take place on February 10 in Connecticut, hosted by the Tri-Church Cultural Committee, at the Holiday Inn, 1 Bright Meadow Blvd, in Enfield. The dance will feature musicians Harry Bedrossian, pictured above, Mal Barsamian, Bruce Gigarian and Charlie Dermenjian and DJ Chris Habibian. To purchase tickets: <https://hyeheartsdance2018.eventbrite.com>**

Maria Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or [Ria.tk@verizon.net](mailto:Ria.tk@verizon.net). Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment. Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

**FEBRUARY 13 — Tuesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Watertown Free Public Library. Budgeting and credit scores 101.** Come learn about creating a budget worksheet, how to

improve and maintain your credit score. Hosted by Armenian International Women's Association New England and CFA Society Boston. Free and open to the public. Registration recommended at [aiwanewengland@gmail.com](mailto:aiwanewengland@gmail.com).

**MARCH 8-11 —The Global Cinema Film Festival of Boston (GCFF)** announces its 2018 Official Selections. The 3rd annual global event will be held at the Studio Cinema, 376 Trapelo Road, Belmont, MA. Festival kicks off on March 8, at 6 p.m. with Red Carpet Event and film screenings until 10 p.m. Film screenings will continue from Friday, March 9, through Sunday, March 11, 2018 from 12 to 11 p.m. For more info visit @ [www.worldwidecinemaframes.com](http://www.worldwidecinemaframes.com). [globalcinemafilmfestival@gmail.com](mailto:globalcinemafilmfestival@gmail.com)

**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.

**MAY 5 — Save the date! Annual Meeting, Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA).** Details to follow. Contact: [info@aiwainternational.org](mailto:info@aiwainternational.org) or 617-926-0171.

**MAY 11 — Welcome His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians,** to Celebrate with Rev. Father Mampre A. Kouzouian on the 60th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Hrshapar Service in the Sanctuary followed by a Celebration in the Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall. Details forthcoming.

**APRIL 14 — Saturday, St. James Great Gatsby Gala! A Roarin' 20s Celebration!** Live Jazz & Armenian Music, Passed Hors D'oeuvres, Mezza and Dessert Stations and more. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, 8 p.m., Tickets \$100. Purchase online at [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org) or contact [info@stthagop.com](mailto:info@stthagop.com).

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

## Director of 'The Cut' Fatih Akin Gets Acclaim, Awards for 'In the Fade'

By Tom Brueggemann

LOS ANGELES (Indie Wire) — Fatih Akin, the 44-year-old German director of "In the Fade" (December 29, Magnolia Pictures) seemed both bemused and philosophical the night after his film's surprise Best Foreign Language win at Sunday night's Golden Globe Awards. "The story is like a German team won a big sports victory in the local newspapers," he noted from the Palm Springs International Film Festival, 5,000 miles away from Berlin.

"In the Fade" is the fictionalized story of a German woman (Cannes Best Actress winner Diane Kruger) who demands justice after her immigrant husband and their son are victims of a terror attack. They turn out to have been targets of white nationalists who are arrested and put on trial. Based on real-life events but fictionalized (the actual case that served as a starting point is still not resolved in local courts), it is a compelling thriller as well as a drama about justice and racism.

The day after collecting his big prize in front of the world, Akin might have been expected to stay in Los Angeles fielding calls and basking in the glory. Instead he was back on the festival circuit, making two appearances in Palm Springs. First at a panel featuring eight of the nine shortlisted foreign-language Oscar contenders and then a question-and-answer, a sold-out screening of "In the Fade," accompanied by Cannes Best Actress winner Diane Kruger.

Showing no signs of exhaustion eight months after his Cannes debut, Akin reflected on his win. "It's a good place for me to be," he



Fatih Akin and actress Diane Kruger

said. "Happy to be getting out of the LA craziness as much as I love the city. It was getting to be a little too much. It's an adventure that includes frustration, laughs, loss — and physical and psychological exhaustion." The director, whose films have been prominent on the global festival circuit going back to "In July" in 2001 (followed by "Head On," "The Edge of Heaven," and "Crossing the Bridge," all playing stateside) has won many awards from (including the Cannes screenplay prize for "Edge"), but nothing at this level of attention in America.

He has embraced getting to know his fellow contenders. "The better you know the people, the less competitive you get," he said. But the experience of winning is "a moment when you're alone."

Akin, a German-born citizen of Turkish descent, said that he'd wanted to make a film about racism — "what it felt like as a child to learn that because you have dark hair and

brown eyes you are different" — for many years. "In the Fade" shows how police and public suspicion sometimes falls within an ethnic group when murders occur, victimizing them a second time.

Magnolia's "In the Fade" has been a modest performer in its limited initial dates in New York and Los Angeles since it opened on December 29, qualifying for mainstream Oscar categories and other awards, though that is not needed for Foreign Language contention. It opens this Friday in San Francisco, then after its hoped-for nomination, hitting major markets for initially exclusive dates in top cities.

Akin expects the Globe win to boost its ongoing performance in Germany, where the film has performed decently for an arthouse independent.

Palm Springs has been a traditional showcase for subtitled films, often to selling out shows of little known titles from around the world enthusiastically received by a mostly older audience (the area includes many retirees including snowbirds who winter there). For years they have screened half or more of the initial submissions for the Oscar from around the world. All nine of the remaining contenders have been shown, nearly all with their directors in attendance.

These include South African John Trengrove, whose "The Wound" (Kino Lorber) is the only debut feature on the Oscar shortlist, and, despite the year-long acclaim for the tribal coming-of-age ritual story which includes unexpected gay relationships, the biggest surprise on the list. Trengrove, who has been touring with the film since its Sundance premiere a year ago, is up in the air for his short-term plans. Like Akin,

he is awaiting the nominations on January 23 to see where he heads next from Los Angeles.

The attention these awards can bring include possible interest from U.S. studios for more big-scale work. Akin expressed some doubts about that as his next step, citing Pedro Almodovar and Ingmar Bergman as major European directors who did fine without ever succumbing to the lure of Hollywood. His response when asked if he had heard about "The Mountain Between Us," last year's plane crash drama with Kate Winslet and Idris Elba directed by Palestinian two-time Foreign Language Oscar nominee Hany Abu-Assad, his response was an enigmatic "Kate Winslet? Hmmm."

"In the Fade" is also Germany's official best foreign language Oscar entry this year, competing with eight other foreign language films. The 90th Academy Awards ceremony takes place on March 4.

Kruger, a native German acting in her first German film, won best actress for the performance at last year's Cannes Film Festival for playing the devastated mother.

Kruger said the role forever changed the way she looks at terrorism.

"I got to witness what those families go through," she said backstage at the Globes. "I know they have a name and a life to live."

Fatih said he was stunned that by looking inward he has been accepted on the international stage — and hoped the victory would help sell more tickets in Germany, where "In the Fade" hasn't fared well.

"This is the most personal film I did," he said, "and it brought me here."

(Akin's previous film was "The Cut," about the Armenian Genocide.)



## COMMENTARY

# Armenia Speaks up for Yazidi Brethren in Pain

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The former president of the Committee of Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad, Vartkes Hamazaspian, a historian in his own right, once said, "Look at the irony of destiny; the survivors of a once all-powerful empire of Assyria are seeking shelter under the wings of tiny Armenia to preserve their identity in the Soviet Union."

Armenia, as small as it is, has served as a haven for other minorities escaping persecution and genocide. One such minority group is the Kurds who had been persecuted – and continue to be – throughout the Middle East. The only country which had offered refuge was Armenia, where they enjoyed equal rights as individuals and as an ethnic minority practiced their own language, religion and customs, with their radio broadcasts in Kurdish as well as their own newspapers.

A less understood minority group is the Yazidis, with their syncretic language and brand of religion. They are defined as a Kurdish-speaking (Kurmanji dialect) ethno-religious group practicing a pre-Islamic Assyrian tradition mixing Sufiism and Shiite Islam, Nestorian Christianity and Zoroastrianism. That is exactly what it means to be syncretic, meaning combining diverse and sometimes contradictory concepts into a single faith. Their religion believes in seven fallen angels headed by the Peacock Angel Malek Taus. The latter symbol has been misinterpreted by other groups which label them as devil worshippers. These distinctions are sufficient characteristics to define them as "other" and persecute them.

The Ottoman Turks persecuted and killed the Yazidis during World War I and many of them fled to Armenia and settled in the area of Aknalich, 22 miles from Yerevan. Some 50,000

Armenian Genocide.

The United Nations formally recognized the ISIS genocidal campaign against the Yazidi population in June 2016. It also states in a communique that "there can be no impunity" for the crime, arguing for the Security Council to refer the case to the International Criminal Court.

All the crimes and acts described in the convention on Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as defined by the General Assembly Resolution 260 adopted in 1948 have been perpetrated by ISIS.

There is worldwide revulsion against the crimes committed by ISIS. The UN and the International Court of Justice now seeking justice. But where are the criminals? Which party will be held accountable for these heinous crimes? Now that ISIS has been effectively wiped out in Raqqa, there is a very convenient copout that the criminals have been punished and no further action needs to be taken.

The Rwandan Genocide in the 1990s was the child of the Armenian Genocide and Jewish Holocaust and the precursor of the Yazidi Genocide. Political expediency forbade any intervention during the events which happened front of the eyes of the world community. The head of the UN Peacekeeping Force at the time warned of an impending genocide, but he was silenced. Thus, 800,000 Tutsis lost their lives in the ensuing massacres in Rwanda at the hands of the Hutu ethnic group. Belatedly, after he was out of office, President Bill Clinton visited the Rwandan capital, Kigali, to apologize for US inaction, an apology too late for the 800,000 victims.

In the Yazidi case, there may be an excuse that the ISIS leaders have been killed and that they cannot be brought to justice. But what about the countries that supported, armed, trained and logistically helped the group in the commission of their vile efforts? Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and several other neigh-

boring countries created the monster and armed and unleashed it against unarmed civilians. Are those governments going to get off scot free because they are our "trusted allies" and there is always political expediency to absolve them.

Right at this moment, another crime is being committed by Turkey against the Kurds in Syria – Kurds who had been armed by the US. By all estimation of observers, Turkey would not have dared to invade the Kurdish enclaves of Afrin and Manbij without the tacit approval of the US and Russia, which have their military assets in the area.

"I have not seen the utter futility – perhaps insanity – of our Middle East policy laid bare in a clearer way than in this week's breathtaking developments in Syria," writes Dr. Ron Paul in describing the situation and the encouragement given to Turkey, the main architect of carnage in the region.

Armenians, as victims of genocide, have been extremely sensitive to the plight of other minorities experiencing the same fate. President Serzh Sargsyan had already condemned the mass killings of the Yazidis in Iraq in 2014 and had instructed the missions of the Foreign Ministry to "redouble their efforts to adequately raise the issue in the international arena." That persistent policy came to fruition when Armenia's Parliament unanimously passed a resolution on January 16 recognizing as genocide the 2014 mass killing of the Yazidis in Iraq committed by the Islamic State.

The Yazda organization and UN Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking Nadia Murad have welcomed the resolution.

"The recognition of the Yazidi Genocide by the Armenian parliament today is a historic moment for the entire Yazidi community worldwide and for the victims of this genocide. We welcome this important step, especially as it comes from a country which in its recent history, has suffered greatly from genocide," reads the statement.

It was the right thing to do for Armenia. It would have been counterproductive to claim that our pain is greater than other people's pain, as some of us are tempted to do.

Nor is there value in claiming that our experience was unique, since all genocides and human tragedies are part of universal pain.

As we demonstrate empathy toward other groups' pain, we find empathy for our own.



Yazidis are now in Armenia, where they are awaiting the completion of the Quba Mere Diwane, their temple which will become the largest Yazidi religious structure in the world. As a minority, they are represented in the Armenian Parliament by Rustam Makhmudian.

The majority of the world's 1.5 million Yazidis used to live in Northern Iraq, where they were also persecuted by Saddam Hussein's government and recently they suffered genocide in their country.

Some 300,000 Yazidis live in Iraqi Kurdistan, where they enjoy relative safety, while the majority was left in the Sinjar mountain area, occupied by ISIS, which waged genocide against them.

As details of the atrocities emerge, one could see it as a repeat performance of the Armenian Genocide.

A full century later, the same exact actions were repeated. "Almost 10,000 Yazidis were killed or kidnapped in the ISIS genocide, but the true scale of the horror may never be known," reports the *Independent* newspaper. While adult men were most likely to have been executed by the militants, almost all of the victims who died after going up Mount Sinjar were children under the age of 15, one study found.

Dr. Valeria Cetorelli, a research officer and postdoctoral fellow at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, said escapees documented torture, sex slavery, forced religious conversion and recruitment as child soldiers.

"We heard several accounts of girls being gifted or sold to ISIS fighters as sex slaves and the boys forced in training camps," she added. "More than one third of the kidnapped are still missing and it was not possible to determine whether they are still alive or not. This is really an ongoing genocide because thousands of people are still in captivity."

These accounts read as the memoirs of the survivors of the

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## COMMENTARY

# My Immigrant Story

## Choosing Challenge Over Comfort

By Armine Hovhannissian

I admire successful people. They inspire me. Everyone has their own definition of “success.” For me personally, I define success as someone who has reached their full potential, or at least uncovered the need towards progress. Someone, who at the end of the day, feels gratified and content with what they were able to accomplish and contribute to making the world a better place.

I often ask myself how we, as immigrant Armenians, define success when we establish ourselves in a new host country. Is it only a roof over our heads, luxury cars, material possessions, or pursuing the profession and goals we left behind, discovering a new path, a dream unfulfilled, that perhaps could now be accomplished in this new land of opportunities? I hope through sharing my story, I will be able to inspire others who are embarking on their own journey or are on a path to self-discovery. I know that within each one of us, there are unique and hidden talents to be brought to life. I believe having a positive attitude, open mindset, and surrounding ourselves with likeminded people, will create an abundance of opportunities to bring those to life.

I grew up in the capital of Armenia, Yerevan, in a family of engineers. I am the youngest of three sisters, and often was referred to as being the son to my parents. I was definitely a tomboy; coming home with scratches, bloody knees and dirt all over me. It seemed as if I was always up for a challenge by speaking the truth, standing up for my friends, and organizing street game contests and events. My parents gave me an amazing childhood, spending summers on the shores of the Black sea, or at our summer house just outside of Spitak. I remember helping my grandparents make homemade butter and cheese, planting cabbage and potatoes for the fall harvest, and often found myself in the midst of the bees’ nest. These were true memories of childhood fun! It gave me insight into real life lessons on how people earn their daily bread to provide for their families. Seeing the tangible rewards of my own labor during harvest, cemented the foundation for me to value and appreciate hard work. My parents instilled in me the importance of education and staying true to values such as respecting the elderly, honesty and integrity, and the gratitude in helping others.

However, back in the 1990s growing up in the capital of Armenia, I recall my teen years in the dark, as many refer to as “the dark years of Armenia’s independence.” Armenia was recovering and still is, from the 1988 devastating earthquake that took the lives of thousands of innocent people, and left cities and hundreds of villages destroyed. It had a direct impact on my family, as I had witnessed the unimaginable that I would not wish for any 11-year-old to experience. The collapse of the

Soviet Union, Armenia’s independence in 1991, and the Artsakh Liberation War, had created a distressing economic state of hardship where basic daily needs such as food and electricity were scarce. I remember studying for college exams under an oil lamp. When the electricity would come back on for only two hours, on a good day, suddenly the entire building would come to life, and you would hear people running around frantically to accomplish as much as possible. The times were arduous, but we were creative and resourceful, finding ways to come up with games to keep ourselves entertained. For one thing, I learned how to run a small television off of a car battery! Even standing in long lines fighting for limited amounts of bread and butter was entertaining. I recall helping my dad chop wood and dragging it from the nearby woods, on a sleigh, to burn for warmth in the old-fashioned wood stove on the third floor of a five-story apartment building, in the city, with the pipe coming straight out from the brick wall. Not to mention, we also used it for cooking, and I enjoyed roasting potatoes on the hot surface of the stove. We were forced to survive the harsh winters, with very limited resources, which also meant not attending high school for a period of time due to the cold and lack of heat.

It has now been almost 20 years since I moved to the United States. It is still a learning experience for me as I continue to discover my purpose and what I am capable of achieving. I embrace the lessons I have learned, and the challenges I encounter on a daily basis; always opting for challenge over comfort. I believe that the greatest things in life don’t come easy, at least for me, as a 20-year-old trying to process leaving a large family behind, especially my mother, who is my best friend, and starting a new life abroad. I know I am not alone. Not only was marriage already a life changing event, but it was also the new language, and the adaptation to the new and diverse culture of America. The most challenging of all, that was also a wakeup call for me, was the fact that I had just graduated with my bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering in Armenia, and had no idea how I would pursue it with my broken English and lack of background of the field in America. I must admit that I was never really passionate about engineering, as it was arbitrarily chosen for you back in those days growing up in a family of engineers, especially when your father is the dean of the department, and following in the footsteps of my two older sisters. Although at that time my diploma was my pride and asset, I felt lost and frightened.

Over the years, I realize how lucky I am being married to a supportive husband and a wonderful father to my two beautiful children; a daughter who is a freshman in college, and a son who is a sophomore in high school. As I strive to be a good role model for my children, I often look up to my wise dad, who has been and continues to be my role model. His words never escaped me when I was at the gate boarding for my journey to America, with his last hug and a tear coming down; he looked at me and said: “Bales (my child), I have no doubt you are going to be in good hands, but know that life is a funny thing. Become someone, so you can stand strong on your own two feet and be able to provide for yourself and your children.” I didn’t realize the magnitude of his words until I was more or less settled in America, starting a family and having my own children.

My journey in Boston began when I became conscious of the fact that my biggest hindrance was the inability to speak and write English fluently. It became clear that it was only going to hold me back, and as a mother, I needed to be able to raise my children in society and be their advocate; properly communicating with school, teachers, and whatever I needed to do on a daily basis as a citizen, including my career. I had a goal of learning five new words every day, and had a wonderful tutor who would come to my house for lessons. I remember reading and translating articles from the Boston Globe while my daughter played in the cradle. The English dictionary all of a sudden became my bible.

We all start from somewhere. I reflect back to the days when I was expecting my daughter and working at a small nut store called Mixed Nuts, now Fastachi. I was working at the front reg-

ister as well as helping in the back of the store filling hundreds of bags of orders. One day, a confident young woman walked into the store dressed in a black business suit and I just froze standing there in my dusty apron and a hair cap. I simply wanted to be her. In that very moment, I reflected back to what my parents instilled and hoped to see in me; to never be afraid of dreaming big, regardless of where you are destined to embark on a new journey. I realized this was just the beginning of an adventurous ride. I constantly found myself in the state of self-discovery, in the pursuit of identifying the gap between where I was, where I saw myself to be, and what I needed to do to get there. As time went by, to gain experience and build new skills, I searched for opportunities here and there; from an administrative assistant at a small doctor’s office, to a project manager, to currently managing large-scale program operations at one of the leading health insurance companies in New England. I found healthcare to be a fascinating field to build a career upon. It wasn’t an easy ride. I recall going to a job interview at a downtown hospital with little experience. My heart was pounding from fear and the unknown. Through my perseverance and excitement for this growth opportunity, I pulled it off and was hired by the vice president of the department, who later became an exemplary mentor. However, I also recall days where I would lock myself in the restroom and quietly fight my tears from not understanding the business lingo or how I was going to complete an assignment. I would look in the mirror, wipe my tears, put mascara and lipstick on and walk out of that restroom as if I were the CEO of the company. I simply chose not to give up. I would bring work home, google terms, and read through papers to self-educate. I made it through a challenging couple of years, relying upon my dad’s words to help me get through it. As we discussed an implementation of a multimillion dollar new site project, my contributions and voice made me aware that I am no less than anyone else in that board room. I realized that I just needed to believe in myself and stay focused. That’s all!

We are our own largest investment. Throughout the years, I experienced how easy it is to lose self-esteem and confidence when we find ourselves outside of our own comfort zone. The path of an immigrant is the ultimate test of this. Through experience, I learned that in times of self-doubt, we need to ask. We need to reach out to others when we need direction, which I find can be quite intimidating to do in my culture. Seeking advice and asking for guidance is a strength – not a weakness. I consider myself lucky for having had great mentors, that I still have to this day, who taught me valuable lessons; one being that we stop growing when we stop learning, which encouraged me to go back to school for my MBA fifteen years later. There were days where I would only get a couple of hours of sleep, or not see my children. My car was my second home as I would quickly grab a bite in between work and going to class, or reading a case study while my son was at soccer practice. The struggles and challenges of juggling a career and family while in school allowed me to unlock my true potential and manifest my inner strength.

As humans, we are resistant to change. One of my favorite quotes is from Henry Bergson: “To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly.” Through my personal experiences, I discovered that the key to self-growth is to be able to adapt to change as well as overcome the mindset of insecurity and the intimidation of asking for and willingly accepting constructive feedback. I challenged myself with overcoming those feelings, and do believe that once you are on the other side of the spectrum, not only will you discover your hidden talents and your full potential, but you will also be able to make a positive impact on others and your community. And the beauty of this endless journey is that all of a sudden, you find yourself in a contagious cycle of constant giving and receiving. It is incredible, it is powerful, and for me, the most gratifying feeling of all is to hopefully leave this world better than how we found it.

(Armine Hovhannissian lives in the Greater Boston area.)

## LETTERS

### Talking about Church Unity

To the Editor:

Please forgive this delayed response on the issue of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church and Church Unity as raised by Mr. Charles Kasbarian (penname C. K. Garabed). I am not a subscriber, nor a regular reader of the Mirror-Spectator, but upon my visits to my sister-in-law (a subscriber), I do peruse and read her copies. I have always enjoyed Mr. Edmond Azadian’s insightful column “Commentary,” on Armenian issues (although not always agreeing with him).

Fortuitously, I came upon Mr. Garabed’s short note in the “Letters to the Editor” regarding “church unity”. As I read on, a smile came upon my face and I chuckled to myself as I sus-

pected that his commentary was done with “tongue-in-cheek.” I then wondered if there was any seriousness or special intent on his part. Being a friend of old, I called Mr. Garabed and inquired re such. Indeed, Mr. Garabed had done such with “tongue in cheek” and a sense of frivolity. However, there was a modicum of seriousness since he had sensed some difficulty in the relationship between the Eastern Diocese and the Catholicosate of Holy Echmiadzin.

I am not privy to the problems, if any, between the Diocese and Holy Echmiadzin, but if there were such and they were unsurmountable, a reasonable option would be to join the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. After all, in the late ‘40s and throughout the ‘50s when the now “Prelacy” churches were in disarray as a result of lack of support from Holy Echmiadzin, upon petition the Catholicosate of Cilicia came to their rescue. Under the nurturing leadership of the Cilician Catholicosate, the

“Prelacy” churches were stabilized, strengthened and became a formidable religious institution in North America. Not too bad of a history for joining the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia.

With regard to the issue of the phrase “a meaningful and significant relationship” as proposed for the “Guidelines to Unity”— this in general defined the subsequent relationship between the new united Diocese under Holy Echmiadzin and the Great House of Cilicia. The members of the Unity Committee (certainly the representatives of the Prelacy) understood this to mean:

The Catholicos of Cilicia would be regularly invited to the new Diocese and would be accorded the respect and honor due His office.

The new Diocese would annually contribute financially to support the Cilician Catholicosate, and the Catholicos would be able to raise funds from private philanthropy.

The Great House of Cilicia would have repre-

sentation at the annual General Assembly of the new Diocese.

Once the “Guidelines” had been agreed to, the details and specifics of this relationship were to be determined by subsequent subcommittees. These seemed like reasonable accommodations to support the Cilician Catholicosate which had come to the aid of the non-Diocesan churches at a time of great need and under whose nurturing care they had grown and matured. It was a token of appreciation in an attempt to assuage the sense of abandonment that the Catholicosate of Cilicia might have felt.

At this point in the negotiations, I was summarily dismissed from the Unity Committee without due cause by Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian and the Prelacy Executive Council. All subsequent commentary is based on information provided to me by a Prelacy representative who was an integral part of the proceedings.

see UNITY, page 19



## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Human Rights Watch Reports on Violations In Armenia, Azerbaijan And Turkey

Human Rights Watch, a respectable and prominent non-governmental organization, issued last week its annual report that documented human rights violations during 2017 in more than 90 countries, including Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

## ARMENIA

Below is the summary of what Human Rights Watch reported on violations in Armenia during 2017:

“Parliamentary elections, the first since the 2015 constitutional amendments moving the country from a presidential to a parliamentary system, failed to improve public confidence in the electoral system. The ruling Republican Party dominated the polls amid reports of irregularities. Authorities failed to bring to justice officials responsible for excessive use of force against protesters and journalists, including during largely peaceful protests in Yerevan in July 2016. The trials of 32 men accused of crimes committed during the violent takeover of a police station in Yerevan, which prompted the protests, were ongoing at time of writing. Four defendants have reported ill-treatment in detention.”

## AZERBAIJAN

Below is the summary of what Human Rights Watch reported on violations in Azerbaijan during 2017:

“The government intensified its crackdown against critics in 2017. Courts sentenced at least 25 journalists and political and youth activists to long prison terms in politically motivated, unfair trials. Dozens more were detained or are under criminal investigation, face harassment and travel bans, or have fled. Draconian laws and regulations impede independent groups’ work and ability to secure funding. Torture and ill-treatment in custody persist. In a violent campaign, police arrested and ill-treated dozens of gay men and transgender women. Following years of scrutiny and several warnings, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), an international coalition promoting better governance in resource-rich countries, suspended Azerbaijan for failing to ease restrictions on civil society groups.”

Human Rights Watch also provided the following details of human rights violations in Azerbaijan:

- “18 activists are imprisoned or awaiting trial on politically motivated criminal charges.”
- “7 journalists and bloggers are imprisoned or awaiting trial on politically motivated criminal charges.”
- “11 times the Council of Europe called on Azerbaijan to release opposition leader Ilgar Mammadov.”
- “5 major media outlets are permanently blocked by Azerbaijan under the pretext of ‘national security.’”
- “162 out of 180 countries is where Reporters without Borders ranks Azerbaijan for press freedom.”
- “11 activists, including journalists and NGO leaders, are banned from leaving Azerbaijan.”

## TURKEY

Below is the summary of what Human Rights Watch reported on violations in Turkey during 2017:

“An April 2017 referendum, which voters approved by a slim margin, introduced constitutional amendments switching Turkey to a presidential system of governance, the most significant change to its political institutions in decades. The referendum took place under a state of emergency imposed after the July 15, 2016 attempted military coup, and in an environment of heavy media censorship, with many journal-

ists and parliamentarians from the pro-Kurdish opposition in jail. The new presidential system, which consolidates the incumbent’s hold on power, is a setback for human rights and the rule of law. It lacks sufficient checks and balances against abuse of executive power, greatly diminishing the powers of parliament, and consolidating presidential control over most judicial appointments. The presidential system will come fully into force following elections in 2019.”

Below are brief excerpts from the Human Rights Watch report which provides lengthy details about violations in Turkey:

“Public officials continued to be dismissed or suspended by decree without due process, with more than 110,000 dismissed since July 2016. Hundreds of media outlets, associations, foundations, private hospitals, and educational establishments that the government shut down by decree remained closed in 2017, their assets confiscated without compensation. ...Those affected have no right to work in public service, their bank accounts are frozen, and passports confiscated.”

Furthermore, “people continued to be arrested and remanded to pretrial custody on terrorism charges, with at least 50,000 remanded to pretrial detention and many more prosecuted since the failed coup. Those prosecuted include journalists, civil servants, teachers and politicians as well as police officers and military personnel.... Under the state of emergency in Turkey over 500 lawyers have been jailed pending trial, and over 1,000 prosecuted”

The report also stated that “Turkey is the world leader in jailing journalists and media workers as they face criminal investigations and trials, with around 150 behind bars at time of writing. Most newspapers and television channels lack independence and promote the government’s political line.”

Compared to Azerbaijan and Turkey, Armenia had the least number of human rights violations. Turkey is one of the biggest violators of human rights in the world with Azerbaijan a close second. However, most Armenians prefer that their homeland be as democratic as possible regardless of how undemocratic the neighboring countries are.

## Paying Tribute to Karabakh War Veteran Sarkis Hatsbanian

By Raffi Bedrosyan

Sarkis Hatsbanian, Karabakh war veteran, political commentator and activist, passed away last week in Lyon, France. He was only 55.

Born in Adiyaman, southeastern Turkey and former Cilicia, he had left for France in 1980 to avoid persecution of the military dictatorship in Turkey, and then had moved to Armenia to join the Karabakh war in 1990. He participated in the liberation of the Karvajar (Kelbajar) region joining Armenia to K A photo of him with an elderly woman

became a symbol of the war. This photo had two stories, one very real, the other a complete lie. The real story was as reported by a French journalist who accompanied the Armenian forces during the campaign, depicting Sarkis with an 80-year-old Azeri woman, Shaikha Hanum. She was left behind, along with other elderly Azeri women and children in the Karvajar district, when all the able-bodied Azeris had fled ahead of the advancing Armenian forces. Her son was a police commander in the district. Sarkis was in charge of taking care of the Azeri civilians, and eventually providing safe passage to Gandzag (Kirovabad). Armenians took such good care of the civilians that Shaikha Hanum stated she loved Sarkis more than his cowardly son who had abandoned her. On the same day that this story and photo was published in France, a fake story was posted in the Turkish daily, Milliyet, using the same photo, depicting Sarkis as an Azeri soldier, rescuing his Azeri grandmother from the Armenian enemy...

After the war, he became politically active and a fierce critic of the bribery and corruption of the oligarchs in the government and in the church, expressing his views very eloquently and articulately during frequent TV appearances. Sarkis and I met and became fast friends when I took groups of hidden Armenians from Turkey to Armenia. He was fascinated by this new Armenian reality. He would follow our tour itinerary and meet us at museums and churches that we visited, becoming a volunteer guide, counsellor, mentor and lifelong friend to our hidden Armenians.

When he was struck by cancer this past summer, he had to move to Lyon, France to receive the required treatment, in a race against time. He needed a place to stay during the treatments and was in dire financial need. Our numerous pleas for some financial assistance from heads of Armenian organizations, influential or politically active Armenians in France or Europe fell on deaf ears, unfortunately. Ultimately, a fundraising

campaign was organized in Canada to send emergency funds to Sarkis and his family, with a few anonymous donors from Turkey also contributing. He passed away disappointed and dejected by the apathy of fellow Armenians.

And now, as soon as he passed away, the accolades and eulogies by Armenian Diaspora leaders rise to the sky for the “Karabakh war hero.” We have a saying in Armenian – “Kna merir, yegour sirem,” meaning “First go die, then come let me love you.”

Istanbul Bilgi University in September 2005, where he and other speakers were pelted with eggs, tomatoes and coins, and I had suggested that perhaps a similar conference can be organized somewhere in US or Europe, by inviting both Turkish and Armenian historians. He had smiled bitterly: “Raffi, you would have more problems with the Diaspora than I have here with the Turks.” Unfortunately, Hrant became a unanimously accepted hero only after he was shot.

In the last few months of their lives, both

## Talking about Church Unity

UNITY, from page 18

Early on the Unity Committee had decided that the deliberations would not be made public until the “Guidelines” had been completed and agreed upon. But, before that could happen, the Diocesan Council upon the objections of a midwestern church, rejected the “Guidelines” based upon the phrase “a meaningful relationship.” Thus ended the attempt to unify the Apostolic Church of the Armenians in the Eastern United States.

I would hope that these comments would help add some clarity to the situation regarding Mr. Garabed’s letter and the phrase “meaningful relationship.” With the passage of a substantial amount of time since the rejection of the “Guidelines” by the Diocese, the changes in people and attitudes, I can’t help but wonder if that phrase is now acceptable to the Council. And if so, what is the present-day opinion of the Prelacy Executive Council concerning this issue? Is it possible that the Unity Committee be reconstituted, deliberations commenced and a successful conclusion reached to benefit our Community, our Church and by extension our Armenian nation?

George Dermaksian, MD

Prelacy Representative to the original Unity Committee



Sarkis Hatsbanian with an Azeri woman left behind by her family

Perhaps this attitude is unique to Armenians, because I cannot find such a cruel but poignant proverb in any other language.

I remember a similar situation with my other hero friend, Hrant Dink. He was disliked and heavily criticized by most Diaspora Armenian leaders for his pro-dialogue stand with the Turks. We were chatting after the first Ottoman Armenian conference held in

Sarkis and Hrant felt alone and abandoned in their struggles, one fighting the ever-increasing cancer eating him from inside, and the other fighting the ever increasing death threats eating him from outside.

I hope Armenians can adopt a new proverb by reversing the order of the four words: “Yegour sirem, kna merir,” meaning “Come let me love you first, then you go die.”



## Argentine Billionaire to Pass Baton to Nephew in Airport IPO

**BUENOS AIRES (Bloomberg)** – When the bell sounds in New York later this month for the initial public offering of Eduardo Eurnekian's airport business, the man ringing it will probably be his nephew Martin Eurnekian.

It will be more than a symbolic move. The share sale represents a key milestone in the Argentine mogul's long and varied career, as he passes the baton of his billion-dollar business to his chosen successor.

"I am doing this IPO, but that doesn't mean I'm in charge – the one who manages the airports is my nephew," Eduardo Eurnekian said during an interview in his Buenos Aires office. "I will oversee this deal this month, and my career in airports will be complete."

Eurnekian's closely held Corporacion America Airports SA, which owns concessions to operate

sight. The son of Armenian immigrants who fled the genocide in the early 20th century said that handing over day-to-day operations will free him up to explore new areas of business.

Putin, Maradona

In an interview in his office, surrounded by photographs of himself with a spectrum of people he's met throughout his career – from Russian President Vladimir Putin to soccer star Diego Maradona, Pope Francis and Buenos Aires province Governor Maria Eugenia Vidal – Eurnekian spoke of his interest in biotechnology, cattle, agriculture and renewable energies.

Eurnekian knows change. His Palermo neighborhood office is located in what was once his textile factory. Later it became his media headquarters, when he left the clothing sector to reign in cable television, before the airport business propelled him to his greatest success. That's still where he sees the most room for growth.

The key to his success in the sector, Eurnekian said, was finding a niche in the operation of medium-sized airports that didn't appeal to larger rivals such as Aeroports de Paris, LHR Airports Ltd. and Fraport Frankfurt Airport Services Worldwide.

Eurnekian said he believes more profits can be squeezed from the airports he already operates by either expanding their capacity or providing retail and entertainment options for travelers. That could mean adding stores, restaurants and other services, as the company plans to do at Ezeiza airport in Buenos Aires, or by increasing their size through building new runways, as the company plans to do in Florence, Italy.

"The future will be airports with more space, such as in Mumbai, or airports with more services, such as is the case of Florence, where we will add more hectares in order to incorporate services, shopping malls and offices," he said. "Today air passengers are growing at double the rate of gross domestic product, and in some regions as much as three times – and I charge by the passenger."

The core of Eurnekian's business that generated \$1.2 billion in the first nine months of 2017 is in Argentina. Aerpuertos Argentina operates 36 airports in the country, handling more than 90 percent of the country's total passenger traffic.



Eduardo Eurnekian

51 airports worldwide, is looking to sell as much as \$750 million of shares between late January and February, spokeswoman Carolina Barros said Wednesday. It would be the first IPO by an Argentine company this year.

It will also mark the start of a new phase for Eurnekian, though the 85-year-old entrepreneur –who says he still swims and practices yoga every day – won't be retiring out of



Fethiye Cetin speaking in Istanbul

## Hrant Dink Remembrance Event Held in Istanbul

ISTANBUL, from page 1

Despite 11 years having passed, little progress has been made regarding Dink's case.

Ogün Samast, who was aged 17 at the time of the shooting, was jailed for 23 years in 2011 for the killing. But speculation about the involvement of other groups inside and outside the state apparatus has persisted, and a number of slow-moving investigations are still ongoing.

Among the speakers was Fethiye Çetin, who said, "Let us become Hrant Dink, let us join arms, and embrace this huge world to put love in it. Come, let us become Hrant Dink, to form the broadest front for peace, democracy, a culture of living together and dialogue. We are of the kin, who since time immemorial, has fought for justice, freedom, equality and peace, we are of those who have sought to turn the hell they live in into paradise. We have done it before; we can do it again."

### Healing Rift

Eurnekian named nephew Martin, 39, chairman of Aerpuertos in April, replacing Rafael Bielsa, a former foreign minister under ex-President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner. Transport Minister Guillermo Dietrich acknowledged in November that Martin's appointment helped heal a rift with President Mauricio Macri's government and persuaded Macri not to exercise an option to terminate the concession early.

Eurnekian was initially skeptical of Macri's reform agenda. Now he's more optimistic, saying he thinks Argentina has great potential even if

he believes dismantling 80 years of protectionist policies will take some time.

"We isolated ourselves and wanted to believe we were the best, and the day we took our head out of the sand we realized we'd fallen from 12th place to 80th," he said. "This government is a



Martin Eurnekian

step forward. There are people that have another vision of the world, that are looking for competitiveness. They haven't still given the big step a liberal would like to see, but they're in the right path."

Still, Eurnekian says the reforms Macri is carrying out are more tepid than those of Brazil, its largest trade partner. He hopes the changes Brazil is implementing will push Argentina to be bolder in its attempts to make the economy more competitive.

At least a portion of the proceeds of the Corporacion America share sale will be used to lead the expansion of the Buenos Aires airports, including building hotels. Eurnekian looks to add two in Ezeiza, the international hub that handled 7.4 million passengers in the first nine-months of 2017 and 9.8 million passengers in 2016. He also sees one hotel in Buenos Aires city airport, which will likely gain terrain by advancing over the estuary known as Rio de la Plata.

Bank of America Corp., Oppenheimer & Co., Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Citigroup Inc. were hired by Corporacion America to help raise at least \$500 million. Pension funds are the largest investors for airport stocks as flying becomes safer and cheaper, Eurnekian said.

"They buy the stocks because they trust me," he said. "I don't want to sound pretentious, but if they didn't trust me, they wouldn't be waiting with so much anticipation for the share sale."



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